

**At a meeting of the ENVIRONMENTAL AND PLANNING REVIEW COMMITTEE  
held in the CIVIC CENTRE on MONDAY, 17<sup>TH</sup> JULY, 2006 at 5.30 p.m.**

**Present:-**

Councillor Blackburn in the Chair

Councillors Dixon, Fletcher, Higgins, Paul Maddison, Tye, Wares, Whalen and Wood.

**Also Present:-**

Councillor Lawson - Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transportation  
Councillor Rolph - Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood and Street Services

**Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors C.R. Anderson, MacKnight and L. Scott.

**Minutes of the Last Meeting**

With regard to page 4 of the minutes, Mr. High advised that the response to Councillor MacKnight should state that an investigation could not be carried out until issues were resolved with Single Status and then the capacity for it could be looked at.

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 19<sup>th</sup> June, 2006 (copy circulated) be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

**Declarations of Interest (Including Whipping Declarations)**

Item 4 - HiTrans – High Quality Public Transport

Councillor Wood declared a personal interest in the above item as a Member of the Passenger Transport Authority (PTA).

## Item 7 - Allocation of Additional Funds for Highway Maintenance

Councillors Blackburn, Higgins and Wares declared a personal interest in the above item as Council appointed representatives of the Sunderland Housing Group Limited.

### **HiTrans – High Quality Public Transport**

The Director of Development and Regeneration and the City Solicitor submitted a joint report (copy circulated) detailing for Members the outcome of the HiTrans (High Quality Public Transport) project, into the development of public transport systems in a medium sized city.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Mr. Clive Greenwood, Senior Planner, presented the Committee with a 10 minute DVD of the promotional film, that was one of the outcomes of the project.

Following the film, Mr. Greenwood clarified that although it stated that Sunderland would be concentrating all its efforts on bus networks, it had failed to mention the work going into considering new stock for the Metro service, which could include a tram-to-train as a possibility.

Councillor Whalen felt this was a good project and welcomed it and asked how this had been an unique opportunity to forge partnerships. Mr. Greenwood advised that this referred to working in collaboration, nationally with other cities. He said that this had been a fantastic opportunity for all to share thoughts and views and work towards getting decisions made. He also informed Members that the project was being promoted as part of North East in Europe and highlighted as best practice for the North of England.

The Chair sought clarification on the definition of a 'medium' sized city and how Sunderland compared with the other cities involved. Mr. Greenwood explained that a medium sized city was one which had a population between 100,000 and 500,000. Sunderland falls almost in the middle with a population of 280,000. He informed the Committee that Edinburgh had been nearer the top of the scale, whilst Helsingborg had been one of the smaller.

The Chair asked if there were any plans for future projects and was told that there were discussions over a HiTrans2 ongoing.

Councillor Wood queried what differences could be seen as a part of the project and was informed it had allowed for better internal networking which would benefit colleagues and help to share best practice. Mr. Greenwood explained it would also help in improving access for all and social inclusion by applying the principles in the 5 best practice guides produced.

Councillor Wares stated that the film and suggestions from it had been impressive but queried what benefit Sunderland would get from being involved. Mr. Greenwood informed Members that the partners were looking at some similar aspects such as involving the public and seeking their views. He also advised that they would be looking at the Metro and bus network services to see how they could link to better provide public transport to retail centres and remote villages.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Greenwood for his report and presentation, and it was:-

2. RESOLVED that the information be received and noted.

### **Study into the Council's Approach to Carbon Management – Baseline Position**

The Director of Development and Regeneration and the City Solicitor submitted a joint report (copy circulated) which set out the baseline position for the Committee for their study into the Council's approach to Carbon Management.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Kathryn Warrington, Sustainable Development Assistant, gave a presentation to Members detailing the Council's Carbon Management Programme and its objectives and outcomes.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Maddison asked if Elected Members were included within the staff travel to work data and was informed not at present but this could be looked at, to include at a future stage.

The Chairman thanked Ms. Warrington for the report and presentation, and it was:-

3. RESOLVED that the information be received and noted.

### **Remit and Scope of Study into Carbon Management**

The City Solicitor and the Director of Development and Regeneration submitted a joint report (copy circulated) which set out the remit and scope of the Committee's study into carbon management and asked Members to establish a draft programme, outlining various techniques and methods for gathering evidence.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Wood referred to the direct consultation with community groups and members of the community and expressed concerns over which groups the Committee could and would target. He agreed people would have views to express which would be helpful to the study and asked if written information could be sought to help Members understand the public view. Mr. Diamond advised that there would be an article in a future edition of Sunrise which encourages public participation and

involvement and seeks views on the issues. He also informed Members that work was ongoing looking at ways to increase community engagement.

In response to a query from Councillor Maddison, Mr. Diamond confirmed that the Council website was used and at present the Scrutiny pages were being updated and will be given a higher profile in the future.

Following discussion of the item, it was:-

4. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the report be received and noted; and
- (ii) the proposals, remit and objectives of the study, as set out in the report, be agreed.

### **Allocation of Additional Funds for Highway Maintenance**

The Director of Development and Regeneration submitted a report (copy circulated) which updated Members on the proposed works for 2006/2007 and on the spend profile of footway and carriageway works for 2005/06 and 2006/07.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Andy Morris, Head of Transport and Engineering, advised that this was a standard report the Committee had received in previous years. He informed the Members that works were prioritised on treating the highways that were considered most at risk.

In relation to page 27 the Chairman requested that the Committee be provided with some more photographs of the areas, once works had been completed, as it would be useful for Members to see the impact it had.

In response to a query from Councillor Wood, Mr. Tim Smith, Senior Project Engineer, informed him that unfortunately the works on Tunstall Road would have to be put on hold until Northumbrian Water had completed works in that area.

Councillor Wood sought clarification on what works were planned for the areas shown (p.27) in the report and was advised by Mr. Morris that areas would be upgraded and safety measures installed to reduce risk of harm. He informed the Committee that the £400,000 in additional funding would be used on areas of higher risk of accidents/trips, etc. to help reduce liabilities on the Council and improve safety in the areas.

Having discussed the report, it was:-

5. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the information be received and noted; and

- (ii) that photographs of completed works be provided to the Committee.

### **Proposed Visit to Joe's Pond**

The City Solicitor and the Director of Development and Regeneration submitted a joint report (copy circulated) asking Members to consider a date to visit Joe's Pond to view the condition and maintenance of the area.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Mr. Keith Hamilton, Deputy Manager Landscape and Reclamation, gave Members a general overview of the area and the actions which were being undertaken to try and secure funding to improve the environment. He advised Members that the Council were working with Durham Wildlife Trust, as an 'expert friend', to help deal with the issues and find a suitable way forward.

Councillor Maddison queried the wildlife at the pond and was informed that there was a range of aquatic birds, as well as a dragonfly population, southern hawkers, amphibians and a strong collection of trees.

The Chairman suggested that Member's may wish to include a visit to view the progress of the Southern Radial Route.

Upon discussion, it was:-

6. RESOLVED that a site visit to the Southern Radial Route and Joe's Pond be arranged for 14<sup>th</sup> September, 2006.

The Chair closed the meeting having thanked Members and Officers for their attendance.

(Signed) J. BLACKBURN,  
Chairman.