

ENVIRONMENTAL AND PLANNING REVIEW COMMITTEE Durham Suite (North End)

Scope & Work of the Committee

Scope

Building Control, Planning, Policy Strategic Planning, Transport, Land Use, Coast Protection, Emergency planning, City Centre, Ground Maintenance, Management and Highway Services, Cemeteries and Crematorium, Port (Non Operational, Facilities Management (excluding Leisure Centres).

Past Reviews (Full documents available on request)

Public Realm and Streetscene 2007/08

Carbon Management 2006/07

Road Safety and Child Pedestrian Accidents 2005/06

Cycling Development 2004/05

City Centre Traffic Management 2003/04

Waste Management 2002/03

Highlights from 2007/08

The Committee's policy review involved undertaking a study into the development of public realm and streetscene in the city taking evidence from a range of experts from within and from outside the council.

As part of the study, the Committee commissioned Living Streets to undertake an audit of public realm in a number of locations within the city. This involved a number of member and community "walkabouts" where views were gathered on the condition of the local environment and any areas of improvement.

The quarterly performance monitoring reports are an integral part of the Committee's work programme. The reports allow the Committee to monitor the Council's performance across a range of key performance indicators and highlight any areas of risk or underperformance at an early stage.

Performance monitoring highlighted that there had been an increase in the number of people killed or seriously injured during this period though the overall long term trend was down. In response, the Committee asked for a further report from the Directorate to analyse in detail the issues behind this change and the engineering, enforcement and educational initiatives going on to reduce the number accidents and improve road safety. Northumbria Road Safety Initiative and the Sunderland Institute of

Advanced Motorists also contributed to their views on the ways in which road accidents can be reduced. The Committee agreed to closely monitor the situation.

Last year, the Committee looked into public concern regarding reductions in local bus services and improving partnership working by speaking to Martin Harris, Commercial Director of GO North East.

This year, the Committee invited Bernard Garner NEXUS Director General to attend the Committee to answer questions on a range of public transport issues within the city including:-

- ❑ operation of bus services within the City of Sunderland Council the future of public transport and the implications of the Local Transport Bill
- ❑ modernisation and reinvigoration of the metro
- ❑ Progress on the refurbishment of Sunderland Station
- ❑ measures for people who are suffering social exclusion
- ❑ operation of the concessionary fare scheme.

The Committee was satisfied with the progress being made by NEXUS in working to improve public transport across the city.

The Review Committee felt that it is most important to receive update reports on the progress being made by the Executive in implementing the recommendations from its earlier policy reviews. During the year progress reports were received on the following studies:-

- ❑ Development of Cycling Within the City of Sunderland Council
- ❑ Carbon Management and Energy Efficiency
- ❑ Development of Road Safety and Child Pedestrian Accidents

Overall, there had been good progress made in implementing the recommendations.

The Review Committee has received several reports seeking its views on the contents of the draft Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy as it has been developed in conjunction with Gateshead and South Tyneside Councils.

The strategy sets out three Councils strategic approach to tackling the increasingly important issue of waste management.

The Committee requested a report on the arrangements that have been implemented in response to the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. This provided the Committee with the opportunity to satisfy itself with the soundness of arrangements for dealing with an emergency in the city. The Committee was impressed with the structure and measures put in place in response to the Act.

The Committee also considered the details of the Sunderland Flood Risk Assessment and considered its implications as part of the Council's emergency planning functions.

During the year, the Committee received a report on the additional funding of £400,000 that had been secured by the Review Committee for highway maintenance. This related to work carried out in 2006/07 and proposed works for 2007/08.

The Cabinet sought the Committees views on the on the preferred option for the Hetton Downs Area Action Plan. This decision has major implications for the area setting out the planning framework for a programme of potential development over the next 15 to 20 years.

Other important planning documents on which the Committee was consulted includes:-

- Sunnyside Planning and Design Framework
- Farrington Row Development Framework
- Evening Economy Supplementary Planning Document
- Regional Spatial Strategy – Proposed Modifications Response
- Unitary Development Plan – Alteration No 2 – Adoption of Policies
- Urban Design Supplementary Planning Documents
- Doxford Park Renewal Area Masterplan – Responses to Consultation
- Whitburn Bents, Houghton and Cedars Conservation Character Studies

The Committee has received and agreed to two written requests from Members for the inclusion of an item on the agenda of the Review Committee.

Residents Parking Zones

The Committee agreed to receive a presentation at a future meeting on the progress of the Council's piloting of residents parking zones and the projected timescales for their implementation. This item will be included in the work programme for next year.

Leamside Line

The Committee agreed to receive a report detailing the feasibility study into the reopening of the Leamside Line and the Council's response to the study.

The Committee also agreed to invite a representative from Nexus and Network Rail. Richard Thompson from Network Rail has agreed to attend the Committee but was unable to make the April meeting. Arrangements are being made to agree a mutually suitable date.