

**STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS**

**PROFORMA**

Cabinet Meeting .....21st July 2008

1. Title of Item/Report

Environment Select Committee (Task & Finish Group)-Review of Rats & Pigeons

2. Record of the Decision

Consideration was given to a report which presented the findings and recommendations of the Task and Finish Group that had been examining the extent to which the Borough was affected by high numbers of both rats and pigeons, and what necessary measures could be carried out, in isolation or in partnership, by both the Council, the public, and the business/retail sector to help reduce the numbers of both.

It was explained that when reviewing the evidence, members considered the need for greater public and commercial awareness of factors that influenced the number of rats and pigeons. The Group made recommendations in order to achieve a reduction in numbers of both; at the same time as increasing awareness of the Council's policy to control such problems and maintain the cleanliness of the Borough and to contribute to promotion of both the Borough and its Town Centres as enjoyable places to visit and shop.

Members of Cabinet discussed Stockton News in terms of it not being distributed throughout the full borough. It was requested that officers look into the distribution.

RESOLVED that:

1. A public awareness campaign be conducted via Stockton News, the Council's website and other Council information outlets advising of the sensible action that should be taken (both do's and don'ts) so as to eliminate potential food sources likely to encourage rats.

The availability of the free service offered to all domestic properties, and the service offered to commercial properties, be similarly highlighted as part of the campaign.

2. The Corporate Director of Resources be requested to look into current

spend across the Council on pest control services and the opportunities to maximise efficiencies and 'invest to save' opportunities, particularly in relation to responsibilities for open public land.

3. In order to minimise the potential for the urban landscape to attract both rats and litter, the Environmental Health Service should continue to be consulted on planning applications containing proposed shrub beds, and the service should also provide input into the design stage of major projects and the guidance contained within the Local Development Framework.

4. The benefits of the connectivity of the two relevant IT systems be acknowledged and the Environmental Health Manager build into Service Improvement Planning the acquisition of the appropriate software necessary to achieve greater connectivity between use of the Council's FLARE and GIS systems, so as to produce a higher level of management information that more accurately records specific trends regarding reported pest control problems.

5. Through consultation with the Environmental Health Manager, the Council's Waste Implementation Plan should reflect the need to ensure that the advice provided regarding, and proposed methods of, food waste disposal and home composting did not encourage and provide food sources to rodents; and that the supply of suitable compost unit bases be further investigated by a Sub Group established by the Urban Environment Task Group (UETG).

6. An initial public and commercial awareness campaign be initiated via Stockton News, the Council's website, the various Retail Fora highlighting the Council's wish to tackle pigeon infestation in the Borough, targeted initially via a pilot exercise within Stockton Town Centre , through measures designed to:-

- Reduce food availability;
- Prevent pigeon roosting sites as far as possible;
- Raise awareness via high profile publicity/education of the causes of pigeon infestation (i.e. available food sources and areas for harbourage) and the detrimental effects caused by feeding pigeons human food;
- Enforce prohibition;

and that successful measures were then extended to the remaining Borough Town Centres following the trial period.

7. As part of the awareness raising campaign suggested in Recommendation 6, the views of both the public and the retail sector be sought through a consultation exercise to ascertain their support for any proposed action to be taken aimed at reducing the number of pigeons

within Stockton Town Centre in the first instance.

8. Via the suggested Retail Fora (e.g Stockton Town Centre Retail Forum; Town Centre Managers Newsletter, Chamber of Commerce Business Forum) the retail sector be advised of the available support offered by the Council's Pest Control Service regards measures that could be implemented to prevent harbourage of pigeons on their properties, including proofing measures, securing of property against roosting etc, and they be encouraged to identify any retail properties requiring prevention works, including derelict properties providing harbourage.

9. As an incentive to the retail sectors involvement in measures to reduce pigeon infestation, the Council's Environmental Health Manager gave consideration to initial concessions being offered to retailers on the cost of implementing proofing measures on their buildings, and issue appropriate advice regarding necessary measures to be carried out.

10. The Council's Land & Property Manager, in consultation with the Environmental Health Manager, be requested to consider appropriate action that could be taken to deter pigeon roosting on Council buildings; such as the suitability of proofing measures being added where appropriate.

11. As part of the consideration of the detailed design stage of proposed retail developments dialogue be entered into between developers, Planning and Environmental Health so as to seek to remove the potential for design features to encourage pigeon harbourage.

12. A Sub Group be established by the Urban Environment Task Group with responsibility to incorporate into its work programme consideration of the following measures and their cost; and that they form part of an agreed Action Plan to be built into future Service Improvement Planning to assist this Task & Finish Group's aim in achieving a reduction in pigeon numbers in Stockton Town Centre as part of an initial pilot exercise:-

- Use of Prohibitive Signs advising the public not to feed the pigeons/warning of enforcement action;
- Media campaign utilising all available advertising outlets, bus shelters, billboards, retail premises, sandwich bags etc, promoting the theme of encouraging the public not to feed the pigeons;
- Advice/Enforcement action towards retail sector regards storage of commercial food waste;
- Target collection of litter bins in the Town Centre to reduce build up of food waste likely to attract pigeon/vermin, and consider number and

sighting of bins to ensure that they are sited in appropriate locations (such as outside of fast food outlets) ;

- Involvement of Neighbourhood Enforcement Team in offering advice/enforcement to public regards dissuading them from feeding pigeons/dropping food waste;
- Engagement of the retail sector in all measures designed to improve the Town Centre environmental street scene;
- Enforcement action to be taken with regard to properties left derelict and prone to attract pigeon/vermin;
- Commissioning of a DVD, based on the example provided by Liverpool City Council, as a method of engagement to educate the public, schools, community groups etc regarding the aims of the Council's campaign to discourage the feeding of pigeons, and the DVD be promoted on the Castlegate Centre display screen; hosted as a download on the Council's website, and circulated to schools/community groups as appropriate;
- The proposed use of raptor methods, subject to the outcome of the proposed consultation, be approved and be funded from the campaign budget, as a measure towards pigeon control.

13. A campaign to reduce pigeon numbers be built into future Pest Control Service Improvement Planning and if appropriate any funding implications be built into the Medium Term Financial Plan process.

14. The Council's website content be reviewed to include the main themes of the campaign, which offered appropriate advice and requesting on line comment from the public regarding areas affected by pigeon infestation.

15. That the Council commit to a campaign to achieve a sustainable 50% reduction in pigeon numbers in Stockton Town Centre within three years.

16. The success of the campaign be monitored by the Sub Group established by the Urban Environment Task Group and results provided on an annual basis to the Environment Select Committee.

### 3. Reasons for the Decision

The review had been suggested by members in 2006 at a time when there appeared to be a visible number of rats prevalent in areas of the Borough, including around the vicinity of the Municipal Buildings/Central Library. The presence of high numbers of pigeons around the main Town Centres had also been noted; encouraged by available food sources. As a result, the Executive Scrutiny Committee had included the topic on its Scrutiny Work Programme. Subsequently in January 2008, the Environment Select Committee was requested to establish a small Task & Finish Group to carry out an appropriate scrutiny review and three

members of the Select Committee volunteered to undertake this work.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

None

6. Details of any Dispensations

Not Applicable

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

Not later than Midnight on Tuesday 29th July 2008

Proper Officer  
23 July 2008