

Environment Select Committee

A meeting of Environment Select Committee was held on Monday, 21st July, 2008.

Present: Cllr Mrs Maureen Rigg (Chairman), Cllr Maurice Frankland (Vice Councillor Cains), Cllr Colin Leckonby, Cllr Roy Rix, Cllr Michael Smith, Cllr Mick Stoker, Cllr Mick Womphrey, Cllr Bill Woodhead

Officers: S Daniels, R Bradley and Mrs J Robins (DNS), Mrs D Hurwood (R), Mrs T Harrison, N Hart and R MacGregor (LD)

Also in attendance: None

Apologies: Cllr Dick Cains and Cllr Andrew Larkin

1 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

2 Draft Minutes of the meeting held on 23rd June 2008

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd June 2008.

CONCLUDED that the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd June 2008 be approved and forwarded to Council for consideration.

3 Future Development of Cemeteries Review and Management of Memorials Review Progress Report

Members were provided with a progress report on the Future Development of Cemeteries Review and Management of Memorials Review.

Phase 1 - Ten of the recommendation had been fully completed and only 3 had slipped. The reasons for slippage were as follows:

Recommendation 2 had slipped due to lack of staff. A revised target date of December 2008 was agreed.

Recommendation 8 would be picked up in the Autumn during the appropriate season.

Recommendation 13 was due to issues relating to storage of equipment

The Head of Performance and Business Services reported that Blackpool Borough Council had been successful in restoring a chapel of which one half had been converted into a florist and a cafe. Officers were arranging a site visit to investigate the success of the change of use of the chapel and discover the source of the funding.

Members felt there were more suitable places to store equipment, however it was observed that the time it would take to transport the equipment to the site every time it was required was not effective in relation to time or money. The equipment also needed to be securely locked up when not in use. Discussion was held on using large storage containers, however these were not considered to be aesthetically pleasing.

Members were pleased to learn that the recommendation to make registration

of births and deaths available within the University Hospital of North Tees had been a success.

Members were advised that the audit of space available in un-purchased graves had been completed and a feasibility study had been completed in relation to the provision of a crematorium. However the Head of Performance and Business Services recommended that a separate meeting be organised to discuss these items to enable a thorough discussion.

Phase 2 - Members were advised that there had been no slippage in phase two.

Members were advised that a pilot scheme dealing with encouraging the replacement of toys and items left on gravesides with soft plantings would be taking place once an appropriate area had been chosen.

An enforcement officer was being recruited to 'police' the removal of inappropriate items.

Clarification was given regarding the policy of dogs being brought into Cemeteries.

The Head of Performance & Business Services also reported that future progress reports would combine the recommendations across the two reviews, establishing the linkages.

CONCLUDED that the report be noted.

4 Waste Management Review - Progress Report

Members were provided with a progress report on the Waste Management review.

A query was raised regarding observation that the phasing out of skips was not included in the recommendations, however Members were advised that the recommendations had been agreed previously by Members and approved to be forwarded on to Cabinet.

CONCLUDED that the report be noted.

5 Scrutiny Review of Customer First

Comparisons had been sought from other authorities; three examples were provided (Devon, Mid-Bedfordshire and Kirklees); however none appeared to have a better customer service programme.

The Committee also received evidence in relation to residents' views on our customer service standards and experiences of customer service at Stockton Council from consultation undertaken in reception areas of Council buildings throughout the borough.

Members were advised if Stockton Borough Council were to adopt the Cabinet Office's Customer Service Excellence Standard the Council could tick a lot of

the boxes. Customer First however, had several local standards which were not obvious in Customer Excellence so if the scheme was adopted Section 5 of Customer First Stage 2 programme relating to Service Equality would need to be reviewed and developed where necessary and included as an additional section above and beyond the Customer Service Excellence Standard.

The Scrutiny Officer presented Members with draft recommendations compiled from Members' requests.

Members thanked Daniel Ladd (Scrutiny Officer) for the work done; Daniel had left for another job. Members welcomed the new Scrutiny Officer.

CONCLUDED that:

1. The report be noted.
2. The draft recommendations were agreed and would be included in the initial draft report.

6 Work Programme

Members discussed list of future scrutiny topics.

The Chair expressed concern should Environment Select Committee be given the topic of Area Partnerships as she was Chair of an Area Partnership Board and would therefore not be comfortable Chairing a review that scrutinised the Partnership Boards. If Executive Scrutiny required the Environment Select Committee to review Area Partnership Boards, Members agreed to carry out the review with a few of the Committee Membership as a Task and Finish group. This would enable the Select Committee to undertake another review in conjunction with the review of the Area Partnership Boards.

Members expressed preference to review dog fouling but if the item was not chosen by Executive Scrutiny then Environment Select Committee wished the next review to be the storage of nuclear waste.

CONCLUDED that Environment Select Committee would request to review storage of nuclear waste in the next batch of reviews.