

Environment Select Committee

A meeting of Environment Select Committee was held on Monday, 5th October, 2009.

Present: Cllr Mrs Maureen Rigg (Chair), Cllr John Gardner, Cllr Michael Smith, Cllr Mick Womphrey, Cllr Bill Woodhead

Officers: M Chicken (DNS); G Birtle and Mrs T Harrison (LD)

Also in attendance: No other person's were present

Apologies: Cllr Dick Cains, Cllr Andrew Larkin, Cllr Roy Rix and Cllr Mick Stoker.

1 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

2 Minutes of the meeting held on 24th August 2009

Consideration was given to the draft minutes of the meeting held on 24th August 2009.

CONCLUDED that the minutes of the meeting held on 24th August 2009 be approved and forwarded to Council for consideration.

3 Minutes of the meetings held on 19th January 2009, 11th February 2009, 9th March 2009, 1st June 2009, 29th June 2009, 13th July 2009 and 3rd August 2009 to be signed by the Chair.

The minutes of the meetings held on 19th January, 11th February, 9th March, 1st June, 29th June, 13th July and 3rd August 2009 were signed by the Chair as a true record.

4 Review of Carbon Management

Members considered the final draft conclusions and recommendations relating to the review of Carbon Management.

CONCLUDED that further to a minor amendment the draft final report will go to Cabinet for consideration.

5 Progress Update on Previously Agreed Recommendations

The Committee was provided with reports monitoring progress made towards the implementation of recommendations agreed at the outcome of the following scrutiny reviews:-

Rats and Pigeons

It was observed that that Committee had never seen an action plan which experienced such a hold up simply due to lack of funding bid opportunities.

The Committee requested that a letter be sent to the Cabinet Member and the

Corporate Director for Environment to emphasise the importance of securing funding to tackle rats and pigeons.

Members also requested that the Regeneration Project Manager who liaised with the company that ran Billingham Town Centre be contacted and a letter be sent to the company. The letter would advise that the Environment Select Committee had investigated the possibility of using birds of prey to eliminate pigeons in High Streets around the Borough but had dismissed the option. The Committee were very concerned to therefore learn from an article in the Evening Gazette that a hawk was being used in Billingham Town Centre. Members requested that the letter stated their unhappiness at the lack of courtesy provided to the Principal Environmental Health Officer and Members of the Committee by the company who ran Billingham Town Centre. There was an expectation that the Principal Officer would be included in future discussions and the Committee be informed.

Members discussed enforcement in relation to litter; however feedback had not been received regarding enforcement.

Members were advised that The Chair and Vice Chair of the Environment Select Committee would be holding a meeting with the Cabinet member and Corporate Director responsible for Environment in December 2009 at which point they would discuss the issue of enforcement as well as other issues.

The Scrutiny Officer informed the Committee that it no longer needed to monitor items that could not be achieved. However, the Chair requested that the Rats and Pigeon item be kept on past the next budget review in the hope that budget could be secured to tackle the problem and then it could be reviewed in a few years.

Waste Management

Members noted the monitoring review of waste management and noted that the Public still had concerns regarding the prospect of weekly bin collection. It was observed that fortnightly bin collections would be a significant budget saving method which might be required of local authorities in the present economic climate; however it was not favoured by the public.

CONCLUDED that:

1. The monitoring reports be noted.
2. A letter will be sent to the company which runs Billingham Town Centre expressing the Select Committees unhappiness at the lack of courtesy provided by them to the Environmental Health Manager and the Select Committee by not informing on the bird of prey being used in Billingham Town Centre. A request would be given that the Environmental Health Officer be included in all future decisions relating to environmental health in Billingham Town Centre.
3. The overview meeting to be arranged in December will include discussion of the rats and pigeons and enforcement issues raised at this meeting.

6 Work Programme

The Chair advised Members that topics for review and the methods used in reviews were being considered by senior management. It was hoped that feedback and a topic for review would be provided by the next meeting.

CONCLUDED that the Committee await the outcome of the review of Scrutiny topics and methodology.

7 Chair's Update

The Chair advised that the RSPCA had presented the Animal Welfare Team of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council with an award.

In response to the award the Chair advised that she had sent an email thanking and acknowledging the team for the work that they undertook.

Members agreed that the Animal Welfare Team were a very good team.

CONCLUDED that the update be noted.