

Environment Select Committee

A meeting of Environment Select Committee was held on Monday, 9th August, 2010.

Present: Cllr Michael Smith (Acting Chair), Cllr Dick Cains, Cllr Mrs Suzanne Fletcher (Vice Councillor Mrs Rigg); Cllr John Gardner, Cllr Roy Rix, Cllr Mick Womphrey, Cllr Bill Woodhead

Officers: Mrs J King (R); M Chicken, B Trewick (DNS); G Birtle, Mrs T Harrison (LD)

Also in attendance: J Stockill (UNISON)

Apologies: Cllr Mrs M Rigg

1 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

2 Minutes of the Meeting held on 29th March 2010-For Signature

CONCLUDED that the minutes of the meeting held on 29th March 2010 were signed by the Chair.

3 Minutes of the Meeting held on 28th June 2010-For Approval

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 9th August 2010.

Members requested a report be presented to the Committee regarding the need for a crematorium which featured in Local Development Framework Steering Group Papers, yet there was still no crematorium.

CONCLUDED that:

1. The minutes of the meeting held on 9th August 2010 be agreed as a correct record and be forwarded to Council.
2. A report be presented to Committee providing details of the proposals for a crematorium in Stockton-on-Tees.

4 EIT Review of Built and Natural Environment

Review of School Crossing Patrol Service

Officers advised that in 2007, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council instigated a review of the School Crossing Patrol service (SCP), stage 1 of the review aligned both payment and duties of the SCP. Stage 2 was to disestablish sites that no longer fulfilled criteria or had been replaced with light controlled crossings.

Members were presented with a number of options to provide alternative arrangements for Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council to meet its responsibility for the School Crossing Patrol which cost £350,000 per annum. The Committee requested more information to assist its selection of options

Clarification was given on the various types of crossings and their costs.

Members queried whether the criteria for School Crossing Patrol's in other authorities would be investigated but were advised that the criteria was national.

The Committee asked whether changes to the School Crossing Patrol would impact on school travel plans.

National study on Re-offending by speeding motorists

Members were advised that punishment alone had a limited affect on speeding motorist. The need for education was required to play a more effective role in altering offenders' habits.

Officers advised that gathered evidence proved that driver training worked.

Members were advised that offenders were given the choice to pay £90 to undertake the training and upon successful completion of the course, the offender would receive no points on their licence; or the offender would pay £60 and receive 3 points on their licence.

Officers advised that the future of the funding for the driver training was unclear due to the fact that the Government may withdraw the road safety grant which funded the camera enforcement unit. Members suggested that they could lobby the Government and explain the impact of the removal of safety cameras on the driver training scheme.

Members suggested that increasing the cost of the training course could be a greater incentive to the offender to not repeat the offence and could help fund the costs of the course.

Members suggested that speed limits should be lowered to 20 miles per hour in areas around schools and where older people live.

Potential fuel savings for Stockton-on-Tees Borough council fleet

Members were advised that an in-house Eco Driver training course had been introduced to improve both safety and economy for Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council driving staff. The principle benefits of the course were to reduce running costs, wear and tear on the vehicles, driver stress, road risk to driver and public, emissions of greenhouse gases, improve air quality and lower noise levels.

The savings to the Council would be significant even when the cost of the training had been factored into the equation.

It was observed that some vehicles in the fleet such as refuse lorries would not see improvements in fuel reduction.

Members requested details of Council vehicles in each department, the amount of fuel consumed and when available, analysis of a year.

Discussion took place regarding penalising drivers who received training but did not drive in a cost effective and safe way. It was advised that this would not be appropriate.

Opportunity of Motorcycle Training within colleges

Members were advised that the Compulsory Basic Training certificate allowed 16 year olds to ride up to 50cc machines on the road with "L" plates and 17 year old upwards, to ride on the road with "L" plates on a machine up to 125cc. The CBT certificate was valid for two years and was required to be re-taken if both the practical and theory test was not successfully completed within that period.

Discussion took place regarding the cost of the course and whether there were opportunities to link with other authorities for motorcycle training and fuel savings. Stockton Council was the lead authority in the Tees Valley for providing motorcycle training but it could be extended to other neighbouring authorities.

CONCLUDED that:

1. The reports be noted.
2. Further information will be provided regarding the options for the School Crossing Patrol Service.
3. Members could lobby the Government and explain the impact of the removal of speed cameras on the driver training schemes.
4. Details on the amount of Council vehicles in each department and the amount of fuel consumed.

5 Chair's Update

There was no Chairs update due to the Chairs absence.

6 Work Programme

Members requested that the panel which had been set up for the Rats and Pigeons review be reconvened as it appeared that nothing further had been done to tackle the issue of rats and pigeons.

The Scrutiny Officer advised that he would consult with Democratic Services to organise a meeting for the panel.

Members were advised that the next Environment Select Committee meeting was scheduled for 4th October 2010. A progress report on Carbon Management would be presented to Members.

CONCLUDED that:

1. The Work Programme be noted.

2. The Scrutiny Officer will consult with Democratic Services to organise a meeting for the panel to discuss the lack of progress in relation to the Cabinet approved recommendations for rats and pigeons.