

Environment Select Committee

A meeting of Environment Select Committee was held on Monday, 12th May, 2014.

Present: Cllr Nigel Cooke(Chairman), Cllr David Wilburn(Vice-Chairman), Cllr Derrick Brown, Cllr Ray McCall, Cllr Mrs Maureen Rigg, Cllr Steve Walmsley, Cllr Mick Womphrey, Cllr Bill Woodhead

Officers: Graham Birtle, Jenna McDonald(LDS) Craig Willows(CFYA) Barry Jackson(DNS)

Also in attendance:

Apologies: Cllr Jean Kirby

ENV 50/13 **Evacuation Plan**

The evacuation procedure was noted.

ENV 51/13 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

ENV 52/13 **Draft minutes - 6th December 2013 & 27th January 2014**

Consideration was given to the draft minutes of the meetings held on 16th December 2013 & 27th January 2014.

AGREED that the minutes be approved.

ENV 53/13 **Review of Tree Preservation Orders**

The Development Services Manager from Development and Neighbourhood Services and The Service Manager of Care For Your Area (CFYA) attended the meeting to give the Committee an update on the Review of Tree Preservation Orders (TPO).

Members heard that there was a health check for trees in place, however it was highlighted that officers would have liked for the tree health check to have been more detailed. The Committee was informed that the guidance for TPO's had been updated in March 2014. The Committee was informed that the Council could have initiated the process themselves or a request could have been made from another party.

Members heard that there had been an increase in the number of applications for works to protected trees due to concern over the effect of weather changes and the stability of trees and more generally their location.

It was highlighted that it was extremely important to protect all trees of different kinds and sizes. Officers informed Members that when a TPO was made it was publicised. The period of time it took to confirm a TPO was six months and if necessary and order could have been revoked.

The Committee heard that people often applied for works to be carried out on trees at their neighbour's properties due to the tree affecting their own property.

It was heard that Members had come across situations in their wards which had created a problem when housing had been built on land where trees stood. Members agreed that problems with trees often occurred when they caused loss of light, dominated buildings and also when roots interfered with foundations. The Committee discussed the demand from housing developers for land which often meant trees being taken down as a result of this.

Stockton Council's process for dealing with TPO's was considered robust but as the responsibility fell primarily on the Principal Tree and Woodland Officer the appropriate Head of Service could provide the final determination for TPO's.

AGREED that the Committee would finalise the review at its meeting on 23rd June 2014.

**ENV
54/13** **Work Programme**

Members were presented with a Work Programme which provided information of upcoming meetings through to March 2015.

It was heard that the next topic for the Committee was the Review of Country Park Maintenance.

Members heard that at future meetings, the work programme would take consideration for scrutiny review topics throughout the year.

**ENV
55/13** **Chair's Update**

The Chairman of the Committee informed Members that he was extremely pleased to have been awarded Scrutineer of the Year Award. The Chairman congratulated and thanked Members of the Committee for their hard work and contribution. The Chairman explained that he considered the award to be an award for the Committee as a whole.