

Environment Select Committee

Update to Executive Scrutiny Committee – 19 October 2010

Review of Built and Natural Environment Update on Progress (including issues/problems/successes)

The Committee has considered the following aspects so far:

Blue badges

Currently use GP's for lower threshold applications, use of physiotherapists maybe more appropriate?

Review of the three year renewal process to bring in greater challenge?

Could we charge for blue badges to park? Other Authorities do this.

The Committee will be investigating possible changes to the service as introduced in Sunderland following a RIEP initiative at its next meeting.

The Committee is also awaiting the initial findings of the Department of Transport's consultation regarding possible changes to the scheme.

Car Parking

Harmonisation of car parking charges.

Consider position relating to price increase/decrease/freeze

Enforcement of disabled bays at supermarkets to support income – use of off street parking orders.

Enforcement at school gates continues to be an issue and outstrip resources available.

The Committee also examined the possibility of introducing car park charges for disabled bays in Council run car parks as exists in privately run car parks in the borough.

Urban Design

The Community Participation Budget is £400K per year.

Housing related environmental improvements are carried out in isolation by housing services and don't link up with broader environmental works led by Technical Services.

The Committee will be taking a more detailed look at this service at the next meeting.

School Crossing Patrol Service

The service is operated in accordance with the adopted National Guidelines for the operation of School Crossing Patrols.

Currently 35 sites meet the numerical criteria and have no alternative crossing facility. 17 sites meet the numerical criteria but operate on light controlled or zebra crossings and 6 sites no longer meet the criteria but currently are served by a School Crossing Patrol

It is being suggested to close 13 sites (3 puffin, 4 pelican and 6 that do not meet criteria) in two phases. Schools currently served by the proposed disestablished sites would be offered additional education and training before the sites were closed to assist them in continuing to walk to school safely. This could deliver net savings of £45,500.

Driver Improvement Schemes

Eco Driver is an in-house training course aimed at improving both safety and economy for SBC's driving staff.

The current fleet fuel budget is approximate £1,000,000, a 15% fuel saving could generate a potential saving of £150,000 per annum (less the initial cost of the training the staff, £95 per person).

In the last three years 57% of motorcycle collisions involved motorcycles under 125cc in size. The training offered by the council run scheme offers high quality training which can take students from Compulsory Basic Training (CBT) to test, and to the advanced level training they would need to ride the more powerful motorbikes. The intention is to re-launch the scheme across the Tees Valley. Funding is currently drawn from Hartlepool, Middlesbrough and the Local Transport Plan budget. The other Tees Valley authorities are to be approached to support this wider initiative.

Road Safety Partnership

Grant funding remains under threat.

National Driver Offender Rehabilitation Scheme (NDORS) continues to grow and increase revenues that support the partnership.

New offences are being rolled out such as mobile phone, seatbelt and officer witness offences that will allow more courses (and more income) to be run.

Monitoring Updates

The Committee has received its first update for the review of carbon management in addition to continuing updates for the reviews of waste management and Customer First.