

Place Select Committee

A meeting of Place Select Committee was held on Monday, 15th January, 2018.

Present: Cllr Derrick Brown (Chair), Cllr Sonia Bailey (Vice-Chair), Cllr Chris Barlow, Cllr Maurice Perry, Cllr Evaline Cunningham, Cllr Mrs Sylvia Walmsley, Cllr Louise Baldock

Officers: Reuben Kench (CL&E); Jamie Stephenson (EG&D); Judy Trainer, Gary Woods, Annette Sotheby (DCE)

Also in attendance:

Apologies: Cllr Ken Dixon, Cllr Bill Woodhead MBE

PLA 53/17 Evacuation Procedure

The evacuation procedure was noted.

PLA 54/17 Declarations of Interest

Cllrs Brown, Walmsley, Bailey, Perry and Cunningham declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in Item 4, Scrutiny Review of Disabled Parking (Task & Finish), as family members were blue badge holders.

PLA 55/17 Scrutiny Review of Billingham Event Infrastructure

Consideration was given to the draft final report for the Scrutiny Review of Billingham Event Infrastructure.

The following points were noted:-

- The order of the recommendations had been changed for the purposes of clarity.
- The recommendation in relation to the potential for BIFF to reduce the frequency of the festival had been adjusted to reflect comments at the last Committee meeting (recommendation 7).

Members questions and comments could be summarised as follows:-

- The review recognised the value of the festival, providing useful information on requirements and solutions around site options, infrastructure, clarity of SBC contribution and capacity of organisation. This would hopefully assist BIFF in their long-term future planning of the festival.
- Discussion took place on the seven recommendations, with the following amendment:-

Recommendation 7:

‘There is limited scope to reduce the accommodation costs by reducing the scale or duration of the event in a single year due to CIOFF requirements. In principle, BIFF could consider the frequency of the event in order to reduce the annual burden of the infrastructure costs.’

AGREED:

That the final report be approved for submission to Cabinet, subject to the agreed amendment to recommendation 7.

**PLA
56/17**

Scrutiny Review of Disabled Parking (Task & Finish)

The Committee was provided with a draft scope and plan for the Scrutiny Review of Disabled Parking, focusing on abuse of the blue badge scheme and location and accessibility of disabled car parking.

Members were given an overview, the key points as follows:-

- Blue badge scheme car parking in car parks, off-street and on-street parking bays.
- DfT Guidance for number and size of disabled bays.
- Applying for a blue badge.
- Number of blue badge applications referred to Occupational Therapist:
2015/16 = 584 and 2016/17 = 569
- Number of cases referred to Welfare Rights:
2015/16 = 627 and 2016/17 = 1,211
- Number of badges declined:
2015/16 = 83 and 2016/17 = 68
- A penalty ticket is issued if vehicle seen parking in a disabled bay without a blue badge - £70 (reduced to £35 for payment within 14 days).
- Civic Enforcement Officers lawfully allowed to seize a badge used fraudulently. It is then returned to the local authority and a letter sent to the badge holder, following which it is usually returned to them.
- Number of fraudulent badge use offences:
2014/15 = 318 2015/16 = 355 2016/17 = 315
- Some other local authorities prosecute blue badge offenders, usually successfully.

Members comments and questions could be summarised as follows:-

- What were the implications and costs to the Council if they were to prosecute blue badge abusers? It was noted that advertising, enforcing the scheme, compiling evidence, Legal Department and Magistrates court costs would all need to be taken into account.
- Could any action be taken with private car parking where, for example, people with disabilities had received penalties when parking in a 'mother and child' bay when no disabled bays had been available? It was noted that the Council had no influence or power of enforcement on private land.
- Discussion took place around clarification of the aim of the review. Was it to discuss abuse of the blue badge scheme only, or also include the use and abuse of disabled parking spaces? When both were confirmed, Members then asked for the 'key lines of enquiry' to be reworded to reflect this.

Members noted that during the course of any review, although important to ascertain key lines of enquiry, others could occur.

AGREED:

- 1) That the scope's 'key lines of enquiry' be amended to include Use and Abuse of Disabled Parking Spaces.

- 2) That Members be contacted for their experience and that of residents in relation to this issue.
- 3) That the Disability Advisory Group be contacted for their feedback.
- 4) That a letter be sent to private car parks for their feedback.

PLA Work Programme 2017-2018

57/17

Next meeting to be held on 12th February 2018.

AGREED – that the work programme be noted.

PLA Chair's Update

58/17

The Chair had nothing further to report.