

Place Select Committee

A meeting of Place Select Committee was held on Monday, 11th December, 2017.

Present: Cllr Derrick Brown (Chairman), Cllr Sonia Bailey (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Chris Barlow, Cllr Maurice Perry, Cllr Evaline Cunningham, Cllr Bill Woodhead MBE, Cllr Sylvia Walmsley, Cllr Louise Baldock (sub for Cllr Paul Rowling)

Officers: Reuben Kench (CEL); Steven Hume (CS); Jane Salisbury, Gary Knight (EG&D); Gary Woods, Annette Sotheby (DCE)

Also in attendance: Cllr Jim Beall (Cabinet Member)

Apologies: Cllr Ken Dixon, Cllr Paul Rowling

PLA Evvacuation Plan

45/17

The evacuation procedure was noted.

PLA Declarations of Interest

46/17

Cllr Evaline Cunningham declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in Agenda Item 5 - Countryside Sites, as some were within Billingham Ward.

PLA Minutes of the Meeting held on 10th July 2017 - For Approvval/Signature

47/17

Consideration was given to the draft minutes of the meeting held on 10th July 2017.

AGREED that the minutes be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

PLA Minutes of the Meeting held on 11th September 2017 - For Approval/Signature

48/17

Consideration was given to the draft minutes of the meeting held on 11th September 2017.

AGREED that the minutes be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

PLA Monitoring the impact of previously agreed recommendations

49/17

Consideration was given to progress of the implementation of previously agreed recommendations. There were outstanding recommendations from the reviews of Flooding, Fire Safety of High Rise Residential Buildings, and Countryside Sites.

FLOODING

The Council's Flood Risk Management – Annual Report 2016/17 had been circulated to Members for information, and a progress update was given on the review of flooding, key points as follows:-

- Developing the expertise of operatives currently engaged in dealing with flood issues had not progressed due to limited resources, however this would be picked up in the New Year.
- Older style gullies (4,173) had now been identified for replacement and a further 6 sites would be considered in next year's programme.
- A new highways management system was currently being implemented to assist in future cleansing and maintenance programmes.

Members commented that site visits had been helpful in understanding the work that had been carried out.

Members asked where the old gullies were located and noted that they were spread around, but predominantly in the older areas of Thornaby and central Stockton.

One Member had received an enquiry from a resident regarding implications of the speed of water passing part of the beck close to his property after work had been carried out. It was noted that a community officer had recently attended a residents meeting and further details would be passed on for investigation.

FIRE SAFETY OF HIGH RISE RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS

A progress update was given on the review of Fire Safety of High Rise Residential Buildings, key points as follows:-

- Thirteen Group had reassessed all their high rise buildings, re-looking at fire risk assessments, door knocking, leaflet dropping, joint visits with the Fire Authority, completing surveys of fire alarms and escape lights. Tenants have been reminded to report any concerns they may have.
- The Leader had written to the Shadow Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and Stockton Council were in regular contact with this department since the Grenfell Tower fire.
- Minutes of a meeting on buildings and fire safety led by members of the Hackitt Review Team were highlighted and feedback would be given at a later date.
- Outcome awaited from Thirteen Group's commissioned independent enquiry around the presence of Class 3 combustible cladding at Kennedy Gardens – details to be forwarded when received.
- Thirteen Group are in the process of carrying out a feasibility study to determine which buildings will be fitted with sprinkler systems – details to be forwarded when received.
- Letters had been sent to all privately owned, high rise properties to ensure compliance with fire regulations.
- Outcome awaited from the Government's public inquiry into the Grenfell Tower fire – when complete, a review would be undertaken and recommendations shared with those responsible for high rise residential buildings.

Members comments and questions could be summarised as follows:

- Following a Member visit to North Shore where Members asked questions on the Thornaby (Anson House) tragedy, the Chair asked that the report findings be forwarded to Members.

- What advice had been given to residents if a building caught fire – stay in the building or attempt escape? It was noted that this would depend on the circumstances, however advice could be given by the Fire Brigade such as closing all doors. Further details could be made available to Members.
- The quick response from the Fire Brigade during a recent fire in Melsonby Court had enabled the fire to be contained in one flat – Members felt this was very encouraging for residents. It was queried if Thirteen Group produce an internal report following such incidents, in order to reflect on how this was handled, particularly around how residents were alerted.
- Were inspections carried out to monitor the type of fridge freezers residents had? It was noted that information regarding this would be sought from the Fire Brigade.

COUNTRYSIDE SITES

The progress update on Countryside Sites was highlighted – most of the outstanding actions remain on-track, though some actions that had slipped previously have yet to be resolved. These include the preparation of an overall strategic plan and updated site management plans for countryside sites (plan being drafted), and the exploration of opportunities for external partners to carry out management functions and associated services.

The Chair commented on the excellent role of the voluntary sector which had previously been noted on site visits, and asked if information could be provided as to whether this had improved or deteriorated.

AGREED that:

- 1) The Progress Updates be noted and the assessments for progress be confirmed.
- 2) Information from Thirteen Group in relation to developments around the Anson House (Thornaby) fire be provided to Members.

PLA 50/17 Scrutiny Review of Billingham Event Infrastructure / Billingham International Folklore Festival (BIFF)

Officers highlighted a summary of evidence received in relation to this review and Committee considered possible draft recommendations.

The following points were noted:-

- The requirement for site management (highlighted by the Health & Safety Manager) which was a legal requirement for a construction site erecting temporary structures. Restrictions and legislation were slightly different for fixed buildings. If the event takes place on council land we have a duty of care for the site to be overseen by suitably qualified personnel in order for it to be managed safely.
- The infrastructure costs for various cabins or marquees were estimated to be between £75k and £100k. One further option had been discounted as the cost was nearer £200k.
- BIFF receive 60k per annum, however an extra £25k had been requested at short notice from SBC this year, requiring an urgent decision by Cabinet. There was now a requirement for BIFF to build on existing and identify new

funding streams for future festivals.

- There would be a reduction in transport costs if the two favoured accommodation sites of John Whitehead Park or Sidlaw Road proved suitable/practicable.
- SBC continue to support BIFF and were keen to ensure its viability, however recommendations of the Committee were around infrastructure rather than how they were going to address the funding challenges of those infrastructure needs.

Members questions and comments could be summarised as follows:-

- The amount of festival funding given by Billingham Town Council (£1,500) was felt to be limited given the cultural, social and economic value to the town.
- Discussion took place around potential cost savings if the festival was held every two years, or over one week rather than two weeks. It was noted that there was no realistic prospect of significantly reducing costs as, to comply with CIOFF terms, timescales have to include sufficient rehearsal time for performers.
- Widening the geographical location of the festival to include Wynyard, Wolviston or Norton would still enable easy access to Billingham.
- Had the possibility of local people accommodating performers in their homes been considered, possibly receiving a small amount of money for this purpose? It was noted that this could not be funded by Stockton Council.
- An amendment to Recommendation (d) was suggested as follows:-
“As an advocate of BIFF, and in recognising the benefits it provides for the town of Billingham, Billingham Town Council may want to consider enhancing its role and financial contribution in supporting the festival’s future sustainability”.

The final report would be considered by the Committee in January 2018 and submitted to Cabinet in February 2018.

AGREED that the information be noted and the draft recommendations be included in the final report.

PLA 51/17 Work Programme 2017-2018

AGREED – That the work programme be noted.

PLA 52/17 Chair's Update

The Chair thanked the Committee and had nothing further to report.