

**PUBLIC PROTECTION FORUM**

13th July, 2006

**PRESENT -**

**Representing the Council** – Councillor Harker (in the Chair); Councillors Holmes, Mrs. D.M. Jones and Lawton.

**Representing Outside Organisations –**

**Darlington Association on Disability –**

Mr. G. Pybus.

**Darlington Association of Parish Councils –**

Councillor B. Jones.

**Darlington Residents Panel –**

Mr. M. Nicholson.

**Independent Member –**

Mr. K. Fridd.

**Patients Council –**

Mr. M. Smith.

**Patients and Carers Council –**

Mrs. M. Springett.

**Officers Attending** – The Assistant Director - Public Protection, the Environmental Health Manager and the Trading Standards Manager within the Development and Environment Department.

**Apologies** – The Mayor; Councillors Hartley, Ruck and Vasey, Parish Councillors Welch and York, L. Bedocs, Heighington Village Hall, Mrs. A. Eynon, Durham County Federation of Women's Institute, Mr. S. Donnelly, Durham County Fire and rescue Service, Mr. B. Bell, Red Hall Partnership and Insp. B. Maudling, Durham Constabulary.

**1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** – There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

**2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR – IT WAS AGREED** – That councillor B. Jones be appointed Vice-Chair of this Forum for the Municipal Year 2006/07.

**3. MINUTES** – Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of the Public Protection Forum held on 6th April, 2006.

**IT WAS AGREED** – That the Minutes be approved as a correct record.

**4. MATTERS ARISING** – The Chair reported that Mr. L. Bedocs, Heighington Village Hall had reported that a member of the Street Scene Team attended the meeting of the Heighington Parish Litter Group in May and gave a very informative briefing on the plans and activities of Street Scene. Mr. Bedocs recommended this form of contact be made with other Local or Parish Groups.

**5. PLANNING FOR BUSINESS CONTINUITY** – The Director of Development and Environment submitted a report (previously circulated) outlining the relevance of business continuity planning (BCP), the Council's role and duty with respect to BCP and the advice and support available to businesses.

The submitted report stated that a BCP, which is regarded as good practice and highlighted within the Civic Contingencies Act 2004 (CCA), was a plan for the recovery of a business from an interruption such as loss of a building, loss of power, IT, staff, or key supplier. Without a plan some businesses may never recover. One of the duties of a local authority in relation to BCP's is to promote them to local businesses and organisations.

It was also advised that in the Durham region several working groups have been established under the guidance of the Durham and Darlington Civil Contingencies Unit and one of the working groups deals specifically with BCP's. In order to assist small and medium sized businesses the working group has produced a guidance booklet (circulated at the meeting) on developing BCP's.

Business continuity planning is relevant not only to businesses (large and small) but also to voluntary and community organisations. An effective BCP will ensure a swift recovery from business interruption, which could otherwise cause the organisation to collapse. The advice available from local authorities and nationally will assist organisations to develop and maintain effective BCPs.

The Assistant Director – Public Protection also advised that it was intended to run workshops six monthly and enlist specialist companies to train and develop businesses in development their BCP's.

Discussion ensued on financial implications on small businesses, development of BCP's being done in-house and continually being evolved and reduction of insurance premiums if a BCP is in place.

**IT WAS AGREED** – That the report be received.

**6. FOOD SAFETY PROMOTION FOR DARLINGTON RESIDENTS – DARLINGTON BARBECUE SAFETY CAMPAIGN** – The Director of Development and Environment submitted a report (previously circulated) on the Food Safety Campaign recently undertaken by the Public Protection Division as part of National Food Safety Week held from 11th to 17th June, 2006.

The submitted report stated that this was the fourteenth consecutive year Darlington Borough Council had participated in National Food Safety Week, a National Campaign, co-ordinated by Food and Drink Federation and Chartered Institute of Environmental Health with this year's theme being 'The Four C's – cleanliness, cooking, chilling and cross-contamination'. As barbecued food carries risks encompassing the four c's it was considered appropriate to use this as the campaign vehicle.

Details were supplied of the campaign which involved a barbecue in Bondgate on 16th June, 2006 at which shoppers were advised on the storage, preparation and cooking of barbecue food and also enjoyed a freshly cooked taster prepared by the Catering Department of Darlington College of Technology and donated by local butchers. The event was hugely advertised in the local 'free papers' and radio stations and local businesses and the Darlington College of Technology are keen to participate in future events.

The Environmental Health Manager reported that this was an annual campaign and there had never been a major summer food poisoning outbreak in Darlington for many years. Food safety leaflets were also circulated at the meeting.

**IT WAS AGREED** – (a) That the report be received.

(b) That future Food Safety Campaigns be supported.

**7. DOORSTEP CRIME ACTION PACKS** – The Director of Development and Environment submitted a report (previously circulated) which outlined the progress being made on the development of a Doorstep Crime Action Pack (DCAP) (circulated at the meeting).

The submitted report stated that, following an initiative by the Consumer Support Network, a DCAP had been developed in conjunction with Neighbourhood Watch and Community Police Officers, in order to give clear and practical advice to enable residents to deal with unwanted doorstep callers. The DCAP's were launched on 19th and 20th June, 2006 within the Cornmill Shopping Centre and were also available from Trading Standards, Citizens Advice Bureau, 50plus Age Concern and Darlington Crown Street Library.

Discussion ensued on the circulation of the pack to all interested groups, availability of the pack at the Library, Town Hall Reception and Citizens Advice Bureau also advertising in the Town Crier.

**IT WAS AGREED** – That the contents of the Doorstep Crime Action Pack be noted.

**8. THE ROLE OF THE PUBLIC EVENTS SAFETY ADVISORY GROUP** – The Director of Development and Environment submitted a report (previously circulated) on the establishment of the Public Events Safety Advisory Group (PESAG) and its Terms of Reference

The submitted report highlighted that the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) highlighted that the Police have no authority to approve or ban public events and that the legal responsibility for public safety at organised events, staged in a public place and on all public highways, rested with event organisers, owners of the land and possibly the Local Authority if the event was on a road. The role of Multi Agency Safety Advisory Groups was recognised by the District Surveyors Association and they recommended that the same or similar groups should consider public events.

There are currently two Safety Advisory Groups working in Darlington and the Terms of Reference for the group, which focused on public events, were highlighted in the submitted report. The membership of the PESAG, which was accountable to the Director of Development and Environment and chaired by the Council's Environmental Health Manager, comprised senior officers from all emergency services and Council Services working in the Borough of Darlington. Other persons who could make valid contributions were also invited to discussions if it was deemed necessary.

The submitted report also outlined the PESAG's main objectives, the variety of events considered, the process involved in applying to hold an event and key issues that had been identified for events during 2006.

The Environmental Health Manager gave a demonstration of the information that was available on the Council's website which included an Application Form, Guidance Information on the holding of a event, Safety Checklists and Risk Assessment Forms.

Discussion ensued on the definition of an event being 'an event where the public come together', the introduction of a Park and Ride Scheme for the Great North Walk as the area was unable to cope with the amount of car parking required, the impact of the PESAG on small village fetes, the discontinuation of informal road closures during events as this was illegal, cost implications for the closure of street and roads which could have a disastrous effect on small village fetes and community events, assistance being given to organisers in the development of their plan, problems associated with large funerals which have an impact on traffic within the Town, possible financial aid for smaller communities to assist in organising events and the production of an Events Strategy which encompassed many community events.

It was hoped to make contact with all relevant community groups to ensure the message is spread and feedback on the forms and their usefulness was sought.

**IT WAS AGREED** – That the report be noted.

**9. QUESTIONS** – There were no questions.