

**PUBLIC PROTECTION FORUM**

7th October, 2004

**PRESENT -**

**Representing the Council** – Councillor McEwan (in the Chair); Councillors Foster, Holmes, Mrs. Jones, Lawton and J.C. Vasey.

**Representing Outside Organisations –**

**Carers' Forum** –  
Mrs. M. Springett.

**Darlington Association on Disability** –  
Mr. G. Pybus.

**Darlington and District Townswomen's Guilds** –  
Mrs. A. Turnock.

**Darlington Association of Parish Councils** –  
Councillor B. Jones.

**Darlington Independent Taxi Traders Organisation** –  
Mr. N. Nevison.

**Darlington and District Youth and Community Association** –  
Mr. G. North.

**Darlington Taxi Owners' Association** –  
Mr. A. Leighton.

**Patients Council** –  
Mr. M. Smith.

**Red Hall Partnership (RHP)** –  
Mr. B. Bell

**The Speedwell** –  
Mrs. E.A. Batty

**Officers Attending** – The Commercial and Licensing Manager, the Environment and Sustainability Manager and a Policy Officer – Transport Section within the Department of Development and Environment.

**APOLOGIES** – Councillor Thistlethwaite, Parish Councillor N. Welch, Archdeacon Newton Parish Council, Mr. Bedocs, Heighington Village Hall Association, Mr. K. Richards, Darlington Council for Voluntary Service, Mr. S. York, Middleton St.

George Parish Council and Mrs. Eynon, Durham County Federation of Womens' Institute.

**1. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR – IT WAS AGREED** – That Councillor B. Jones be appointed Vice-Chair of this Forum for the Municipal Year 2004/05.

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

**3. UPGRADE TO CIVIC AMENITY SITE** – The Environment and Sustainability Manager gave a video presentation to Members on the upgrade of the Civic Amenity Site which was to be undertaken during March/April 2005 following the award from DEFRA of £730,000. He stated that the existing site was designed for 11,000 tonnes of waste however it was currently taking 18,000 tonnes which was equivalent to one third of household waste. Once complete the upgraded site would be twice as large as the existing one with 20 larger skips being provided for individual waste and easily accessed by level-access gantries. The roadways were to be widened within the site and a 'Recycling Garden' was to be provided with various recycling skips being made available to encourage maximum recycling within the Borough

Members were also informed that electricity and water were to be supplied to the site which would give the option of negotiating with the operators to encourage longer operating hours.

It was also stated that during the upgrading works a publicity campaign is to be undertaken to increase public awareness of the closure of the site and the bulky waste collection service is to be increased. Once the new Civic Amenity Site is up and running it should be able to handle 50 per cent of household waste.

Discussion ensued upon the disposal of tyres which are recyclable and therefore cannot be landfilled but are generally classed as trade waste and disposed of as such; and the level of the skips which were to have a one metre height barrier.

**IT WAS AGREED** – That the thanks of this Forum be extended to the Development and Sustainability Manger for his informative presentation.

**4. DRAFT LICENSING POLICY** – The Director of Development and Environment submitted a report (previously circulated) which identified the preparations the Council are making towards the publication of a Licensing Policy which this Council, as Licensing Authority, has to produce by 7th January, 2005.

It was stated that a draft Licensing Policy (also previously circulated) had been approved for consultation and it was hoped that members of this Forum would forward any comments by 30th November, 2004. The Commercial and Licensing Manager advised that comments could be made via the Council's website, letter or on the form provided.

Details were given of the four statutory objectives that included the prevention of crime and disorder, public safety, prevention of public nuisance and protection of children from harm and that this Council will be a Licensing Authority responsible for administering the proposed licensing system for 468 premises licenses and more than 600 personal licenses to be administered and enforced. The Department of Media, Culture and Sport had a proposed timetable for implementation of 7th January, 2005 – Licensing Authority to publish Licensing Policy Statement, 7th February, 2005 – First appointed day the date by which Licensing

Authorities can begin processing applications for conversions to premises licences, club licences, club premises certificates, simultaneous variations and new licenses/certificates and fast track applications for personal licences, November 2005 – Second appointment day – the new Licensing regime begins.

Discussion ensued on the bodies/organisations that had been consulted; whether the duties of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 were covered in the Policy; the effect of longer opening hours for public houses on anti-social behaviour; and the publication of the Policy one month prior to 7th February making it impossible to bring its publication forward.

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

(b) That the comments of this Forum be noted.

**5. CLIMATE CHANGE** – The Director of Development and Environment submitted a report (previously circulated) detailing the relevance of climate change and climate change strategies to local authorities and local communities and sought the views of Members on developing a climate change strategy for Darlington.

The submitted report stated that global temperatures had risen by approximately 0.06° C since the beginning of the Twentieth Century which had resulted in warmer coastal waters, fewer frosts, wetter winters, longer thermal growing season for plants and a rise in average sea level by approximately 10cm since the beginning of the twentieth century. Climate changes can occur due to the influence of human activities through ‘global warming’ and also by natural factors such as the earth’s orbit of the sun. The Government Energy White Paper was published in February 2003 and identified local authorities as being pivotal to delivering the step change needed to reach the long-term target of 60 per cent CO2 reduction by 2050 and details were supplied of what would be involved in developing a Climate Change Strategy.

Any Member who had an interest in being of developing the Climate Change Strategy was encouraged to contact Bill Westland, the Environment and Sustainability Manager.

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

**6. FOOD SAFETY PLAN 2004/05** – The Director of Development and Environment submitted a report (previously circulated) detailing the contents of the Food Safety Plan (also previously circulated), a requirement of the Foods Standards Agency, which was produced on a yearly basis and was an important document for the Council as a Food Authority.

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

**7. TRADING STANDARDS SERVICE DELIVERY PLAN 2004/05** – The Director of Development and Environment submitted a report (previously circulated) detailing the contents of the Trading Standards Service Delivery Plan 2004/05 (also previously circulated) which was required to be produced on a yearly basis.

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

**8. BEST VALUE REVIEW OF REGULATORY SERVICES** – The Director of Development and Environment submitted a report (previously circulated) to present the final report of the Best Value Review of Regulatory Services.

The final report summarised the findings and conclusions from Stages 1 and 2 of the review and presented an Improvement Plan, which is expected to bring about a step improvement in services over a five-year period following completion of the Review.

A Member asked for clarification as to who could be represented on the Local Business Partnership.

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

**9. PUBLIC PROTECTION SERVICE PLAN** - The Director of Development and Environment submitted a report (previously circulated) outlining the Public Protection Division Service Plan and its priorities for action during the year 2004/05. The key objectives of the Service Plan is to ensure that the activities carried out by the Public Protection Division complement the aims and objectives set out in the development Environment Departmental Plan, the Council's combined Corporate and Best Value Performance Plans (Striving for Excellence) and the Community Strategy. It was also stated that staff would be informed how they could contribute to achieve targets and objectives through Appraisals carried out as part of Personal Development Reviews and that the monitoring of the Plan would be on a continuous basis via 'Performance Plus', the Council's new IT Performance Management System.

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

**10. CYCLING IN THE PEDESTRIAN HEART** - Gordon Pybus, Chair, Darlington Association on Disability (DAD) and Access Interest Group submitted a report (previously circulated) seeking the support of the Forum to prevent cycling being allowed in the Pedestrian Heart and emphasised the need for a solution specific to Darlington and not one based on generic Government accident statistics.

In response the Director of Development and Environment submitted a report (previously circulated) reassuring members of the Forum that the Council's proposal to allow cycling within the pedestrian heart was based on a balanced assessment of the requirements of all members of the community and took into consideration issues in respect of safety, convenience, environmental impacts and evidence gathered through public consultation.

Discussion ensued on the amount of people using cycle lanes; a request for Darlington Borough Council to conduct its own survey on the amount of cycling within the Town Centre and to seek the views of the public; the Pedestrian Heart was not the place for cyclists; cyclists needed to be educated on how to cycle in the vicinity of pedestrians; banning of reckless riders from the Pedestrian Heart; and a possible trial period of allowing cyclists in the Heart.

The need for clarity of the cycling and pedestrianised areas through the detailed design stage of the pedestrian heart, and the ability to monitor and revisit the issue of cycling in the pedestrian heart through a trial period was suggested.

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

**11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS** – A members requested information on Nuisance Calls and bogus e-mails and asked if Trading Standards had any way of dealing with such matters.

The Chair advised that a report would be submitted to the next meeting of this Forum and that the relevant Officer would also be invited to attend.

