

PUBLIC PROTECTION FORUM

11th October, 2007

PRESENT -

Representing the Council – Councillor Copeland (in the Chair); Councillors Hartley and Mrs. Jones. (3)

Representing Outside Organisations –

Darlington Association on Disability –

Mr. G. Pybus.

Darlington Association of Parish Councils –

Councillor B. Jones.

Darlington Branch of the Alzheimers Disease Society –

Mr. J.P. Rodwell.

Darlington and District Town Womens' Guild –

Mrs. A. Turnock.

Darlington Federation of Womens' Institutes –

Mrs. A. Eynon.

Heighington Village Hall Association –

Mr. L. Bedocs.

Independent Members –

Mr. K. Fridd.

Red Hall Partnership –

Mr. B. Bell.

Officers Attending – The Assistant Director, Public Protection, The Environmental Health Manager, A Principal Environmental Health Officer and the Sustainable Development Officer.

Apologies – The Mayor; Councillors Barker, Lister, Nicholson, Nutt and York, Parish Councillors N. Welch and Mrs. Scaife, and Mr. M. Smith and Mrs. M. Springett.

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

11. MINUTES – Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of the Public Protection Forum held on 12th July, 2007.

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

12. MATTERS ARISING – There were no matters arising.

13. TEES VALLEY FOOD SAFETY AWARD – The Director of Development and Environment submitted a report (previously circulated) informing Members of the introduction of a food hygiene award scheme. Members were also given a guided tour of the Council's Website in relation to the Awards.

The submitted report stated that the Tees Valley Food Safety Liaison Group, which comprised Food Safety Officers from the five Unitary Authorities, developed a single food hygiene award scheme in each of their Council areas. All eligible food businesses joining the scheme are issued, free of charge, with a certificate showing their 'star award' for the standard of food hygiene although there is no legal requirement for them to display the award. In October 2006 a consultation exercise with a sample of businesses was undertaken which showed support for the Scheme.

Food Safety Officers inspect and rate food businesses taking into account type of food, processing method, public risk, compliance with food hygiene, safety procedures and structure of premises, management and control systems and finally risk of food contamination. Star ratings will only be awarded to food businesses inspected by the Local Authority with subsequent inspections being determined by the star rating.

The scheme has provided residents and visitors of Darlington the ability to compare the relative hygiene standards of food businesses and make decisions accordingly. No complaints have been received from businesses and early indications are that a number of food businesses are using the awards as part of their advertising.

Discussion ensued on the definition of a food premises, inclusion of hospitals and nursing homes on the list of premises and whether the scheme was country-wide.

IT WAS AGREED – That the thanks of this Forum be extended to the Environmental Health Manager for his informative presentation and report.

14. AIR QUALITY – The Director of Development and Environment submitted a report (previously circulated) to inform Members of this Forum of the results of air pollution monitoring carried out in Darlington.

It was reported that air pollution monitoring is currently carried out at two fixed monitoring stations situated at a busy town centre roundabout at Cockerton Bridge and at a kerbside site on the ring road at St. Cuthbert's Way. Nitrogen Dioxide and particulate PM10 are measured at these sites and compared with the national air quality objectives. The Council also has an extensive diffusion tube monitoring programme for nitrogen dioxide, currently at ten locations throughout the Borough.

The Updating and Screening Report 2006 concluded that all the Government Objectives will be met within Darlington and there is no need to declare any Air Quality Management Areas.

With regard to the location of the monitoring stations, a Forum Member suggested that one should be located near Durham Tees Valley Airport as there has been an increase in air traffic in recent months, and was advised that when the Airport applied for planning permission for the

extension an Environmental Assessment had shown no significant increase in road traffic close to residential properties and it was not an area which represented a 'worst case' scenario. A Member reported that a recent press article had advised that Newcastle Airport was the worst air polluting airport in the Country and questioned whether there was equipment available to monitor emissions from planes, however Officers advised that the mobile monitor was de-commissioned and there was no equipment available for Local Authority use.

A Forum Member also suggested a monitor be located Haughton Road due to increased traffic and was advised that both stations had been located where traffic is slow moving to represent a 'worse case' situation for the town. Priestgate had recently been monitored and it was believed that the air quality had not been affected by buses using this area.

IT WAS AGREED – That the thanks of this Forum be extended to the Principal Environmental Health Officer for her informative presentation.

15. CLIMATE CHANGE – The Director of Development and Environment submitted a report (previously circulated) to update Members of this Forum on the current work being undertaken on Climate Change which was now widely accepted as one of the most pressing long term challenges.

The submitted report gave details of Darlington's Climate Change Strategy which was approved by Cabinet in September, 2006 with a commitment to producing a Climate Change Action Plan; the work being undertaken by the Tees Valley Climate Change Partnership which aims to develop a sub-regional strategy and support local strategies and actions plans, to set emissions targets and develop an effective emissions reporting protocol and methodology; and the support being give by the Darlington Partnership to the development of a Tees Valley Climate Change Strategy.

Discussion ensued on the level of detailed consultations undertaken during the Planning process as there were flooding concerns within the Borough around new developments generally and the cross-town route currently under construction around the Red Hall Estate.

IT WAS AGREED – That the report be received.

16. REAL NAPPIES - The Director of Development and Environment submitted a report (previously circulated) to inform Members of the Real Nappy Incentive Scheme.

The purpose of the incentive scheme is to encourage the use of real nappies as opposed to disposable nappies, which make up 2.6 per cent of the average household rubbish in a year. Disposable nappies take up to 500 years to decompose and in Darlington disposable nappies account for approximately 1430 tonnes of total waste.

Several local authorities across the UK have set up incentive schemes to encourage parents to convert to using real nappies and these schemes include offering cashback on expenditure of real nappies while other authorities offer free starter packs to parents. Darlington's incentive scheme will offer £25 cash back to residents who register, and parents must be Darlington residents and be able to provide a receipt of purchase of a pack of real nappies and a photocopy of their child's birth certificate.

17. QUESTIONS – There were no questions.