

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

16TH MARCH 2005

PRESENT	Councillor Kingston (Chair) Councillors Mrs Brown, Dobinson, Gale, Grogan, Harrison, Hayton, Nevins, Perkins, Mrs Pinkney and Stonehouse.
ALSO PRESENT	Councillors Mrs Jones and Clements, (ex- officio) and Councillor Zair, (observer)
ADVISERS	M. Coleby, Acting Director of Community Services and Mrs H Wilson, Committee Administrator.

MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19th January 2005 were taken as read, confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

427. CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Consideration was given to the recently completed Durham Sport Child Protection Policy for application within Wear Valley.

The Leader of the Council was pleased that the matter was being considered and believed it would be beneficial to all departments within the Council.

RECOMMENDED that the adoption of the Durham Sport Child Protection Policy, as amended, for use by Wear Valley District Council be approved.

428. HOWDEN-LE-WEAR ALLOTMENTS

Members were advised of negotiations with the landowners of Howden-le-Wear allotments and considered the continuation of efforts to resolve the issue of allotment provision.

Members were advised that the agents acting on behalf of the owners had indicated that they would not withdraw the Notice to Quit. An alternative site had been offered and was currently being investigated by Officers.

Councillor Nevins believed the authority had been put in a difficult position but was pleased that negotiations were still ongoing. He requested that Compulsory Purchase of the land be investigated.

In response to Councillors Dobinson and Perkins the Acting Director advised that an independent arbiter would be introduced who would undertake a feasibility study in order to ascertain the suitability or otherwise of proposed alternative land and location of any transfer.

- RECOMMENDED**
1. that that actions taken to date by officers be endorsed;
 2. that in light of the outcome of the feasibility study the matter be further considered by this Committee.

429. BULKY WASTE COLLECTION SERVICE

Members were informed of the implications to the bulky waste collection service following Durham County Council's decision to implement a permit scheme at all household waste recycling centres.

From 6th December 2004, Durham County Council invoked a permit scheme within their household waste recycling centres. If a resident used a van, pick-up or towed a trailer, they require a permit to deposit household waste at any of the County's household waste recycling centres. Permits have to be applied for in advance of depositing the waste at the site.

The Leader of the Council was extremely concerned by the introduction of the permit scheme and believed it would encourage fly-tipping, she moved the report with the following additional recommendations, which were seconded by Councillor Stonehouse:-

2. that the appropriate Cabinet Member from Durham County Council be requested to attend a meeting with the Chair and Deputy Chair of Community Services and Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council together with the relevant officers of the Community Services Department to discuss the introduction of the County Council's permit scheme at household waste recycling centres.
3. that a letter be written to Government Office North East regarding the implementation of the permit scheme and possible contravention of the joint fly tipping initiative.

Councillor Harrison believed that the Refuse Service provided by Wear Valley had already started to suffer as a result of the introduction by the County Council of the permit scheme.

- RECOMMENDED**
1. that the information be noted and that officers monitor the situation and present a further report when the implications of the introduction of the household waste permit scheme by Durham County Council become clearer;

2. that the appropriate Cabinet Member from Durham County Council be requested to attend a meeting with the Chair and Deputy Chair of Community Services and Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council together with the relevant officers of the Community Services Department to discuss the introduction of the County Council's permit scheme at household waste recycling centres.
3. that a letter be written to Government Office North East regarding the implementation of the permit scheme and possible contravention of the joint fly tipping initiative.

430. WHEELED BIN IMPLEMENTATION

Members received an update on the progress of the implementation of wheeled bin and green waste collection services.

RECOMMENDED that the work undertaken to date and the proposed implementation timetable and promotional activities regarding the wheeled bin and green waste services be endorsed.

431. PROPOSED INTERNAL WASTE RECYCLING STRATEGY

Consideration was given to initial proposals in respect of the recycling of waste material generated within the Council's offices and buildings. Following on from the Waste Minimisation Strategy, which focussed upon external service improvements, the authority made a commitment to improving its own internal arrangements. Efforts will be made to reduce the waste disposed of by the authority and its operations.

The Leader of the Council was pleased that a conscious effort was being made to improve the recycling within Council owned buildings.

Although he supported the proposals Councillor Gale believed there may be a problem regarding deliveries of milk in bottles as he believed the use of glass bottles was now decreasing.

RECOMMENDED that the principle of developing improved arrangements for the recycling of waste generated within the Council's buildings and centres of operation be approved.

432. REMOVAL OF PLAY AREAS – CHURCH RISE ESTATE, WILLINGTON

Consideration was given to actions taken to date and future intended actions in respect of the removal of play areas and the adoption of the resulting open spaces at Church Rise Estate, Low Willington.

Councillor Mrs Pinkney was of the opinion that the removal of the play areas would improve problems in respect of antisocial behaviour, which had previously been encountered at these sites.

RECOMMENDED that actions taken to date by officers be endorsed and the proposed future actions regarding the removal of the four play areas at Church Rise Estate, Willington be approved.

433. SPECIAL EVENTS PROGRAMME 2005

Consideration was given to the programme of community-based events intended to be delivered during 2005.

In response to Councillor Hayton the Acting Director advised that although he would be prepared to hold the fireworks spectacular at another site within the district there were many factors to consider, such as road closures and implications which affected the police.

RECOMMENDED that the proposed schedule of special events for 2005 be approved.

434. COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT – SERVICE PLAN 2005/06

Consideration was given to the proposed programme of work for the Community Services Department for 2005/06. The programme of work promised to be very challenging with officers faced with the task of not only maintaining current levels of service but also moving forward some key issues.

RESOLVED that the Community Services Department Service Plan for 2005/06 and the programme of work for the year be endorsed.

RESOLVED that under Section 100(a)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the

following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined under paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the said Act.

435. PROPOSED REVISION TO THE MANAGEMENT ARRANGMENTS OF THE COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL SERVICES SECTION OF THE COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Members considered proposals necessitated by the effect of the interim management arrangements currently in place in the Community Services Department.

RESOLVED

1. that the permanent revisions to the job description of the Cultural Services Officer (Sport), be approved;
2. that the post of Events and Activities Officer be increased in accordance with the details in the report for the period 1st April 2005 until 31st March 2006;
3. that the post of Cultural Services Manager be increased in accordance with the details in the report for the period 1st April 2005 until 31st March 2006;
4. that the post of Youth Arts Co-ordinator and the re-designation of the posts to Arts Development Officer be increased in accordance with the details in the report;
5. that the post of Community Fitness Officer be increased in accordance with the details in the report with effect from 1st April 2005;
6. that the post of Finance and Administration Officer be increased in accordance with the details in the report with effect from 1st April 2005.

436. STAFFING ARRANGEMENTS – PUBLIC PROTECTION

Members considered the revised arrangements for staffing within the Public Protection Section.

Councillor Stonehouse believed the problem regarding the shortage of Environmental Health Officers (EHO) across the Country was a contributory factor to the difficulty which the department had encountered in appointing to the EHO posts. He was of the opinion that it was necessary to also consider alternative methods of working to try and resolve the issue. He therefore moved the report with the

following additional recommendation this was seconded by the Leader of the Council:-

5. that officers also investigate alternative methods of working (such as joint working with other authorities) to overcome problems resulting from the national shortage of Environmental Health Officers.

RESOLVED

1. that in accordance with the details in the report, the two Environmental Health Officer posts within the Public Protection Section be re-graded and that they be re-designated Senior Environmental Health Officers;
2. that in accordance with the details in the report the Principal EHO (Food and Health and Safety) be re-graded with effect from 1st April 2005;

RECOMMENDED

3. that in accordance with the details in the report a consultant be employed to undertake food safety inspections;
4. that a further report be brought to Community Services Committee regarding Dog Warden duties.
5. that officers also investigate alternative methods of working (such as joint working with other authorities) to overcome problems resulting from the national shortage of Environmental Health Officers.

The meeting concluded at 19:40

CHAIR