

THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING

OF THE NORTH AREA FORUM

HELD ON WEDNESDAY 28 SEPTEMBER 2005

Present: **Representing the District of Easington**

Councillor C Walker (Chair)
Councillors E Bell, G Bleasdale, B Burn
P J Campbell, J Goodwin, J Haggan,
Mrs J Maitland, Mrs S Mason, A Napier,
Mrs A Naylor, C Patching, F Shaw and R J Todd

Also Present: J Walker – Seaham Town Council
R Blair – Dawdon Partnership
R Meir – Durham County Council
R Olaman – Dalton Le Dale Parish Council
B Allan – Seaham Town Council

Residents: W A Place and D B Glover

Apologies: Councillors F Shaw and W R Peardon

1 **CHAIR'S COMMENTS**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the District Council's North Area Forum and introduced himself, the Vice-Chair and the officers present. A representative from the Customer Services Section was also present to take any individual queries or problems at the end of the meeting.

2 **CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

The Minutes of the last meeting held on 1 June 2005, were confirmed subject to Councillor Mrs G Bleasdale being added to the list of those present.

3 **FOLLOW UP FROM LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING**

(i) **Black Box Kerb it Scheme**

Mr D Glover advised that a number of residents in Watling Avenue, Seaham had still not received a lid for the black recycling box.

RESOLVED that J Malcolm, Neighbourhood Enforcement Officer, make arrangements for the properties in Watling Avenue, Seaham to be supplied with a lid for the black recycling box.

(ii) **Telecommunications Poles (Minute No 3 (i) refers)**

The Chair advised that following the last meeting a letter was forwarded to British Telecom advising of residents concerns and this was currently being investigated.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted and further developments be awaited.

(iii) **Access to Cycleway, South Hetton (Minute No 3 (vi) refers)**

The Chair advised that following the last meeting Mrs Kennedy's concerns were referred to Durham County Council who subsequently referred the matter to the Coast and Countryside Rangers to investigate.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

4 **YOUR QUESTION TIME, YOUR SAY IN SERVICE DELIVERY, YOUR CALL**

(i) **Former Seaham Colliery Site**

Mr D Glover made reference to the problem of excess rainwater running off the former Seaham Colliery site during heavy rainfall and flooding the surrounding areas of Station Road and the Mill Inn. It was explained that the site, which was owned by One North East, had all the field drains removed and the remaining holes were filled with clay.

Mr Glover had previously contacted both the owners and contractors who were not interested in the problem.

Councillor R Meir stated that he was also aware of several incidents of flooding in the area following heavy rainfall particularly the area to the rear of Kingfisher Industrial Estate.

Councillor A Napier advised that the former colliery site was earmarked for housing and a preferred developer would be identified in the near future.

RESOLVED that the matter be referred to the appropriate officer together with the Executive Members for Environment and Transport and Regeneration.

(ii) **B1285 – Dalton le Dale to Cold Hesleden Footpath**

Councillor R Olaman stated that during heavy rainfall soil was being washed off the embankment onto the footpath on the B1285 from Dalton le Dale to Cold Hesleden.

RESOLVED that J Malcolm, Neighbourhood Enforcement Officer, refer the matter for investigation.

(iii) **East Durham Homes**

Mr B Blair expressed concern that following the disappointing star rating awarded by the Audit Commission East Durham Homes (EDH's) had not issued a statement outlining the current position or proposals to achieve the decent homes standard.

Councillor A Napier advised that to help achieve a three star rating at the next inspection in September 2006 EDH's would be working with Housing Quality Network to achieve the decent homes standard.

In relation to tenants being kept informed of the situation it was explained that all tenants had been issued with a newsletter which outlined the

current position and proposals for improvement leading up to the next inspection.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(iv) **Regeneration**

Mr B Blair congratulated the District Council on the regeneration work being undertaken throughout the district and the money that had been secured through the Coalfield Regeneration Trust. The District Council had also stated that they were willing to work with all types and sizes of organisations and B Blair queried if a Funding Officer was needed to co-ordinate the work.

Councillor A Napier advised that the District Council had qualified officers who were dealing with these issues on a daily basis.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(v) **Primary Care Trust**

Mr B Blair expressed concern at the proposed changes to the Primary Care Trust (PCT) and Every Child Matters; Change for Children. It was explained that Every Child Matters would effect all organisations involved in providing services for children.

Councillor R J Todd advised that the future of the Easington PCT was under consideration. It was the Government's intention to reduce the number of PCTs and Easington PCT would be effected. The District Council were keen to retain the PCT but if this was not achievable then a strong locality presence was needed. Full consultation was ongoing and further developments would be forthcoming.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(vi) **Adolphus Street**

Councillor R Meir stated that the trees and bushes along Adolphus Street were overgrown and needed to be cut back.

RESOLVED that J Malcolm, Neighbourhood Enforcement Officer, refer the matter for investigation.

5 CLEAN NEIGHBOURHOODS AND ENVIRONMENT ACT 2005

Mr J Malcolm, Neighbourhood Enforcement Officer, gave a presentation on the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005, which would be phased in over the next year and gave potential new powers to local authorities.

Mr D Glover stated that he had recently read a press article which claimed that spot fines were illegal and local authorities were breaking the law by issuing them. J Malcolm advised that he was unaware of this but would investigate the claim.

Mr B Blair stated that, in his opinion, a £75 fine was not severe enough and it should be set at a higher level.

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Councillor A Napier stated that he hoped the press statement relating to the issuing of spot fines being illegal was unfounded.

Councillor B Burn queried if children under 11 could be fined for offences under the Act. J Malcolm advised that legally children under 10 could not commit a crime. However, there were other avenues to explore and warnings were issued where necessary. Juveniles could also be issued fixed penalties in the presence of parents. Street Wardens also patrolled school areas.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted and J Malcolm, Neighbourhood Enforcement Officer, investigate the position regarding spot fines.

JW/MA/com.naf./050901
24 October 2005