

THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING

OF THE NORTH AREA FORUM

HELD ON WEDNESDAY 14 DECEMBER 2005

Present: **Representing the District of Easington**
Councillor C Walker (Chair)
Councillors Mrs G Bleasdale, B Burn,
P J Campbell, R Davison, J Goodwin,
J Haggan, D Myers, A Napier,
Mrs A Naylor, C Patching and
R J Todd

Also Present: L Allen – Easington Primary Care Trust
J Walker – Seaham Town Council
B Allen – Seaham Town Council
K Younger – Seaham Town Council
R Meir – Durham County Council

Residents: W A Place, D B Glover A Lanes,
T McCourt, M McDade, T E Campbell,
R Jordan

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 28 September 2005, were **AGREED**.

3 FOLLOW UP FROM LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

(i) Black Box Kerb-it Scheme - Minute No. 3(i)

J. Malcolm, Neighbourhood Enforcement Officer, advised that an order had been placed to supply properties in Watling Avenue, Seaham with lids for the black recycling box.

AGREED that the information given, be noted.

(ii) Former Seaham Colliery Site - Minute No. 4(i)

T. Forster, Principal Regeneration Officer, advised that the former Seaham Colliery site had undergone a major reclamation and infrastructure contract to remove contamination and the remnants of the former colliery operations in order to make the land suitable for future housing development and public open space. Progress was being made on the preparation of a Development Competition Brief in the expectation of taking the site to the market.

Members were advised that part of the reclamation process involved a degree of clay capping over parts of the site and there had been isolated incidents involving limited surface water run-off from the site on its northern side during periods of exceptionally heavy rainfall.

In order to address this, One North East had awarded a further contract for drainage works along part of the northern edge of the site. These works had been designed to address the issue of potential surface water run-off.

AGREED that the information given, be noted.

(iii) **B1285 Dalton-le-Dale to Cold Hesleden Footpath - Minute No. 4(ii)**

J. Malcolm, Neighbourhood Enforcement Officer, advised that problems related to the embankment on the B1285 from Dalton-le-Dale to Cold Hesleden footpath had been referred to the Highways Action Line.

AGREED that the information given, be noted.

(iv) **Adolphus Street, Seaham - Minute No. 4(vi)**

J. Malcolm, Neighbourhood Enforcement Officer, advised that an instruction had been issued to have the trees and bushes cut back at Adolphus Street, Seaham.

AGREED that the information given, be noted.

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

(i) **Recycling**

Mr D Glover queried the District Councils position in relation to recycling. He was aware that a visit had been made to the aerobic digester at Shotton and wondered if the districts recycled waste could be converted for use as a fuel.

P Penman, Environmental Services Operations Manager, advised that a high percentage of the districts waste was sent to the aerobic digester. It was explained that the District Council was a collection authority and not a disposal authority so the ultimate decision for converting waste into fuel rested with Durham County Council. The District Council did however have a policy for recycling glass and paper, etc through the black box recycling scheme.

D Glover pointed out that the idea of converting waste material into fuel was not a new idea. P Penman reported that a percentage of the waste processed by Durham County Council was converted to fuel, however, the process of converting waste into fuel pellets was a very complex procedure.

AGREED that the information given, be noted.

(ii) **Concessionary Fares Scheme**

Mr Campbell queried the situation regarding the concessionary fares scheme for pensioners particularly when a journey crossed county boundaries.

Councillor J Goodwin explained that the position regarding how the new fares scheme would operate was yet to be determined. He advised that passes would be available from 1 April 2006 and information relating to the scheme would be available prior to this date.

Councillor A Napier advised that the current scheme cost £400,000 and the new scheme would cost in excess of £1m. Whilst the District of Easington had received a provisional financial settlement, funding was not guaranteed in the long term.

AGREED that the information given, be noted.

(iii) **Excess Water – Mill Inn Bank/Lodge Garage**

Mr A Place expressed concern at the amount of rainwater that accumulated at the bottom of the Mill Inn Bank and the Lodge garage following heavy rainfall. In order to avoid the water cars had to move across the road and it was only a matter of time before an accident occurred.

P Penman advised that Durham County Council were responsible for the road gullies, which were cleaned by the District of Easington on their behalf. The problem with the gully at the Lodge had been raised previously with the County Council and it had been cleaned and unblocked on several occasions. A defect notice had also been issued in relation to this gully.

County Councillor R Meir explained that in order for repairs to be undertaken to the gully at the Lodge the road would need to be closed. With regard to the accumulation of water at the Mill Inn it was explained that the drainage pipe was not large enough to accommodate the amount of water.

Mr D Glover felt the reason for the flooding at the Mill Inn was due to the gully being located in the wrong position and moving it would easily rectify the situation.

AGREED that P Penman report the problems related to the gullies at the Mill Inn and the Lodge Garage.

(iv) **Former Seaham Colliery Site**

Mr D Glover explained that water was still running off the former Seaham Colliery site during heavy rainfall and flooding the surrounding areas of Station Road and the Mill Inn.

P Penman explained that Officers from the District Council had previously visited the site and the road at this location had been cleaned by the District Council on a number of occasions on behalf of One North East.

Following discussion it was **AGREED** that the matter be referred to the Director of Regeneration and Partnerships.

(v) **Parking Problems – Seaham**

County Councillor R Meir reported on the parking problems being experienced in Seaham. Motorists were parking indiscriminately on pavements and particularly around East Shore Village and not using the designated car parks.

There was also a problem with fishermen parking on the grass around the clock.

Councillor A Napier explained that this was a traffic management problem, which was a County Highways issue.

Councillor D Myers explained that motorists rarely took any notice of yellow lines and parked where they wanted. A solution would be to employ traffic wardens and meter the car parks.

Mr Campbell pointed out that motorists also parked directly outside shops on yellow lines and whilst the police were aware of the situation they did not appear to take any action.

AGREED that the information given, be noted.

(vi) **Enfield Road**

Mr A Lanes reported that a fire had recently taken place in a garage on Enfield Road, Eastlea, Seaham. As a consequence residents had to be evacuated from their homes, as there was a danger of gas canisters stored at the garage exploding. Mr. Lanes queried if the District Council had had any involvement with the incident.

Councillor A Napier explained that the District of Easington had an emergency planning procedure which would be implemented in the case of an emergency incident. However on this particular occasion the incident did not warrant the involvement of the District Council.

Mrs T McCourt queried what the council's position was in relation to a business being operated from a residential property, particularly in this instance where gas canisters were being stored.

The Chair pointed out the gas canisters were widely used by people in their homes and it would be very difficult to enforce their use.

Councillor A Napier pointed out that if the situation had warranted the involvement of the Health and Safety Executive they would have been advised of the situation and taken appropriate action.

It was suggested that the District Council's Emergency Planning Officer be requested to contact Mr Lanes in relation to the emergency planning procedure.

AGREED that the Emergency Planning Officer be requested to contact Mr Lanes in relation to the district councils emergency planning procedure.