

**Minutes  
Environment Scrutiny Panel**

**19 July 2006  
5.30 p.m.  
Town Hall**

**Present:** Councillors Wolstenhome (in the Chair), Colledge, Graham, Kinghorn, McDonnell, Marsden, Simpson, Turnbull.

**Also in Attendance:** Councillors Cowper, Dickie, Kellett, Lodge, Moderate, Pape, Taylor and Wynn

Legal & Democratic Services Manager – Clare Greenlay

**Apologies**

There were apologies for absence from Councillors Carr, Pitts and Walton.

**Minutes of the Meeting held on 20 June 2006**

The minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed as a correct record.

**Note:** *Councillor Moderate entered the meeting at 5.35 p.m.*

**Discussions of Draft Report; Recommendations – Litter Pickers**

The Panel considered the draft Report and the following amendments and additions were made:

1. That the City of Durham's Environmental Services Department research how best to implement any requisite legislation regarding litter and litter pickers contained within the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 *and that the Panel report back to Cabinet as soon as possible.*
4. That in the wider street scene, dog foul bins should be better identified by use of stickers, and also that in key important areas, i.e. the City Centre, *Village Centres*, Tourist spots, more ornate bins are recommended.
6. *When future developments are being considered at the planning stage that, where appropriate and subject to planning procedure, attention is given to the provision of adequate measures for the prevention of potential litter, and any subsequent removal of litter, within the application.*

Members further discussed the issue of the dog foul bins and it was felt that information should be obtained showing the number of plastic bins burnt out in comparison to the number of metal bins destroyed similarly, in order to clarify the rationale behind the move to the more cost-effective solution.

A Member raised an issue relating to graffiti on New Elvet Bridge on behalf of a member of the public. This issue had also been raised with the Committee Clerk prior to the meeting by the member of the public and the details would be passed to the relevant Officers / Authority.

### **Review of Previous Scrutiny Topic – Temporary Road Closure Policy**

The subject of Temporary Road Closures had been looked at by the Panel in July 2004, with a Policy being developed which was approved by Cabinet 02 April 2005.

The City of Durham's Legal and Democratic Services Manager, Clare Greenlay, was in attendance to inform Members as to how the Policy was working in practise.

The Panel were apprised of the two main points to note, one being that many applications for temporary road closures were withdrawn once the Applicants were informed that they would be required to seek their own insurance and traffic management for any event being organised.

The second point was that whilst the current Policy *recommends* that the Applicant hire a traffic management company to organise the putting up of requisite Notices and the running of the closure on the day, it does not *insist* on such a requirement. It is an offence if such Notices and traffic management is not carried out by a company or person who has undergone the relevant training and has an appropriate qualification. By not insisting upon the use of qualified persons, the City of Durham could be viewed as condoning such an offence.

In the past this service was provided by the Durham Constabulary who then withdrew the service due to lack of resources, though it should be noted that this was a national Police policy. As the cost for professional traffic management is in the region of £200 – £650 it was felt that smaller events would suffer as often this amount is beyond the means of such small organisations.

Members wondered whether it would be possible for the City of Durham to provide the traffic management service, either free for certain charitable events or at a cost significantly lower than the £200 – £650 price. This would require City of Durham staff to receive the necessary training and to obtain the qualifications relating to traffic management. Whether this would be cost-effective, or indeed feasible, would need to be explored.

Members felt such provision of traffic management would benefit the District in terms of Tourism and should be looked at in order to help maintain the tradition of the displaying of banners and of marching bands.

Concerns were raised that the City of Durham would be seen to be undercutting traffic management companies and also that the City of Durham may not be able to absorb such a cost. It was suggested that the Neighbourhood Wardens could be ideal for such training as they are "out and about" in the District as part of the job. Upon further discussion, it was thought that whilst admittedly the staff would be in the correct place, the level of responsibility was significantly higher than their current pay grade.

Some Members believed that the Durham County Council employ an external traffic management company and perhaps this could be an approach the City of Durham could use if it were to take on this responsibility.

In addition to the cost of the traffic management, there would be the cost of insurance cover for any such event. Members wondered whether the City of Durham could obtain a blanket cover for the district, which may be more cost-effective than individual applications for cover per event.

In order to reach a conclusion on this matter, Members requested that a report be produced outlining the facts relating to this matter to help ascertain whether it would be feasible for the City of Durham to provide the traffic management and insurance on behalf of Applicants. This would be brought back to the Panel in due course so that Members may draft recommendations as appropriate for consideration by Scrutiny Committee, and subsequently Cabinet.

**Actions for the next meeting:-**

- Presentation from the City of Durham's Sustainable Development Manager to allow for a review of the previous Scrutiny topic of Biodiversity.

The Meeting terminated at 6.00 p.m.