

**Minutes
Environment Scrutiny Panel**

**17 October 2006
5.30 p.m.
Town Hall**

Present: Councillors Wolstenholme (in the Chair), Carr, Colledge, Kinghorn, McDonnell, Marsden, Simpson and Turnbull.

Also in Attendance: Councillors Gibbon, Howarth, Kellett, Robinson and Young.

Senior Engineer (Property Services) John Westgarth.

Technical Resources Manager (Property Services) Andrew Young.

Apologies

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

Minutes of the Meeting held on 19 September 2006

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

Review Report – Biodiversity

A copy of the draft report on Biodiversity had been circulated for Members consideration prior to the report being submitted to the Scrutiny Committee.

It was agreed that the report be submitted to the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee subject to an amendment that Biodiversity Areas be called Wildlife Meadows.

Review of Previous Scrutiny Topic, Unauthorised Parking on Council Land Discussion with Representatives from Property Services (Additional Parking Provision)

Andrew Young and John Westgarth were in attendance to update Members on the Provision of Additional Parking.

The Panel were advised that at present, there were 38 proposed schemes identified from the neighbourhood wardens and requests made from individual members.

Funding for these schemes was available through the Members discretionary allowances, a £50,000 budget within the Housing Revenue Account and match funding from Durham County Council.

The Housing Revenue Account budget was in the Housing Business Plan and could only be used in estates where there were Council owned Housing, it could not therefore be used to fund schemes on private or housing association estates.

In order to maximise the use of the funds, the Council were working with Durham County Council to secure match funding for as many of the schemes as possible. The list was being prioritised using the agreed procedure a copy of which had been circulated and Mr. Westgarth would be meeting the County representative to discuss the list and identify areas of common concern.

This was necessary, not only to maximise the Council's budget but also to ensure that schemes met the approval of the Highways Authority. It would also give the Council's prioritisation process some objectivity through the input from the County Council.

A number of members had already used money from their individual allowances to fund parking schemes and if the Panel wished to see a list of these, it could be prepared and made available.

Some of the schemes came to the Council with prior approval from the County Council with match funding already in place.

John Westgarth had a list of proposed sites and was waiting for a reply from the County Council's representative regarding meeting to discuss which schemes they were prepared to match fund and to agree on prioritisation.

The Chairman asked if the £50,000 budget could come from another account so that the scheme was not limited to council housing estates. The Chairman also asked if the budget was spent if not could the money be spent even if on small schemes.

It was agreed that the subject be reviewed again in six months.

The Chairman thanked Andrew Young and John Westgarth for attending the meeting.

Any Other Business

The Chairman advised the Panel that at the next meeting they would be looking at a new scrutiny topic which was the Riverbanks.

The Meeting terminated at 6.00 p.m.