

**SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
AREA 5 FORUM**

Town Council Offices
School Aycliffe Lane,
Newton Aycliffe

Tuesday,
29 November 2005

Time: 7.00 p.m.

Present: Councillor Mrs. A.M. Fleming (Chairman) – Sedgefield Borough Council and

Councillor Mrs. B.A. Clare	–	Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor Mrs. J. Croft	–	Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor V. Crosby	–	Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor M.A. Dalton	–	Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor R.S. Fleming	–	Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor M. Iveson	–	Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor J.P. Moran	–	Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor Mrs. E.M. Paylor	–	Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor J.K. Piggott	–	Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor Mrs. D. Bowman	-	Dales Residents Association
Councillor Mrs. S.J. Iveson	-	Durham County Council
Superintendent B. Knevitt	-	Durham Constabulary
PC D. McKenna	-	Durham Constabulary
PC H. Young	-	Durham Constabulary
Councillor J. Dormer	-	Great Aycliffe Town Council
Councillor V. Raw	-	Great Aycliffe Town Council
Councillor M. Dalton	-	Great Aycliffe Town Council
Councillor S. Mlatilik	-	Great Aycliffe Town Council
Councillor A. Tomlin	-	Great Aycliffe Town Council
A. Robson	-	Residents Association
M. Robson	-	Residents Association
N. Porter	-	Sedgefield PCT
D. Rutherford	-	Sedgefield PCT
J. Mlatilik	-	Local Resident
M. Tomlin	-	Local Resident

Apologies: Councillor W.M. Blenkinsopp - Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor G.C. Gray – Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor Mrs. J. Gray – Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor B. Hall – Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor K. Henderson – Sedgefield Borough Council
Inspector A. Neill – Durham Constabulary
Councillor C. Wheeler – Great Aycliffe Town Council
Councillor Mrs. M. Gray – Great Aycliffe Town Council
Councillor Mrs. A. Clarke – Middridge Parish Council

AF(5)11/05 DRAFT RESIDENTIAL EXTENSIONS SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

C. Walton, Head of Planning Services, was present at the meeting to give a presentation on Draft Residential Extensions Supplementary Planning Document. Copies of the document were available at the meeting for Members' information.

It was explained that the Supplementary Planning Document: Residential Extensions had been prepared as part of the Sedgefield Borough Local Development Framework. The Local Development Framework would replace the Local Plan and would comprise of a Local Development Scheme which set out the work programme; a Statement of Community Involvement; a range of Development Plan Documents; Supplementary Planning Documents and Annual Monitoring Reports.

The Supplementary Planning Document on Residential Extensions had been prepared in advance of the Sedgefield Borough Local Development Framework as there was an urgent need for improved guidance on residential extensions as the existing guidance, produced in 2000, was now out of date.

It was reported that final year students from the University of Newcastle had been commissioned to review the existing guidance and identify national best practice. Council officers had subsequently refined the work to suit local circumstances.

A Draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) was produced and presented to the Borough Council's Cabinet in September 2005 where it was approved for public consultation. The consultation period had now ended and it was anticipated that the document would be adopted by the Council in February 2006.

The Draft Supplementary Planning Document was more comprehensive than the existing Supplementary Planning Guidance and provided detailed advice and guidance on the following:

- General design principles
- Porches
- Forward extensions
- Side, rear and rural extensions
- Conservatories
- Dormer windows and roof extensions
- Garages and outbuildings
- Walls and fences
- Other material considerations

In considering a planning application, the Council would take account of the design and how it affected the privacy, outlook, daylight of adjacent properties and the impact on the general street scene and character of the area. Specialist advice from the County's Highways Authority and Northumbrian Water Limited would also be taken into account when determining applications.

A proposal that was poorly designed in relation to its host dwelling or that utilised materials or window features which were not in keeping with the general street scene or character of the local area would constitute inappropriate development and be refused permission.

The Forum was informed that informal advice could be obtained before submitting a planning application by making an enquiry for consideration at the Council's weekly 'One Stop Shop'. The purpose of the 'One Stop Shop' was to provide free informal advice on a scheme that required permission and to suggest any appropriate changes.

AF(5)12/05 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 27th September 2005 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

AF(5)13/05 POLICE REPORT

PC Dave McKenna and PC Helen Young were present at the meeting to give details of the crime statistics for the area.

Superintendent Barry Knevitt was also present to discuss the concerns expressed by Members of the Forum in relation to Police communications system and response times.

The crime figures for the year to date were as follows:

Dwellinghouse burglary	37
Burglary (other)	30
Criminal damage	498
Vehicle crime	72
Theft of vehicle	31
Theft from vehicle	41
Damage to vehicle	176
Shoplifting	127

It was pointed out that when compared with last year's figures total theft had increased by 4.4%, violent crime had increased by 76.4% and violence against a person by 69.2%. It was pointed out that the substantial increases were due to new reporting methods.

With regard to rowdy nuisance behaviour, the following number of incidents had been reported.

<u>Ward :</u>	<u>September:</u>	<u>October :</u>
Neville Simpasture Ward	11	17
Greenfields Middridge Ward	23	21
Shafto St. Mary's Ward	49	47
West Ward	39	41
Woodham Ward	20	25

It was reported that the West Ward was no longer one of the top ten wards for anti-social behaviour problems.

Members of the Forum expressed concern regarding the number of incidents in the Shafto St. Marys Ward.

It was explained that the incidents occurred in the new Town Centre park and the well lit areas surrounding the Town Centre, and the Police would welcome any extra help from the Council's Neighbourhood Wardens in tackling the problems. It was pointed out that the deployment of Neighbourhood Wardens in the Town Centre on market days had made a substantial difference.

Specific reference was made to Operation Gumby, which was aimed at tackling the problems of shoplifting and anti-social behaviour. It involved dedicated patrols of the Town Centre.

With regard to the issue of communicating with the Police, Supt Knevitt explained that there were two communication centres. The South Communication Centre was based at Bishop Auckland and was responsible for handling calls for the south of the County (Weardale/Teesdale/Sedgefield and Darlington areas). The North Communication Centre was situated at Aykley Heads, Durham City and covered the remainder of the County.

The centres handled between 65,000 - 70,000 calls per month – 1,500,000 per year. The average time for answering the non-emergency number was between 6 and 7 seconds. 999 calls were usually answered in less than 4 seconds, which was well below the target time of three minutes. 999 calls from mobiles were answered by the North Communication Centre. The non-emergency number if not answered within a certain timeframe, transferred to the automated attendant.

The Forum's attention was drawn to the fact that Durham Constabulary operated on the Airwaves radio system. The digital system provided secure communication channels and gave good coverage of the area.

Members noted that calls were taken by support staff known as 'call handlers'. They had a list of questions to ask the callers to ensure that they received the necessary information. The call handlers transferred the information they had received regarding incidents to the 'call dispatchers'. The call dispatchers were aware of the officers on duty and their location when assigning incidents. The call handlers were under instruction not to make unrealistic promises regarding how quickly the calls would be responded to.

The Superintendent acknowledged that there could be delays between the switchboard and the call handler and had requested extra staff to address the problem. He also referred to a Best Value Review of the communications system and the 33 recommendations that had been made.

He reported that on 14th December 2005, new software would be introduced which would allow the call dispatcher to read information regarding an incident as it was being typed by the call handler. This would result in a quicker response. The software would also provide the call handlers with any call history and appropriate questions to be asked.

The Forum was also informed that a voice mail system for Beat Officers was being piloted and that work had begun on revising the shift patterns to match the busiest periods.

Members queried when it was appropriate to ring 999 as opposed to the non-emergency number. They were asked to view Durham Constabulary's website. This contained advice on which the Superintendent would like to receive feedback. If the feedback was positive he would produce leaflets detailing that advice. He also invited Members of the Forum to contact him if they wished to visit a Communication Centre.

AF(5)14/05 SEDGEFIELD PCT - PROGRESS UPDATE

Nigel Porter and David Rutherford attended the meeting to give an update on local health matters.

With regard to the future PCT configuration in County Durham, it was noted that Nigel Porter would be attending a meeting the following day with representatives of the Department of Health, where details of the proposed future structure would be announced.

The Chairman of the Area Forum reported that she had written to David Flory Chief Executive Officer of the new Strategic Health Authority to support the establishment of at least two PCTs at the very minimum and if that arrangement was not achieved, strong locality arrangements should be maintained.

The Forum was also given details of proposed structural changes in respect of Strategic Health Authorities, the North East Ambulance Service and Mental Health Trusts.

Attention was also drawn to the additional resources that Sedgefield PCT would be allocating to the following:

- Primary Care
- Cancer Services
- Continuing healthcare
- Mental Care
- Coronary Heart Disease
- Dentistry

It was pointed out that the number of NHS dentists within the Borough had increased.

Specific reference was also made to the development of the health centre and the Sure Start Centre in Newton Aycliffe.

Members of the Forum expressed concern regarding the difficulties encountered in travelling by public transport to hospitals outside the area, in particular the James Cook Hospital.

AF(5)15/05 NAMING OF DEVELOPMENT RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AT SITE OF FORMER NURSERY ADJACENT TO SANDERSON CLOSE NEWTON AYCLIFFE

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Neighbourhood Services regarding a request received from Bett Homes (NE) Limited to officially name and number the above development comprising of thirty four dwellings. (For copy see file of Minutes)

Members of the Forum proposed that the development be named Hamilton Court.

AF(5)16/05 CORRESPONDENCE

The Chairman of the Forum reported that she had received two letters regarding proposals for schemes under the Local Improvement Programme.

NB : In accordance with Section 81 of the Local Government Act 2000 and the Members Code of Conduct, Councillors R.S. Fleming and M. Iveson declared a prejudicial interest in the above item as they were Members of Cabinet and left the meeting for the duration of discussion on the item.

The Chairman read out both letters to the Forum.

The first letter was regarding the Aycliffe A167 Corridor project, which involved upgrading the road surfaces, street lighting, street furniture and natural environment within the High Street of Aycliffe Village and the approaches to the High Street in Aycliffe Village.

The second proposal was to improve the nature area in Newton Aycliffe and the former Port Clarence Railway Line, which was adjacent to the nature area. The nature area was a piece of former wasteland between the Tallents Industrial Complex and the A167.

It was also reported that an e-mail had been received seeking a contribution from the Local Improvement Scheme towards the hall at Greenfield School.

NB : In accordance with Section 81 of the Local Government Act 2000 and the Members Code of Conduct, Councillors Mrs. A.M. Fleming declared a prejudicial interest in the above item as she was a School Governor of Greenfield School and left the meeting for the duration of discussion.

NB : In accordance with Section 81 of the Local Government Act 2000 and the Members Code of Conduct, Councillors Mrs. B.A. Clare declared a prejudicial interest in the above item as her husband was Deputy Head of the school and left the meeting for the duration of discussion.

NB : In accordance with Section 81 of the Local Government Act 2000 and the Members Code of Conduct, Councillor V.

Crosby declared a prejudicial interest in the above item as he was a member of the Management Committee for Greenfield Community College and left the meeting for the duration of discussion.

Councillor M.A. Dalton, Vice- Chairman in the chair.

The Vice-Chairman read out the e-mail received regarding the need for funding for the construction of Greenfield School Hall.

Councillors Mrs. B.A. Clare, V. Crosby, Mr. A.M. Fleming, R.S. Fleming and M. Iveson returned to the meeting.

AF(5)17/05

QUESTIONS

A member of a Residents Association gave details of anti-social behaviour problems relating to children in her area and the difficulties she had encountered in obtaining support to deal with the matter at Residents Association meetings.

In response, Councillor Iveson, Lead Member of Community Safety, reported that he would investigate the anti-social problems in her area the following day and take appropriate action.

AF(5)18/05

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

24th January 2006 at 7.00 p.m.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Any person wishing to exercise the right of inspection, etc., in relation to these Minutes and associated papers should contact Liz North 01388 816166 ext 4237