
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE SCRUTINY PANEL

A meeting of the Economic Development, Environment and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel was held on 5 February 2020.

PRESENT: Councillors Saunders, (Chair), Branson, Coupe, Garvey, Hubbard and M Storey

**PRESENT AS
OBSERVERS:** J Cain, BBC Local Democracy Reporter

OFFICERS: G Field, S Lightwing, P Shaw, M Shepherd

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were submitted on behalf of Councillors Arundale, Furness, S Walker.

DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no Declarations of Interest at this point in the meeting.

1 **WELCOME AND EVACUATION PROCEDURE**

The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting and read out the Fire Evacuation Procedure.

2 **MINUTES - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE
SCRUTINY PANEL - 8 JANUARY 2020**

The minutes of the meeting of the Economic Development, Environment and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel held on 8 January 2020 were taken as read and approved as a correct record.

3 **SUSPENSION OF COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO 5 - ORDER OF BUSINESS**

ORDERED that, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule No 5, the Panel agreed to vary the order of business to deal with the agenda items in the following order: agenda item 6, 5, 7, 8 and 9.

4 **TEESSIDE CREMATORIUM - UPDATE**

Stockton Crematorium opened in September 2020. The initial impact in October 2019 was a year on year reduction of 28 cremations, which climbed to 88 in December 2019. It was highlighted however, that there had been an underlying reduction in the number of cremations of six per month, in line with national trends for death rates reducing over the last year or so. There was also impact from Kirkleatham Crematorium, which was currently offering reduced rates for selected times.

The January figure showed a reduction of 25 cremations and it was unclear whether the higher December figure was reflected across the industry. Data gathered over the next months would clarify the position.

In terms of the financial impact in the current financial year, for the remaining two months, a £200K shortfall in income had been projected. Using the December figure, there was a predicted annual shortfall in income of £870K. It was stressed that this 38% drop was the worst case scenario. Based on this assumption, an additional 490K had been allocated in the Medium Term Financial Plan to compensate for the loss of income. Teesside Crematorium currently provided approximately £1.8 million profit per annum.

During the past few years the Council had made significant investment in Teesside Crematorium refurbishing and upgrading the chapels as well as the grounds and ensuring that services had been improved. Whilst there had been a drop in numbers since Stockton Crematorium opened, there had been 298 cremations at Teesside in January 2020. Consideration would be given as to whether operations needed to be scaled back in the long term to ensure sustainability. In response to a query about the possible expansion of

Kirkleatham and Stockton, it seemed unlikely at the current time.

Several Members of the Panel had visited Stockton Crematorium and provided the other Panel Members with information about it. Stockton Crematorium had taken ten years from the planning stage to completion at a cost of £6.5 million. Stockton's current capacity was 40 cremations per week based on being open from Monday to Friday. Similar to Teesside, Stockton had one-hour time slots for services as well as dedicated Chapel Attendants. There were two chapels available and the buildings had been designed by a local architect with feature glass panelling which was also sourced locally. A viewing room had been incorporated into the building, in consultation with members of the Sikh community. Another feature that was highlighted was the use of a voile curtain which could be drawn around the catafalque and the lights dimmed at the close of the service.

AGREED that:

1. the information provided was received and noted.
2. a visit to Teesside Crematorium would be arranged for Panel Members.

5

REVIEW OF RECYCLING AND WASTE MANAGEMENT

The Operations Manager Recycling and Education gave a presentation in relation to the current recycling and waste management services in Middlesbrough. Middlesbrough Council provided weekly refuse, fortnightly recycling and seasonal green waste collections as well as junk jobs and the Household Waste Recycling Centre at Haverton Hill.

In 2018/2019, 61,863 tonnes of household waste was collected and 20,718 tonnes was recycled. Current performance figures showed that 33.5% of waste was recycled, 61.12% was processed at the energy from waste (EFW) facility and 5.38% of waste was disposed of in landfill. It was highlighted that significant amounts of metals that were processed in the EFW facility could not be included in the recycling figures due to Government regulations.

The national recycling target for 2020 was 50% and the latest England Recycle Rate for 2017/2018 was 43.2%. In relation to north-east recycling rates, Middlesbrough was mid table, with County Durham highest at 42.3% and Stockton On Tees lowest at 26.4%. It was pointed out that some local authorities had a fortnightly rather than weekly refuse collection. Middlesbrough Council's current budget consultation included a proposal to move to fortnightly collections.

There were five elements in the waste hierarchy from prevention to disposal and these included re-use, recycling and recovery. Reducing the amount of waste produced and requiring disposal was a key factor in the Government's Resources Waste Strategy. This included working with producers to reducing packaging and develop eco-friendly packaging.

Reuse of materials collected from junk jobs or at the Household Waste Recycling Centre could be considered. Consideration had already been given to establishing a re-use shop at the Recycling Centre but there were health and safety issues that made this difficult to implement. With regard to food waste, this was quite an expensive material to collect. From 2023, the Government would tax food producers and this funding would be passed on to Local Authorities to assist with food waste collection.

Responding to a query regarding take away pizza boxes, it was clarified that when manufactured, the boxes were recyclable. However, once they had been used for the purpose they were designed for - to hold cooked pizzas - they were no longer recyclable, due to food contamination.

It was noted that there was often confusion about which items could or could not be recycled and there were variations across local authorities as to what they collected and processed.

The Environment Bill published on 30 January 2020 made provision for:

- A new direction for resources and waste management

-
- Clear product labelling.
 - Ecodesign.
 - Producer responsibility.

Other key points in the Bill were:

- Deposit return schemes.
- Waste crime.
- Consistent set of materials collected at the kerbside.
- Food Waste Collections.
- Enforcement of Litter Strategy.

Panel Members discussed various ideas for recycling and re-use, including a re-use shop and the regular provision of skips in community areas for residents.

AGREED that the information provided was received and noted.

6 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD - UPDATE

A verbal update was provided on the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 9 January 2020.

NOTED

7 DATE OF NEXT MEETING - 4 MARCH 2020

The Chair confirmed that the next meeting of the EDEI Scrutiny Panel would be held on Wednesday 4 March 2020 at 10.30 am.

NOTED

8 ANY OTHER URGENT ITEMS WHICH IN THE OPINION OF THE CHAIR, MAY BE CONSIDERED

Air Pollution

The Vice Chair highlighted a report that had appeared on Gazettelive in relation to air pollution and the Panel's previous review of that topic.

AGREED that the Head of Public Protection would be invited to a future meeting to provide an update in relation to air pollution.

Middlehaven

Following a request at the last meeting, the Chair had received an update in relation to the clearance of land which was proposed as the site of a new school. The update had been circulated to the Panel.

AGREED that clarification would be sought as to the location of temporary accommodation for the school prior to the opening of the permanent building at Middlehaven.