

Environment Sub-Committee

7 September 2016

Present: Councillor B Burdis (Chair)
Councillors G Bell, L Bell, P Brooks, D Drummond, E
Hodson, F Lott, W Lott, G Madden, M Rankin and M
Thirlaway.

E16/09/16 Apologies

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor M Huscroft.

E17/09/16 Substitute Members

There were no substitutes reported.

E18/09/16 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

There were no declarations of interest or dispensations reported.

E19/09/16 Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 6 July 2016 be confirmed.

E20/09/16 Street Lighting

Consideration was given to a presentation which outlined proposals to develop a street lighting strategy. It was explained that in July 2004 the Authority had entered into a 25 year joint finance initiative, along with Newcastle upon Tyne City Council, for the large scale replacement of the street lighting stock and the improvement of lighting levels across the borough.

It was noted that in 2004/5 the Authority had used 13.5M kilowatt hours of energy for its street lighting. By 2013/14 this had risen to 19.2M kilowatt hours, a 42% increase in energy consumption. During the same period the cost of the energy had increased from less than 4 pence per kilowatt hour up to 10 pence per kilowatt hour.

Reference was also made to the previous studies undertaken by the Sub-committee in relation to street lighting which had recommended that street lights be dimmed and trimmed and that in some non residential areas of the Borough the lights be switched off for part of the night. The introduction of the above changes along with the installation of a central management system and other measures had resulted in a 30% reduction in the consumption of electricity, with the associated carbon reduction and energy costs falling by nearly £300K.

It was explained that work was ongoing to develop a street lighting strategy for the Borough. This strategy would cover lighting standards across the Borough, whether there was a need for a central management system, the roll out of LED lighting (Light Emitting Diode), and whether there was a need for further dimming and trimming along with the de-illumination of road signs and, if appropriate, the permanent switch off of certain lighting columns. It was suggested that a draft strategy could be presented to the Sub-committee at a future meeting.

Members sought clarification on a number of issues including the improved business case for the installation of LED lighting due to the increased cost of electricity, the need for the Mayflower system on each lighting column as the data for controlling the lighting was now available and the possibility of further dimming and trimming of lighting although it was noted that significant savings had already been made in this respect.

The Chair thanked the officer for his report

It was **AGREED** that the draft street lighting strategy be presented to a future meeting.

E21/09/16 Coastal Erosion – Overview of Strategy

Consideration was given to a report which set out an overview of national and local strategies in place to manage coastal erosion. It was explained that the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) had overall national responsibility for policies in relation to flood and coastal erosion risk management.

It was explained that the Authority had a statutory duty to manage its coastline in line with national policies and it was required to produce its own strategy for coastal defence for around 10 kilometres of coastline between Hartley Cove and the River Tyne. The majority of this coastline was protected by hard sea defences, such as sea walls, although there was one section adjacent to Whitley Bay Golf Course which was undefended cliffs.

It was explained that the overarching strategy for the management of the coastline in North Tyneside was the Shoreline Management Plan which provided a broad assessment of the risks associated with coastal erosion and provided a policy framework to assess risks to people and the developed environment. The Plan had been updated in 2009 and this had been based on an improved understanding of coastal evolution of the area of coastline between the Scottish Borders and the River Tyne.

The plan based on DEFRA criteria and guidelines had a number of policy options:

- Hold the line – maintain or upgrade the levels of protection provided by defences;
- Advance the line – build new defences seaward of the existing defence line;
- Managed realignment – allow realignment of the new shoreline with management to control or limit movement; and
- No active intervention – a decision not to invest in providing or maintaining defences.

In addition to the Shoreline Management Plan the Authority had a coastal strategy which provided a plan for the long term management of the coast between New Hartley and the River Tyne. It was explained that, in respect of coastal management, the biggest challenge which faced the Authority had been the replacement or maintenance of the various sea defences and structures which defended the bulk of the North Tyneside coastline. Since the first plan had been produced a number of schemes had been completed including the refurbishment of Cullercoats Piers and the new sea wall at Trinity Road whilst the reconstruction of the lower central promenade had been progressing.

It was explained that DEFRA provided funding for flood and coastal erosion risk management activities in the form of Grant in Aid. It had developed a 6 year forward plan to allocate the national coast protection budget which allowed it to prioritise individual schemes. The amount of Grant in Aid which could be made available to individual schemes depended on the number of houses protected, the amount of damage prevented and the other benefits which a project could deliver. Any shortfall in funding had to be made up by local contributions from the Authority and or other partners.

Coast protection authorities had been encouraged to establish coastal groups, develop shoreline management plans, adopt a strategic approach and monitor their coastline. It was explained that the Authority was a member of the North East Coastal Group which covered the shoreline between St Abbs Head in the Scottish Borders and Gibraltar Point in Lincolnshire.

It was explained that monitoring of the North Tyneside coastline began in 2001. This monitoring included beach profiles, topographic surveys, aerial photography, Light Detecting and Ranging (LiDar) and visual inspections. The data collected would eventually allow for accurate prediction of future coastal erosion and assist in the design of future defence schemes.

Members sought clarification on a number of issues including an assertion that the entrance to Cullercoats harbour was silting up and the levels of sand cover on Whitley Bay beaches had reduced over recent years due to erosion. It was suggested that an analysis of the monitoring data might provide some answers.

The Chair thanked the officer for his report.

It was **AGREED** that an analysis of the monitoring data be undertaken and the results reported back to a future meeting