

Minutes of a Meeting of the Economic Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 23 June 2005

Present: Councillor Mick Jones (Chair)
" Michael Doody
" Pat Henry
" Mick Jones
" Frank McCarney
" Philip Morris-Jones
" Kam Singh
" Ian Smith

Also present: Councillor Chris Saint, Portfolio holder for economic development.

Officers: Bill Basra, Corporate Review Team
William Brown, County Fire Officer
John Deegan, Director of PTES
Jean Hardwick, Principal Committee Administrator, Chief Executive's Dept.
Ian Marriott, Principal Solicitor, Chief Executive's Dept.
John Ridgley, Regeneration Projects Manager, PTES
John Scouler, Head of Social and Economic Regeneration, PTES.

1. General

(1) Apologies.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors George Atkinson, Eithne Goode and John Ross.

(2) Members' Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

None

(3) (a) Minutes of the meeting of the former Employment and Inclusion Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 8 March 2005

Members noted the minutes of the former Employment and Inclusion Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 8 March 2005.

(b) Matters Arising

Minute 1 (2) (b) (ii) – Jaguar Cars

Councillor Phillip Morris-Jones referred to the comments recorded about the Jaguar Cars, and the situation being now overtaken by the closure of the Rover Company. He said that, more accurately, the concerns expressed related to the need to investigate what could be done to help the contractors and subcontractors who were facing difficulty finding alternative contracts to replace those lost by redundancies at Jaguar Cars and the closure of the Rover Plant. The Chair acknowledged the need for discussion about the future of the motorcar industry in the sub-region recognising the problems resulting from the Jaguar and Rover closures.

In response John Deegan undertook to report to the next meeting setting out a position statement on motor industry. He also undertook to commission expert advice on the overall car industry situation in so far as it affected the sub-region and the impact on the companies that support the car industry and to report the findings to a future meeting. Members accepted the offer of reports to the next and to a future meeting.

(4) Minutes of the meeting of the Economic Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 17 May 2005.

Resolved that the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 17 May 2005 be agreed as a correct record and be signed by the Chair.

(5) Remit of the Economic Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Resolved to note the remit of the Committee is to advise on the development of policies and to scrutinise performance in relation to economic development including regional and sub regional matters, employment, tourism, community development, local community planning partnerships, rural affairs, strategic land use, regeneration and planning.

2. Public Question Time

None.

3. Review of Dyslexia Issues

Bill Basra presented the report of the County Solicitor and Assistant Chief Executive outlining the outcomes from two dyslexia meetings held in the 2004/05 municipal.

Members commended the review and the outcomes as set out in the report.

Resolved that the report be –

- (1) noted and the officers be commended on the report;
- (2) passed onto the Warwickshire Disability Forum for information and consideration;

- (3) Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee be recommended to examine issues relating to the diagnosis of dyslexia with a view to making improvements where necessary;
- (4) Adult and Community Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee be recommended to examine the issue of raising awareness and accessibility of information to people with dyslexia within county libraries.

4. Equality and Diversity Progress Report.

CFO William Brown presented his report, which outlined the progress of equality and diversity within the Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service.

Members commended the progress of equality and diversity within the Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service.

Resolved that the Committee note the progress on equality and diversity within Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service, and endorsed the approach.

5. Rural Policies and Rural Services

John Ridgley presented the report of the Director of Planning Transport and Economic Strategy outlining proposals to review the Council's approach to policy and the delivery of services in rural areas. He reminded Members that, in view of the changed responsibilities of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees following the Annual Meeting of Council, the Committee was asked to reconsider the process for taking forward the review of rural policies and rural services.

Discussion followed during which Members expressed concern about the lack of progress of the Freight Quality Partnership, and public transport in rural areas as issues of particular importance. Concern was expressed that the map detailing HGV routes, on which there had been much public consultation, had not yet been published. The need to provide activities and schemes in rural areas, which would involve and engage young persons, was also highlighted.

The Chair acknowledged the problem caused by HGV's travelling through rural areas and the issue of public transport and access to services. The issue of providing activities for young people was, he suggested, outside the remit of the review and fell within that of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee and was an issue, which impacted on both rural and urban areas. The Chair considered that the Committee should take a broader approach to rural policies and address job creation and greater diversity in the countryside.

John Ridgley reported that the map referred to by Members was shortly to be finalised. John Deegan informed Members that he would be reporting to Cabinet in the autumn on signing, because there was public concern about the growing number of signs cluttering the highway, and he could include signing of routes in rural areas for HGV's. This report could be brought to this Committee for consideration either before after Cabinet. The Chair said that the would discuss the way forward on this issue with Councillor Saint and John Deegan.

Resolved that the Committee identify three key issues to be addressed as follows –

- (1) industry and diversity (job creation) and public transport (access to health and other services);
- (2) signing and routing of HGV's through rural area (to be discussed by the Chair, Councillor Chris Saint and John Deegan.)

6. Provisional Items for Future Meetings and Forward Plan Items Relevant to the Work of this Committee

(a) Provisional Items for Future Meetings

Members considered the provisional items for the Committee's future meetings and the work programme was amended as follows -

- 26 July 2005 meeting –add a report from the Director of PTES giving a position statement on the motor industry;
- 6 September 2005 meeting – (b) extend the report from the Director of PTES on the Regeneration Strategy Action Plan to include "Improvements"; (b) defer the report on the Review of the Approach to policy and the delivery of services in rural areas to the 18 October meeting;
- To be timetabled – (a) in the autumn (special meeting if necessary) consultant/expert's report on help that can be given to companies who support the car industry and are experiencing problems. (b) To note that the item of Affordable Housing is being dealt with through a County and Districts Partnership (led by County officers).

(b) Forward Plan

Members noted the Forward Plan item relevant to the work of this Committee.

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Regional Housing Strategy – Response to Government Strategy.

7. Any Other Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

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Chair of the Committee

The Committee rose at 3:15 p.m.