

Minutes of the Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 4 March 2010

Present: Councillors:

Penny Bould
Les Caborn
Chris Davis
Ron Cockings
Mike Doody (Chair)
Jim Foster
Joan Lea
Barry Lobbett
Phillip Morris- Jones
Ray Sweet
Helen Walton
John Whitehouse
Chris Williams

Also Present: Councillor Alan Cockburn (Portfolio Holder for Environment)
Councillor Peter Fowler (Economic Development)
Councillor Chris Saint (Leisure, Culture and Housing)

Officers

1. Election of Vice Chair

Councillor Mike Doody, seconded by Councillor Les Caborn, proposed that Councillor Jim Foster be appointed Vice-Chair of the Committee.

A vote was taken and it was resolved that Councillor Jim Foster be appointed Vice-Chair of the Committee.

2. General

(1) Apologies for absence

None.

(2) Members Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

Councillors Martyn Ashford, Les Caborn, Jose Compton, Eithne Goode, John Whitehouse and Alan Cockburn declared prejudicial interests as Members of Warwick Area Committee who were present when the Area Committee made the decision relating to item 2 below. These Members left the meeting after they had addressed the Committee.

- 3. Public Question Time**
- 4. County Highways Contract**
- 5. Questions to the Portfolio Holder**
- 6. Quarter 3 – Corporate Performance Report 2009/10**

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director for Environment and Economy presenting the third quarter performance for 2009/10 under the enhanced performance management arrangements.

Following the ensuing discussion the following points were made:

1. There needed to be greater clarification around the support and advice being given in terms of economic development, and when economic benefits were being created. John Scouller noted that the Coventry and Warwickshire Investment Trust was assisting many businesses in getting finances in place. Councillor Peter Fowler pointed out that 256 investors and businesses had approached the Authority for help and guidance over Quarter 3.
2. In terms of the Council's business parks, every effort was being made to assist companies through the economic difficulties through downsizing of premises, deferring rent payments etc. The County Council were recognised as being good, flexible landlords and business centres were beginning to see an increase in occupancy from six months ago.
3. The country had been experiencing a heavy recession, resulting in an alarming number of jobs and skills lost, and the aim was to see a greater mix of skills in the economic recovery and an increase in manufacturing within the County.
4. There were a number of national indicators relating to economic development where the County Council had no control, and work was being done to look at proxy measures, where the Authority could have input and effect.
5. It was felt that the data under Ni177 (Number of journeys made by bus and light rail) showed a gradual trend increase, which had plateaued this years, reflected an ambition of target rather than an actual ambition.
6. In response to a query on Li712 (Percentage reduction in Municipal Waste landfilled) and the disparity with the Government 'Waste Data Flow' database, Martin Stott noted that this Government reporting tool was backward looking. The data held by the County Council was more up to date and therefore more accurate. The two sets of data were brought together and validated on an annual basis. Performance and awards were decided on the validated 'Waste Data Flow' database figures.

Resolved that the Committee noted the performance and improvement activity of services under the remit of the committee

- 7. Review and Refresh of WCC Performance Indicators**

The Committee considered the report of the Assistant Chief Executive presenting the proposed measures for inclusion under the Portfolios relevant to the remit of the Committee.

Following the ensuing discussion the following points were made:

1. There needed to be greater clarification around the support and advice being given in terms of economic development, and when economic benefits were being created. John Scouller noted that the Coventry and Warwickshire Investment Trust was assisting many businesses in getting finances in place. Councillor Peter Fowler pointed out that 256 investors and businesses had approached the Authority for help and guidance over Quarter 3.
2. In terms of the Council's business parks, every effort was being made to assist companies through the economic difficulties through downsizing of premises, deferring rent payments etc. The County Council were recognised as being good, flexible landlords and business centres were beginning to see an increase in occupancy from six months ago.
3. The country had been experiencing a heavy recession, resulting in an alarming number of jobs and skills lost, and the aim was to see a greater mix of skills in the economic recovery and an increase in manufacturing within the County.
4. There were a number of national indicators relating to economic development where the County Council had no control, and work was being done to look at proxy measures, where the Authority could have input and effect.
5. It was felt that the data under Ni177 (Number of journeys made by bus and light rail) showed a gradual trend increase, which had plateaued this years, reflected an ambition of target rather than an actual ambition.
6. In response to a query on Li712 (Percentage reduction in Municipal Waste landfilled) and the disparity with the Government data flow, Martin Stott noted that Government waste data flow was backward looking. The data held by the County Council was more up to date and therefore more accurate. The two sets of data were brought together and validated on an annual basis. Performance and awards were decided on the validated waste data flow figures.

Resolved that the Committee noted the performance and improvement activity of services under the remit of the committee

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Chair

The Committee rose at 11:25 a.m.

