

Minutes of the Meeting of the Environment and Rural Affairs Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 22 March 2005

Present: -

Members of the Committee	Councillor Peter Barnes
	“ Gordon Collett
	“ Jose Compton
	“ Chris Davis
	“ Les Forsyth
	“ Anne Forwood
	“ Eithne Goode
	“ Martin Heatley (Chair)
	“ Joan Lea (Vice Chair)
	“ Ray Sweet

Officers	Graeme Fitton, Head of Transport Planning, PTES
	Jean Hardwick, Principal Committee Administrator, Chief Executive's Dept.
	Ian Marriott, Principal Solicitor, Chief Executive's Dept.
	Andy McDarmid, Environmental Management Systems Officer, PTES
	Martin Stott, Deputy Director PTES.
	Paul Rhodes, Rural Estates Services Manager, Property Services.

1. General

(1) Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Tom Cavanagh and Andy Marshall and Councillor Ken Browne (Portfolio holder for Transport, Environment and Rural Affairs).

(2) Members Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

None.

(3) Minutes of the meeting held on 15 February 2005.

The minutes of the Environment and Rural Affairs Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 15 February 2005 were agreed as a correct record subject to Councillor Anne Forwood being added to the list of those present.

(4) Public Questions

None.

2. Environmental Sustainability – Service Improvement Plan

Andy McDarmaid, with the aid of a power point presentation, and Martin Stott presented the report of the Director of Planning, Transport and Economic Strategy. The Service Improvement Plan brought together the improvements the Authority intended to make under the five key strategic headings supporting the corporate policy, with regard to sustaining the environment. The Plan followed the work undertaken during the Internal Review of Environment and Sustainability and formed the work programme for the Environment Sustainability Board.

Discussion followed during which Members' commended the Plan and the presentation. Concern was expressed, with regard to the presentation material, that for some people, the use on the graphs of small black print on a green background was difficult to read

In reply to questions Martin Stott said that –

- Progression of the Green Travel Plan and the Safer Routes to School scheme had been delayed because of staffing issues. The staffing situation had now been resolved in that 3 new staff members had been appointed, funded by the Department of Transport, and a further member of staff had returned to work after 6 months sabbatical leave.
- The absence of action points with regard to several targets was because the Plan was currently being evolved. These areas were being developed and would be included in the 6 monthly progress report.
- With regard to objective 22, a member of staff had been appointed and progress was being made to ensure that suppliers conformed to the County Council's environmentally sustainable procurement agenda.
- Generally staff were very positive and co-operative with the Green Travel Plan and the Trade Unions had been invited to the launch.

Resolved that –

- (1) The status of the Service Improvement Plan in Appendix 1 be endorsed;
- (2) The framework for ISO 14001 certification as shown in Appendix 1 is used as the monitoring tool for the Service Improvement Plan;
- (3) A Seminar be arranged for all Members of the Council following the May elections;
- (4) A more detailed report be presented to this Committee in 6 months time to demonstrate improvement in performance in a cohesive and consistent manner.

3. Best Value Review of Traffic Management – The Final Report

Graeme Fitton presented the report of the Director of Planning, Transport and Economic Strategy setting out the Final Report of the Best Value Review of Traffic Management including an Outline Service Improvement Plan.

Discussion followed and, in reply to Members expression of concern about greater delegation to officers, Graeme Fitton gave assurance about Members being adequately consulted and referred Members to paragraph 6.17 of the report.

Resolved that the Committee endorses the Final Report of the Review attached as Appendix A, and commends the proposed Outline Service Improvement Plan to Cabinet for approval.

4. Implementation of the Tree Stock Risk Assessment

Paul Rhodes presented the report of the Director of Property Services and invited comment on the progress made in the recording of trees within and affecting the County Council's ownership.

Discussion followed during which Members welcomed the report and asked for a further progress report in 6 months time.

Resolved that the Committee –

- (1) welcomes the progress made in the recording of trees within and affecting the County Council's ownership;
- (2) asks for a progress report in 6 months time.

5. 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 Committee's future work programme and noted the additional items as follows –

27 September 2005 meeting –

- Environmental Sustainability six monthly progress report (PTES);
- Implementation of the Tree Stock Risk Assessment – Progress Report (PS).

(b) Forward Plan

Members noted the Forward Plan items relevant to the work of the Committee as follows -

Cabinet – 7 April 2005

Warwickshire Landscape Character –Forestry Commission request that WCC contribute to a West Midlands Regional Map.

Cabinet – 28April 2005

Capital Programme for Transport 2005 –06

Cabinet – 8 September 2005

Renewal of Management Contracts for Waste – EXEMPT

6. Any Other Items

There were no items of urgent business.

7. Reports Containing Confidential or Exempt Information

Resolved to exclude the public from the meeting for the agenda item below on the grounds that their presence would involve disclosure of confidential or exempt information as defined in the Local Government Act 1972.

8. Exempt Minute of the Meeting held on 15 February 2005

The exempt minutes of the Environment and Rural Affairs Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 15 February 2005 were agreed as a correct record.

9. Vote of Thanks to Members

The Chair reminded Members that this was the final meeting before the elections and thanked them for their participation in the Committee's work during the previous year. Councillor Collett expressed particular appreciation to Councillor Forsyth who would not be standing again in the next election.

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Chair of Committee

The Committee rose at 3:40 p.m.