

Minutes of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 14 September 2006.

Present:

Members of the Committee: Councillor Ken Browne (Chair)
“ Ray Sweet (Vice Chair)
“ John Appleton
“ Gordon Collett
“ Jose Compton
“ Ann Forwood
“ Eithne Goode
“ John Haynes
“ Joan Lee
“ Sid Tooth
“ John Whitehouse

Also Present : Councillor Martin Heatley, Portfolio Holder for Environment.

Officers:

John Deegan, Strategic Director of Environment and Economy
Graeme Fitton, Head of Transport and Highways, Environment and Economy Directorate.
Jean Hardwick, Principal Committee Administrator, Performance and Development Directorate.
Ian Marriott, Community and Environmental Legal Services Manager, Performance and Development Directorate
Peter Samwell, Policy Manager (County Highways), Environment and Economy Directorate.
Martin Stott, Deputy Director, Head of Waste and Environment, Environment and Economy Directorate.
Paul Williams, Scrutiny Officer, Performance and Development Directorate

1. General

(1) Apologies for absence

An apology for absence was received from Councillor George Atkinson.

(2) Members Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

Members declared personal interests as district/borough councillors as listed below:

Warwick District Council
Councillors Jose Compton and Eithne Goode.

Rugby Borough Council
Councillor Gordon Collett.

North Warwickshire Borough Council
Councillor Ray Sweet and Sid Tooth.

Stratford District Council
Councillor John Appleton

(5) (a) Minutes of the Meetings held on 8 June 2006

The minutes of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 8 June 2006 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

(b) Matters Arising

(i) Minute 3 Concessionary Travel in Warwickshire

(a) In reply to a question from Councillor Josie Compton the Chair confirmed that letters had been sent to the Warwickshire Members of Parliament. (Copies of responses received from Mike O'Brien, James Plaskitt and Bill Oler were circulated). The Chair added that letters of support had also been received from Jeremy Wright and John Maples.

(b) Councillor John Appleton referred to the recent Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the Acute Services Review, and reported concern expressed that concessionary travel was not available to Warwickshire residents visiting the University Hospital Coventry and Warwickshire (UHCW) because free travel did not extend to Coventry. General concern had also been expressed about the need for better, affordable, access to the UHCW.

Graeme Fitton explained that concessionary transport was free to older and disabled people for journeys that started and finished in Warwickshire and that this might need to be better publicised. John Deegan said that the issue of access and cost of transport to the UHCW was the responsibility of the Health Authority but undertook to investigate what help his Directorate might be able to offer in this respect.

(ii) Minute 4 Leamington Urban Mixed (LUMP) Priority Project Review

In reply to questions Graeme Fitton –

- reported that the 2nd Phase of the LUMP Scheme was currently on budget. He added that there would be a 3rd

phase to complete the scheme, in front of the Church, but this could not be undertaken until the necessary planning permissions were granted.

- said that the contractors were assessing how to fix the unstable paving slabs.

2. Public Questions Time

None

3. Planning, Transport and Economic Strategy Performance Report – Full Year 2005/06

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director of Environment and Economy.

The report presented full year performance outturn with respect to Planning, Transport and Economic Strategy (PTES) objectives. In addition it contained details of consultation activity, which had taken place and an analysis of complaints received during 2005/06.

Discussion ensued on performance indicators that did not meet targets following which the Committee -

- (1) acknowledged positive progress made on PTES's 2005/06 performance at the full year stage;
- (2) noted that a report would be presented to 10 October 2006 Cabinet on Recycling of Plastics;
- (3) asked for reports to be time tabled for future meetings as follows-
 - (i) On the impact that school choice has had on performance indicators CH45a+b (page 16 of the report), "children travelling to and from school by car", to include an investigation into the payment of school transport costs (£200 a year) by monthly instalments.
 - (ii) A review of the policy on accident and remedial schemes, to be carried out in conjunction with the review of the speed policy.
 - (iii) Progress on the Climate Change Strategy and clarification of the position with regard to the proposal for a cross-party Steering Group;
- (4) asked that the future annual report on accident statistics include separate statistics on the number of fatalities and seriously injured, details about the reasons for the fluctuating statistics for BVPI (i) L, (ii)(H) and (iii) (H), the impact of Safe Routes to School Schemes on

reducing accidents and progress of the Safe Routes to School Schemes.

(5) noted that the BVPI 215b, (page 46) “average time taken to repair a street lighting fault” is currently being discussed at officer level with a view to resolving the delays in carrying out the work. A report will be brought to a future meeting of the Committee if the discussions prove to be unsuccessful.

(6) Asked the Strategic Director of Environment and Economy to -

- (i) contact the Warwickshire Members of Parliament to arrange for a cross-party delegation to meet with the Minister for Transport about the need for an early decision on funding for the Rugby Western Relief Road (A7 of 14) to ensure that S106 money is not lost if the scheme is not started before April 2007;
- (ii) ensure that the Kenilworth Greenways Project (A11 of 14) is progressed with delay.

4. Future Work Programme and Items Relevant to the Work of this Committee

(a) Provisional Items for Future Meetings

The Committee agreed the work programme for future meetings subject to the inclusion of the following reports in the section headed “To be timetabled” -

- (i) Review of Speed Policy (following Seminar on 21/9/06 (link with (ii) below).
- (ii) Report on performance indicators “children travelling to and from school by car”(see minute 3 (3) (i) above).
- (iii) Review of the Criteria for Accident Reduction Schemes (minute 3 (3) (ii) above) - to link with Review of Speed Policy.
- (iv) Climate Change Strategy (Clarification of position with regard to Cross-party Steering Group. (minute 3 (3) (iii) above).
- (v) Rural Strategy – work with Economic Development O & S Committee.
- (vi) Extend existing report on Highway Trees to include maintenance of highway verges and parking.

(b) Forward Plan

None

5. Any Other Business

There were no items of urgent business.

6. Reports Containing Confidential or Exempt Information

Resolved that members of the public be excluded from the meeting for items 7 and 8 below on the grounds that their presence would involve the disclosure of confidential or exempt information as defined in the relevant paragraphs of the Local Government Act 1972'.

7. Highways Maintenance Contract with Carillion – Report on Progress.

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director of Environment and Economy, which updated the Committee on the progress and action plan.

Following discussion the Committee –

- (1) Noted the progress made on the action plan agreed at the January 2006 meeting.
- (2) Asked for a further report in September 2007 identifying any outstanding issues of concern.

8. Highways Liability.

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director of Performance and Development on highway liabilities.

The Committee commended and noted the report.

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Chair of Committee

The Committee rose at 12:25 p.m.