

Minutes of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 1 March 2007.

Present:

Members: Councillor Ken Browne (Chair)
“ Ray Sweet (Vice Chair)
“ John Appleton
“ George Atkinson
“ Gordon Collett
“ Jose Compton
“ Eithne Goode
“ Mick Jones
“ Katherine King
“ Joan Lea
“ Bryan Levy
“ John Whitehouse

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

Officers:

Oliver Garvey, Strategy Advisor (Marketing), Environment and Economy Directorate.
Glenn Fleet, Sustainability Group Manager, Environment and Economy Directorate
Jean Hardwick, Principal Committee Administrator, Performance and Development Directorate.
Andy McDarmaid, Performance Manager, Environment and Economy Directorate.
Martin Stott, Head of Environment and Waste, Environment and Economy Directorate
Paul Williams, Scrutiny Officer, Performance and Development Directorate

1. General

(1) Apologies for absence

None.

(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

Stratford District Council - Councillor John Appleton

(3) Minutes of the Meetings held on 18 January 2007

The minutes of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 18 January 2007 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

Matters Arising

(a) Minute 1 (3) Rugby Western Relief Road - Funding

In reply to a question Martin Stott undertook to circulate to Members a position statement with regard to the funding of the Western Relief Road.

(b) Minute 3 Street Lighting Hours of Operation

In reply to a question Members were informed that the consultation on this issue had not yet started. The Chair reported on the misreporting by the press of a statement made by him when interviewed on this proposal.

(c) Minute 4 Update on Maintenance of Highway Trees in Warwickshire, Verge Parking and Verge Maintenance: Resolution (2)

Councillor Jose Compton expressed concern that because of the way the resolution of this item had been recorded, she was unsure about what had been agreed. It was agreed that, in future, resolutions should not refer to a paragraph contained within the report under discussion but should record the decision in full.

2. Public Questions Time

None

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

(a) Provisional Items for Future Meetings

Members considered the provisional items for future meetings. The Chair suggested that the work programme should include comparable data from other authorities where the County Council was performing less favourable in areas relating to this Committee's remit. Members supported this proposal and suggested that information should also be included about areas of work in which the Council was performing better in order to assess whether resources might be better used elsewhere.

In connection with the report to the April meeting on the LUMP Scheme Members asked for information on the number of complaints received about uneven slabs along The Parade and who would be responsible for making good the remedial work.

The Committee agreed the work programme subject to –

- (1) The inclusion of a report from Paul Williams on “Benchmarking data from other authorities” in the agenda for the June meeting).
- (2) The inclusion, in the LUMP Scheme report to the April meeting, of information relating to complaints received about uneven slabs and responsibility for repair.
- (3) It being noted that the Rural Strategy Working Group had not yet met to agree its terms of reference but that progress would be reporting orally to the April meeting.

(b) Forward Plan Items

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

4. Environment and Economy Directorate Complaints and Compliments – April-December 2006

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director for Environment and Economy, which outlined the progress on complaints and compliments received up to December 2006.

During discussion the following comments were noted that –

- (1) during a recent complaints training workshop the Local Government Ombudsman had said the Council’s process stood up well against best practice.
- (2) In the recent CPA Assessment, the Environment element had achieved 4* rating.
- (3) It would be helpful if future reports contained a more detailed analysis of the type of complaints received in order for Members to consider how they might be addressed.

In reply to Members comments -

- Paul Williams reported that Resources, Performance and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee, at its last meeting, had asked for a corporate review of how complaints and compliments were reported.

- Andy McDarmaid said that the Environment and Economy Directorate would be playing a major role in helping to shape this review.

The Committee –

- (i) Commended the Environment and Economy Directorate's on the reduction in the number of complaints received during April to December 2006.
- (ii) Noted the corporate review being undertaken into the presentation of complaints and compliments information/statistics.

5. Annual Report

The Committee, having considered the report of the Strategic Director for Performance and Development, agrees the annual report of this Committee and refers it to the Council on 20th March 2007

6. Council Motion – Feasibility Study on Establishing a Waste Partnership Company

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director for Environment and Economy and were asked to support a feasibility study on establishing a Waste Partnership Company.

The Chair reported that, at the Warwickshire Waste Partnership meeting on Tuesday, four of the district and borough councils and the County Council had signed up to the feasibility study but Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council had declined to participate.

Glenn Fleet added that the Waste Partnership had agreed to the terms of reference being amended to include street cleaning as this had been omitted in error.

The Committee –

- (1) Supports the proposed direction on carrying out a feasibility study to establish a Waste Partnership Company.
- (2) Endorses the revised terms of reference of a working group and nominates Councillors Ken Browne, Eithne Goode and Martin Heatley as the County Council representatives.
- (3) Asks the Working Group to report back to this Committee before the final report is completed so that this Committee can have an input to the process.

7. Any Other Business

There were no items of other business.

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Chair of Committee

The Committee rose at 10:40 a.m.