

Minutes of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 26 April 2007.

Present:

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

Also Present : Councillor Martin Heatley, Portfolio Holder for Environment, and Councillors Sarah Boad and Tim Naylor for item 5, Leamington Urban Mixed Priority Review and item 10, Parking in the Parade.

Officers:

Roger Bennett, Strategic Projects Team Leader, Traffic Projects Group, Environment and Economy Directorate.
Mike Cunningham, Principal Lighting Engineer, Environment and Economy Directorate
Graham Fitton, Head of Transport and Highways, Environment and Economy Directorate.
Glenn Fleet, Sustainability Group Manager, Environment and Economy Directorate
Jean Hardwick, Principal Committee Administrator, Performance and Development Directorate.
Ian Marriott, Community and Environment Legal Services Manager, Performance and Development Directorate.
Max McDonogh, Design Services, Environment and Economy Directorate.
Peter Samwell, Policy Manager, County Highways Policy Transport and Highways, Environment and Economy Directorate
Martin Stott, Head of Environment and Waste, Environment and Economy Directorate
Paul Williams, Scrutiny Officer, Performance and Development Directorate

Invitees: Richard Jackson, Public Lighting Manager and Steve Owen, Customer Delivery Manager, E-ON, UK, attended for item 4.

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 - Councillors Joan Lea and Ray Sweet

Stratford District Council - Councillor John Appleton

(3) Minutes of the Meeting held on 1 March 2007

The minutes of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 1 March 2007 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

Matters Arising

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

In reply to a question from Councillor Gordon Collett, Graeme Fitton reported that the DfT had given conditional approval to the Rugby Western Relief Road funding and it was anticipated that full approval would be granted after the May elections. An advanced contract had been awarded to enable the contractor to fence the site, and to start work on the site compound.

(b) Minute 3 Future Work Programme – Rural Strategy Working Group.

In reply to a question the Chair informed Members that the work on the Rural Strategy would be deferred and the position reviewed in January 2008.

(c) Minute 6 Council Motion – Feasibility Study on Establishing a Waste Partnership Company.

Glenn Fleet reported that the indications from district/borough council officers was that the Partnership Appraisal Working Party would not be convened until June because two of their portfolio holders would not be standing for re-election.

2. Public Question Time

None

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

(a) Provisional Items for Future Meetings

The Committee noted the future work programme and agreed revisions as follows under “future items to be allocated” –

- (1) Street Lighting – Hours of Operation Consultation: To be allocated a meeting date when the Area Committees have been consulted.
- (2) Severn Trent Water – This issue to be included in the special meeting in October on “Climate Change and the Impact on Water”.
- (3) The A5 – this item to be scheduled for consideration at the Committee’s 8 November 2007 meeting. Graeme Fitton undertook to provide a briefing note for this meeting and reported that the County Council and Leicestershire County Council had agreed to a joint initiative to address the areas of concern, which related to the Spatial Strategy housing proposals.
- (4) Public Transport Access to the Hospital – Consideration to be given to a joint scrutiny exercise with Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Chair reported that the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee had made a recommendation to the Health PCT about finding a joint solution to this problem.
- (5) Rural Strategy Working Group – deferred to January 2008 (see minute 1 (3) (b) above).
- (6) Annual Report from Smallholdings – Smallholdings Panel to be asked to propose a meeting date.

(b) Forward Plan Items

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

4. Energy Services Presentation on Street Lighting and Mains Repairs

Richard Jackson, with the aid of a power point presentation, (copy attached) introduced E-ON, UK and–

- (1) Detailed its work relating to public lighting, which fell within the "New Connections" arm of its Energy Services Business.
- (2) Highlighted that repair of the majority of Warwickshire faults were out of standard (the current SLA standard measure being 15 days for a single fault and 5 days for a multiple fault). He explained that the reasons for delays were mainly because of trying to clear a backlog of problems, the introduction of a more accurate reporting system and instances where road closures required 28 days notice. Until the backlog was cleared the standard would not improve and might be worse before showing any improvement.
- (3) Explained the main elements to the fault process and the new "End to End Process Review Improvements" plan.
- (4) He said that E-ON was committed to improving performance against standards but that 100% performance against existing standards was not achievable. He outlined proposed revised standards for 2007 that were considered to be achievable. He added that Central Network provided adequate funding for this work and said that improvements would be delivered in accordance with an action plan and timescales, which would enable improved performance to be sustained.

Peter Samwell highlighted one indicator that had caused concern (100 days to repair a cable fault). The primary reason for this delay was the reporting mechanism which had since been improved, with the latest being 28 days, but there was some way to go to achieve 15 days. He added, for comparison purposes, that 370 orders were issued last year to repair cables and 16,000 faults for street lighting.

In reply to questions Richard Jackson said that –

- (1) The level of service provided for Warwickshire was the same as that provided for other authorities. An analysis of all work was provided monthly to the County Council and this included an age analysis and data relating to other authorities, and which would provide the evidence that the work was carried out fairly and no preference given. Poor performance had occurred in established former areas (east midlands).
- (2) E-ON was one of the top performing companies in the UK.
- (3) The backlog of difficult faults was being managed by a dedicated team and new jobs dealt with within the set standards. Some jobs were outstanding from 2006 and the vast majority of these jobs were where cables had burned back.
- (4) 28 days delay in carrying out jobs related to the period of notice that was required in a traffic sensitive area.
- (5) E-ON hoped to turn round its performance in the street lighting area and he would be happy to attend the Committee later in the year to report progress.

The Chair -

- (1) thanked Richard Jackson and Steve Owen for attending the meeting and presenting their report.
- (2) asked that future Environment and Economy Directorate Performance reports include a separate section on Energy Services BVPI 215b performance.

5. Leamington Urban Mixed Priority (LUMP) Review

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director of Environment and Economy, which described the current financial situation following completion of both phases 1 and 2 of the project. The report also included the current situation regarding the implementation of the remaining works.

Max McDonogh highlighted that the bedding trial was ongoing and once it was found to be successful the remaining rocking slabs would be rectified, subject to budgetary constraints. It was pointed out that it would be pointless replacing the broken slabs until the parking issue was resolved.

During discussion Members noted with concern the comments contained in 4.3 of the report and expressed differing views about the desirability of bollards in the Parade should the parking problems not be resolved. The general view was that bollards should be resisted unless all other measures failed.

In response to comments and concerns Max McDonogh explained the circumstances surrounding the reason why the slabs had been laid on concrete in Phase 1 and said that the finishing materials used on the Parade had been agreed with stakeholders over a long period prior to commencement of the work.

Councillor Martin Heatley commended the work carried out on The Parade, which was a most important area of Leamington, and which had been undertaken after careful consultation. The problem caused by delivery lorries and illegal parking needed to be addressed by traffic regulation orders, if necessary, and by better policing rather than bollards as this would be contrary to the aim of the scheme which was for The Parade to remain uncluttered.

The Chair referred to the issues raised and Members' views which were, in the main, opposed to the use of bollards to address the parking problems but considered that the Committee should keep a watching brief on the situation.

The Committee noted –

- (1) the progress of the scheme.
- (2) that, if the financial situation outlined in the report changes, a further report will be brought to this Committee.

6. Draft Waste Minimisation Strategy

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director of Environment and Economy, which asked for views on the draft Waste Minimisation Strategy presently out for consultation.

The Chair asked for officer comment on Mr Keith Kondakor's response to the consultation and reported that the Warwickshire Waste Partnership had already agreed the draft Strategy for consultation.

Glenn Fleet confirmed that Mr. Kondakor's previous e-mail had been responded to and he had, therefore, agreed to amend the increase growth in waste to 1.2% on average per year, which tied in the forecast of housing growth. In addition, he highlighted that the current landfill tax of £24 would increase by £8 per tonne from next April escalating to £56 by 2011. This increase, together with disposal costs, would increase costs from a range of £44 at present for some sites to an estimated £70 in 2011.

Glenn Fleet reported 6 responses received on the consultation document relating to waste reduction, green waste and plastic collection. One proposal was to minimise up to 20% by 2015 in line with what Somerset had achieved whereas the draft Strategy recommended 10%. The Officer said he believed that Somerset had achieved this result by not accepting green waste at the kerbside.

Discussion followed during which Members highlighted their concerns about the amount of plastic entering the waste stream and the need for kerbside collection to encourage separation.

The Committee endorsed the draft Waste Minimisation Strategy and noted Members' comments relating to the collection of plastics.

7. Review of Parking Policies

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director of Environment and Economy on the review that had been carried out of the County Council's parking policies. The report outlined possible changes together with a new policy on footway parking which recommended that the draft policies be submitted to the five Area Committees and other consultees for comment and that a revised draft, taking into account the views expressed, be considered by this Committee prior to its ultimate submission to Cabinet.

The Committee endorsed the draft policy, in principle, for submission to the five Area Committees and other consultees for comment and asked that a revised draft, taking into account the views expressed, be considered by this Committee prior to its ultimate submission to Cabinet.

8. Any Other Business

There were no items of other business.

9. Exempt Item

Resolved to exclude the public from the meeting for item 10 below on the grounds that their presence would involve the disclosure of confidential or exempt information as defined in paragraphs 3 and 5 of the Local Government Act 1972.

10. Parking in the Parade

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Directors of Performance and Development and Environment and Economy, which recommended steps to be taken to limit the risk of harm from vehicles parking on the footways in the Parade in Leamington.

Discussion followed during which Members referred to the discussion about the damage done to the pavement as a result of parking on The Parade, during item 5 above, and said that the option of bollards should be resisted until decriminalisation of parking was introduced later in the year and other measures pursued.

In reply to questions Ian Marriott said that the law about parking on the pavement was a complicated mix of statutory provisions but that a traffic regulation order banning parking on the pavement would make the position clear and simple. When parking in Leamington was decriminalised responsibility for enforcement would pass to the Parking Attendants.

Councillor Sarah Boad referred to many incidents of parking on the pavement she had witnessed in Leamington and which the Police ignored. She also referred to the damage done to footpaths on the Parade by vehicles connected with the Christmas market.

The Chair suggested that a letter should be written to the Chief Constable asking for Police support to stop the illegal parking of vehicles on the pavements in The Parade until such time as the decriminalisation of parking and a road traffic order banning footway parking had been introduced.

The Committee –

- (1) endorsed the measures proposed to discourage parking on the footway in the Parade in Leamington.
- (2) asked that a letter be sent to the Chief Constable asking for enforcement of pavement parking in The Parade in Leamington prior to the introduction of decriminalisation in August.
- (3) requested vigorous enforcement of a traffic regulation order banning footway parking in the months following its introduction, and

(4) agreed that the possible use of bollards should be considered only after the traffic regulation order had been in force six months.

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Chair of Committee

The Committee rose at 12.05 noon.