

Minutes of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 8 November 2007.

Present:

Members: Councillor Ken Browne (Chair)
“ John Appleton
“ Tom Cavanagh
“ Gordon Collett
“ George Atkinson
“ Jose Compton
“ Joan Lea
“ Ray Sweet (Vice-Chair)
“ Sid Tooth
“ John Whitehouse

Also Present: Councillor Martin Heatley, Portfolio Holder for Environment

Officers: Graeme Fitton, Head of Transport and Highways, Environment and Economy Directorate.
Jean Hardwick, Principal Committee Administrator, Performance and Development Directorate.
Shirley Reynolds, Team Leader - Highways and Transportation Studies, Environment and Economy Directorate.
Kevin McGovern, Transport Operations Group 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

Tribute

The Committee stood in silent tribute to the memory of the four fire-fighters who had died in the recent incident at Atherstone on Stour and to County Councillor Bryan Levy, who had died suddenly.

(1) Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Eithne Goode and Katherine King.

(2) Members Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

Members declared personal interests as follows –

- (1) Councillor John Appleton – as a Member of Stratford-on-Avon District Council in respect of item 6, Concessionary Travel in Warwickshire.

- (2) Councillor Tom Cavanagh – as a Member of Rugby Borough Council in respect of item 6 Concessionary Travel in Warwickshire.
- (3) Councillor Sid Tooth - as the County Council's representative on the Board of the Pride of Camphill in respect of item 7 Efficiency Savings 2007/08.

(3) Minutes of the meeting held on 20 September and 9 October 2007 and matters arising

The minutes of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings held on 20 September and 9 October 2007 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

Matters Arising - minutes of the meeting on 20 September 2007

(a) Minute 1 3 (a) Public Access to the Coventry and Warwickshire University Hospital

Graham Fitton reported that a briefing note had been circulated on the status of discussions with the Health Authority.

(b) Minute 5 (2) Comparative Performance

Members noted that a briefing note had been circulated on the areas of concern identified at the previous meeting.

(c) Minute 6 (2) Street Lighting Hours of Operation

Graeme Fitton reported that the trial of street light dimming had not yet taken place and that local Members would be consulted prior to implementation of the pilot scheme.

Matters Arising – minutes of the meeting on 9 October 2007

Special meeting on Climate Change and Impact on Water

The Chair invited comments on the issues note circulated by Paul Williams in order to assess how to progress this issue. Members commented as follows –

- (1) that another meeting or working group should be arranged to take this issue forward.
- (2) on the importance of all agencies working together.
- (3) on the need to identify what mitigation measures were being taken to prevent similar disasters.
- (4) that providing a local supply of sand bags and sand hoppers for use in emergency situations should be considered.
- (5) the need to identify the County Council's role as Strategic Authority was highlighted.

The Chair said the he would be holding a meeting with the spokespersons after the meeting to consider the Committee's

future work programme and these points would be considered when discussing how to progress the Climate Change and Impact on Water issue.

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 Chair said that the spokespersons and officers had agreed to meet after the meeting to discuss the Committee's future work programme.

(b) Forward Plan items

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

4. Warwickshire Climate Change Strategy First Annual Report

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director for Environment and Economy, which outlined progress on delivering the partnership projects in the Warwickshire Climate Change Strategy to which Warwickshire County Council had an input. The report also outlined the County Council's proposed commitment for the next year for approval.

During discussion Members—

- (1) commented on the importance of the County Council making budget provision and planning for climate Change.
- (2) commended the report and work undertaken by Warwickshire Climate Change Partnership, in particular the initiatives listed in Appendix A.
- (3) suggested that, with regard to the examples of future project work, listed in Section 3 Next Steps, Cabinet should be urged to "implement" rather than "explore" the potential for renewable energy generation on WCC land and elsewhere to meet the council's contribution towards the national target for 2015." (paragraph 3.2 (ii) of the report).

The Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee asks Cabinet to -

- (1) Agree that future reporting on the Climate Change Partnership should be incorporated into the Corporate Review of Environmental Sustainability presented to Cabinet in December each year.
- (2) Implement the potential for renewable energy generation on WCC land and elsewhere within the county to meet the County Council's contribution towards the national target for 2015.
- (3) pay due regard to the importance of climate change issues in preparation of the County Council's coming budget in view of the

inclusion of specific climate change objectives in the National Performance Framework.

5. Issues Relating to the A5 in Warwickshire

Members considered the report of the Strategic Director of Environment and Economy following a request from this Committee that a report be presented to this meeting regarding the A5.

During discussion Members agreed that traffic congestion and the extensive housing and industrial developments along the A5 were the main issues that they wished to engage in discussions with Leicestershire and Northamptonshire County Council, in addition to the specific key problems listed in paragraph 3.3 of the report.

In reply to Members' comments and questions Shirley Reynolds confirmed that accident statistics were available for the length of the A5 in Warwickshire and, in particular, for the Red Gate junction and could be made available for Members.

Resolved that –

- (1) officers continue to meet with their counterparts at Leicestershire and Northamptonshire County Councils to discuss development and transportation issues on an as-needed basis.
- (2) officers continue to work with the Highways Agency to develop transportation modelling capabilities to the benefit of both organisations.
- (3) Councillor Martin Heatley, the Portfolio Holder for the Environment, be asked to write formally to Leicestershire and Northamptonshire County Councils to invite members to attend a Joint Members' meeting to discuss issues relating to the A5 corridor.

6. Concessionary Travel in Warwickshire

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director for Environment and Economy which provided a summary of how the new national concessionary transport scheme, due to commence in April 2008, would benefit residents in Warwickshire.

Discussion followed during which Kevin McGovern, in reply to Members questions said that –

- (1) the new arrangements were a significant improvement over the current scheme, which included 5 separate schemes administered across the county by the different borough and district councils.
- (2) passenger numbers had significantly increased since the introduction of the scheme.
- (3) assessing the size of the grant payable to each Travel Concession Authority (TCA) was complex but the County Council would continue to co-ordinate the scheme.

- (4) the new concessions would enable eligible passengers to board any local bus operating in England and enjoy off peak travel and the cost would be met by the local TCA.

Resolved that Members note this report and endorse the partnership working between Warwickshire County Council and the five District and Borough Councils across the county in delivering a national concessionary travel scheme from April 2008 for older and disabled passengers in Warwickshire.

7. 2007/08 Efficiency Savings – Environment and Economy Directorate Progress Report

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director for Environment and Economy, which outlined the progress the Environment and Economy Directorate had made to date in delivering the required efficiency savings in 2007/08 required as part of the 2007/08 budget.

Discussion followed during which Members commented on the lack of progress in delivering the Directorate's efficiency savings and concern was expressed particularly about the comments contained in –

- (1) paragraph 2.3 of the report that savings could not be made without loss of services, and
- (2) 3.7 that the sustainable environmental savings would not be delivered until 2008/09.

Following which –

The Committee expressed its concern about the lack of progress made by the Environment and Economy Directorate in delivering the 2007/08 efficiency savings target and asks for a further report in January 2008.

8. Any Other Business

None

9. Reports Containing Confidential or Exempt Information

Resolved that members of the public be excluded from the meeting for the items mentioned below on the grounds that their presence would involve the disclosure of confidential or exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972'.

10. Exempt Minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2007

Resolved that the exempt minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2007 be agreed and signed as a correct record.

The Chair advised that a briefing note would be circulated to Members addressing the issues raised at the last meeting.

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Chair

The Committee rose at 12:00 noon