

Minutes of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 6 March 2008.

Present:

Members: Councillor Ken Browne (Chair)
“ John Appleton
“ Jose Compton
“ Gordon Collett
“ Jill Dill-Russell
“ Eithne Goode
“ Joan Lea
“ Ray Sweet (Vice-Chair)
“ Sid Tooth
“ John Wells

Also Present: Councillor Martin Heatley, Portfolio Holder for Environment

Officers:

County Council

Barbara Golding, Environmental Management Officer – Education, Environment and Economy Directorate.

Graeme Fitton, Head of Transport and Highways, Environment and Economy Directorate.

Nick Gower-Johnson, County Partnership Manager, Performance and Development Directorate.

Jean Hardwick, Principal Committee Administrator, Performance and Development Directorate.

Andy McDarmaid, Environmental Management and Performance Manager, Environment and Economy Directorate.

Gereint Stoneman, Corporate Planning Manager, Performance and Development Directorate.

Paul Williams, Scrutiny Officer, Performance and Development Directorate.

Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council

Alan Franks, Director of Environmental Services

1. General

(1) Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors George Atkinson and John Whitehouse.

(2) Members Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

None

(3) Minutes of the meeting held on 24 January 2008

The minutes of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 24 January 2008 were agreed and signed as a correct record subject to, in connection with minute 8, paragraph 2, 3rd sentence, Financial Position of the Smallholdings Estate, being amended to read "2007/8" and not "2006/7".

Matters Arising

(a) Minute 1 (3) (b) A5 Issues

Councillor Gordon Collett reported that the A5 Working Group had met on Wednesday and representatives from Leicestershire and Northamptonshire were present. The Working Group had agreed to meet quarterly and to gather relevant information and maps about county and district housing and other developments that impacted on the A5 with a view to putting forward a Strategy to the Highways Agency. The outcome of discussions would be brought to Committee in due course. Councillor Joan Lea highlighted her concerns about the M42 junction 10/A5 and asked that Staffordshire officers be included in the Working Group discussions.

(b) Minute 2 – Pubic Question from Councillor Alan Moore

In reply to a question the Chair said that the Environment Agency had given an 11 March 2008 deadline for the material deposited at the Quality Hotel, Chesford Bridge to be removed after which time a Notice would be served for removal of the material. It had, however, been established that the matter was very much in the hands of the Environment Agency.

Councillor Alan Moore expressed his concern about this issue and said that the Environment Agency should have served the Notice sooner and not waited until 11 March. A Member suggested that Councillor Moore should raise this issue with the Localities Panel.

(c) Minute 7 Green Transport Plan Progress

Graeme Fitton undertook to establish a timetable for bringing the follow-up report back to Committee.

(d) Minute 8 Financial Position of the Smallholdings Estate

Councillor Gordon Collett reported that the Smallholdings Panel would be meeting on 11 March 2008 to appoint a new tenant.

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 agreed the future work programme and –

- (1) Noted that the Rural Strategy Issues/Strategy Working Group would be meeting shortly.
- (2) Noted that the meeting on the 5th June 2008 would be in Seminar/Workshop format to help Members understand the new “Speed Safety Camera Criteria”.
- (3) Agreed the items put forward by the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Group to be included in 2008-09 core work programme for overview and scrutiny as follows –
 - PriceWaterhouseCoopers Benchmarking reports
 - Directorate/Performance Reports
 - Local Area Agreement Performance Reports
 - Medium Term Financial Plan/Finance Reports
 - Action Plans arising from external inspection reports.

(b) Forward Plan items

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

4. 1st Draft of the Corporate Business Plan (CBP) 2008-2011

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director of Performance and Development, which outlined the first draft of the Corporate Business Plan 2008-11 and the updated the corporate risk register for comment. Following consideration by Cabinet it was intended that Council would be asked to agree the final version on 18th March 2008.

The Chair referred to the briefing paper prepared in response to queries he had raised before the meeting and Members confirmed that they had received a copy.

Gereint Stoneman reported that all best value indicators would be replaced by 1st April 2008. The “to be completed” (tbc), on pages 19-21 of the report, related primarily to the measures which would be taken from the Environment and Sustainability Block of the new LAA. With regard to the LAA 2008 measure (NI 191) he said that this had changed and was now “Residual waste per household” and not “residual household waste per head” and the definition of the measure N1 177 “Number of journeys made by bus” had been expanded to include “.... and light rail”.

During discussion the following comments were noted –

- (1) That the 1% target increase for “household waste recycled and composted” was too modest and should be reconsidered. Andy McDarmaid undertook to review the target and report back to Members.
- (2) That the impact of meeting recycling targets on fulfilling landfill contracts was of concern and Members asked for a further report to Committee explaining the position and the cost of landfill in relation to incineration. Andy McDarmaid undertook to provide this report.
- (3) The lack of targets made it difficult for Members to assess the CBP.
- (4) That the CBP did not reflect all the existing LAA themes.

The Chair said that the Committee –

- (1) was unable to agree the report’s recommendations and said he would raise Members’ concerns at Council on 18 March 2008.
- (2) looked forward to receiving two further reports as requested in paragraphs (1) and (2) above.

5. Draft Sustainable Schools Strategy for Warwickshire

The Committee considered the report of the Interim Strategic Director for Environment and Economy, which provided the context of an overview of the draft Sustainable Schools Strategy for Warwickshire. The draft Strategy was attached as Appendix A for Members’ consideration.

During discussion –

- (1) Members commended the report.
- (2) Assurance was given that every school would be given assistance to meet the Government target of becoming sustainable by 2020.
- (3) It was noted that there was no WCC budget for implementing this Strategy and that it was dependent on external funding being obtained. £10,000 had been promised by DCSF to run a pilot for 10 schools in Warwickshire assisted by Head Teachers and Industry (HTI).

Following which –

The Committee expressed support for the Draft Sustainable Schools Strategy for Warwickshire attached as Appendix A and recommended its adoption by Cabinet.

6. Local Area Agreement Quarter 3 Performance Report

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director of Performance and Development detailing Quarter 3 Performance Information – LAA & LPSA2 Targets.

In reply to a question from the Chair Nick Gower-Johnson said that he would provide a briefing note explaining the reason for the red indicators for journey speeds.

Alan Franks –

- (1) Referred to the five Climate Change and Environment indicators listed on page 29 of the report and said that they had been sent to the Government Office and he believed would be accepted.
- (2) Explained the comment received from the Government Office on indicator N1 185 – emissions from local authority buildings, was that it should be more visionary and take into account all co2 emission for the whole area and that this was being replaced by indicator N1 185 which was a more challenging target. He explained further that the Government had provided more information about how this target could be measured and this included sharing and extolling best practice and influencing organisations outside local government control.

The Committee -

- b) generally supported the progress made to date in relation to the relevant indicators in the Climate Change & Environment and the Safer Communities blocks of the LAA and the remedial actions suggested by the Block Leader in respect of those measures that were currently forecasted to miss target
- c) had reservations about the indicators for the revised LAA relating to the methodology and feasibility of the greenhouse gas emissions and requested further information before endorsing the report.

7. Any Other Business

None

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Chair

The Committee rose at 11:20 a.m.