



Buckinghamshire County Council

Minutes

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES HELD ON WEDNESDAY 22 JUNE 2005 IN MEZZANINE ROOM 2, COUNTY HALL, AYLESBURY, COMMENCING AT 10.06 AM AND CONCLUDING AT 1.06 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr R C Pushman (Chairman), Mr H Cadd, Mr D A B Green, Mrs P Lindsley, Mr M Tett, Julia Wassell, Mr R K Woollard,

IN ATTENDANCE

Mrs V A Letheren
Mr R Royston
Mrs B H Jennings

OTHERS PRESENT

Mr M Rogers Strategic Transport Team Leader
Mr G Bartlett Strategic Transport Manager
Mr J Britton Environment Service Manager
Ms D Pentelow Project Officer for Community Services
Mr J Stevens Transportation Contracts Manager
Mrs K Jones Democratic Services Officer
Mr D Sweetland Policy Officer

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services reported apologies for absence from Mrs A Davies, Mr M Edmonds, Mr C Jones, Mr Z Mohammed, Mr D Meacock, and Mr A Walters (South Bucks District Council).

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

1 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for Community and Environmental Services held on 25 May 2005, copies of which had been circulated, were agreed and signed as a correct record.

2 MATTERS ARISING

The Policy Officer reported the following

- A letter had been sent to the Deputy Leader suggesting that the number of targets on the Corporate Plan be reduced.
- A note of the discussion at the last meeting on Local Area Working had been sent to the Strategic Director for Planning and Transportation (the Strategic Director). This had been discussed at the meeting of the Leaders Advisory Group (LAG) the previous week.
- Chesham Parish Council had expressed concern that the work on Communities Working Closer Together implied that they would either be asked to speak for other parishes or be amalgamated. This has been recognised and the Strategic Director has suggested that the Committee consider the proposals before taking them forward.
- Members were asked to submit items for the September Work Programme to the Policy Officer.

Nominations for the Corporate Task Group

Martin Tett
Patricia Lindsley
David Meacock
Bob Woollard

The first task will be to look at the Medium Term Plan (MTP) and associated budget September 2005 – February 2006.

Nominations for Working Groups

Community

Julia Wassell
Patricia Lindsley
Bob Woollard

Environment

Hedley Cadd
Dennis Green
Martin Tett

It was agreed that the Policy Officer would write to members not in attendance and invite them to nominate themselves for the Working Groups.

3 CABINET MEMBER PRIORITIES

The Chairman welcomed the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning to the meeting (the Cabinet Member).

The Cabinet Member explained that there were significant decisions to be taken in waste including choosing the way forward and that they will have significant implications both for the Portfolio and the County.

In response to a question, the Cabinet Member explained that crucial decisions had to be taken on the long- term future of waste particularly on waste disposal that will have implications for the next 10 – 15 years.

The Co-opted Member from Wycombe District Council welcomed the joint working between District and Council on waste. The Cabinet Member endorsed the importance of joint working for waste.

In response to a question regarding how decisions took both the cost and the impact on the environment and local factors an officer replied that decisions need to be taken as follows:

- 1 What technology will be used in future for waste management and where facilities be located?
- 2 How will new technology be financed?
- 3 Procurement. How do we deliver these facilities? Decisions on strands will have to be made in parallel and pulled together into a single coherent plan.

The Co-opted Member from Chiltern District Council stressed the importance of Joint Working and suggested that the Joint Working Committee (JWC) make a presentation. He recommended that the Councils should operate as one entity rather than District and County.

The second priority for the Planning Portfolio is the Minerals and Waste Local Plan and the South East Plan that is crucial for Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC) until 2031. There are significant impacts for Aylesbury Vale and the Western corridor. BCC currently has a seat on the SEERA planning committee and they are keen to retain this and to make the best use of it.

The Chairman asked if the Portfolio had identified ways of looking at the SE Plan and addressing the infrastructure needed for housing. The Cabinet Member replied that bottlenecks have been identified and will need addressing. For example there is a block in waste water treatment capacity in Aylesbury Vale.

A Member asked for details of the process of making decisions and when seminars were being held. The Policy Officer advised that there will be a briefing for Members on 15 September 2005 and that a timetable for decisions would be provided to Members. The SE Plan will be adopted in spring 2007.

The Co-opted Member for Wycombe District Council noted that climate change was not mentioned in the discussions. The Cabinet Member replied that climate change is on the agenda for the Regional Planning Committee.

The Chairman thanked the Cabinet Member for attending the meeting.

The Chairman welcomed the Cabinet Member for Transport to the meeting. The Cabinet Member thanked Rodney Royston and the officers for their help in the transition. The four main services in Transportation are as follows:

- 1 Infrastructure maintenance
- 2 Highway network management
- 3 Strategic transport services
- 4 Transport and accessibility

Top Three Priorities

- 1 Highway maintenance
- 2 Congestion Management including the effects on air pollution.
- 3 Public Transport

Work was continuing on developing a strategy to reduce congestion on the Tring bypass.

The Local Transport Plan links directly with three of the top priorities.

A member noted that aeroplanes were responsible for causing air pollution and asked what, if anything was being done. The point was noted.

A member welcomed the proposals to include air quality as a top priority and suggested that children could be educated for measuring air quality.

The Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning reported that air quality was included on the South East Plan.

The Chairman thanked the Cabinet Member for Planning for attending and welcomed the Spokesman for Countryside, Community Services to the meeting.

The three priorities are as follows:

- 1 Community safety
- 2 Youth Service
- 3 Learning and Culture

The Spokesman explained the priorities by making the following points:

- The portfolio was very varied and it was important to consider the quality of life of Buckinghamshire residents. In 2004 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Personal Care had looked at Emergency Services and in 2002 they had looked at Drugs.
- Youth Service – a Green Paper was expected in July and this will assist in the way forward. It was noted that facilities were not evenly distributed across the county and that a review was recommended on how to increase provisions particularly in the rural areas.
- Learning and culture – there is a possibility of a merger between Adult Learning and Library Services. Members were advised that LSC might reduce the funding for Adult Learning.

The Policy Officer advised the Committee that Adult Learning & Libraries fall within the remit of the Adult Services Committee. The co-opted member from Wycombe District Council suggested that consideration be given to working closely with the districts on youth service. The Cabinet Member for Transportation replied that a survey with 16 – 18 year olds had recently taken place and revealed that there was an opportunity to work in partnership with businesses.

The Chairman thanked the Spokesman for Countryside and Community Services for attending the meeting.

4 LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN 2: UPDATE

Marcus Rogers gave a presentation on the Second Local Transport Plan (the Plan) during which the following key points were noted:

- Provisional Local Transport Plan – 29 July 2005
- Full Local Transport Plan 31 March 2006
- Government assessment December 2005
- Funding announcement late 2005

- Local consultation autumn 2005
- Our vision for transport contains national influences and regional strategies and is a five year transport strategy
- Our transport priorities are accessibility, congestion, environment (including air quality), safety and maintenance. With the exception of maintenance all other priorities are shared/national.
- Our plan for the future is influenced by Best Value Performance, mandatory and local indicators, trajectories and monitoring, major schemes and work programme and finances
- Next steps include completion of Area Action Plans, launching our vision and our priorities, consultation with local communities, local accessibility action plans, amends to programmes and targets, Transport Symposia and political process.

In response to a question regarding the Bisham roundabout, members were advised that a range of cross-boundary strategies have been developed.

A multi-modal study will be undertaken to assess congestion on the A4010.

A member expressed concern that any comments made at the next meeting on 13 July will not be included in the Provisional Plan to be submitted on 29 July. This was noted. Members were advised that the proposals being submitted were the result of extensive consultation.

A member expressed concern that the Plan was being submitted before details have been obtained on the development for key areas such as Milton Keynes and Aylesbury. He suggested that there was a lack of flexibility in the Plan. The member was asked to make any representations to the Government regarding the timetable for Plan. It was also noted that until 2007 that the District Councils would identify the location of housing in there Plans.

The Chairman suggested that the proposed timetable be reviewed and that any strategic problems be discussed at the next meeting.

The Chairman thanked Marcus Rogers for an excellent piece of work.

5 BEST VALUE REVIEW OF TRANSPORTATION

Jim Stevens explained that the Transportation Service Best Value review was carried out between July 2004 and May 2005 and was structured to establish how good the current service is and to identify actions to enhance and improve the service over a five-year period to 2011. The review has been carried out concurrently with the development of the new Local Transport Plan and the Council's Medium Term Plan.

Members were advised that the Local Government Act 2000 drove the Best Value review. The review concluded that there was a fair service with uncertain prospects for improvement. The purpose of the review was to evaluate how much had improved and where there was a need to strengthen the service.

The review of the Council's Medium Term Plan has been focussed around establishing the priorities for transportation service delivery, within the overall context of the Council's corporate priorities for revenue expenditure over the period 200/06 – 2007/08. There will be no new costs to the Council in delivering the improvement plan. The service was awarded a Centre of Excellence for Transport Delivery in February 2005.

The best value review identified the following areas for improvement:

- 1 Business process reengineering to look at inefficiencies.
- 2 Procurement - look at development of long term arrangements with neighbouring authorities.
- 3 Delivery – for example, there is a need to develop a strategy for cycling
- 4 Organisational development – work with employees and leadership development.

One of the key issues highlighted by the external panel included the potential impact of the growth agenda and the impact on the environment.

Jan Britton explained that the services in the Environment Inspection had previously been allocated scores as follows:

Planning 4 star service

Waste 3 star service

Transportation 4 star since the last inspection

The CPA inspection will also take a look at the peripheral areas of environment such as country parks, gypsy and traveller services.

A member explained that in his opinion, this review was very important and in his opinion, it was disrespectful to the officers that a paper was being tabled and that the subject was not being given justice. He added that he had been very impressed with the quality of officers with the exception of those in Transportation. He had found processes to be flawed and un-owned. The Policy Officer apologised for the late distribution of papers.

Jim Stevens responded to questions as follows:

- 1 Procurement will be renewed in 2009 because the major contracts with Babbie and Fitzpatrick expire in 2009. The Fleet Management contract expires in 2008 and early termination would be an error.
- 2 Cycling and walking – previously this has been approached in a reactionary way. The LTP will create a strategic overview. Congestion is being looked at in urban areas.
- 3 Climate change is an increasingly important national agenda an area which, Professor Begg in his challenge role, had said BCC was weak.
- 4 Funding streams capital funding is sourced through the LTP at a cost of between £13 - £14m. LTP funding will be clearly linked to strategic objectives.

Members suggested that a summary be prepared of how funding streams work.

A member commented that the Local Co-Ordinators role was unclear and it was difficult to raise new issues at Local Committees.

6 FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

The following items were confirmed:

Rural Road Design 13 July

Waste Strategy 13 July

Waste Procurement 28 September

A member cautioned if the only solution to waste disposal was incineration he hoped that this followed an open and transparent debate on all the options available.

The co-opted member from Chiltern District Council suggested that because waste collection interacts with disposal there should be a joint presentation from Mark Tipton and Martin Dickman. The Policy Officer advised that the JWC partnership Officer will be making a presentation to the July Committee.

7 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 13 July 2005 at 10am in Mezzanine Room 2.

**MR R C PUSHMAN
CHAIRMAN**