



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 28 SEPTEMBER 2005 IN MEZZANINE ROOM 1, COUNTY HALL, AYLESBURY, COMMENCING AT 10.00 AM AND CONCLUDING AT 12.50 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr R C Pushman (Chairman), Mr H Cadd, Mr M Edmonds, Mr Q Ings-Chambers, Mrs P R Lindsley, Mr D G Meacock, Mr D J Rowlands, Mr M Tett, Mr H G W Wilson and Mr R K Woollard.

CO-OPTED MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr A Walters (South Bucks District Council)
Mr J Warder MBE (Chiltern District Council)

OTHERS PRESENT

Mr H Jones Head of Planning and Environment
Mr D Sutherland Waste Reduction Team Leader
Ms C Baldry Waste Education Officer
Mr N Sexton Building Surveying and Maintenance Manager
Mr R Dwight Strategic Maintenance Manager
Mr M Rogers Strategic Transport Team Leader
Mr K Shaw Highway Network and Traffic 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 Mr A Hill (Mr Hugh Wilson was substituting for this meeting only), Mr Z Mohammed (Mr David Rowlands was substituting for this meeting only).

The Chairman reported that Mr Alan Oxley would be replacing Mrs Avril Davies on a permanent basis.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

1 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for Community and Environmental Services held on 13 July 2005, copies of which had been circulated, were agreed and signed as a correct record.

2 MATTERS ARISING

Members were updated on the following:

- 1 At the last meeting a Press Release had been issued on the Waste Strategy. The Vice-Chairman had given a radio interview on Mix 96. On 14 November there will be a Members' Seminar on Waste at 2.00pm in Mezzanine Room 1. A timetable of visits to Waste sites had been circulated to members.
- 2 A member reported on the recent visit to Calvert Landfill and Landfill Gas Power Station. He explained the importance of good relations between the site operators and the local residents. The Calvert site benefited from railway communications. The site serves Buckinghamshire, London and Avon. Another member reported that Wapseys Wood takes waste from London and Hampshire. During a discussion members noted that in their opinion there was a need to engage the public and that the budgets for publicity were too small.
- 3 Local Transport Plan – the Policy Officer reported that Aylesbury had been nominated as one of five towns to receive a Government grant for cycling.
- 4 Traffic Management in Environmentally Sensitive Areas – the Chairman had written to five MPs. The Department of Transport has since agreed on the issue of signage in environmentally sensitive areas that previous advice had been incorrect.

3 WASTE MINIMISATION AND EDUCATION

David Sutherland, Waste Reduction Team Leader and Claire Baldry, Waste Education Officer gave a presentation on Buckinghamshire's approach to waste minimisation and education.

David Sutherland outlined the Waste and Resources Action Plan (WRAP) and explained that BCC has been accepted on the 2006 WRAP Scheme. WRAP regard waste minimisation as a priority and the most sustainable waste management option. Programmes include the home compost programme and the real nappy programme.

Members were advised that there was extensive partnership working in each programme area and that the aims and targets are linked to the Corporate and Service Plan. To tackle fly tipping camera units have been purchased jointly and each partner authority has an enforcement officer.

Claire Baldry explained that the Rethink Rubbish Campaign was launched in schools three years ago. She outlined the initiatives that have taken place in schools including a Youth Waste Summit in November 2004 that had involved a number of members.

David Sutherland outlined the recycling programme and explained that there was a need to motivate people as to the importance of recycling. Around one in three people do not know which materials are recycled and where.

Members were advised that £220k has been secured for an integrated partnership communication campaign. One of the aims of the campaign is to reduce the amount of illegal dumping.

The Chairman thanked David Sutherland and Claire Baldry for an excellent presentation. Members endorsed the Chairman's comments and made the following points:

- A member commended the team and hoped that the work that is taking place would be communicated to businesses. Communication to businesses is made through CEAC. The Government has given funding to Envirowise to help businesses minimise waste and recycle.
- A member referred to the refusal of a Planning Application for the conversion of existing agricultural buildings and land for use as a waste transfer and recycling facility at Bissenden Farm, Oakley Road Worminghall by the Development Control Committee and asked when the departments in the County Council will work together. The Head of Planning and Environment replied that this was a complex issue and that planning policies need to align what is done and when. He added that National Planning Guidance is to be changed.
- A member suggested that the presentation is made at Member Briefings. He also suggested that the programme be communicated to teenagers and older people for example Women's Institutes. A seminar for members is being held on 14 November details of which are above. In secondary schools the programme is used as part of the PHSE citizenship programme and the team have given presentations to Women's Institutes.
- A member asked for comparative figures on how much waste was from packaging. David Sutherland agreed to provide this information.
- A member asked how achieving targets could be measured. David Sutherland replied that by signing up to the National Agreement a commitment has been made.
- The member from South Bucks District Council welcomed the news that households may receive credit for composting. It was noted that home composting and green waste must be complimentary.
- A member suggested that there was a need to tackle the 2010 Courtold Agreement. He asked if there was an opportunity to change central legislation. The officer replied that the Government has decided not to pursue weight based charging. This was noted.
- A member explained that in his opinion there was much confusion about what can be recycled and that the signage is very unclear. These points were acknowledged
- A member asked if incentives could be introduced to encourage recycling. The officer replied that there is a £30 reward for using the Nappy scheme and that the cost of purchasing the home composting bins has been discounted.

The Committee agreed that the Waste Strategy be revisited at a future date. The Policy Officer suggested and it was agreed that the Chairman writes to the Cabinet Member in support of the points made and requests that information on plastic recycling is promoted.

4 ENERGY EFFICIENCY

The Chairman welcomed Nigel Sexton and Richard Dwight to the meeting. Nigel Sexton reported that the Energy Team had won an ATP award for innovation by saving money and saving energy. The Committee were advised that it is anticipated that electricity costs will increase by 65% in the next 12 months. Members were advised that the causes and effects of climate changes were now daily news items.

Richard Dwight gave a presentation showing examples of energy saving devices at Brill School, Long Crandon School and Carrington School. He explained that there were planning issues surrounding installation. Solar panels have also been installed in the front of New County Offices.

A member expressed concern that too little action was being taken. Within the context of the national picture and he asked what impact could be made. During a discussion about staffing levels the member asked for a demonstration that an extra member of staff could generate sufficient savings to justify their costs. Nigel Sexton agreed to provide this information.

Another member expressed concern that although solar panels provide cheap power that it takes a long time before for the cost of installing solar panels to be paid back. This was confirmed. It was noted that prices would be reduced if use of solar panels increases.

The Energy Team was congratulated on their achievements with woodburners.

It was suggested that the Keith Richards from Thames Valley is invited to attend a future meeting

In response to a question regarding the availability of wind turbines for domestic use members were advised that it was anticipated that it would take approximately a year for the new technology to be proven or not. Richard Dwight agreed to provide information about the planning issues associated with building wind turbines.

A member expressed concern about the poor performance in Buckinghamshire against the national standards and he suggested that there is joint funding with Berkshire for water mills. This was noted.

12.10pm Mr R K Woollard left the meeting.

A member reported that the Thames Valley Waste Forum was taking place on 14 October to which members were invited to attend.

5 TRAFFIC CONGESTION SCOPING PAPER

The Chairman welcomed Keith Shaw and Marcus Rogers to the meeting. Members were asked to agree the scoping paper that had been attached to the minutes. The Policy Officer explained that part of the investigation was to find out where the areas where the problems were now and for members to focus on them.

A member recognised that all roads were included but asked for a definition of congestion. Marcus Rogers replied that an adequate definition has not yet been received by the Department of Transport and he suggested that the Task and Finish Group prepares one. Members were advised that BCC is only responsible for Buckinghamshire roads excluding Trunk roads and motorways.

A member asked if consideration had been made for congestion within the context of the growth agenda. Members were advised that that these two issues were separate but officers were working to address issues arising from growth. The first objective was to keep the traffic moving.

Four key corridors had been identified as priority they were Bicester Road, Buckingham Road, Wendover Road and Tring Road to improve existing conditions. Park and ride schemes for example at Cressex had been developed and partnership working was taking place with hospitals. BCC had responded to proposals to centralise services and a mini bus service was to be provided.

A member from Chiltern District Council expressed disappointment that there was no mention of home working in the proposals.

The Committee agreed the draft scoping paper and it was also agreed that Martin Tett would be the lead member on the Environment Task and Finish Group on Congestion.

6 WORK PROGRAMME

The Policy Officer reported that there were 77 aims on the Corporate Plan and 33 were the responsibility of the Committee. The Chairman has spoken to the Cabinet Members about the Work Programme and the objectives have been agreed.

Members were advised that in Community Services anti social behaviour was considered very important and that the Cabinet Member for Community Services had offered her support.

The Chairman explained that his preference was to keep the public informed on single issues for example waste, traffic congestion and law and order.

7 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

It was reported that the environment services of transport, planning and waste had been reviewed and that it may be necessary to change the agenda for the December meeting. It was also agreed that one good presentation should be that main agenda item and that there should also be subsidiary items together with reports from the Task Groups.

It was agreed that the date of the meeting in July 2006 be changed to 10 July.

8 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 26 October 2005 at 10am in Mezzanine Room 1.

**MR R C PUSHMAN
CHAIRMAN**