



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 26
OCTOBER 2005 IN MEZZANINE ROOM 1, COUNTY HALL, AYLESBURY,
COMMENCING AT 10.00 AM AND CONCLUDING AT 12.32 PM**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr R C Pushman (Chairman), Mrs M A M Aston, Mr D A B Green, Mr A Hill, Mr C Jones, Mrs P R Lindsley, Mr Z Mohammed, Mr A Oxley, Mr D J Rowlands, Mr M Tett, Mr H G W Wilson and Mr R K Woollard.

CO-OPTED MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr D Schofield (Chiltern District Council)

OTHERS PRESENT

Mr M Dickman Group Manager Waste Management
Mr M Tipton Waste Partnership Officer
Mr R Edwards Policy Officer
Mrs K Jones Democratic Services Officer

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr R Royston
Mrs P Birchley

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services reported apologies for absence from Mr M Edmunds (Mr Hugh Wilson was substituting for this meeting only), Mr H Cadd (Mr David Rowlands was substituting for this meeting only) and Mr Q Ings-Chambers (Mrs Margaret Aston was substituting for this meeting only).

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

1 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for Community and Environmental Services held on 28 September 2005, copies of which had been circulated, were agreed and signed as a correct record after Julia Wassell had been included in the names of apologies received.

2 MATTERS ARISING

Members were updated on the following visits to waste sites:

- 1 New Lincs Combined Heat and Power NE Lincolnshire
The Vice-Chairman reported that as a former member of the Green Party she had been very impressed with the presentation and she commended the officers for a well-organised visit. The site was clean and had no odours. It had had been developed following local consultation and consideration of public concerns. These included health, taking waste from other local authorities, the public desire to maximise recycling and respect the local landscape. Another member supported the Vice-Chairman's earlier comments and explained that he went to the site with scepticism and returned a convert. He reported that there were no emissions from the site and that in his opinion a form of incineration is the solution to waste disposal.

10.10am Mrs M A M Aston joined the meeting

Another member agreed with the earlier comments and reported that he had visited SELCHP near Millwall Football Club.

A member explained that in her opinion the United Kingdom (the UK) is behind other countries with waste disposal and that a campaign is needed to promote incineration and explain the consequences of failure to do so.

The Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning stressed the importance of using the correct language to describe a process that often was not incineration in the accepted sense of the word. This was noted.

In response to a question regarding invitations to the Press to the waste sites visits Mark Tipton replied that invitations had been extended in the following order:

- 1 The Joint Waste Committee
- 2 Members
- 3 Press

The following visits had been arranged: 27 October to Avonmouth, 9 November to High Heavens and 17 November to Barking. The Chairman reported that he would shortly be making a personal visit to a waste site in Caen, Normandy. (Chairman's note: subsequent to the meeting members were advised that the visit to High Heavens had been postponed).

- 2 Marchwood Energy Recovery Facility, Hampshire

Another member reported on the visit to Marchwood that was one of three incinerators and was served by Portsmouth, Southampton, and Basingstoke. The member explained that he was very impressed with the site and the plant's energy extraction capability.

The Chairman thanked the members for giving up their time to attend the visits and agreed that there was a need for the County Council via the press to educate the public. He explained that in his opinion this was a very safe option and he hoped that the UK would gradually follow Europe in using this form of waste disposal..

3 WASTE STRATEGY – PUBLIC QUESTIONNAIRE

Mark Tipton Waste Partnership Officer, gave a presentation on the Municipal Waste Management Strategy. During the presentation the following points were made:

- The Waste Strategy sets out how the Waste Partnership proposes to manage Buckinghamshire's waste
- Public consultation on the Waste Strategy document is planned for Spring 2006. A draft consultation document and questionnaire will be distributed with the Buckinghamshire times in November and will be sent to every household in the county (207,000).
- The focus is on waste issues and why things need to change.
- A poster campaign will run alongside the questionnaire with the strap line 'Your Waste, Your Choice'. Posters will be placed in supermarkets, schools, stations and other public locations.
- It is hoped that a 5% response will be received
- Further consultation plans will be developed at the monthly project meetings
- Managed workshops are planned for February/March 2006 to coincide with further information provision
- Press briefings will begin on Friday 28 October 2005
- Work continues using workshops to develop the waste strategy
- A 'consultation' draft will be prepared in early 2006.
- Process is governed by the partnership's Joint Waste Committee, Committee chaired by Councillor John Warder
- The Strategy is independently assessed by consultants to check that it is in accordance with national and European legislation.
- Adoption of the strategy should be late 2006

Strategic Choices

Buckinghamshire has 2 primary options:

- A recycling led strategy to maximise recycling first and then introduce new technology to recover value from the remaining waste
- A recovery led strategy to set a lower target for recycling and to prioritise investment in new facilities to recover more value from waste
- Currently about 30% of waste is recycled and composted and 70% is managed at landfills
- Recycling rates could be increased to 40,50% or more
- The joint waste strategy is a statutory requirement. The choice of option in the strategy will indicate the type of facilities that the partnership deems acceptable.
- Currently waste is sent to facilities for recycling and composting (two of which are owned and operated by the partnership) and the vast majority of the remaining waste is sent directly to landfill sites

Members were asked to comment on how happy they were with the information they have been provided with, to give feedback and if there was anything else that Mark Tipton could help with. The Chairman confirmed that members were happy with the information provided.

Members made the following points:

- A member observed that there was no information on costs.
- Another member noted that electricity was provided from methane gas.
- It was suggested that a policy should be developed to increase recycling in Buckinghamshire
- A member asked if there was any information available on how much waste should be sent direct to facilities to make them economically viable.
- A member explained that the Buckinghamshire times was not delivered to all residents and he asked if consideration could be given to reviewing delivery. Mark Tipton replied that the Royal Mail had been paid to provide an enhanced delivery service and that the questionnaire was also available online. Six hundred posters have been sent to the Parishes. Members were asked to advise Mark Tipton if extra copies were required.
- A member expressed concern about the amount of packaging supplied by goods in supermarkets and he suggested that this should be addressed within the context of recycling.
- A member commended the composting day and suggested that consideration be given to running this on a subsequent date.

The points raised were noted.

A member asked about the market for recycled materials. He explained that in his opinion this was important within the context of recycling. He recommended the need for consistency in approach. Mark Tipton acknowledged the need for alignment of services.

The Chairman expressed disappointment that a reply paid envelope was not to be provided with the questionnaire. He anticipated that there would be a poor response to the consultation. The Vice-Chairman suggested that members encourage participation through their local newsletter. Mark Tipton replied that posters have been printed in four different languages and distributed to the Race Equality Centres, Age Concern, schools and libraries for example. He added that the second consultation document would be gummied.

4 CONGESTION TASK GROUP UPDATE

The Chairman reported that he had recently attended a meeting of the Congestion Task Group with David Rowlands and Martin Tett.

The general view was that Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC) did not suffer badly from congestion. The perception was that the way existing roads are designed was more important than building new ones.

Work was needed on traffic management and particularly on removing the rat runs in order to improve the main roads. This has taken place on the Oxford Road junction of Churchill Avenue where the traffic has been managed by traffic lights. Ultimately the traffic lights will be linked to a central computer in County Hall. The Chairman explained that whilst he supported the proposals he was cautious because of the experiences with Sapphire. Another member noted that there were problems with the junction of the A40 and the A4010 in West Wycombe. Members were advised that an in-house traffic light expert would be appointed shortly.

A member expressed concern about the impact on the A4010 of the new houses in Milton Keynes and Aylesbury Vale because this was the main route from the north of the county to the Thames Valley. It was acknowledged that maintaining the flow of traffic was an important consideration.

During a discussion on Urban Traffic Control (UTC) it was suggested that UTC was required in Aylesbury and that there were issues with funding and central control and revenue costs outstanding.

A member asked for the Chairman to support the member's concerns about the A4010, he noted that there was also a major problem with congestion at the Bisham roundabout. The concerns raised by members were noted. Members were advised that the Terms of Reference of the Congestion Working Group have been changed. The Chairman suggested that the outcome of the visits should be awaited before a recommendation is made to Cabinet.

5 COMMUNITY SAFETY – ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

The Chairman welcomed Rebecca King from the Community Safety Team to the meeting. This item was the beginning of the work of the task and finish group that the OSC had set up to examine the issue of Anti-social behaviour (ASB). Rebecca explained that a multi-agency (ASB) Group has been formed. Government has provided £100k in funding for four ASB Officers in the districts.

Part of the remit of the ASB Strategy Group is to look at how to provide training on dealing with anti-social behaviour. A practical guide on how to deal with ASB has been published on the Community Safety website and cited as good practice. It is primarily a handbook for practitioners.

A new member of staff has been employed to develop a Buckinghamshire-wide ASB policy.

Currently there are fourteen ASB orders in place.

12.00pm Mrs M A M Aston left the meeting

The Chairman thanked Rebecca King who was attending on behalf of Geraldine White for a very succinct appraisal.

Members made the following points:

- A member asked how it would be possible to get a more sympathetic response when raising an anti-social behaviour issue in particular in the 'grey areas' not owned by the police and where the ASB officers lacked the resources to be involved. What advice should Councillors give and/or what should they do when approached on such issues? Rebecca King replied that there was a need to find out the nature of the problem, to find out whether it had been reported and refer to mediation if necessary. It is hoped that disputes could be resolved through local initiatives.
- Rebecca reminded members that Community Support Officers could be brought in to deal with such matters and that they had the right to video miscreants (for example those using footpaths for riding trail bikes).
- One member commented that rural ASB was becoming more of a problem. This was particularly difficult to deal with because of the spread out nature of rural communities.
- A member noted that before the document was published he was unaware of what constituted ASB and that he believed offenders may not be aware either. Rebecca

King explained that the –So What’ campaign was designed to explain the consequences of action.

- A member asked about the process to influence local government to develop solutions. Rebecca King replied that the Government’s view on ASB was to get as many anti-social behaviour orders as possible. In some cases this can be counter-productive where so many ASBOs are issued that there are insufficient resources to manage them. Complaints are referred followed by interviews and case conferences. If there is sufficient evidence a case may go to court to await a decision on whether or not to grant an ASB order. The Chairman suggested that there was a need to promote good behaviour in classrooms.

The member from Chiltern District reported that following changes to the Licensing Law there had been a significant increase in the number of applications to change licences. He anticipated that there would be an increase in ASB. It was noted that the Tesco stores in Aylesbury, Wycombe and Amersham were now open for 24 hours. Another member endorsed the concern that by increasing the licensing hours there would be an increase in anti-social behaviour. Members were advised that concerns about under age sales should be reported to Trading Standards.

In response to a question, Rebecca King suggested that the key issues for the OSC Task Group could include:

- Youth Provision
- Educating the Public.
- The cleaner, greener, safer agenda
- Intelligence/data collection across agencies
- Future funding for increased resources (e.g. Community Wardens)
- What is happening across County Council services as well as between authorities and agencies? For example, the Schools Portfolio has appointed an ASB officer. How will this postholder work with the Community ASB Officers?

12.25pm Mr C Jones left the meeting

12.29pm Mr D J Rowlands left the meeting

The Chairman suggested that consideration be given to inviting a member of the police force to a future meeting of the committee. This was noted.

6 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 23 November 2005 at 10am in Mezzanine Room 1.

**MR R C PUSHMAN
CHAIRMAN**