

ENVIRONMENT SELECT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 1 NOVEMBER 2011 AT COUNCIL CHAMBER, BRADLEY ROAD, TROWBRIDGE.

Present:

Cllr Chuck Berry, Cllr Rosemary Brown, Cllr Nigel Carter (Chairman), Cllr Christopher Cochrane, Cllr Peter Doyle, Cllr Jose Green, Cllr Alan Hill (Vice Chairman), Cllr Chris Humphries, Cllr Tom James MBE, Cllr Howard Marshall, Cllr Ian McLennan, Cllr Stephen Oldrieve and Cllr Leo Randall

Also Present:

Cllr Julian Johnson, Cllr Keith Humphries, Cllr Richard Gamble, Cllr Dick Tonge

185. Apologies and Substitutions

There were no apologies.

186. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 09 September 2011 were approved and signed as a correct record, subject to,

Cllr Stephen Oldrieve asking a question relating to Minute 179, *Carbon Reduction Commitment Energy Efficiency Scheme*, on whether the Council's net investment of £3.5 million over 5 years would be capped. Officers agreed to write to Cllr Toby Sturgis, Cabinet Member for Waste, Property Environment and Development Control Services, for a response.

187. Declarations of Interests

None.

188. Chairman's Announcements

There were no announcements.

189. Public Participation and Councillors Questions

The meeting was presented with public questions submitted to the Committee by Mrs Wilmot, Salisbury, regarding the Air Quality Strategy with particular interest to Salisbury, which had been answered in writing by the Head of Public Protection (Food and Environment), as seen in Appendix A.

The Service Head also stated that Mrs Wilmot had asked for and received a further written response from officers beyond that contained in Appendix A.

190. **Air Quality Strategy**

The Committee has held a longstanding interest in the development of the Council's Air Quality Strategy, considering a draft version in July 6 2010 and a further update at the July 21 2011 meeting.

Cabinet, on December 13, will be recommended to approve the Air Quality Strategy before its being submitted to Council for adoption. The Committee has an opportunity to review the document whilst it is in draft form and recommend as appropriate to the Cabinet member any amendments that it is felt would enhance the Strategy.

The Cabinet Member for Public Health and Protection Services, Cllr Keith Humphries, presented the draft Air Quality Strategy with input from the Joint Director of Public Health and Public Protection. The Director welcomed the opportunity to involve scrutiny members in developing the project.

The report emphasized that air quality in Wiltshire is in general very good, with only a few hotspots of concern, and that the biggest pollutant factor for the county is vehicular traffic.

A debate followed, wherein it was confirmed the Air Quality Strategy is a high level strategy, but that, on its own, would not deliver its aims. It will require the more holistic involvement from Council teams, local groups and the community. In response to queries, the Joint Director for Public Health and Public Protection offered members the opportunity to join local groups such as the Devizes Community Area Partnership, Transport Sub-group, to assist in implementation of the strategy. The Committee further discussed the integration of the Air Quality Strategy within local, team and service plans and strategies, and the need for updated reports to be presented regularly to achieve the aims of the report.

The committee also discussed the need to emphasize the context of the risks resulting from poor air quality by showing Wiltshire's situation against the national context, and recommended that this and the associated health risks be included in the report.

It was:

Resolved

- 1) To thank the Cabinet member for providing the opportunity to contribute towards the development of the Air Quality Strategy;**
- 2) To endorse the content of the strategy;**
- 3) To ask the Cabinet member to agree that the aims and delivery of the Air Quality Strategy are integrated into the relevant service delivery plans;**
- 4) To invite an update on the delivery of the Air Quality Strategy in May 2012;**
- 5) To recommend that the Air Quality Strategy includes health risk charts and Wiltshire's situation as seen against the national position.**

191. **Car Parking Charges**

The Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, Cllr Dick Tonge, was in attendance as requested by the Environment Select Committee held on 06 September 2011. Cllr Tonge informed the committee that the report in the agenda pack had been revised ahead of its consideration by Full Council on 08 November 2011. He outlined the revisions to the report as follows:

- A new paragraph (paragraph 8) and appendix (Appendix 3) have been added detailing proposals made by Salisbury City Council, Salisbury City Centre Management and others that were considered by Cabinet on 18 October.
- Chart 1, Table 2 and paragraphs 36-38 have been amended to take account of revised and updated car parking data.
- A new appendix (Appendix 5) has been added outlining how the Council is supporting regeneration activities in Wiltshire's towns.
- A new paragraph (paragraph 40) and appendix (Appendix 7) have been added providing car park ticket sales and income for each town from April 2010 to September 2011

The key points of the report, *Countrywide Analysis of Car Parking Charges*, highlighted by the Cabinet member were:

- The report's conclusions were that car parking charges were not of primary significance in relation to retail health, and that the primary factor encouraging economic success was the level and range of retail services on offer to visitors.
- Shop vacancies across Wiltshire's market towns had declined with the exception of Salisbury.
- Within Salisbury, footfall levels had stabilised and undergone recovery since February 2011 after months of decline.
- Short stay ticket sales have reduced by 5.8% as shown in like-for-like data tables for On and Off Street Parking Ticket Sales in 2010 and 2011. The figures excluded the areas of West Wiltshire and Salisbury.
- In Appendix 7 figures were presented showing town by town ticket sales. It was emphasized that long stay ticket sales were down, and that sales were down for short stay even in some areas where prices had remained unchanged.
- Appendix 8 presented mixed results where other local authorities reduced car parking charges.

A verbal update was provided on the impact on bus services of changes in car parking income. In Salisbury there had been an increase in the use of general bus services and of Park and Ride, but figures for the rest of the county April 2010- April 2011 showed a decrease of 9%. Carshare Wiltshire was up 73% in 2011.

Where car parking charges produced a surplus this money was hypothecated for use by bus services but in the case of a shortfall these monies would be found from the departmental budget. The committee was advised this arrangement was a legal arrangement.

Overall there was a £500,000 shortfall of income from on- and off-street parking for 2011-2012.

A debate followed, wherein concern was raised in relation to the time the committee had to digest the revised report. The committee also discussed the possibility that on street parking in residential estates had risen in response to parking charges. The committee was informed of the Cabinet Member's intent to promote the use of season tickets.

With regards to the decline in shop vacancies, it was highlighted that the impact of the increase in charity shops within those figures had not been fully assessed. The committee also further debated the level of support given to various towns for Economic Development and Regeneration activities, including the cost to the Council of CCTV systems in different areas. The Chair requested

a written response from the Service Director for Economy and Enterprise to provide this information in more detail.

Several measures to improve the service for users of Council car parking sites were discussed, including the need to improve signage at car parking sites. Some members of the committee felt that in their localities the perception of the impact of the changes was potentially damaging the Council's reputation.

The committee noted that the issue would be debated fully at Full Council on 08 November 2011.

It was:

Resolved:

- 1) To thank the Cabinet member for the opportunity to contribute to the Car Parking review;**
- 2) To recognise the current economic climate and the challenges it presents the Wiltshire public and its business sector;**
- 3) To recognise that due to the legislative process any immediate policy changes on car parking pricing will impact on the 2012/2013 budget; and in response to ask the Cabinet member to inform Council on the service implications of the current (2011/12) shortfall on the Car Parking budget.**

192. Forward Work Programme

The Forward Work Programme was noted and received several amendments. Further to minute 190, it was amended to reflect the invitation for the Air Quality team to appear before the Committee in May 2012. Members also requested clarification that the Climate Change Adaptation Plan would be discussed in March 2012, and it was requested that the Local Development Framework in the form of the Core Plan was added to the work programme for January 2012.

In response to developments regarding the updating of the rail system in Wiltshire, including the electrification of lines, and the implications for the county, it was further requested that an item be included at a future date to discuss the issue of Rail Travel and Network Line Electrification. Lastly, Members discussed the issue of the Community Infrastructure Levy appearing before the Committee at a future date to discuss the levy that can be charged on new developments in order to support local infrastructure, and it was clarified that a date could not be confirmed until legislative changes and national guidance were finalised and a report could be created.

193. **Date of next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 10 January 2012, at the Council Offices, Bradley Road, Trowbridge, from 10:30am.

194. **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

195. **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

196. **Amenities Consultancy and Works Contracts**

The Committee was asked to consider a confidential report regarding the upcoming decisions for the Highways and Amenities contracts, which had been reviewed to consider future options for the service. Any comments will be fed back to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport ahead of the Cabinet meeting of 15 November 2011.

The Committee welcomed the opportunity to comment upon and be involved in advance of a decision being made, and examined the report. Details were provided on the costs of current contracts, and the staffing, environmental, legal and other implications of the proposals.

A verbal update was provided on the current financial position of one of the contractors, Mouchel, as a result of the economy relating to their stock and share price. It was confirmed there were no service reasons for concern.

It was clarified to the committee that the contract would need to be advertised across the EU as required for contracts exceeding the OJEU threshold of £1 million as laid out in the European Public Contracts Directive 2004/18/EC. Members were reassured that regardless of who received the contract, local Wiltshire operators would likely remain the same, and this was to be encouraged.

In answer to queries, Members were also reassured of the flexibility of any chosen option to keep down contractual costs and to take into account localism factors, and officers expressed confidence of attracting sizable interest from bidders.

It was:

Resolved

- 1) To thank the Cabinet member for providing an opportunity for the Committee to contribute to the review of the existing and future expenditure of and service requirements of the highways and amenities functions;**

- 2) To endorse the proposals contained within the report;**
- 3) To update Scrutiny in January 2012 once the scope of the contract and the procurement processes have been developed further along the OJEU process.**

(Duration of meeting: 10.30 am - 1.40 pm)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Kieran Elliott, of Democratic Services, direct line (01225) 718504, e-mail kieran.elliott@wiltshire.gov.uk

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WILTSHIRE COUNCIL

APPENDIX A

ENVIRONMENTAL SELECT COMMITTEE

01 NOVEMBER 2011

Item No.5 - Public Participation and Councillors Questions

Questions from Mrs Wilmot, Salisbury, and responses from Head of Public Protection (Food & Environment), John Carter.

- 1) When the Air Quality Strategy says that, for Salisbury, 'the majority of locations show a reduction in levels' (p.19) - could there be an explanation as to what is being compared here? (it is clearly not 2010 versus 2009).

Air quality is monitored at a number of locations around Salisbury city centre. Monitoring is carried out using both automatic real time equipment and diffusion tubes. The reduction mentioned in the strategy document refers to an overall trend reduction since peak levels were recorded in 2006. It is acknowledged that the 2010 levels have increased on the 2009 figures, but it is important to look at longer term trends in air quality as this approach can take better account of variations in weather conditions and traffic levels from year to year.

- 2) Should Salisbury be categorised as a 'success' in Air Quality terms when most of the measured locations in the city are still in excess of allowable nitrogen dioxide levels?

The long term downward trend in pollution can be seen as a success. However this is a fragile situation, and is highly dependent the amount, flow and distribution of traffic in the city, and the meteorological conditions throughout each year.

- 3) Is there any intention to implement the Salisbury Transport Plan 1 (STP1) measures outlined above (removal of city centre parking spaces and extension of city centre pedestrian area) in order to help meet Air Quality objectives?

The implementation of the measures included in the STP1 to improve air quality are largely reliant on the planning process which is used to deliver them. These processes involve an element of public involvement and they cannot be achieved without community engagement and support.

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