

ENVIRONMENT SELECT COMMITTEE

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 9 JUNE 2015 AT KENNET ROOM - COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE BA14 8JN.

Present:

Cllr Rosemary Brown (Substitute), Cllr Brian Dalton, Cllr Dennis Drewett, Cllr Peter Edge (Vice Chairman), Cllr Peter Evans, Cllr Jose Green, Cllr Jacqui Lay, Cllr Magnus Macdonald, Cllr James Sheppard, Cllr Tony Trotman, Cllr Bridget Wayman (Chairman) and Cllr Philip Whalley

Also Present:

Dr Carlton Brand (Corporate Director), Tracy Carter, Cllr Anna Cuthbert, Cllr Simon Killane, Cllr Toby Sturgis, Cllr Philip Whitehead and Cllr Jerry Wickham

25 **Changes to the Membership**

Following the Full Council meeting on Tuesday 12 May 2015, a number of changes were made to the Environment Select Committee membership with immediate effect:

Cllr Philip Whalley was now a member of the Committee, in place of Cllr Christopher Newbury.

Cllrs John Noeken and Anna Cuthbert were now substitute members.

26 **Election of a Chairman**

Cllr Bridget Wayman was elected as Chairman of the Committee for 2015/16.

27 **Election of a Vice-Chairman**

Cllr Peter Edge was elected as Vice-Chairman of the Committee for 2015/16.

28 **Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Linda Packard who was substituted by Cllr Rosemary Brown.

29 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

Members considered matters arising from the previous meeting and it was confirmed that the recycling review was going to Cabinet on 16 June 2015 as part of the 'Citizens' Dashboard' (agenda item 7). The Cabinet member confirmed that the guide to inform councillors about road surface repairs and safety was being produced.

Resolved:

To confirm as a true and correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 14 April 2015.

30 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

31 **Chairman's Announcements**

Meetings with the Cabinet members

The Chairman highlighted the upcoming meetings between the Environment Select Chairman and Vice-Chairman and Cabinet Members with responsibility for the services whose work the Committee was responsible for reviewing. The Chairman explained that the objective was to review and update the forward work programme and invited members of the Committee to suggest any topics for discussion. It was confirmed that the following areas would be the subjects of these meetings:

- Highways and Transport
- Waste
- Economic development
- Housing, Leisure, Libraries and Flooding
- Hubs, Heritage & Arts, Governance, Support Services (joint with the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee)

Learning and Development

The Chairman explained that there was a new approach for providing learning and development for councillors. The programme would be delivered through Frontline Consulting and led by a trainer well-known to the council with five half-day events bookable in 2015/16. Further detail would be provided after the confirmation of dates and content.

For further information, these reports were presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on 19 May 2015. [Click here](#) to access the information.

LGA Peer Review

The Chairman explained that the formal feedback letter from the LGA Peer Challenge on Wiltshire Council's approach to overview and scrutiny was considered at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on 19 May 2015 alongside a draft action plan.

These documents are available in the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee minutes from 19 May 2015. [Click here](#) to access the information.

Committee members were encouraged to contact the Scrutiny Officer with comments on any actions that the Environment Select Committee could take to meet the recommendations made by the Peer Challenge team.

Upcoming Events

A Home Grown Energy conference and Community Open Day organised by Westmill Sustainable Energy Trust (WeSET) at the Westmill Wind and Solar Farm Visit (Watchfield, Swindon, SN6 8TH - beside A420 and off B4508). Any interested members were encouraged to contact the Scrutiny Officer.

Resolved:

To note the Chairman's announcements.

32 Public Participation

The Committee raised the issue of switching off street lighting which was to be rolled out across the county from 1 July 2015. Some members suggested that there ought to have been more consultation before the rollout.

The Cabinet member, Cllr Philip Whitehead, explained that there had been consultation in April 2012. A street lighting reduction scheme had been successfully piloted in Trowbridge for six months. It was also noted that ongoing consultation with local people was a key element of the street lighting reduction scheme in Trowbridge and that this approach was to be echoed across the county.

33 Waste Service

33a Executive Response to Waste Task Group

The Committee received a response (attached to these minutes) from Cllr

Toby Sturgis, Cabinet member for Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning (strategic and development management), Property, Waste and Strategic Housing, as a result of the recommendations endorsed by the Committee at its meeting on 14 April 2015 following a report from the Waste Task Group.

Cllr Toby Sturgis explained that there was a comprehensive communications strategy in place to explain the changes to Household Recycling Centre (HRC) opening hours and the changes to garden waste collection arrangements.

It was recognised that the durability of the decals (stickers) placed on some of the bins was faulty. It was advised that these decals would be replaced if affected households contacted Customer Services. The public should be reassured that drivers would have details of which properties had signed up for the garden waste collection service. Cllr Toby Sturgis advised that any members of the public who experienced difficulties should contact Customer Services.

It was reported that 61,000 people had signed up for the garden waste collection service at the time of the meeting. It was commended that a high number of people had signed up for this service. The Committee considered that it would be appropriate to provide more detailed information about what items could be recycled and the Cabinet member agreed and explained that this would be addressed once the new procurement contract was in place. It was also advised that the toolkit for recycling and composting was under development and being fully trialled in Westbury; it was expected to be circulated to all councillors in early 2016.

Cllr Jose Green, the Chairman of the Task Group, suggested that, although the final report had been submitted, there was a continued need for the Waste Task Group particularly in respect of monitoring the Household Recycling Centres (HRC) and the impact of the changing hours. The Cabinet member suggested that the upcoming meetings between the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee and the relevant Cabinet members would address this.

The Committee suggested that, owing to the £40 per year charge for the garden waste collection service, the savings of £800,000 envisaged in the budget might be exceeded. The Cabinet member, Cllr Toby Sturgis, advised that 131,000 households used the service prior to the introduction of a charge and it was anticipated that roughly half of those households would eventually sign up for the service. The Cabinet member suggested that the additional income would cover the cost of the garden waste collection service.

It was also advised that payment for the garden waste collection service by instalments and/ or direct debit was being considered. The Committee

recommended that these methods of payment be introduced in time for renewal payments in 2016 and encouraged the Cabinet member to investigate this as a priority. The Committee suggested that it might be beneficial for the Budget Scrutiny Task Group to investigate the income, costs and total savings arising from the introduction of the charge for the garden waste collection service.

Resolved:

To note the Executive response to the final report of the Waste Task Group.

33b Recycling Performance

Tracy Carter, Associate Director for Waste and Environment, introduced the report on waste management performance that set out key figures monitored from 2014 – 2015. It was highlighted that there had been a reduction in the waste which was landfilled to 20.3% of the total waste collected which was significantly better than the target of 25%. It was reported that 46.4% of waste collected was recycled or composted. Although this was below the target of 50%, it was acknowledged that there was a late spring, and a change in the method of calculation which may have had some impact on this figure.

The Committee suggested that it would be informative to know the increase in households in the county to calculate the impact on waste targets and the Associate Director informed the Committee that the impact of increased households was being discussed.

It was also noted that some of the household waste produced in Wiltshire could be used as fuel (solid recovered fuel) instead of being diverted to landfill. It was questioned when a local plant that could use solid recovered fuel was to be constructed. It was also highlighted that a recent report by Hills appeared to use different data to that presented in the update on waste management performance.

It was explained that an objective in the Hills contract was to find a local plant to use solid recovered fuel and that the planning process for a local plant was underway. The Associate Director commented that Hills' data may include waste collection for other clients and suggested she liaise with Hills to affirm whether the same base data was used.

The Chairman commented that it might be informative to see the recycling performance of community areas to address underlying local issues. The Associate Director explained that the efficient routes of waste collection vehicles made this more complicated as the routes cross community area boundaries. However, trends were visible based on the old district council

boundaries, for example fewer dry recyclables were collected in the west, probably because more residents still have larger bins for non-recycled waste than those in other areas of the county.

Resolved:

To note the report on waste management performance.

34 **Task Group Update**

Public Transport Review Task Group

The Chairman drew attention to the written update in the agenda pack. It was requested that the Task Group look at an integrated transport strategy and the Wilton Parkway Station in partnership with TransWilts and the Committee agreed an integrated approach to transport was desirable.

Highways and Streetscene BBLP Task Group

The Chairman highlighted the written information provided in the agenda pack.

Attention was drawn to the public concern about littering on highways. The Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, Cllr Philip Whitehead, informed the Committee that the council was aware of the issue. He explained that work was now being done to address the root cause of this littering; this included publicity, support for volunteer groups, and local council enforcement options to discourage littering.

The Committee discussed the issue of community litter picking groups. It was considered that littering was also an issue of animal welfare and attention was drawn to the requirement that some Parish Councils pay for waste collection from volunteer litter picks. Some members of the Committee urged that the council should be prepared to deal with the waste from litter picks as this activity encouraged resilient communities, which was at the heart of the business plan. Other members agreed that it would be helpful to have a universal approach to this issue.

It was confirmed that the type and location of roadside litter strongly suggested that the majority resulted from motorists. It was also explained that the council was aware of and engaging in the Keep Britain Tidy campaign.

The Committee also discussed the recent cycle of grass cutting. It was suggested that the grass was knee height in some locations before being cut.

Cllr Philip Whitehead clarified that the Streetscene contract had always been measured by outcomes and the grass had been cut by length, rather than on a

timescale, since 1 June 2013. It was agreed that the grass cutting timescales would be investigated in more detail by the Highways and Streetscene BBLP Task Group.

The Scrutiny Officer thanked members for their feedback on experiences with BBLP and explained that feedback would be catalogued.

Resolved:

To agree that the Public Transport Review Task Group would include consideration of an integrated transport strategy and the Wilton Parkway Station in partnership with TransWilts and approve the membership of the Task Group as follows:

**Cllr Peter Evans
Cllr Terry Chivers
Cllr Mollie Groom
Cllr Jacqui Lay
Cllr Magnus Macdonald
Cllr Graham Wright**

To agree that the grass cutting timescales would be examined by the Highways and Streetscene BBLP Task Group.

To note the Task Group updates.

35 **Forward Work Programme**

The Committee was informed of a new housing Act: the Self and Custom Build Housing Act 2015. This was noted by the Chairman who would take the issue to the upcoming meeting with the Cabinet member.

Following questions about the implementation of recommendations from the Adoptable Estates Task Group final report, it was confirmed that the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee was looking into the implementation of recommendations and tracking of decisions for all task group final reports.

The Committee was informed that the items on the forward work plan for the Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Documents (DPD) and Gypsy and Traveller Plan would be updated after the meetings between the Chairman and Vice-Chairman and the Cabinet members.

Resolved:

To note the progress of items on the Forward Work Programme.

36 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

37 **Date of Next Meeting**

The next ordinary meeting of the Committee would be held on 1 September 2015.

(Duration of meeting: 10.35 am - 12.20 pm)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Fiona Rae, of Democratic Services, direct line 01225 712681, e-mail fiona.rae@wiltshire.gov.uk

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**Executive response to the Final Report of the Environment
Select Committee Waste Task Group**

Purpose

1. To present the response of the Cabinet member for Strategic Planning, Development Management, Strategic Housing, Property and Waste to the [Final Report of the Waste Task Group](#) (link to pdf). The task group's report was endorsed by the Committee on 14 April 2015 and referred to the Cabinet member for response.

Background

2. On 28 October 2014 the Environment Select Committee agreed that communications to householders regarding waste and recycling was a work priority and resolved to reconvene the Waste Task Group to review this area.

This priority relates to the following aspiration in the council's Business Plan 2013-17:

"We will increase recycling and reduce our carbon footprint – we will encourage waste prevention and re-use and reduce the carbon footprint of our buildings, fleet and street lighting and support our staff and schools to become more carbon efficient."

3. The task group adopted the following terms of reference:
 - (a) To investigate how improved communications with householders on the council's waste services may facilitate an improved rate of recycling (including garden waste);
 - (b) To investigate how to increase the awareness of the range of services and resources available to assist in achieving improved recycling rates; with clear information on how to access the available resources and services.
4. The task group met on four occasions between January and March 2015 with the following membership:
 - Cllr Pat Aves
 - Cllr Rosemary Brown
 - Cllr Peter Evans
 - Cllr Mollie Groom
 - Cllr Jose Green (Chairman)
 - Cllr Jacqui Lay
5. On 14 April 2015, the task group's final report was considered by the Committee and it was resolved:

- (1) To endorse the following recommendations and refer the report to the Cabinet member for response at the next meeting.

Executive response to recommendations:

1. Alongside the environmental benefits, considers promoting the financial benefits of reducing, reusing and recycling in council communications about waste and recycling.

Work will be done on this following the implementation of the new garden waste service, the change in operating hours at the household recycling centres and the completion of the current procurement process.

2. Considers illustrating Wiltshire's recycling performance in an engaging graphic form on the council website and at HRCs.

The waste management service works closely with the web team and again will consider this following implementation of the service changes referred to previously.

3. In terms of kerbside collections, indicates how the following areas will be addressed:

- Ensuring clarity around which plastics are recyclable and can be placed in the blue-lidded bins to avoid contamination;
- Ensuring clarity around what recyclables can be placed in the black box;
- Promotion of the council's offer of a second blue-lidded bin and black box at no additional charge to residents;
- Early information that plastics other than bottles will be kerbside recycled from 2017 as part of new waste contract.

Current communications strategies are focussing on the new garden waste service and the change to opening hours at the household recycling centres. Future strategies could focus on improvement of the collection of dry recyclables, subject to availability of budget. There will be a comprehensive communications strategy relating to any changes to the collection service arising from the commencement of new contract arrangements in 2017.

4. Investigates whether decals (stickers) applied to bins are a cost-effective method of communicating waste collection arrangements and good recycling practices.

This will be researched in connection with the work referred to above on promoting the collection of dry recyclables.

5. Indicates how changes to garden waste collection arrangements will be:

- Effectively communicated to residents; and
- Used as an opportunity to provide information about alternative options for garden waste, for example, good garden practice, composting, household recycling centres and the safe and legal use of bonfires.

There is a comprehensive communications strategy in place for communicating the changes to garden waste collections. Its success has been evidenced by the number of households signing up for the new service which now exceeds 61,000.

6. Considers increasing communications around successful prosecutions for fly-tipping.

The Enforcement team works closely with the council's media team to highlight such opportunities. It is an important element of our preventative work.

7. Indicates how changes to HRC opening hours, their locations and opening hours will be widely communicated to avoid:

- inconveniencing customers;
- reducing overall recycling rates; and
- increasing incidences of fly-tipping.

There is a comprehensive communications strategy in place.

8. Provides further details of the recycling promotion work currently undertaken by Wiltshire Wildlife Trust under the joint venture agreement with the council and the implications for recycling of the Trust's business plan review.

The council has a business plan in place which sets out the objectives that the WWT and the council will work to achieve. The board is chaired by Councillor Wickham, Portfolio Holder for Waste, who is taking a keen interest in the performance of WWT and ensuring that the objectives would be met.

9. Provides any further details of the initiative being run by Westbury Area Board to develop a toolkit for recycling and composting and how other area boards might be supported to take forward similar initiatives and increase local recycling rates.

Councillor Wickham is leading this work for Westbury Area Board. Once the toolkit has been produced we will ensure that it is communicated to all councillors and Community Area Managers.

10. Notes the task group's comments on the waste and recycling pages of the council website and the improvements being made in the redesign.

The comments are noted. The waste management service will continue to work closely with the web team to develop the information available to residents.

Cllr Toby Sturgis, Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning (Strategic and Development Management), Property, Waste and Strategic Housing

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