

ENVIRONMENT SELECT COMMITTEE

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 2 MARCH 2011 AT COMMITTEE ROOM III, COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE.

Present:

Cllr Chuck Berry, Cllr Nigel Carter, Cllr Peter Colmer, Cllr Peter Doyle, Cllr Jose Green, Cllr Mollie Groom (Chairman), Cllr Alan Hill, Cllr Chris Humphries, Cllr George Jeans (Substitute), Cllr Howard Marshall (Substitute), Cllr Ian McLennan and Cllr Leo Randall

Also Present:

Cllr Linda Conley and Cllr Jeff Osborn

132. **Apologies and Substitutions**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Tom James and Cllr Stephen Oldrieve. Cllr George Jeans and Cllr Howard Marshall substituted respectively.

133. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved and signed as a correct record.

134. **Declarations of Interests**

There were no declarations of interest.

135. **Chairman's Announcements**

A report on scrutiny of the Business Plan adopted at Full Council would be presented at the next Committee meeting in May. This document would be key to assist the Committee in the shaping of its future work programme.

Members would note that the two key items on the agenda included reference to their position within the Business Plan.

136. **Public Participation**

There was no public participation.

137. **Waste Collection and Recycling Service**

Following the Committee's longstanding interest in the transformation of the waste service, the Chairman requested that an update be provided on the current position with regards to service provision following approval by Full Council on 22 February 2011.

The Service Director Waste Management Services and Head of Waste Management Transformation were in attendance to answer questions arising from the debate.

The Chairman requested that members focus on the timetable for the service changes and associated risks and challenges.

Discussion commenced with members raising concern over the capacity required by residents across the County to host the additional waste collection bins for plastic and cardboard. It was expected the sizing of the additional recycling bins required would be approximately 240 litres for the majority of households (although this had yet to be confirmed).

Confirmation was provided by the Service Director that where residents were unable to accommodate the additional bins (such as flats/apartments) the individual needs of those residents could be further discussed with the Council to consider alternative options. A policy to address this issue was to be submitted to the Cabinet member for consideration.

The Council currently offered an assisted collection service for eligible residents which would remain as part of the revised service provision.

Members also discussed green waste collection where, in the South of the County, a collection fee was currently in place. Although it was understood the revised service would no longer attract a fee for the collection of green waste members felt that, following budgetary cuts announced following the Comprehensive Spending Review, this could have perhaps remained a revenue stream for the Council.

The Service Director confirmed that the collection of green waste generated approximately 12,000 tonnes per year. As the Council was now expected to pay a set fee per tonne of landfill waste generated the service would provide savings in this area as well as reducing the methane emissions that green waste produced which were 20 times more damaging to the environment than carbon emissions.

Food waste collection was also raised as an area for potential consideration although clarification was provided that, due to cost, this would not be considered at the present time. The authority was however monitoring other

authorities who provided this service to ascertain the potential long term benefits.

The current contract for the collection of non-landfill waste ran until 2016 when there would be a further opportunity to review the service provided.

The Service Director confirmed that an order had been placed to meet the additional fleet requirements following approval by Full Council on 22 February 2011 and that the contract in place for the supply of the fleet included that, should there be a delay in delivery, the manufacturer was required to cover the cost of providing temporary vehicles until delivery of the additional vehicles had taken place.

Further discussion commenced in relation to carbon reduction commitments. Currently the Council was not required to pay any carbon tax on vehicles although this was likely to change over the next few years when further monitoring measures were expected.

The Committee noted the need for strong communication and monitoring of the service and that the Management Review undertaken to achieve budgetary savings had impacted on the communication workstream which included the information system. It was hoped that the information system (to include asset management and accessible across the county) would be active by October 2011. However contingency plans had been put in place to ensure storage of the necessary information was held until activation of the system if required.

Resolved:

- 1) To thank officers for the report.**
- 2) To request that the Cabinet Member kept green waste charging under review.**
- 3) To receive a further update on the Waste Collection and Recycling Service in July 2011.**

138. Local Transport Plan

The Committee resolved at its previous meeting to conduct a rapid scrutiny exercise on the Local Transport Plan. This took place on 25 January 2011 and a copy of its findings was attached with the agenda, together with the Executive response.

The lead member of the group exercise introduced the report, thanked his fellow members to their assistance in the exercise and confirmed that the group had considered the public transport, road transport and freight strategies with all ensuing recommendations made by the group incorporated into the Plan by the Cabinet member.

Concern was raised over the length of time the scrutiny members had in order to review the Plan which had resulted in a need for the Committee to conduct a rapid scrutiny exercise. It was hoped that the development of the Business Plan endorsed by Full Council on 22 February which provided details of the authorities direction over the next four years would address this issue and allow the Committee to better plan its work programmes.

Further comments included that a mechanism should be in place to ensure that local aspirations were able to be fed into strategic documents produced by the Council and that Councillor involvement at an early stage was needed.

Further clarity was also requested on the impact that any reduction on concessionary fares would have on operations where it had been indicated that this would result in a reduction on the number of services run, and further information on the competition that existed on commercial routes.

Resolved:

To note the Rapid Scrutiny Exercise report and response from Cabinet to the recommendations made.

139. **Carbon Reduction Commitment Energy Efficiency Scheme**

The Committee had a longstanding interest in the work undertaken by the authority to improve energy efficiency around Wiltshire with the Committee receiving an update on the Council's Carbon Reduction Commitment in July 2010.

Following stories arising from the media in January 2011 relating to the council now expected to pay a £600k levy, a report providing an outline of the carbon reduction commitment energy efficiency scheme and what this would mean for Wiltshire Council was requested.

The Head of Climate Change was welcomed to the meeting to present the report where clarification was provided that, since consideration of the Council's carbon reduction commitment (CRC) in July, the proposed carbon trading scheme had since been removed following central governments Comprehensive Spending Review and replaced with a levy based tax on carbon emissions per tonne. This equated to a £600k levy which would now be paid retrospectively.

Central government was also expected to replace the national indicator set with a single data set and the Council was currently consulting in relation to the form this would take. Further details were expected to be available from July 2011.

Although the work being undertaken to reduce carbon emissions in relation to assets was noted, the Committee felt that further work could be undertaken to

ensure that employees were also fully briefed and on board with the need to reduce carbon emissions across the authority.

The Head of Climate Change confirmed that much work had been undertaken on behaviour change which had not been included within the report and that a lot of work had been undertaken on the Carbon Management Plan which could be presented to the Committee at a future meeting.

At present the Council had agreed to take responsibility for the cost of school carbon emissions for the first year, noting that school buildings in Wiltshire currently equated to approx 40% of the annual CRC carbon emissions. This would include responsibility for those schools opting out of authority control (i.e. academies) although the issue of emissions from academies was to be addressed.

Further comments included that a breakdown of the annual spend and how it was distributed would have been useful information to allow the Committee to better scrutinise the scheme. The Committee also requested that details of the potential savings, in terms of electricity and carbon emissions, turning off street lights had and, accordingly, asked that Mouchel be requested to clarify the cost per light.

The first league table, which would show how well organisations were cutting their carbon emissions, was to be published in October 2011 and would include data for the last 3 years. As the Council did not hold some historic energy data (due to Unitary status) and had been hindered by the roll out of smart metres, its position in the first year's league table was likely to be low.

Resolved:

- 1) To thank the Head of Climate Change for the report.**
- 2) To receive an update on the Carbon Management Plan at the Committee's next meeting in May 2011.**
- 3) To request that Mouchel provides the cabinet member with the individual costs of lighting.**

140. **Budget Monitoring**

The Chairman reminded the Committee that, as previously agreed, reports would be submitted for the Committee's consideration by exception.

Resolved:

To note that budget monitoring reports would be provided to the Committee by exception.

141. **Housing Commission Board**

The key points arising from the recent Housing Commission Board meeting and as included with the agenda were presented by the Scrutiny representative.

Clarification was provided that, since the inclusion of the update, a further meeting had taken place which had been attended by both the Chief Executive and Deputy Leader where grants to encourage the provision of insulation was discussed.

At the Board meeting the Chairman of the Housing Commission Board indicated that the government had now set the agreement buy out rate at £119m. In order to make the 30 year business plan sound they were expected to offer favourable rates to take them on. Central government were also expected to announce details of loans for photovoltaic sales.

A quality audit on where the Council currently stood and what needed to be done in the future would be undertaken in the Spring.

Resolved:

To thank the Scrutiny Representative for the update provided.

142. **Forward Work Programme**

The Committee noted the forward work programme provided.

Following discussion it was agreed that Gypsy and Traveller provision would be added to the plan for consideration at the Committee's next meeting in May.

143. **Date of next Meeting**

The date of the next Environment Select Committee meeting would be 10 May 2011.

144. **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items for consideration.

(Duration of meeting: 10.30 am - 12.25 pm)

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