

ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 27 MARCH 2003

Councillor J S Highfield (Chairman)

Present (for all or part of the meeting):-

Councillors:

R M Baggaley

D M Byrne

Mrs A P Edgeller

Mrs A M Loughran

W R Reid

J A Russell

Mrs J E Tabernor

Mrs D A Wakefield

Also in attendance:-

Councillor Mrs E Kidney - Cabinet Member - Environment Portfolio

ES38 MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting held on 9 January 2003 submitted and signed.

ES39 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs E A Croxall and J H Kennedy (substitute Councillor Mrs A M Loughran).

ES40 HEALTH SCRUTINY

Considered a report relating to the outcome of the Annual Health Scrutiny Conference held at the Rising Brook Baptist Church, Stafford on 28 January 2003 and of the meeting of the County Health Scrutiny Committee held on 24 February 2003.

Suggested topics for scrutiny by this Council were the following:-

- Ill-health prevention/health promotion/public involvement
More ill-health prevention/more health promotion/collaborative working/public involvement and co-ordinated approach;
- physical access/transport
need to remove physical barrier to access services (Government policy/transport services/location/building design, etc.) Consider the impact on other agencies.
- co-ordinated approach;
need to ensure partnerships work effectively. Information sharing, need to recognise the contribution of the local voluntary sector.

At the meeting of the County Health Scrutiny Committee on 24 February 2003, the following shortlist of topics for scrutiny by that Committee was approved:-

- (a) Health Promotion in schools (and the Health Promoting Schools Scheme);
- (b) Respite Care (and Domiciliary Care);
- (c) Access to services, including transport and availability;

- (d) Health Services for vulnerable children;
- (e) Substance Misuse/Drug Action Team.

County Councillor M J D Poulter, the County Council's representative on the Stafford Borough Health Scrutiny Committee, attended the meeting of this Committee when this item was considered.

In advance of the first meeting of the Borough Council's Health Scrutiny Committees the Committee discussed the need to obtain information of health issues affecting the Borough area and the merits of writing to all Members of the Borough Council to obtain their views.

RESOLVED:- that in exercise of the powers delegated to the Committee:-

- (i) the report be noted;
- (ii) all Members of the Borough Council be asked for details of their views relating to key health issues in the Borough;
- (iii) the suggested topics for scrutiny by this Council be referred to the first meeting of the Borough Health Scrutiny Committee for consideration together with details of any responses from (ii) above.

ES41 GNOSALL FLOODING

Considered a report on progress with the Gnosall Flooding Alleviation Scheme.

At the meeting of the Cabinet on 4 March 2003 it was decided that a contribution of £74,500 be offered towards the cost of the Gnosall Flooding Alleviation Scheme using the Watercourses and Flood Defence provision of £40,000 in the 2002/03 Capital Programme with the remaining balance being met from the £40,000 provision for public conveniences for 2003/04.

The decision of the Cabinet had been published in Digest No 45 and had not been Called In for scrutiny by this Committee.

The County Council anticipated that work on the scheme would commence in Spring 2003.

RESOLVED:- that in exercise of the powers delegated to the Committee the report be noted.

ES42 NATIONAL WASTE MINIMISATION AND RECYCLING FUND 2003/04

At the meeting of the Committee on 9 January 2003, it had been reported that the Department for the Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) had decided not to approve the Council's application for funding in relation to the Council's trial garden waste collection service.

The Committee had decided that a letter be sent to DEFRA expressing the Council's disappointment with the recent decision bearing in mind this Council's previous and current success in achieving the Government's recycling targets for local authorities.

Although an informal indication had been received from DEFRA that the matter was still receiving consideration a formal reply was still awaited.

The Committee discussed the current changing position in relation to the Government's funding of recycling initiatives by local authorities.

RESOLVED:- that in exercise of the powers delegated to the Committee:-

- (i) the report be noted;
- (ii) a letter be sent to Margaret Beckett, MP, Secretary of State for Environment Food and Rural Affairs, copied to the Members of Parliament representing the Borough area, expressing concern regarding the lack of a formal response from her Department in relation to the Head of Environmental and Health Services' letter.

ES43 REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT INFORMATION FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2002

Considered the quarterly progress report on performance for the services within the Committee's purview for the quarter ended 31 December 2002.

The Head of Environmental and Health Services advised the Committee that he would include in the progress report to the next meeting the actual figures relating to the activities of the Council's Dog Warden.

RESOLVED:- that in exercise of the powers delegated to the Committee:-

- (i) the performance management report and the associated Executive Summary be approved;
- (ii) the Cabinet Member, Environment, be asked to pursue the possible sponsorship of an additional Dog Warden by a dog food manufacturer.

ES44 STAFFORD MARKET

Considered a report on progress to date in respect of improvements at Stafford Market, particularly revised management arrangements, the proposed outdoor market, the design brief and 6 day trading.

Jon Webb, the newly appointed Markets Co-ordinator, was introduced to the Committee and he outlined the work which he had undertaken in relation to the market since taking up his appointment on 10 March 2003.

RESOLVED:- that in exercise of the powers delegated to the Committee, the report be noted.

ES45 BUSINESS PLANNING FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Considered the report of the Strategic Director regarding the programme of business considered by the Committee in 2002/03 together with its future work programme.

The report would be submitted to the meeting of the Council on 29 April 2003 in accordance with Article 6, paragraph 6.3 of the Constitution which required the Committee to report annually to the Council on its workings and future work programmes.

RESOLVED:- that in exercise of the powers delegated to the Committee:-

- (i) the report, as amended and attached as Schedule No 1 to the signed copy of the minutes be approved for submission to the Council;
- (ii) the Council be recommended that the appropriate Scrutiny Committee considers in its Business Plan the effects of telecom masts.

ES46 CHAIRMAN

This was the last meeting of the Committee prior to the Borough Council elections on 1 May 2003 and the Chairman thanked Members and Officers for their support and assistance.

Proceedings commenced at 6.30 pm and terminated at 8.10 pm.

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ES45/03 **Business Planning for Future Meetings**

The following is the report approved by the **Environment Scrutiny Committee** for submission to the Council:-

The Committee drew up the following programme of business for 2002/3:-

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| (a) Scrutiny of Health, including health promotion | At a Special Meeting of the Committee on 14 May 2002 representatives of the South Western Staffordshire Primary Care Trust and the South Stoke Primary Care Trust attended to discuss with the Committee the re-organisation of the NHS and the scrutiny of that service. |
| (b) General cleanliness of the Borough, including street cleansing, litter, fly tipping, pigeons, dog fouling | At the meeting of the Committee on 23 April 2002, it was decided that consideration of the Head of Planning and Engineering Services report be deferred until after publication of the Engineering Services Best Value Review. |
| (c) Environmental well-being and sustainability | This matter was considered at the special meeting on 25 November 2002. |
| (d) The Council's obligation to meet the proposed new recycling targets | This matter will have to be addressed by the Council after May, particularly in the light of the Countywide Waste Strategy "2020 Vision: Zero Waste to Landfill" upon which the Council is to be consulted. |
| (e) Public conveniences | Spring/Summer 2003 |
| (f) Composting and disposing of Green Domestic Waste | The Committee visited the arrangements operated at Lichfield on 1 April 2003. |

The Committee decided at its meeting held on 11 July 2002 that the above issues be considered at special meetings of the Committee, as appropriate, and outside agencies be invited to contribute to the meeting.

The Committee has also taken the opportunity to visit a licensed composting site at Shareshill and an "on farm" composting site at Acton, Near Newcastle-Under-Lyme on 25 September 2002, to acquaint Members with the issues involved with green recycling.

At the meeting of the Committee on 3 December 2002 it was decided that the investigation of the effects of telecom masts be incorporated into the Committee's Business Plan, with all Members of the Council being invited to receive presentations from expert representatives of all sides. However, at the meeting of the Committee on 9 January 2003, it was decided to delete this item from the work programme. Following further discussion at the meeting on 27 March 2003 the Council, after May, is being asked to look again at this issue.

Conclusion

In addition to its regular business, the Committee has considered a wide range of topics and issues, both at regular and special meetings. Scrutiny of health will continue to be an important and ongoing issue for the Council. This has been recognised by the special arrangements now put in place.

Environment and waste issues will no doubt continue to be important areas for future consideration in whatever format. They raise important issues for the Council, the Borough Community and Key Stakeholders.