

ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 9 JANUARY 2003

Councillor J S Highfield (Chairman)

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

Councillors:

R M Baggaley

D M Byrne

Mrs E A Croxall

W D Davis

Mrs A P Edgeller

J Paton

W R Reid

G O Rowlands

J A Russell

Mrs A J Walker

Also in attendance:-

Councillor Mrs E Kidney - Cabinet Member - Environment Portfolio

ES30 MINUTES

Minutes of the meetings held on 25 November and 3 December 2002 submitted and signed.

ES31 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J H Kennedy (substitute Councillor G O Rowlands), Mrs J E Tabernor (substitute Councillor W D Davis) and Mrs D A Wakefield (substitute Councillor J Paton).

ES32 KERBSIDE COLLECTION TRIAL FOR GARDEN WASTE

This matter had been published in Members Digest No 41 of 29 November 2002 and had subsequently been "Called-In" for referral to this Committee by Councillors J A Russell, B J Stamp and D R Seary for the following reason:-

"To scrutinise in detail future funding of this scheme and to review the success or otherwise of the grant application."

The report related to a review of the trial Garden Waste Collection Service from the kerbside and proposals/implications for the future of the scheme.

Councillor Mrs E Kidney, Cabinet Member, Environment Portfolio, and the Head of Environmental and Health Services reported to the Committee the decision made by the Department for the Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) not to approve the Council's application for funding in relation to the scheme and rehearsed with the Committee the implications for the Council arising from this decision.

The Council had been informed that its bid narrowly missed out on funding and would be reconsidered should any savings be identified. DEFRA would let the Council know more early in the New Year.

DEFRA received a total of 357 bids with a total value of some £220m. The amount of funding available in this round of funding was £76.3m, making the fund almost three times over subscribed.

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

- (i) the decision of the Cabinet Member be noted as follows:-
  - (a) that option 2 be pursued;
  - (b) in the event of the DEFRA bid being approved (Option 3), a further report be prepared detailing the approach to be taken and the areas to be covered;

(Note: Option 2 is for the scheme to extend to 1,000 households (utilising the existing stock of brown wheeled bins) with a reduced service charge of £15.00. The net cost to the Council was estimated to be £5,400, which could be met from within the Environment Portfolio draft budget for 2003/04.)

- (ii) 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.

ES33 ENVIRONMENTAL AND HEALTH SERVICES BEST VALUE REVIEWS - UPDATE ON IMPROVEMENT PLANS

Considered a report updating the improvement plans for the Best Value Reviews for the Environmental Health Services, Dog Warden Service and Pest Control Service.

The Head of Environmental and Health Services commented to the Committee on the possible provision of an additional dog warden in the context of the performance detailed in the Performance Management Report (ES35/03) and the re-tendering exercise currently underway for the renewal of the contract relating to the dog warden service.

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

ES34 ANNUAL PROGRESS OF BEST VALUE REVIEW SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLANS IN RESPECT OF BEREAVEMENT SERVICES AND STAFFORD MARKET

Considered a report relating to the annual progress in relation to the Best Value Review Service improvement plans for Bereavement Services and Stafford Market.

The Committee discussed with the Strategic Director and the Head of Operations the current position regarding the establishing of an outside market in Stafford Town Centre, the procurement of a market operator, the appointment of a Market Manager, revision to the internal layout and signage of the market.

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

ES35 REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT INFORMATION FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2002

Considered the quarterly progress report on performance for the services within the Committee's purview for the quarter ended 30 September 2002.

The Head of Operations reported that it was proposed to delete performance indicators L1 M5, M6 and M7, on the basis that a more appropriate means of demonstrating the performance of the market was through the existing L1 M9, M10 and M11 indicators.

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

- (i) the Performance Management report and the associated Executive Summary be approved;
- (ii) performance indicators L1 M5, M6 and M7 be not included in future Performance Management reports.

ES36 AN INTEGRATED WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR STAFFORDSHIRE

Reported that this matter had been considered at the meeting of the Cabinet on 7 January 2002, at which it was decided:-

- “that:-
- (a) the pre consultation draft Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Staffordshire as circulated be approved subject to the initial comments referred to in APPENDIX 2 being incorporated into the final published draft to be published later in January by the Joint Waste Board;
  - (b) the Strategy be referred to the Environment Scrutiny Committee for comments and consideration of the need for additional local consultation;
  - (c) following (b) above, the final version of the Strategy be submitted to Council for adoption as a policy document and submission to the County Council and Staffordshire Waste Management Board.”

The Head of Environmental and Health Services reported that the updated strategy document would be submitted to the Committee at its meeting on 27 March 2003 for consideration.

The Cabinet Member, Environment Portfolio, advised the meeting that it was her understanding that the Waste Management Board would be considering the pre-consultation draft of the strategy document later this month, following which there would be public consultation meetings held in the north and south of the county, but not in central Staffordshire. She sought the Committee’s support in pressing for a public consultation meeting to be held in Stafford to cater for the residents of central Staffordshire.

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

- (i) the report be noted and the updated strategy report be considered at the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee on 27 March 2003;
- (ii) the Cabinet Member’s view that a public consultation meeting be held in Stafford be supported.

ES37 BUSINESS PLANNING FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Considered the report of the Strategic Director reviewing the following programme of business due to be considered by the Committee:-

(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 is to be considered at the meeting of the Committee on 27 March 2003.
(e)	Public conveniences	Spring/Summer 2003
(f)	Effects of Telecom Masts	This matter is to be considered at a special meeting to which all Members of the Council and expert representatives of all sides be invited to attend
(g)	Composting and disposing of Green Domestic Waste	Site visit to be arranged for early 2003 to the arrangements operated by Lichfield District Council

With regard to (a) above, the Head of Environmental and Health Services reported on a forthcoming Annual Conference on Health Scrutiny which was due to be held at the Rising Brook Baptist Church, Burton Square, Stafford on Tuesday 28 January 2003. It was understood that in addition to those Members already invited to the Annual Conference by the County Council (Councillors J S Highfield, J A Russell and Mrs J E Tabernor), there may be additional places available. Those Members who had not yet received an invitation were advised to contact the Head of Environmental and Health Services should they wish to attend this event.

With regard to (f) above, the Head of Environmental and Health Services was endeavouring to obtain a response from the National Radiological Protection Board (NRPB) with regard to the possibility of that organisation attending a special meeting of the Committee to consider the effects of telecom masts. A response from the organisation was still awaited.

With regard to (g) above, the Chief Executive had received an informal indication from Lichfield District Council that it would welcome a visit by the Scrutiny Committee to its green domestic composting and disposal facility. Formal confirmation of this was awaited and when received arrangements would be made for the site meeting to be held as early as possible.

The Committee reviewed its future business plan, particularly the merits of examining the effects of telecom masts, as referred to in (f) above.

RESOLVED:- that in exercise of the powers delegated to the Committee, the work programme be reaffirmed subject to the deletion of (f) above (effects of telecom masts).

Proceedings commenced at 6.30 pm and terminated 8.08 pm.