

SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE ENVIRONMENT

Thursday, 30th June, 2005 at 6.00 p.m.
In Committee Room 2, Council House, Dudley

PRESENT:-

Councillor Mrs Cowell (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs Turner (Vice-Chairman)
Councillors Banks, Body, Mrs Collins, Ms Partridge, Stanley,
Tomkinson and C Wilson

Officers

Director of Law and Property (as Lead Officer to the Committee),
Assistant Director of Housing, Assistant Director of the Urban
Environment (Development and Environmental Protection), Assistant
Director of the Urban Environment (Environmental Management), Head
of Street Care, Food and Occupational Safety Manager, Principal Policy
Officer, (Directorate of the Urban Environment), Senior Policy Manager
(Directorate of Housing) and Mrs M Johal (Directorate of Law and
Property).

1 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 10th
March, 2005, be approved as a correct record and signed.

2 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No Member made a declaration of interest in accordance with the
Members' Code of Conduct.

3 **CHANGE IN ORDER OF BUSINESS**

Pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 13(c), it was

RESOLVED

That agenda item number 12 be considered as the next item of
business.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND DECISION MAKING

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted seeking consideration of the Committee to oversee a programme of research into sustainable development in terms of Council decision-making.

In response to a query the Principal Policy Officer explained that the Corporate Sustainability Group was chaired by the Director of the Urban Environment and comprised a representative from each Directorate and that the main remit of the Group was to explore mainstreaming sustainability within the Council.

A Member requested that to enable a fuller understanding of the outcome and what was to be achieved, a further update report, including a practical example of how the process could be applied, be submitted to a future meeting.

RESOLVED

- (1) That a further update report be submitted to the Committee in due course to include a practical example of how the process could be applied.
- (2) That the Select Committee agree to oversee the consideration of sustainability in the Council's decision-making processes.
- (3) That the proposal that the Council's Corporate Sustainability Group be tasked to undertake the following be endorsed:-
 - (i) Research best practice that has been used by other local authorities to integrate sustainability into decision making (particularly those that have excellent CPA (Corporate Performance Assessment) ratings eg sustainability checklists and appraisal tools.
 - (ii) Consider the level of decision-making that would require sustainability objectives being taken into account.
 - (iii) Develop options/tools to integrate sustainability into decision-making to be presented to the Committee for consideration and to pilot favoured options on behalf of the Committee.

- (iv) Report to the Committee on outcomes from the above.
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5 TERMS OF REFERENCE, RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE COMMITTEE AND SCRUTINY PROTOCOLS FOR SELECT COMMITTEES

A report of the Lead Officer to the Committee was submitted setting out the terms of reference, procedure rules applicable to this Committee and the scrutiny protocols for Select Committees.

A Member queried whether the meeting was open to public participation and queried how questions could be submitted by them, or on their behalf.

In response, the Lead Officer to the Committee advised that the meeting was a public meeting. However, consideration had not previously been given to public participation. He further commented that, should the Committee desire, "Questions from the Public" could be included as a standard item on future agendas.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the information contained in the report and Appendices to the report now submitted, be noted.
 - (2) That "Questions from the Public" be included as a standard item on future agendas.
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6 APPOINTMENT OF WORKING GROUPS

A report of the Lead Officer to the Committee was submitted seeking consideration of Working Groups of the Committee for the ensuing municipal year.

A Member expressed concern that recycling figures for the area of Dudley were lower than average and pointed out that the Government had set a target of 25% achievement. It was further highlighted that the black box situation had still not been resolved and that large numbers of households were still without one. It was suggested that a Working Group be appointed to undertake the monitoring of recycling and to explore avenues to educate people to recycle.

Reference was made to the civic amenities site in Stourbridge, which was used regularly by people from other areas, such as Birmingham, Bromsgrove and Wyre Forest and concern was expressed at the traffic queues that affected Birmingham Road. It was requested that the green collection service should be more frequent.

RESOLVED

That a Working Group be appointed to investigate and monitor recycling in the borough and that membership comprise Councillors Mrs Turner (as Chairman), Mrs Collins, Stanley and Tomkinson.

7 WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2005/06

A report of the Director of Law and Property was submitted seeking consideration of the Work Programme for the Select Committee for 2005/06.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Work Programme as set out in paragraph 2.2 of the report now submitted, be approved.
 - (2) That a visit take place to Wolverhampton City Council on 26th or 27th July, 2005 from 12.30 pm to 4 pm to view their choice based lettings scheme.
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8 QUARTERLY CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT

A report of the Lead Officer to the Committee was submitted presenting the final Quarterly Corporate Performance report for 2004/05, relating to performance for the period 1st January, 2005 to 31st March, 2005.

Arising from the presentation of the report, a Member queried the reason as to why the tip sited in Cannock had closed down. In response the Assistant Director of the Urban Environment advised that it could be due to the right types of waste not being recycled. The Assistant Director of the Urban Environment undertook to investigate the matter and further provide a direct response to the Member concerned.

A Member referred to Section 4, page 36 of the report and queried the definition of "vulnerable people". The Assistant Director of Housing undertook to provide a direct response to the Member concerned.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the information contained in the report and Appendix to the report now submitted, be noted.
- (2) That the Assistant Director of the Urban Environment respond direct to Councillor Tomkinson stating the reason for the closure of the civic amenities site in Cannock.

- (3) That the Assistant Director of Housing respond direct to Councillor Ms Partridge on the definition of “vulnerable people” on Page 36 of the report now submitted.

9

HOUSING SERVICES DIRECTORATE'S EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2004/05

A report of the Director of Housing was submitted seeking consideration of the Housing Services Directorate's Equality and Diversity Annual Report for 2004/05.

Reference was made to paragraph 2.3 of the report and a Member queried the geographical distribution of Council properties allocated to the black minority ethnic group applicants. She further made reference to paragraph 2.3 of the report and queried what the change in procedure was. In response the Assistant Director of Housing undertook to provide a response direct to the Member concerned in relation to the geographical distribution of Council properties allocated to black minority ethnic groups. It was further agreed that an update report would be submitted to the Committee in due course explaining the change of procedure.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the information contained in the report and Appendix to the report now submitted, be noted.
- (2) That a further update report explaining the change of procedure be submitted to the Committee in due course.
- (3) That the Assistant Director of Housing respond direct to Councillor Ms Partridge in relation to the geographical distribution of Council properties allocated to black and minority ethnic groups.

10

FOOD SERVICE PLAN 2005/2006

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on the Directorate of the Urban Environment Food Service Plan 2005/2006.

Arising from the presentation of the report, a Member commented that to undertake proactive work and to ensure that other work was not affected, an extra post or half a post should be appointed. In responding the Food and Occupational Safety Manager advised that there were plans to undertake more educational work which would allow the removal of low risk businesses to be monitored on a regular basis. The resources that would be released could then be allocated to target other higher risk areas.

In response to a query the Food and Occupational Safety Manager reported that complaints in respect of selling food that was past its “sell by” or “best by” date were received. However it was pointed out that selling food past its “best by” date was not an offence. She further stated that it was an offence not to sell food of the required quality or standard and it was also an offence to sell or display perishable foods past the sell by date.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report be noted and that the Food Service Plan 2005/06 be referred to Council.

11

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted informing and updating the Committee of policy and legislative influences relating to traffic management.

A Member referred to the holders of the Blue Badge Scheme and expressed concern that some people abused the scheme and were able to acquire badges even though they did not need one. Further comments were made in relation to the legalities of where holders of badges could park due to some holders parking inconsiderately which held up other traffic.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the information contained in the report now submitted, be noted.
 - (2) That the Head of Street Care respond direct to the Member concerned in relation to identifying where blue badge holders could lawfully park.
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The meeting ended at 7.55 pm.

CHAIRMAN