

ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 2 December 2003 at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 6.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs Compton (Chairman); Councillors Mrs Blacklock, Copping, Evans, Hatfield, Sandhar, Short and Smith.

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Mrs Begg (Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services); and

Councillor Holland.

(Councillor Evans substituted for Councillor Gill).

(Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Davies)

642. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Minute Number 645 - Scrutiny of Action 21

Councillor Evans declared a personal interest in this item because he represented Warwick District Council on the Action 21 Board.

643. **SCRUTINY OF RECYCLING**

The Committee considered a report from the Strategic Director informing Members of the findings of Councillors following their individual scrutiny of recycling.

It had been agreed by the Committee, on 7 October, that the areas of recycling within Warwick District would be investigated by Councillors (in pairs), and that they would report their findings back to the Committee at the December meeting.

The areas and the Councillors responsible for their investigation were as follows:-

Garden Waste – Councillors Mrs Blacklock and Gill

Problems – including the areas and cases where recycling could be problematic – Councillors Copping and Smith

Public participation – including the public's view on the progress which the Council made – Councillors Hatfield and Sandhar

Contractors – considering the performance of the Contractors in providing the garden waste and paper recycling schemes – Councillor Mrs Compton and Davies.

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The findings of the Councillors for garden waste, problems and Contractors, were detailed in appendices to the report. A verbal report was made to the meeting on public participation.

RECOMMENDED that

- (1) the comments made by councillors and the contents of the reports be taken into consideration by officers, when compiling the draft report for submission to the Executive; and
- (2) a presentation by the Contractors ECT be made to the Committee in January.

644. RECYCLING OF PLASTICS

The Committee considered a report from Environmental Health updating them on a recent plastics recycling seminar organised by Warwickshire County Council.

The Committee, as part on its ongoing scrutiny of recycling, had asked for Officers to prepare a report on the feasibility of recycling plastics within Warwick District.

The Waste Strategy Officer and the Recycling Officer for the district had attended a seminar which brought together Officers from the District, Borough and County Council, as well as collection contractors and reprocesses.

The seminar was hosted by the Recycling Co-ordinator of Warwickshire County Council and the group had heard presentations on collection, bulking and storage of plastics, and markets for its reprocessing both at home and abroad.

A general discussion was then held on specific problems and opportunities for collecting plastics for recycling within Warwickshire.

Overall the market for plastics was extremely volatile which could have a major impact on local authority recycling schemes. The key element which determined the viability of schemes was the transportation of the collected material, either from door to door and then on to a transfer station or the final bulk haulage of the material to the reprocessor. Because plastic was so light, compaction levels had to be extremely high to make transportation economical. The measures introduced by the County Council's recycling centres were starting to address that problem, but kerbside collections in semi rural areas where the final reprocessor is some distance away and no bulking facilities exist was still uneconomical, even when the market for plastics was buoyant.

RECOMMENDED that

- (1) the content of the report be noted;

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- (2) the content of the report be included within the Scrutiny Committee's report to the Executive on the scrutiny of recycling.

645. SCRUTINY OF ACTION 21

The Committee considered a report from Action 21 providing Members with information on Action 21, in order to enable them to scrutinise its progress.

At its meeting on 7 October 2003, the Committee had undertaken a pre-planned discussion on the scrutiny of Action 21 within Warwick District.

The Committee had requested further information including copies of the quarterly reports to the Council's Senior Officers on the work of Action 21, a copy of the Council's Service Level Agreement with Action 21 and a copy of the Action 21 budget. A copy of these was included as appendices to the report.

In addition to the report, as the Council's representative on the Action 21 Board, Councillor Evans reported verbally his views on the work of Action 21 and its role as a critical friend with the Council.

Verbal representations were made to the Committee from Mathew Rose as a member of the Action 21 Energy Group, Judy Steele as a member of the Action 21 Food Group, Steve Coulsting as Chair of the Action 21 Energy Group, Andrew Webb as Treasurer of Action 21, and Jenny Sansom as the Action 21 worker, based at Riverside House.

RECOMMENDED that officers compile a draft report for submission to the Executive, taking into consideration the discussions held by members and the contents of the report.

646. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered its work programme for the ensuing year.

The following amendments were made to the work programme:-

The review preparation of flood alleviation, be moved from December 2003 to January 2004.

RECOMMENDED that the work plan, as amended, be approved.

647. EXECUTIVE MEETING – MONDAY 10 NOVEMBER 2003

The Committee considered the minutes of the Executive meeting held on Monday, 10 November 2003, which came within its remit.

RECOMMENDED that the minutes be noted.

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648. EXECUTIVE AGENDA (NON-CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS AND REPORTS)

The Committee considered the items which would be discussed at the meeting of the Executive on Monday, 8 December 2003, which came within the remit of the Committee. As a result, the following comments were made for forwarding to the Executive:-

Item 3 – Approval of General Fund Estimates 2003/2004 and Revised 2004/2005 Based Estimates

The Committee noted the recommendation in the report.

Item 4 – Budget 2004/2005 and Medium Term Financial Plan – Process and Prospects

The Committee expressed disappointment at the Government settlement, as no allowance has been made with regard to recycling, especially considering the burden placed upon District Councils for this by central government.

Item 5 – Annual Audit Letter

The Committee noted the recommendation in the report

Item 6 – Regional Planning Guidance

The Committee supported the recommendations in the report

Item 7 – Provision of Affordable Housing – Guidance for Developers.

The Committee expressed disappointment that grant funding to provide affordable low cost housing had been removed considering difficulty of provision within this district. The Committee also requested that the aids and adaptations working group should be consulted, on Appendix 4 page 106, section 4, Features to be included within the dwelling, if they have not already.

(The meeting ended at 8.05 p.m.)

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