

ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 4 November 2003 at the Castle Sixth Form Centre, Rouncil Lane, Kenilworth, at 6.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs Compton (Chairman); Councillors Mrs Blacklock, Cockburn, Copping, Davies, Gill, Sandhar and Smith.

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

(Councillor Cockburn substituted for Councillor Hatfield)

580. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Minute Number 582 - Smells from a Foul Sewer in Kenilworth

Councillor Cockburn declared a personal interest in this item as he was a local farmer and had sent sheep to the abattoir.

581. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meetings held on 9 September and 7 October 2003 having been printed and circulated, were taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

582. **SMELLS FROM A FOUL SEWER IN KENILWORTH**

The Chairman of the Committee explained that the purpose of the meeting was to give local residents the opportunity to hear the up to date information first hand and ask questions about the issue, and also to try and find a way forward for dealing with this issue.

Officers from the Council, Severn Trent and Hydro Gas (as consultants for Farmers Fresh) reported verbally that all three parties had been working closely together to resolve this issue. Two meetings had taken place at the Abattoir since the September meeting of the Committee and it was now agreed, after a number of tests and experiments, that a permanent dosing system would be installed during the week commencing 17 November 2003.

The Officers reported that there was a high probability that the introduction of a permanent dosing system would resolve the problem and evidence existed that the process would work. A further meeting between all parties would take place at the Abattoir on the 1 December 2003 to monitor events subsequent to the installation of the system and the outcome of this meeting would be reported back to the Committee in January 2004.

There were seven outstanding questions which members of the public wanted to be answered from the meeting on 9 September 2003 as follows:-

6A how many sheep are being slaughtered at the Abattoir?

Currently the Abattoir was working at 80% capacity and there is a variation in capacity operation between 60 and 90%. However, the Abattoir were not prepared to reveal how many sheep were being slaughtered as this caused problems for them with animal rights protestors.

6B was there any risk to health from the chemical that was being used to treat the effluent?

The chemical being used to treat the effluent was a calcium nitrate, which is a non hazardous substance and had achieved the Queens Award for environmental impact. Members of the public were offered the opportunity to contact Hydro Gas after the meeting to inspect the cost data for the chemicals.

6C – why had it taken so long to sort out this problem?

Although the smells had been evident for a long time, many years in fact, it was not that Warwick District Council hadn't done anything to resolve this problem. A lot of work had been carried out with the previous and present owners of the Abattoir at various times which had meant that smells had been eliminated for a time. It was obvious that a permanent solution had not been found. There had been long periods where there had not been any smells and even when smells have been evident they had not been a permanent feature. They had been intermittent and not regular, for those reasons control had been difficult. Nevertheless all parties were fully committed to sort the problem out.

6D – why wouldn't the Environment Agency agree to install a treatment plant on the Abattoir premises?

Provided the effluent was treated properly it made sense to discharge it to a sewer and convey it to a large sewer works. To be efficient, sewer works needed to be able discharge treated effluent into running water. As far as the Council was aware there was no river of sufficient size to act as a discharge point near to the Abattoir.

6E – what was the current maximum level of effluent discharge for the site?

Currently the Abattoir has consent to discharge up to 100 metres cubed per day. However, at the moment the plant has only ever reached 75 metres cubed a day.

6F – would the current levels of effluent discharge be made available as public information?

This question was answered by the previous answer

6G – would the public know if an application was made to Severn Trent to increase the throughput

The public could know if an application was made as they are public documents. However, it was unlikely that the Abattoir would ask for an increase in throughput as they had spare capacity. In the event that they did ask to increase the level of throughput it was highly unlikely that Severn Trent would grant permission as the local sewage treatment works would find it hard to cope with the extra load.

RECOMMENDED that

- (1) the officers' reports presented to the meeting, both verbal and written, be noted;
- (2) the responses of officers given at the meeting to questions, both to those submitted in advance of the meeting and those at the meeting itself, be noted;
- (3) the confidence of officers, that all parties including Farmers Fresh, are working together to sort out the problem, against a background of positive progress and clear steps to resolve it, be noted;
- (4) although Farmer Fresh were not prepared to reveal details of the numbers of animals being slaughtered at the premises each week, the officers be asked to write to Farmers Fresh requesting this information and to check the available public records with a view to finding out.
- (5) Officers undertook to provide information and details of the relevant consents relating to lorry movements associated with the premises
- (6) the following be the recommended to the Executive in December:-
 - (i) all developments at the Abattoir continue to be closely monitored;
 - (ii) a further report be presented to the January meeting of the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee by way of an update of events;
 - (iii) both the District Council and Severn Trent continue their investigations into the continuing drainage problems suffered by the properties in Leycester Road and Mortimer Road;
 - (iv) all parties be encouraged to continue to pursue a permanent solution by negotiation; and

- (v) statutory enforcement action continue to remain a clear option in the event of a solution by negotiation not being found.