

ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMIC POLICY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 7 December 2005, at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 6.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillors Mrs Compton (Chairman), Mrs Blacklock, Copping, Mrs Edwards, Evans, Mrs Knight and Short.

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Evans substituted for Councillor Holland.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Mrs Begg (Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services).

675. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Minute No. 680 - Work Programme

Councillor Evans declared a personal interest in the item relating to the South Warwickshire Tourism Company because he was a Director of the Company representing the Council.

676. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 19 October 2005 were taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

677. **TELECOMMUNICATIONS DEVELOPMENT**

A report from Planning and Engineering was submitted giving an update on telecommunications development, planning policy guidance and recent research reports.

The report also referred to the Council's own policy of siting telecoms equipment on Council land and property.

In October 1996 the Housing Committee had resolved that it would reject any proposals from mobile phone companies to put antenna microwave dishes and other telecommunications equipment on any dwellings owned by the Warwick District Council Housing Department. Since that time Officers with property responsibility had operated a consistent policy in respect of all Council land and buildings and had refused requests from operators for the siting of telecommunications equipment on Council land and property. There was some confusion as to whether there was any Council decision to support the policy of refusing requests for all Council land and property.

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Reference was made to a recent case relating to Warwick Racecourse where a request for siting masts on a racecourse building was rejected in accordance with the above policy. This had resulted in the operator making an application for approval for a lamp post type mast on Hampton Road. This case raised the issue as to whether the Council's restrictive policy in respect of its own land had led to what might become an environmentally preferable solution to the need to provide increased telecoms coverage in this part of Warwickshire not being able to be secured.

The report dealt in detail with planning policy and perceived health risks associated with telecommunications masts.

RESOLVED that the Officers report to a future meeting clarifying the position with regards to the Council's policy on the siting of telecoms equipment on Council land and property and indicating whether the policy should be reviewed.

678. REVIEW OF EFFECT OF PLANNING PERFORMANCE ON PLANNING DEVELOPMENT GRANT

A report from Head of Planning and Engineering was submitted advising members of the effect of performance across a range of planning functions on the award of planning delivery grants.

Planning delivery grants had been put in place by the Government who had recognised that local planning authorities were under funded for the work they were required to undertake. The grant system had been in place for three years and awards were made annually on the basis of performance against a range of identified criteria on planning performance. The amount awarded to local authorities had varied overall each year and varied year on year according to the criteria established and the performance achieved. It was not possible to relate the difference in grant between years to specific changes in performance as other factors applied. A grant of £75,000 had been received by the Council for 2003/04. This was the basic amount in the first year of the system received by most authorities. In 2004/5 the Council's grant amounted to £350,000 which was the second highest for a shire district in the West Midlands and had been achieved as a result of improved performance. The grant for 2005/06 was £214,000. The amount of grant had fallen because the criteria had changed and as performance had been maintained the improvement element of the award had been less. The award for 2006/07 was awaited. A working party consisting of Councillors Copping and Short in conjunction with the Head of Planning and Engineering had considered the effect of performance on the award of planning delivery grant. Both Councillors Copping and Short were pleased with the level of grants being received.

RESOLVED that the report be noted, including the endorsement of the actions therein, particularly in respect of improving the speed of negotiations on Sec 106 contributions on major planning applications.

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679. LICENSING ACT 2003

The Licensing and Committee Services Manager addressed the Committee on the implementation of the Licensing Act 2003.

He referred to the work already done in dealing with applications received but also dealt with the proposals for the future enforcement of the licensing regime.

A multi agency group had drawn up a points system for identifying problem premises. All complaints about premises would be logged by the Police on a central computer and the multi agency group would meet regularly to discuss the premises which had accumulated sufficient points. The Group would offer advice and assistance to Licensees in dealing with problems which resulted in complaints and would only seek a review of the licence as a last resort.

RESOLVED that the Licensing and Committee Services Manager be thanked for his informative presentation and the progressive approach to monitoring the implementation of the new licences be welcomed.

680. WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received a presentation from the Community Services Manager on the scrutiny of refuse. A working party consisting of Councillors Mrs Blacklock and Holland and the Officers had nearly finished their investigation and would report to the next meeting in February. The Committee had previously agreed that the review of refuse should now be amended to focus solely on waste minimisation and it was decided that a decision would be made at the next meeting in February on how this review would proceed.

The Community Services Manager was suggesting that a politically balanced nine member working party should be set up to consider the future waste and cleaning policies of the Councils especially in the light of the contracts which would be due for renewal in 2008.

Councillors Hatfield, Mrs Mellor and Pratt had already been nominated by the Conservative Group and Councillors Holland and Evans by the Labour Group. Councillor Blacklock volunteered to sit on the working party on behalf of the Liberal Democrats and Councillor Short agreed on behalf of the Independent Group. The Groups were asked to submit nominations for the vacancies on the working party.

With regards to the review of the Planning Committee training programme the Director reported that he would be meeting with Planning Committee members in the next couple of weeks to assess their training needs. It was agreed that there should continue to be a verbal bi-monthly update on this subject.

RESOLVED that under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 the Public and Press be excluded from the meeting during the discussion on the future of the South Warwickshire Tourism Council by reason of the likely disclosure of exempt information within paragraph 9

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of the Local Government Act 1972.

The Economic Development Officer addressed the Committee on the future of the South Warwickshire Tourism Company.

A report on the matter was being presented to the Executive on the 12 December.

A working group consisting of Councillors Mrs Edwards, Holland and Mrs Hodgetts had been reviewing tourism promotion and had been involved in the recent events. Mrs Edwards also addressed the Committee on behalf of the working party. A further update on the future of the tourism company would be made to the next meeting on the 8 February.

It was now intended that the report on energy management would now be made to the February meeting of the Committee.

The work had been completed on the review of the improvements to work carried out in Warwick Market Place and a report was being submitted to the Executive on the 12 December.

A report on the residential design guide would be submitted to the Planning Committee in February. There would then be a period of consultation and a report would be made to this Committee in April 2006.

Councillors Mrs Compton and Mrs Knight volunteered to form the working party to review the outcomes of the decision taken by the Executive on Crime and Disorder.

Reference was made to the future of markets in the district.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the future of the review of waste minimisation be considered at the next meeting;
- (2) the setting up of a politically balanced nine member working party to review the future of waste and cleansing be confirmed and the groups be asked to nominate members to fill the vacancies; and
- (3) the work plan be amended to reflect all the above.

(The meeting ended at 7.55 pm)