

# ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMIC POLICY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 19 March 2008, at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 6.00pm.

**PRESENT:** Councillor Gifford (Chair); Councillors Britland, Mrs Grainger, Hatfield and Vincett.

**ALSO PRESENT:** Councillor Kinson (Portfolio Holder for Environment).

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mrs Falp.

## 1005. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

## 1006. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2008 were taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

## 1007. **RECYCLING AND NEW REFUSE COLLECTION SCHEME**

The Committee received a verbal update from the Community Services Manager, who reported that the recycling and new refuse collection scheme was on schedule to commence at the beginning of April 2008.

The contractor had confirmed collection routes, which would be reviewed once the scheme had been in place for a couple of months. Properties with access or storage problems had been identified and alternative arrangements made. These were not necessarily permanent solutions and would also be reviewed during the coming months. A small degree of confusion had arisen over collection of sacks and bins, but considering the size and scale of the operation, this was no more than had been expected. Leaflets were being prepared for distribution over the coming week.

Grey bins and sacks were being distributed to residents, following the roll out of green bins. Thousands of requests had been received for plastic sacks and red bins, indicating a willingness on behalf of the public to embrace the new scheme. Consultation exercises, including a road show, also indicated a predominantly positive public reaction, despite some rather negative and unreasonable press coverage which officers were trying to address.

The Community Services Manager responded to Members' questions on points of detail.

Members were pleased with the progress to date and thanked Officers for their efforts.

## **ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMIC POLICY COMMITTEE MINUTES (Continued)**

**RESOLVED** that

- (1) the presentation be noted;
- (2) the scheme be reviewed in June 2008; and
- (3) a verbal update on progress be given at the next meeting.

### **1008. HEALTH STRATEGY**

The Head of Environmental Health gave a verbal update on the Health Strategy.

It had originally been intended to revise the Health Strategy during 2006/07. This had been delayed due to changes occurring in local health services such as the Primary Care Trust, which impacted on the Strategy.

The Strategy itself was concerned with health policy drivers, local area agreements and consideration of the District Council's actions which contributed to health and wellbeing.

**RESOLVED** that

- (1) the update from the Head of Environmental Health be noted; and
- (2) Officers proceed with the development of the Strategy as presented, producing an ongoing and revisable action plan.

### **1009. PLASTIC BAG WORKING PARTY**

The Committee received a verbal update from Councillor Gifford on the Plastic Bag Working Party.

The Working Party's objectives were: to provide recommendations to the Executive with regard to whether the Council could provide financial support to, or assist in the promotion of, the Warwick Chamber of Trade's initiative for the phasing out of free plastic bags; to look at how the Council could encourage other local chambers of trade to adopt the initiative; and to revisit the Council's position on plastic bags.

The Chair reported that the Working Party had met and discussed the basis for a meeting with the Warwick Chamber of Trade, due to take place on 1 April.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

## **ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMIC POLICY COMMITTEE MINUTES (Continued)**

### **1010. WARWICK TOWNS CONSERVATION AREA ADVISORY FORUM – ANNUAL REPORT**

The Committee considered a report from Planning, reviewing the functioning of the Warwick Towns Conservation Area Advisory Forum (CAAF) and the level of Officer time required to service it over the past year.

Councillors welcomed the Forum's valuable input into the planning process to date, which they were keen to see continue and develop.

Members were pleased that the level of Officer time given to the Forum appeared to be cost effective. It was suggested that comparative data on this could be sought from Councils with a similar arrangement.

#### **RESOLVED** that

- (1) the report be noted;
- (2) the Warwick Towns Conservation Area Advisory Forum continues, servicing the four towns within Warwick District.

### **1011. REVIEW OF PLANNING ENFORCEMENT**

The Committee considered a report from Planning setting out the findings of a task and finish review of the Council's Planning Enforcement Service which had been undertaken by Councillors Britland and Vincett. It followed a similar review undertaken in December 2006 which established that the Service had been operating well in the face of serious staff resource issues.

Since December 2006 the Service had seen some reorganisation and continued to function well despite longstanding staff capacity issues, which had recently been sorted out. Officers outlined current organisational arrangements and responded to Members' questions relating to the same. Gary Fisher, the new Enforcement Manager, was introduced to the Committee.

Members noted that key areas for review and development had been identified for the short and medium term. They were very pleased with progress to date and asked for another progress report in the future.

#### **RESOLVED** that

- (1) the report be noted;
- (2) the Committee endorse the approach to the continuing development of the Planning Enforcement Service;
- (3) officers report back on progress in 12 months time; and

## **ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMIC POLICY COMMITTEE MINUTES (Continued)**

- (4) That Councillors Vincett & Britland be thanked for their time.

### **1012. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK CORE STRATEGY OPTIONS PAPER**

The Committee considered a report from Planning which was due to be presented to the Executive on 25 March 2008. The Executive sought appropriate comments from the Committee on the proposal to embark on a public consultation on the 'Options' stage of the Core Strategy.

Councillors recognised that large scale development would have a significant environmental and social impact, but that there was a lack of affordable housing in the District and that Government pressure would almost certainly require a substantial number of houses to be built in the District. Development would inevitably impact on all of the Council's services and also the infrastructure of the wider regional area. The Chief Executive reported that work was already well underway at a sub-regional level to address this.

**RESOLVED** that the following comments be passed to the Executive:

- (1) the needs of the community play an important part in planning for future development and that the public, other agencies and neighbouring authorities should be consulted accordingly;
- (2) particular attention should be given to housing types, sustainability, affordability, growth areas, the infrastructure, services such as transport, health and education, carbon footprints and the types of businesses which the Council would like to see attracted to the area in the future; and
- (3) efforts should be made to preserve the identities of individual conurbations within the district over the long term.

### **1013. REVIEW OF WORK PLAN**

The Committee considered its work plan for 2007/08.

**RESOLVED** that the following amendments be made to the plan;

- (1) the items on climate change and energy management be amalgamated and a report presented to Committee in June 2008;
- (2) the date for the next report from the Heritage Grants Working Party be amended to read December 2008;

## **ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMIC POLICY COMMITTEE MINUTES (Continued)**

- (3) a further report on the Local Development Framework Core Strategy Options Paper be brought to Committee in the last quarter of 2008, at the preferred option stage;
- (4) updates on the Recycling and New Refuse Collection Scheme be brought to Committee every six months, commencing in June 2008, and a task and finish group consider the scheme on the same timescale;
- (5) the date for consideration of the Proposed Merger of the Stratford and Warwick District Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships be confirmed as June 2008;
- (6) Retail Development in Leamington – Developer Section, together with the future of the Bedford Street Car Park, be considered by a task and finish group adopting a similar approach to that taken to the decriminalisation of car parking;
- (7) Community Safety Strategic Assessment and Warwick District Crime, Disorder and Drugs Misuse Strategic Assessment be combined and a Task & Finish Group be set up to look into Alcohol related crime and disorder; and
- (8) A review of the use of Open Space be considered, separate from the Final SPD on Open Space.

### **1014. END OF TERM REPORT**

The Committee considered a report from Members' Services which, in accordance with the requirements of Article 6 of the Council's Constitution, set out the work undertaken by the Committee during 2007/08 and sought recommendations on future work programmes.

Members noted that, if the committee structure was changed by the Executive on 25 March 2008 and this Committee no longer existed in its current form, outstanding items on the work programme would be fed into the new Overview and Scrutiny Committee's work plan.

**RECOMMENDED** that Council notes the list of matters considered by this Committee during the municipal year 2007/08, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the minutes.

## **ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMIC POLICY COMMITTEE MINUTES (Continued)**

### **1015. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS**

**RESOLVED** that under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item below, by reason of the likely disclosure of exempt information within the paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

### **1016. SPENCER YARD PHASE II PROJECT**

The Committee noted the content of a report and a verbal update given to the meeting by the Chief Executive, updating Members on progress relating to the future of the Spencer Yard Phase II Scheme.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

(The meeting ended at 7.53pm)

Minute 1014**Items considered by the Environment & Economic Policy Committee  
– 2007/2008**

<b>Items</b>	<b>Status as at March 2008</b>
Warwick District Towns Conservation Area Advisory Forum	On going
Refurbishment of Railway Arches off Court Street	On going
Town Centres Management Review	On going
The Future of the Former Spencer Street Church	On-going
Warwickshire Tourism	On going
Heritage Grants Working Party	On going
Food & Occupational Health & Safety	On going
Decriminalisation of On-Street Parking	On going
Recycling and New Refuse Collection Scheme	Report to Committee in June 2008
Climate Change & Energy Management	Report to Committee in June 2008
Joint Review of Performance in Handling Major Planning Application & Section 106 Planning Contributions	Report to Committee in June 2008
Health Strategy	On going
Disabled Facilities	Report to Committee in March 2008
Local Development Framework Core Strategy Options Paper	Report to Committee December 2008
Retail Development in Leamington (Developer Section) and Future of Bedford Street Car Park	Ongoing
Review of Planning Enforcement	Ongoing
Gambling Act 2005	Completed September 2007
Air Quality Action Plan	Completed September 2007
High Hedges	Completed October 2007
Smoke Free	Completed October 2007
Dog Warden Service	Completed September 2007 – comments to the Executive
Anti Social Behaviour	Completed October 2007 – comments to the Executive
Draft Graffiti Policy	Completed February 2008 – recommended to the Executive
SPD on Vehicle Parking	Report due date TBC
Station Area Development Brief	Report due date TBC
Use Of Open Space	Report due date TBC
Plastic Bag Working Party	Ongoing
Community Safety Strategic Assessment / Warwick District Crime, Disorder and Drugs Misuse Strategic Assessment	Report due date TBC
Proposed Merger of the Stratford and Warwick District Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships	Report to Committee in June 2008