

Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 13 December 2005

Minutes of the meeting of the **Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee** held on **13 December 2005** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr P A Capon
Vice-Chairman: Cllr J M Pullen

Cllr J E Grey
Cllr Mrs S A Harper
Cllr P K Savill

Cllr Mrs M A Starke
Cllr P F A Webster

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Mrs H L A Glynn and R A Oatham.

OFFICERS PRESENT

G Woolhouse - Head of Housing, Health and Community Care
S Worthington - Committee Administrator

510 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 18 October 2005 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

511 PROGRESS ON DECISIONS

The Committee noted the schedule relating to progress on decisions.

512 BEST VALUE REVIEW ACTION PLAN – PUBLIC REGULATION, INSPECTION AND PROTECTION

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing, Health and Community Care updating Members of progress to date with implementation of this action plan.

It was noted that a 'traffic light' key would be applied to the next progress report, with green denoting items that were on target, amber indicating items that needed to be monitored and red signifying items that were failing to meet set deadlines. This would enable Members to focus on the red and amber items.

In response to a Member enquiry relating to the transfer of scrap metal dealers' and motor salvage operators' licences to the licensing team, officers advised that it was highly unlikely that any associated cases would need to be considered by the Licensing Committee.

Responding to a further Member question relating to environmental street crime, officers confirmed that the Authority did not have a dedicated resource for this, but that further consideration was being given to how best

to report and enforce environmental street crime.

In response to a Member query with respect to the administration of hackney carriage licensing, officers advised that when the next Council re-structuring came into operation in April 2006, the Transportation team, with responsibility for this administration, would transfer to the new Planning and Transportation Section.

Members expressed concern about the possibility of residents being charged for the removal of bulky household goods. It was perceived that introducing a charge could result in more instances of fly-tipping and would be unpopular with local residents.

Responding to a Member enquiry relating to the prosecution of fly-tippers, officers confirmed that they were unaware of any successful prosecutions having taken place, as good evidence had to be gathered in order for any prosecution to proceed. Officers would provide Members with an update on the situation relating to fly-tipping in Ironwell Lane.

It was noted, in response to a query relating to the reinstatement of reciprocal free access arrangements to civic amenity and recycling centres, that Members would be provided with an update on discussions between Essex County Council and Southend Borough Council.

During debate of the item relating to the prevention of unlawful occupation of land by travellers, officers advised that the deep ploughing of fields could be detrimental to the soil structure; liaison would be necessary with the farming community, landowners and Police to try to improve the security of empty land.

Responding to a Member enquiry with respect to updated planning enforcement guidance leaflets, officers confirmed that they would ensure that Members all received copies of the leaflet.

In response to a Member query relating to the protection of trees in conservation areas, officers advised that, as a result of the difficulty in appointing an arboricultural officer, residents had not yet received advice on this issue. An officer was now in place, however, the intention was that residents living within conservation areas with trees on their property would receive information advising them that permission would be needed for any work to be carried out on the trees. It was noted that Members would be provided with a copy of any communication with residents.

Resolved

That progress to date be noted and that a further update report be made in June/July 2006. (HHHCC)

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The meeting closed at 8.00 pm.

Chairman

Date