

## **Review Committee – 9 October 2007**

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Minutes of the meeting of the **Review Committee** held on **9 October 2007** when there were present:-

Vice Chairman in the Chair: Cllr Mrs S A Harper

Cllr Mrs H L A Glynn  
Cllr T Livings

Cllr J R F Mason  
Cllr P R Robinson

### **VISITING MEMBER**

Cllr Mrs B J Wilkins

### **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Mrs J R Lumley and Mrs L M Cox.

### **OFFICERS PRESENT**

P Warren	-	Chief Executive
R Evans	-	Head of Environmental Services
D Timson	-	Property Maintenance & Highways Manager
S Blake	-	Environmental Protection Manager
P Gowers	-	Overview & Scrutiny Officer
M Power	-	Committee Administrator

### **336 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2007 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **337 IMPLICATIONS OF GLOBAL WARMING AGENDA ON ROCHFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL AND THE ROLE THE DISTRICT COUNCIL AND ITS COMMUNITIES MIGHT PLAY**

The Committee received a presentation from Kevin Jones, Head of Environmental Strategy, Essex County Council.

Mr Jones outlined that Essex County Council had a two-pronged approach towards the issue of combating the possible effects of global warming. The first was to target the County Council's own internal environment, which could potentially achieve savings of 15-20% by adopting behavioural changes by employees, such as switching off lights, computer monitors and by reducing car mileage by employees. It was emphasised that this was not done by sacrificing standards of service but by adopting measures that would have significant savings without significant cost. It was vitally important to record the carbon reductions that had been effected.

This focus on the Council's own behaviour could influence the wider behaviour of the local community towards reducing the overall carbon footprint, as local authorities were seen as catalysts for change. One of the key roles performed by local authorities was that of awareness raising and education in the community. In this respect it was vital that local authorities were vocal in terms of their views and activities in this area and willing to adopt innovative ways of involving the public. Essex County Council had signed the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change, which was the key starting point on the climate change agenda for many authorities. The Declaration required local authorities to adopt a proactive approach to making changes, which would be cheaper than a reactive approach. Mitigation measures could be built into the Council's plan with a focus on key at-risk areas.

Woking Borough Council had also focused on its own estate. The London Borough of Merton Council had introduced a 10% rule whereby all new development had to include 10% renewable energy. It was suggested that this be evaluated, bearing in mind the proposed new housing planned for the Rochford District.

In response to Member questions, the following was advised:-

- The potential impact of climate change was extremely hard to quantify. However, it was noted that each person's small efforts could have an effect and that an individual's contribution was becoming more measurable.
- In respect of carbon balancing, Essex County Council was developing a scheme that would calculate the amount of carbon used during a given activity and allow people the opportunity to offset their carbon use against others' carbon savings. This, however, was only one tool that could be employed in the battle to reduce carbon activities.
- It was the role of local authorities to be innovative but within the resources available.
- It was important to give people incentives to reduce their carbon use and this could be achieved by the forming of partnerships between local authorities and energy providers. The energy companies were keen to pursue such partnerships as they had a legislative obligation to use a percentage of their profits towards bringing carbon-reducing benefits to residents, for example, schemes to subsidise loft lagging and radiator insulation, and the replacement of old light bulbs with new energy-efficient bulbs. It was realised that any efforts by the Council in this respect would have to be well publicised to increase residents' awareness of the Council's role. Organisations such as Essex CRed and Renewables East were available to provide support. There was also access to HECA, the UK Home Energy Conservation Association,

which was a network of support groups that aimed to secure improvements in energy efficiency in the domestic sector.

In response to the suggestion that Essex County Council should be asked to subsidise the transportation of children into school by bus in an effort to reduce carbon emissions, it was agreed that the matter would be referred to the Director for Development, Highways and Transportation at the County Council.

There were a variety of pilot schemes that Essex County Council was becoming involved in, including the planting of woodlands around London and the use of renewable energy in local heating systems.

The Head of Environmental Services distributed the Review Committee Project Plan, which listed the proposed timetable for the Review Committee for November/December 2007.

Following discussion, the following visits/activities were agreed:

- A meeting to be arranged with residents to ascertain peoples' expectations of the local authority in respect of the global warming agenda. It was suggested that the meeting be held in an informal location and that refreshments be provided.
- A visit to the National Power facility in Tilbury, Essex in November 2007.
- Visits to local secondary and primary schools in order to listen to the views of children on the issue of global warming. It was noted that the District Council had an existing involvement with schools in respect of recycling.
- A meeting with the business community, especially Sme's. The Head of Environmental Services to organise.
- A visit to the National Power Station in Rayleigh.
- A visit to other local authorities such as Merton, Woking or a small district authority in an area similar to Rochford.

It was reiterated that it was the decision of Review Committee Members to determine the timetable of visits and that the role of Council officers was to provide support to Members in this respect.

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The meeting closed at 9.08 pm.

Chairman .....

Date .....

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