

## **OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – SAFER & STRONGER COMMUNITIES**

### **MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 10 OCTOBER 2007**

**Present:** Councillors: Mrs E Eastwood, (Deputy Chairman in the Chair); A Carrol; G Garrity; F Gleaves; F Heathcote; J Park; G Scurrah; W Southward; P Watson; Mrs J Williams; M Woodburn

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Jackson & Mrs W Metherell

Councillor P Whalley also attended the meeting.

Officers N White, Scrutiny Officer; D James, Member Services Officer

K Parker Head of Leisure and Environmental Services, Agenda Items 1-4 & 6

### **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 August 2007 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record

### **Arrangement of the Agenda**

**SSC 12/07** Due to Ms Cowperthwaite, Principal Passenger Transport Officer Cumbria County Council being delayed it was

**RESOLVED** - that Agenda item 6 – Grass cutting be considered as item 5 on the Agenda.

### **SSC 13/07 Grass Cutting**

Members, at the meeting held on the 15 August 2007 had expressed concerns over the level of grass cutting that had been achieved in some parts of the Borough and it had been agreed that a report detailing the Council's policies on grass cutting be brought to the Committee for consideration.

Prior to discussion of this item the Head of Leisure and Environmental Services advised Members that the Council had no statutory requirement to undertake grass cutting. However the Council had been successful in securing additional external works that helped subsidise any additional work carried out to Council owned land.

The Committee considered the staffing levels for grass cutting and noted that the greater number of contract staff was due to the seasonal nature of this work, however during the adverse weather staff were occupied on hard landscaping activities.

**RESOLVED** – that the report be noted.

**SSC 14/07 Rural Transport Grants**

Members received a presentation from the Principal Rural Transport Officer, Cumbria County Council. It was noted that the only Statutory obligation for the County Council was the home to school transport for the under 16's.

During this item Members expressed concern at the lack of "access to services" particularly at the weekends. It was suggested that by linking the bus services to specific service areas, for example the Hospital and Sports facilities, this could open up access to more people throughout the Borough.

It was further suggested that a more demand responsive service could be investigated for the more rural areas. Development of the Community Rail Partnership would help in this regard.

It was AGREED that a) the presentation be noted; and

b) the suggestions made by Members be fed back to the County Council for consideration.

**SSC 15/07 Energy Review**

The Committee at its meeting held on 13 June 2007 agreed that a task and finish group be established to undertake an energy policy review. The sub group met and heard evidence from officers of the Council, Cumbria County Council, Copeland Homes and the Cumbria Energy Efficiency Advice Centre.

The group also site visited St Gregory's and St Partick's School, Whitehaven and Eskdale Biomass project.

The Committee noted that all the evidence had been collated and the recommendations from the group to the Committee would be recommended onto the Council's Executive.

**RESOLVED** – that the Executive be recommended to approve that

- a) the Council examine the feasibility of Cumbrian authorities working together on Climate change to ensure possible savings and efficiencies of service and that opportunities for joint working on sustainable development be explored with neighbouring authorities;
- b) officers ensure that the Council makes an appropriate input into the Cumbrian Climate Change Strategy;

- c) external training on Climate Change and other sustainable development issues be given to the Council and be commenced by the end of the Municipal year at the latest;
- d) the works done by the head of leisure and environmental Services to reduce the carbon footprint of the Council's fleet be welcomed and supported;
- e) Cumbria County Council be requested to consider St Gregory's and St Patrick's Catholic infant school in Whitehaven as a best practise example to help other schools in Cumbria on how to use renewable energy and to reduce their carbon footprint;
- f) from now on a greater emphasis be put on developers to use renewable energy in new developments and to improve energy efficiency;
- g) the Council should place greater priority and resources into dealing with energy efficiency, affordable warmth and fuel poverty;
- h) in light of recommendation (g) above, the Council fills the vacant sustainability officer post as soon as possible to deal with climate change, energy efficiency, affordable warmth and fuel poverty targets and priority be given to these issues within the post;
- i) the Car Parking Officer Task Group be requested to investigate the feasibility of the Council introducing a Travel to Work Plan;
- j) Sellafield Ltd be asked when their travel to Work plan will be completed and this issue be placed on the agenda for the next quarterly update meeting;
- k) the Council provides a scheme for the installation of energy efficiency measures for people on benefits and provide £100,000 per annum until 2010 as grants to enable those people who live in private dwellings and are not on benefits to apply for help in installing energy efficiency measures within Copeland;
- l) the Council plans to introduce additional recycling facilities for the collection of glass, cans, and plastic bottles in its major offices be implemented;
- m) specific funding for the implementation of green issues to raise awareness of energy efficiency and climate change be allocated within the Council's budget;
- n) the Council consider energy efficiency when implementing any future refurbishment work to Council owned property;

- o) the Council considers the installation of renewable energy features into a Council building as a pilot project when it is due to be refurbished in the near future as an example of energy efficiency;
- p) the Council implement a programme of public awareness of energy efficiency and climate change across the Borough;
- q) the Council implement an internal programme of staff and Member awareness of energy efficiency issues;
- r) Copeland Homes consider the possibility of installing “smart meters” in a pilot scheme to help encourage better energy use;
- s) Copeland Homes plan to produce a booklet and information pack containing energy efficiency advice for new and existing tenants be welcomed and implemented;
- t) the work undertaken by the Eskdale Biomass project be promoted as an excellent example of a community led renewable energy scheme and the Council should promote it to other organisations both private and public across the Borough;
- u) the Sustainability (LA21) Forum be reintroduced with a view to sharing resources and costs with Allerdale Borough Council;
- v) the Energy Savings Trust be requested to help in the development and implementation of a green policy for the Council;
- w) a target date of 2009 be set for the action in the Council’s Corporate Plan to influence home energy conservation plans and tackle fuel poverty;
- x) the Council explore options for the use of small scale hydropower and other aspects of micro generation; and
- y) a report be submitted the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee in six months on the progress made on these recommendations.

**SSC 16/07    Enforcement Services Performance Sub Group**

Consideration was given to the notes of the Enforcement Services Sub Group held on 6 August. It was noted that this was only the second meeting of the group and monitoring would continue throughout the financial year.

It was further noted that Police Community Support Officers now had new powers to issue on the spot fines for dog fouling and litter and Members of the Sub Group were asked to raise this matter and how it would affect the Council’s enforcement unit at the next meeting.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted; and

b) the effect of the new powers of Police Community Support Officers to issue on the spot fines on the Council's enforcement unit be considered by the Sub Group at its next meeting.

**SSC 17/07 Work Plan**

Consideration was given to the work plan for the Committee for 2007-08.

During consideration of this item Members asked for the use of drugs in Copeland to be subject of a report or presentation.

RESOLVED – that a) the report be noted; and

b) the use of drugs in Copeland be subject of a report/presentation at a future meeting of the Committee.

The meeting closed at 4.40 pm

Chairman