

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
-ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 3RD MAY 2006

Present: Councillor Mrs A Bradshaw (Chair); Cllr Mrs E Eastwood (Deputy Chair); Mrs M Barnes; B Dixon; A Johnston; Mrs J Johnston; F McPhillips; J Park; G Scurrah; W Southward

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor N Clarkson

Officers: Mrs J Carrol, Waste Services Manager; Mr S Bishop, Enforcement Manager; Mr S Mullen, Scientific Officer; Ms J Murray, Scrutiny Support Officer

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 27th February 2006 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

OSC-EN111 Arrangement of the Agenda

RESOLVED: to follow agenda item 5 with agenda item 7, take an additional item on doorstep collections thereafter; to be followed by the update on Enforcement Business Plan, followed by a further additional item on the contaminated land strategy.

OSC-EN112 Items for which the Press and Public will be excluded

The item on Doorstep Collections to be considered with the press and public excluded on the grounds that there is likely to be a disclosure of exempt information under paragraph 3 of Schedule 12 A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended.

OSC-EN113 Update on Public Toilets

Members received an update on the recommendations made by this Committee and accepted by the Executive:

- Signage had not yet been installed.
- Revised procedures had been issued to all cleaning staff, who were reporting faults on a regular basis.
- There had been an audit on six random faults which had uncovered that due to the maintenance work being outsourced, the Council was not logging when the work had been completed. An action had been issued by the Audit to the department to ensure that this now happened.

- Cleaning guidance had been updated and issued to all staff.
- Vandal-resistant toilet roll holders have been installed in St Bees, Cleator Moor and Whitehaven (Millom and Egremont are purpose-built unit toilets).
- Most of the locks have been removed. Two remain as there is still an expectation that £3,000 income is achieved.
- No special events had since taken place, but there is a willingness to consider longer opening, budgets permitting.
- The Council is talking to the Parish Council to see whether there is a local person who could assist with locking and unlocking the toilets at St Bees.
- A request was made to the Western Lake District Partnership to include toilet facilities in tourist maps.
- Millom Town Council were considering options for the Lancashire Road toilets, which were better used than the Copeland Borough Council's own toilets.

RESOLVED:

- That enquiries be made with respect to signage and reported back to the Committee.
- That audit be asked to carry out a further six month check to ensure that a log was being maintained of when work was being completed.
- That the Chair and the Waste Services Manager seek to resolve the pay lock issue.
- That enquiries are made with the Western Lake District Tourism Partnership to establish whether maps were now showing public toilet facilities.

OSC-EN114 Update on Recycling (Black Bins)

A further 2,000 properties would join the twin bin scheme from the beginning of June. Information packs would be distributed to each household over the next two weeks. The properties were mostly in areas where Parish/Town Councils or community groups had requested to join the twin bin scheme.

RESOLVED:

that the briefing be noted and that a full list of properties to be included be distributed to all Members..

OSC-EN115 Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED – That pursuant to Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds of likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

OSC-EN116 Doorstep Collections

Members discussed the Service Level Agreement and

RESOLVED - that the Chair should continue to liaise with the Portfolio Holder and officers with respect to the Service Level Agreement.

In public

OSC-EN117 Update on Enforcement Business Plan

Members were advised as follows:

- That Performance indicators were being monitored on a monthly basis, but this may now be moved to quarterly.
- By November '05 that the team was up to full strength, but that leavers since meant that 2 part-time positions were currently vacant.
- Sickness in the first half of 2005-06 was running at 18%, but had dropped to 1.7% in the second half of the year.
- Four wardens had completed NVQs in Decriminalised Parking Enforcement and that training in dog handling had been completed by some wardens.
- It was hoped to secure funding for a new IT package which would greatly improve efficiency and performance.
- The service had not yet been rebranded, but work was underway to achieve that goal.
- With respect to the implementation of the Cleaner Neighbourhood Environmental Act, consultation was taking place with neighbouring authorities in Cumbria to set the level of fines.
- 104 tickets for littering offences had been issued against a target of 30.

- A poster competition with respect to dog fouling has been run – down to the last 10. The posters will be used around the Borough.
- More education awareness raising is planned with Cumbria County Council.
- Target of 200 for trade waste fines was achieved.

Members continued to ask questions about the financing of the Department. They expressed concerns on two main points:

- that the level of fines would drop – as had been proven with decriminalised parking – as the service become more efficient, making it very much more difficult to achieve self-financing.
- that the level of resources required to implement the Cleaner Neighbourhoods Environmental Act was sufficient.

Members reiterated their continued strong views that the Enforcement Unit was essential to economic regeneration. A good environment was key to attracting business development.

RESOLVED: that the continued support of this committee for an increase in staffing levels to meet the requirements of current legislation and to achieve economic regeneration goals be noted and that the current financing of the unit be put on an appropriate sustainable basis and

that the review of the restructure being undertaken by OSC PR equally consider this issue and include it in their report to the Executive.

OSC-EN118 Contaminated Land Strategy

Members were particularly concerned with the contaminated land strategy register. They wanted to know whether and where they could access the register. They heard that there was currently only one site within Copeland legally defined as a contaminated site – Marchon – but that there were over 1,000 potential sites. These were not divulged under current legislation. Members argued that in order to carry out their duties properly, they should be aware of potential sites within their wards, even if this was on a confidential basis and

RESOLVED: that the Committee had no additional comment to make on the strategy itself and that additional legal advice be sought on Member access to potential contaminated sites.

OSC-EN119 Forward Plan

The Forward Plan of key decisions to be taken by the Executive was received and noted.

OSC-EN120 Work plan

The work plan for the Overview and Scrutiny Committees was received and noted. A suggestion was made that this Committee undertake an energy policy review in 2006-07.

The meeting closed at 12.30 PM

CHAIR:.....

DATE:.....