

ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
17TH MARCH 2004

PRESENT: The Chair (Councillor Bryant)
The Vice-chair (Councillor Noon)
Councillors Fryer, Gay, Green, Harley, Harris, Houseman, Rodgers
and Yardley

91. MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 14th January 2004 and 4th February 2004 were confirmed and signed.

92. DISCLOSURE OF PERSONAL INTEREST

Councillor Hampson disclosed a personal interest in any matter relating to Historic Buildings.

93. DECLARATIONS – THE PARTY WHIP

No declarations of the existence of the Party Whip were made.

PART 2 (DELEGATED)

94. TRANSPORTATION – QUALITY BUS INITIATIVE

On 24th September 2003, the Committee had included Quality Bus Initiative in its work programme to be scrutinised through the select committee approach. On 17th December 2003, the Committee had considered a list of potential stakeholders to be invited to participate. A report of the Head of Planning Services was submitted.

RESOLVED that the matter be re-programmed for consideration at a future meeting of the Committee.

95. REVENUE MONITORING 2003/04

A report of the Head of Financial Services setting out details of actual expenditure and income in respect of services within the Committee's overview and scrutiny remit compared with the budget profile at the end of January 2004 was submitted. Overall, the position was balanced although there were a number of overspendings and underspendings.

In response to issues raised, officers stated:

- (a) Spending on the provision of bus shelters and street nameplates tended to occur late in the financial year and that resulted in the budgets being underspent at the end of January.

- (b) Income from planning fees was difficult to predict as the Council had no control over when planning applications were received. Fees received in 2002/03 had been significantly greater than the fees received in previous years and, perhaps, the income to be received in the current year had been over-estimated.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

96. DEVELOPMENT CONTROL – PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

In accordance with the Committee's work programme, a report of the Head of Planning Services containing performance information in respect of Development Control was submitted.

The Head of Planning Services stated:

- (a) The format of future performance reports would comply with a standard format determined by the Chief Executive.
- (b) The reasons for the apparent decrease in performance in processing planning applications included the fact that clearance of the backlog resulted in many applications being counted which had been outstanding for some time.
- (c) He intended to look at ways of improving the procedure for deciding applications to identify ways in which the time taken might be reduced.

A member of the Committee commented that the next performance report to the Committee should be in the new format together with the current format so that the Committee could compare the suitability of each to meet its needs.

RESOLVED

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the next performance report to the Committee be both to the new format and, in tandem, the current format.

97. FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

The current Forward Plan had been published on 16th February 2004. An extract from the Plan detailing items within the Committee's overview and scrutiny remit was submitted.

The two matters included in the Plan had been added to the Committee's work programme at the last meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED that the issues in the Forward Plan be noted.

98. SCRUTINY COMMISSION FEEDBACK

The Chair reported that the issues considered by the Scrutiny Commission at its last meeting were included in the minutes of the Commission's meeting.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

99. CABINET – CURRENT/RECENT ISSUES CONSIDERED AND RESPONSES TO REPORTS/COMMENTS OF THE COMMITTEE

Details of items within the Committee's overview and scrutiny remit which the Cabinet had considered since the last meeting of the Committee were submitted.

A member of the Committee referred to the item relating to "Historic Buildings Grants Scheme" and suggested that "Historic Buildings" should be included in the Committee's work programme.

RESOLVED

1. that "Historic Buildings" be included in the Committee's work programme for consideration on 15th September 2004;
2. that the remaining issues within the Committee's overview and scrutiny remit which the Cabinet had considered be noted.

100. WORK PROGRAMME

The current position with the Committee's work programme was submitted. The Committee was asked to consider the programme, any amendments and additions it might wish to make and business for future meetings. That would enable planning for future meetings to be undertaken, for relevant background information to be prepared and for the attendance of officers and/or others to be arranged.

At its meeting on 10th February 2004, the Scrutiny Commission had agreed that it be suggested to the Community Development Scrutiny Committee and this Committee that the "Loughborough Town Centre Strategy" and the "Parks, Open Spaces and Wildlife Strategy" could be considered more effectively by the Committees jointly on 26th May 2004, the date of the Environment Scrutiny Committee's programmed meeting.

RESOLVED

1. that consideration of "Transportation – Quality Bus Initiative" be considered at the meeting of the Committee on 26th May 2004;

2. that the Committee proceeds on the basis of the following work programme, which incorporates decisions taken earlier in the meeting:

Issue	Progress	Meeting Date
Transportation – Quality Bus Partnership	Programme for select committee approach to scrutiny of Quality Bus Partnership agreed on 24th September 2003. Initial consideration given on 17th December 2003. On 17th March 2004, deferred to 26th May 2004.	26th May 2004
Parks, Open Spaces and Wildlife Strategy	Identified from Forward Plan of Key Decisions.	26th May 2004
Loughborough Town Centre Strategy	Identified from Forward Plan of Key Decisions.	26th May 2004
Best Value Review of Development Control	Action plan to be reviewed on a six monthly basis. Last considered 5th November 2003.	26th May 2004
Biodiversity Action Plan, its implementation, promotion and management and community initiatives	Progress report last considered on 4th July 2001. Site visits to be arranged for a date in July 2004.	7th July 2004
Transportation – Travel Plans	Programme for select committee approach to scrutiny of Travel Plans considered 24th September 2003.	7th July 2004 3rd November 2004
Development Control Performance Information	Last considered 17th March 2004. Future reports to indicate Council's performance compared with other authorities nationally. Information in respect of appeals to include details of those determined by Committee/under delegation and whether against officer recommendation, with statistical information on major appeals to be identified separately from other appeals.	7th July 2004
Historic Buildings	Identified from Cabinet's consideration of grants.	15th September 2004

Charnwood Wildlife	Cabinet decision considered on 14th January 2004. Further considered on 4th February 2004. New arrangements to be reviewed after six months of operation. Cabinet Lead Member to be invited to attend.	3rd November 2004
Planning Obligations – Section 106 Agreements	Annual report to be submitted on progress made in delivery of planning obligations and outcomes of obligations.	3rd November 2004
Environment Agency	Presentation on work of Agency programmed for consideration on 4th February 2004 but representative could not attend. Re-programmed for a meeting later in the calendar year	To be determined
Bus Facilities in Loughborough Town Centre	Programming to be considered once an indication is available from Leicestershire County Council regarding a timetable for traffic regulation orders and following, or as part of, the Transportation Review.	To be programmed
Car Parking Strategy (Loughborough)	Committee intends to be involved in formulation/scrutiny of Car Parking Strategy when that work is undertaken.	To be programmed

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