

ENVIRONMENTAL AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE

12th July 2007

**PRESENT:-**

**Conservative Group**

Councillor Bladen (Chairman), Councillor Ford (Vice-Chairman) and Councillors Bale, Mrs. Farrington (substitute for Councillor Timms), Mrs. Hood, Lemmon, Mrs. Patten and Watson.

**Labour Group**

Councillors Mrs. Lane, Richards, Southerd, Taylor and Tilley.

**In Attendance**

Councillors Jones and Timms (Conservative Group), Councillor Lane (Labour Group) and Councillor Mrs. Brown (Independent Member).

EDS/4. **MINUTES**

The Open Minutes of the Meeting held on 8th March 2007 and of the Meeting held on 7th June 2007 were taken as read, approved as a true records and signed by the Chairman.

Councillor Southerd submitted an enquiry on the Kerbside Collection Scheme, about the collection of cardboard. It was noted that Tenders for the new contract were currently being assessed and was questioned whether the new contract would provide for the collection of cardboard. The Head of Environmental Services replied that the expansion of in-vessel composting would enable all residents to place cardboard in the brown recycling bin. Alternatively, residents could take cardboard to the various recycling centres. It was unlikely that cardboard would be collected through the Kerbside Scheme, but was confirmed that by May 2008, all residents would be included in the composting scheme. Councillor Taylor added that the commitment to this initiative resulted from a review by the former Community Scrutiny Committee and he acknowledged that Committee's work.

EDS/5. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors Ford and Southerd declared personal interests in the agenda item on Decriminalisation of Parking Enforcement, as they were also Members of Derbyshire County Council.

**MATTERS DELEGATED TO COMMITTEE**

EDS/6. **ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (EMAS)**

The Head of Environmental Services submitted a report and made a presentation to Members on the Eco Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS). Initially, the presentation defined the EMAS as an externally verified and publicly accountable system of improvements. It provided a process for managing the delivery of change and a flagship mark of environmental diligence. The Head of Environmental Services explained the key

requirements of EMAS with commitment and support at the highest level, together with financial investment. There was a need for committed and experienced staff, for continuous improvements and to ensure legal compliance. Ongoing training was required, together with a clearly defined, publicly available and auditable Environmental Policy.

The next step for the Council was to seek approval of the proposed Environmental Policy. Agreement and implementation of departmental and corporate targets and objectives was also needed. It was proposed to create an EMAS Forum and to develop a system framework and responsibilities. Finally, gap analysis would be initiated with internal audits and work towards system and status verification. Further presentation slides showed the key issues identified together with data on the Council's current carbon position. This was supplemented with information on the main areas shown within our carbon dioxide footprint and a number of options were identified for improvement. The presentation concluded with information on the proposed Environmental Policy 2007. This confirmed the commitment to the EMAS standard and to continuous improvements. The Policy agreed to undertake the requirements of the EMAS standard and to place Environmental Management towards the top of the agenda, by committing to achieve targets, objectives and legal compliance. The policy stated that financial support would be available for delivering the requirements of the standard and implementation of the objectives.

The Chairman thanked the Officer for the presentation. Councillor Richards welcomed the report and referred to the options identified for improvement, particularly relating to vehicle emissions. On a Council visit to Japan, he became aware of carbon dioxide problems and the development of hybrid vehicles. He recalled that the Council operated a car-leasing scheme and questioned whether it could work in partnership with Toyota, to promote the use of more environmentally friendly vehicles. He also noted that cycle bays had recently been provided adjacent to the Civic Offices. He was aware that Derbyshire County Council operated a scheme where employees could purchase bicycles through the Authority, effectively saving staff the V.A.T. costs. Officers had not looked at such an initiative yet, but they were enthusiastic about promoting the use of bicycles. Next week, the Council would be highlighting climate change issues and as part of this, the use of bicycles would be promoted.

Councillor Taylor welcomed this significant report for the Council and its public. Climate change was now towards the top of the agenda and he was pleased that the former Controlling Group had driven this initiative forward. He acknowledged the work of former District Councillor Bell and was pleased that there was now a dedicated Officer in post for this area. It was imperative to reaffirm the Council's commitment to EMAS.

Councillor Watson was also supportive of the report and environmental improvements. He was concerned that there were two forms of accreditation and it appeared that ISO 14001 was a higher standard and was recognised more widely in the commercial sector. He also favoured negotiations with the Toyota Motor Company, but considered that Hybrid vehicles were not as carbon efficient as initially seemed the case, particularly when compared to some diesel vehicles. The Council should take a proactive role to encourage the use of diesel vehicles and he outlined a remuneration incentive used elsewhere. He then referred to the Environmental Policy and felt it should

require all of the Council's contractors to comply with the same EMAS standards. This was not mentioned within the Policy presently.

With the approval of the Chairman, Councillor Mrs. Brown spoke on this item. She welcomed the recommendations and endorsed comments made by previous speakers. She questioned whether the Council could become carbon neutral at some future date. Whilst this was unlikely, there was a need to reduce the Council's carbon footprint. The Head of Environmental Services clarified that the EMAS accreditation required the same processes as that used for ISO 14001. By satisfying EMAS, the Council also satisfied the ISO accreditation. The Officer agreed with the suggestions about remuneration incentives, commented on the positive aspects of hybrid vehicle technology and the progress being made in this area. Achieving carbon neutrality would be a very ambitious target and he made a comparison to the current Government target.

The Chairman and Deputy Chief Executive responded to Councillor Watson's suggestion about contractors being required to comply with EMAS. In particular, reference was made to the contractual arrangements before this could be enforced and those other elements that had to be borne in mind when procuring goods and services. It would be quite onerous to implement such contractual requirements.

Councillor Tilley requested that a copy of the presentation slides be circulated to all Members of the Council. It was also suggested that an article be included in the Members Bulletin to provide further information on the Council's carbon footprint. Councillor Bale pursued an earlier discussion on the merits of drilling boreholes to provide a water source for agricultural purposes or the Council's parks.

**RESOLVED:-**

- (1) That the Council renews its commitment to implement the EMAS scheme of Environmental Management.***
- (2) That the Council adopts the proposed programme submitted for the implementation of EMAS.***
- (3) That the Environmental Policy 2007 be adopted as submitted, as South Derbyshire District Council's Environmental Policy, replacing the draft environmental policy agreed previously.***

EDS/7. **DECRIMINALISATION OF PARKING ENFORCEMENT**

The Committee was informed of legislation that made it possible to transfer parking enforcement from the Police to the Local Highway Authority. The Government had indicated that it wished local authorities to take up this option and had suggested that it would be imposed after 2011. Derbyshire County Council had concluded that it would be financially viable to pursue decriminalisation of parking enforcement across the County. It had developed plans, working in partnership with district authorities and these plans had been approved by the County Council's Cabinet.

The proposal involved the collective procurement of services and use of a private sector enforcement contractor, to provide and manage on-street

wardens. The warden contract would be managed by Derbyshire County Council, but each district council would be able to determine how many hours of enforcement time they received. District councils would have to pay for this enforcement time, but would benefit from the receipts from the fixed penalty notices and this should result in a break-even financial position. Derbyshire County Council had requested this Authority to confirm its willingness to work in partnership, on this basis.

Parking attendants had to be exclusively dedicated to parking matters and could not undertake other duties. The financial model used to assess the feasibility of the proposals was based on 15 hours of enforcement per week. The Council provided 759 parking spaces across 17 car parks. Currently, the Council had not made the existing parking restrictions legally binding and it had no way of enforcing them. The financial implications were reported, comprising the initial set up costs, a projected deficit in the first year of operation and a small profit in subsequent years.

Councillor Southerd commented that parking issues were raised frequently at Area Meetings. He spoke about the time required currently to impose on-street parking restrictions and felt this proposal was to be welcomed. He referred to the report's recommendations and presumed that an options paper would need to be considered on the need to charge for car parking. The Chairman replied that there were no plans to introduce charges for car parking at this time. It was then questioned how enforcement could be undertaken and how the enforcement presence would be allocated over the 15 hours. The Head of Environmental Services intended to manage these additional duties within existing capacity. It was understood that the number of Enforcement Officers and duration of their presence could be varied by agreement with the County Council, but discussions were still to be finalised. Members discussed the need for additional on-street parking restrictions and a comparison was made to Derby City Council's area.

Many complaints related to the misuse of parking spaces intended for disabled persons and to people who parked irresponsibly, causing an obstruction within car parks. A further issue raised was how enforcement could take place of the maximum time being exceeded in short stay car parks. Councillor Ford commented on how the Enforcement Officers could be used to patrol car parks and highways in the urban core, whilst also recognising the problems caused by improper parking in rural areas, at certain times of the day.

Councillor Mrs. Brown spoke to this item with the approval of the Chairman. She questioned when the new arrangements would commence and the enforcement responsibilities in the meantime. She also asked how many wardens would be used within South Derbyshire. Officers explained that the service could be expanded, but there would be associated costs, if the penalty fee income was insufficient. An explanation was also given of how the proposal for 15 hours of enforcement time had been determined. Derbyshire County Council's target was to introduce the revised arrangements from April 2008. This was felt to be ambitious, but work had already commenced on the transfer. In the meantime, the Police still had the responsibility for this service.

Councillor Richards felt that all Members could identify problem areas given the number of public complaints. Councillor Lemmon referred to the

requirement for these Officers to focus only on parking matters. Presently, traffic wardens could note details of untaxed vehicles and pass this information onto the Police for enforcement action. Under the revised arrangements, the new wardens would not have such powers. This point was noted and could be pursued as part of the contract discussions, to enable such problems to be reported to the Constabulary. Reference was also made to the role of the Police Community Support Officers.

**RESOLVED:-**

- (1) That the Council accepts Derbyshire County Council's proposals for the decriminalisation of parking offences.***
- (2) That the Council commits to the use of a centrally procured service, managed by Derbyshire County Council, to process fixed penalty notices and to provide on-street warden services.***
- (3) That the Heads of Environmental and Legal & Democratic Services jointly examine the options to make the existing parking restrictions enforceable, within Council car parks, in anticipation of an enforcement presence.***
- (4) That the Finance and Management Committee be recommended to include the sum of £6,266 in the 2008/09 budgets, to cover the initial set up costs and £4,200 in 2009/10 to cover a projected deficit, with anticipated net income of £634 in each subsequent year.***

EDS/8. **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 (AS AMENDED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT [ACCESS TO INFORMATION] ACT 1985)**

**RESOLVED:-**

***That, in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the Meeting as it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that there would be disclosed exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of the Schedule 12A of the Act indicated in brackets after each item.***

**MINUTES**

***The Exempt Minutes of the Meeting held on 8th March 2007 were received.***

J. BLADEN

CHAIRMAN