

ENVIRONMENTAL AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE

20th April 2006

**PRESENT:-**

**Labour Group**

Councillor Lauro (Vice-Chair in the Chair) and Councillors Carroll, Dunn (substitute for Councillor Taylor), Richards (substitute for Councillor Bell), Shepherd, Southern (substitute for Councillor Isham and Whyman M.B.E.).

**Conservative Group**

Councillors Bale, Ford, Mrs. Hall and Mrs. Littlejohn (substitute for Councillor Atkin).

**Independent Member**

Councillor Mrs. Walton.

**APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence from the Meeting were received from Councillor Taylor (Chair), Councillors Bell and Isham (Labour Group) and Councillor Atkin (Conservative Group).

EDS/67. **MINUTES**

The Open Minutes of the Meeting held on 9th March 2006 were taken as read, approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

**MATTERS DELEGATED TO COMMITTEE**

EDS/68. **HERITAGE GRANTS SUB-COMMITTEE**

**RESOLVED:-**

***That the Open Minutes of the Heritage Grants Sub-Committee Meeting held on 2nd February 2006 be received and noted.***

EDS/69. **2005/08 SERVICE PLANS – YEAR END REPORTS**

It was reported that Service Plans were an important part of the Council's "Achieving More" performance management framework. Policy Committees had approved Service Plans for their areas of responsibility and these were intended to provide a detailed basis for service delivery during 2005/06, together with a framework for the following two years. The Committee received the year end Service Plan for the Planning Services Division.

Councillor Bale made reference to the Local Plan and the potential for challenge of planning decisions. He complemented those involved in the development control process on the low proportion of challenges that had been made. The Leader of the Council referred to Performance Indicator

information and he felt this would be more meaningful if comparative upper and lower quartile data was provided. Officers explained that such performance information would be reported to the Development Control Committee the following week and an outline was given of proposals to report such information to future Policy Committees.

A definition was sought of “affordable housing”, the current levels within the District and where it was located. Members also questioned how they could influence the proposed location of affordable housing. There was ongoing research into this issue and Officers explained the delays experienced. However, comprehensive information would be published. Members were seeking a factsheet of key issues relating to affordable housing.

Several Members discussed Section 106 Planning Gain Agreements. In response to a question from the Leader, about the introduction of revised arrangements, Officers understood that the system had not yet changed. Councillor Bale sought an assurance that monies from such Agreements would be used to provide facilities within the area where development took place. Other Members then asked about the amount of Section 106 funding that was still to be allocated. A database had been established to enable such research. Liaison with the Primary Care Trust on the provision of health facilities was also raised. A Member asked about the use of Section 106 funding to provide social housing. In reply, Officers referred to the Government’s review of the provision of such funding from development and the need for survey evidence to prove a requirement for affordable housing. The Leader considered this was a means of providing more social housing of a design that would remain affordable. With regard to the use of Section 106 funding, there was a need for a common sense approach to provide benefits for the wider community. He understood that there was a protocol for the involvement of Local Members in determining how such funding was used, throughout the process from the identification of suitable schemes to securing project delivery. He proposed the establishment of a working panel for this purpose and its composition. Officers explained the difficulties in meeting required timescales for determining major planning applications, due to delays from negotiating Section 106 Agreements.

There was also a discussion about affordable housing. Councillor Bale was delighted that a survey had taken place and Councillor Southern reported that the survey results were available via the Council’s web site. The definitions of “affordable” and “low cost” housing caused confusion and a clearer definition was needed. Councillor Southern referred to the Government’s assessment of average weekly wages for affordable housing purposes. In South Derbyshire, there were many residents who earned less than the projected £360 per week used for this assessment.

**RESOLVED:-**

- (1) That the year-end Service Plan Monitoring Report for the Planning Services Division be received.**
- (2) That a Working Panel be appointed to formulate a protocol for the involvement of local Members in the development and monitoring of Section 106 planning agreements.**

- (3) That the Working Panel comprises the Chairs of the Environmental and Development Services, Development Control and Housing and Community Services Committees, together with the Leader of the Council, two representatives of the Opposition Group and Councillor Mrs. Walton.**

EDS/70. **FUTURE PROCUREMENT OF THE COUNCIL'S REFUSE COLLECTION VEHICLES**

The Committee was advised of the current method for procurement of Council vehicles through individual tenders. The issues associated with this method of procurement were also reported.

The refuse collection freighters were all due to be replaced between now and 2009/10. Officers had considered procurement options to provide the best value for money for the Council. Discussions had taken place with employees and trade union representatives, other councils, vehicle manufacturers and purchasing organisation consortia.

It was recommended to arrange the procurement through a competitive framework contract for a period of 4 years. This would be facilitated by the Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation (ESPO), where one supplier would be selected to meet the Council's requirements for refuse collection vehicles over that period. It was proposed to form a small sub-group, including workforce representatives and if felt appropriate, a Member, to work in partnership with ESPO to deliver the project. The advantages of this approach were reported, together with the overall benefits that should accrue to the Council. There were a number of other purchasing consortia in the process of development, but ESPO offered a tried and trusted organisation that could offer the Council a bespoke service immediately. There would be scope during the next four years to monitor the developments of ESPO and the other consortia, to continue to seek the best value for money for the Council.

Councillor Richards suggested that the Chair be nominated as the Member to serve on the sub-group. Councillor Southern questioned the involvement of the Procurement Officer in this matter and requested that in future the views of the Procurement Officer be included in appropriate Committee reports. The Procurement Officer had been consulted on this proposal, which commenced prior to his appointment. It was questioned whether the Council would receive income from the sale of the old refuse collection vehicles. The current vehicles were leased and negotiations took place on termination of the lease agreement, as there might actually be additional costs for the Council. Councillor Ford asked whether there would be a need to procure maintenance skills. The Council had two vehicle fitters for its fleet. This proposal would enable the selection of a preferred vehicle and appropriate staff training. The maintenance costs incurred by the Council from this approach were considered competitive.

**RESOLVED:-**

- (1) That the Committee approves the future procurement of refuse collection vehicles through a Competitive Framework Contract, for a period of four years, facilitated by the Eastern Shires**

***Purchasing Organisation, whereby one supplier will be selected to meet the Council's requirements for refuse collection vehicles over that period.***

- (2) That a Sub-Group be formed, including the Chair of the Committee and workforce representatives, to work in partnership with ESPO to deliver the project.***

EDS/71. **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 (AS AMENDED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT [ACCESS TO INFORMATION] ACT 1985)**

***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 9th March 2006 were received.***

**RECYCLING SERVICE – EXPANSION OF THE ‘GREEN BOXES’ RECYCLING SCHEME 2006/07 (Paragraph 3)**

***The Committee approved proposals to expand the ‘Green Boxes’ recycling scheme.***

**DOG WASTE BINS – SPONSORSHIP PROPOSALS (Paragraph 3)**

***The Committee deferred consideration of this item to enable further research of the financial implications.***

M. LAURO

CHAIR