

ENVIRONMENTAL AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE

16th November 2006

PRESENT:-

Labour Group

Councillor Taylor (Chair), Councillor Dunn (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Carroll, Jones (substitute for Councillor Venning), Mrs. Lane, Shepherd, Tilley, and Whyman, M.B.E.

Conservative Group

Councillors Ford, Mrs. Hood and Mrs. Wheeler (substitute for Councillor Bale).

In Attendance

Councillor Lane (Labour Group).

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the Meeting were received from Councillor Venning (Labour Group), Councillors Bale and Mrs. Hall (Conservative Group) and Councillor Mrs. Walton (Independent Member).

EDS/46. **MINUTES**

The Open Minutes of the Meeting held on 5th October 2006 were taken as read, approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

EDS/47. **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS AND REPORTS**

The Leader of the Council congratulated Councillor Mrs. Wheeler following her recent selection as the Conservative party candidate for the next Parliamentary election.

MATTERS DELEGATED TO COMMITTEE

EDS/48. **"ACHIEVING MORE" – PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK SERVICE REPORTS SECOND QUARTER 2006/07**

A performance report was submitted to show the Committee's contribution to the Council's Corporate and Improvement Plans, the Community Strategy Action Plan and the Best Value Performance Indicators that it was responsible for. Service level performance was also reported and would be strengthened in future reports.

Information was provided on the performance report format, to ensure a consistent approach across all services. It was linked to the work of the Improvement Panel and for the first time, the reports included service level information. It also reflected the new Community Strategy Action Plan milestones agreed by the Local Strategic Partnership in July 2006. The information appended to the report showed actual performance at the end of the second quarter and was a summary from the report to the Improvement

Panel. Service level performance information was also included, based on the agreed Service Plans. The service areas that reported to this Committee were Environmental Services, Planning and Policy and Economic Regeneration. There were some performance indicators within these service areas that were the responsibility of another Committee. In line with Members' requests, only details of performance relevant to this Committee had been included in the report. The Committee could review the performance information, make suggestions for further improvements and take the opportunity to discuss service issues with the relevant Heads of Service. A summary of achievements for each section was also provided.

Consideration was given to the performance information for Environmental Services. Councillor Ford referred to the introduction of the composting scheme into the Findern area and asked for his thanks to be recorded to staff for their assistance in overcoming initial problems. The Leader of the Council considered the section's performance to be phenomenal, with virtually all targets being met. He felt that remarkable progress was being made by the Council through its Officers and wished to congratulate Environmental Health on this performance report. The Chair was pleased to hear Members' praise and spoke of the extra resources devoted to some areas. Councillor Mrs. Wheeler spoke about the new "in vessel" composting scheme and its benefits compared to the current system. The Chair emphasised the benefits of the Vital Earth project and the quality of the resultant compost. The Vice-Chair referred to improvements in street cleansing. The Leader of the Council also praised the domestic waste minimisation and recycling efforts. He questioned whether assistance could be provided to the commercial sector, to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill. The Head of Environmental Services was hopeful that a Government review would address this through an approach involving recycling credits. In the meantime, the District Council would do all it could to assist commercial organisations. The Chair commented that the private sector was making progress in terms of good environmental practice and it was hoped that this would continue. The Leader referred to waste generated by small businesses such as restaurants.

Consideration was given to the Planning performance report and the Deputy Chief Executive provided further information on the Corporate Plan targets that were considered to be at risk of failure. The Leader of the Council referred to affordable housing requirements, the targets of this Council and those of other local authorities, as compared to the constraints from the regional spatial strategy. He asked that appreciation be passed on to the staff for their excellent performance. Similar sentiments were expressed to staff within the Policy and Economic Regeneration Division, with particular reference made to work on the Economic Regeneration strategy.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee notes the performance information submitted at the end of the second quarter 2006/07 and records its thanks to Officers in each of the relevant Divisions for the work undertaken.

EDS/49. **“ACHIEVING MORE” – PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK
OVERALL PERFORMANCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND DEVELOPMENT
SERVICES COMMITTEE**

Further to Minute No. EDS/48 above, a report was submitted to summarise the position in relation to this Committee’s responsibilities. It provided an opportunity for Members to note performance levels and to review those areas that were not “on track” to achieve agreed targets.

Reports were provided on the Corporate Plan, Improvement Plan, Community Strategy Action Plan and with regard to Best Value Performance Indicators. The Committee had responsibility for 12 actions from the Corporate Plan. A table showed the proportion on track, those at risk and those likely to fail at the end of the first and second quarters of the current year, as compared to the total for the Council. A subsequent table focused on those targets at risk or indicating a probable failure, giving more detailed information and proposed remedial measures.

The Council had 19 actions under the Improvement Plan, which focused mainly on internal business improvement issues. In the current year there were no targets in the Improvement Plan for which this Committee had responsibility. The Council had joint responsibility for 25 actions on the Community Strategy Action Plan. This Committee had responsibility for 7 of those actions within the “vibrant economy” and “sustainable environment” themes. A further table showed projected performance on these targets at the end of the first and second quarters, as compared to the totals for the Council.

There were a total of 85 Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) across the Council and this Committee had responsibility for 37 of them. Overall, there were 31 priority indicators and 12 of these were the responsibility of the Committee. A summary of the BVPI performance was also shown in terms of all indicators and priority indicators, those on track, at risk or predicted to fail. This was supplemented by a table showing a summary of the BVPI position for review by the Committee, together with proposed remedial measures.

Councillor Ford referred to the Corporate Plan indicator for extension of the compositing scheme. He questioned whether there would be a penalty imposed if the Council changed contractor for the delivery of this service. Officers advised that it would not be possible to change contractor at this time. A further report on this issue would be brought to the next Meeting giving the options available.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) That the Committee notes the continuously improving performance within its areas of responsibility.***
- (2) That Members note those areas where performance is not on track and agree the proposed remedial measures in those cases.***
- (3) That a report be submitted to the Improvement Panel to confirm the actions being taken.***

EDS/50. **CONSULTATION ON THE DRAFT EAST MIDLANDS REGIONAL PLAN**

A comprehensive report was submitted to advise Members of the background and timetable for the preparation of the draft Regional Plan. This would set out growth requirements and establish priorities for development restraint in the East Midlands for the period 2001-2026. The Regional Plan would form part of the “Development Plan” and would supersede the existing Regional Spatial Strategy and the Derby and Derbyshire Joint Structure Plan. The report included a section to summarise the Council’s comments in response to the previous consultation on the draft Regional Plan. A number of concerns were raised at that time, many of which have been incorporated.

The next section of the report summarised the overall strategy of the plan and set out a number of key concepts, including Housing Market Areas, Principal Urban Areas and Sub-Regional Centres. The report looked at the proposals with regard to the amount and distribution of housing, the approach to green belt and green wedge areas, the efficient use of land, affordable housing and provision for gypsies and travellers. As with many sections of the report, this included a number of Officer observations. The report gave a summary of the Plan’s approach to the economy and on employment land matters. Officer observations were provided on this area, together with the subsequent section on environmental issues. The report then examined the draft Plan’s treatment of rural areas together with transportation issues. Further Officer observations on these sections were also provided. The report included financial, corporate and community implications. The conclusions reflected the long-term strategic implications for the future growth of the District from this Regional Plan. It was important that the Council formulated and submitted its views in detail at this stage. In view of the great number of issues raised, it was suggested that a Member Working Panel be convened to prepare a detailed response, along the lines of the Officer comments, set out within the report. The Working Panel’s recommendations could be submitted to a Special Meeting of the Council convened for 14th December 2006.

The Chair commented that this was one of the most significant documents for South Derbyshire for many years. The Leader of the Council felt that the report’s recommendations could be supported, without prejudice to the Working Panel’s deliberations. There were concerns at the outset that the Regional Assembly was not aware of issues facing South Derbyshire. Reference was made to proposed housing allocations and the associated increase in population together with infrastructure needs. The document left many questions to be explored, including whether the area would become an overspill for Derby and the West Midlands. It was questioned where additional houses could be allocated in the urban core, as the current road infrastructure was not sufficient. The Plan did not account for the brownfield sites in the District, including the disused power station sites. The location of affordable homes and provision for leisure, health and education facilities were also touched upon. The Leader spoke about the establishment of the Working Panel, its size, political balance and he nominated Members to serve on the Panel. He looked forward to working with and seeking the views of Derbyshire County Council and the East Midlands Development Agency on this matter.

Councillor Mrs. Wheeler suggested a change to the first report recommendation. She confirmed two nominations to the proposed Working Panel and voiced her appreciation of the full report on the principal issues.

She was critical that the Regional Plan had no vision about infrastructure needs, including education and medical facilities. The Leader confirmed that this document had been prepared by the Regional Assembly and he did not wish to associate any blame with the County Council. The Chair confirmed this point and looked forward to working with the County Council on this issue. Councillor Ford spoke of the implications for South Derbyshire from this document. He referred to the remote location of the Regional Assembly and felt that the District Council should guide what happened in its area. The Leader confirmed that he sat on the Regional Assembly, but it had a lack of understanding of this Council's area. He referred to the proposed housing allocations and the inability to locate additional homes within the Derby City Council area. Practically, this meant that additional homes would be located in certain areas of South Derbyshire. It was time to educate the Regional Assembly and others about South Derbyshire's aims. The Chair felt there was a failure to understand the District Council's present situation, the growth in housing, the inward investment and the area's position in the National Forest. He looked forward to the Working Panel and the chance to represent the best interests of South Derbyshire.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) That the Committee notes the contents of the draft Regional Plan.***
- (2) That a Member Working Panel be convened comprising Councillors Shepherd, Taylor and Whyman M.B.E (Labour Group) together with Councillors Ford and Mrs. Wheeler (Conservative Group), to consider the draft Regional Plan and to recommend a detailed response for consideration at a Special Meeting of the Council on 14th December 2006, based on the Officer observations set out in the report and the views expressed by Members at the Committee.***

EDS/51. **DERBYSHIRE'S JOINT MUNICIPAL WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY AND MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING – FINAL APPROVAL**

It was reported that over the last three years, a Working Group comprising Derbyshire local authorities had been developing a Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy. This would provide a framework for decisions on the management of solid waste in the County and City over the next twenty years. The Council approved a draft strategy for public consultation, which was undertaken between September 2005 and March 2006. Details were also provided of the responses received, including that from targeted groups and organisations within the County. The feedback was analysed and where appropriate the strategy documents were modified. A summary of the consultation responses was appended to the report.

The final strategy document, together with technical appendices and environmental impact assessment had been accepted by the Waste Strategy Working Group and the Waste Collection Authority Advisory Group. The proposed strategy was based on a number of key principles, which were outlined in the report. An Executive Summary of the Draft Strategy was also appended to the report, together with the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). This provided a framework for guiding implementation of the strategy. The final MOU had also been accepted by the Waste Strategy Working Group and the Waste Collection Authority Advisory Group.

RESOLVED:-

That the Council adopts the Derbyshire Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy and the accompanying Memorandum of Understanding.

EDS/52. **SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT WITH “VISIT PEAK DISTRICT & DERBYSHIRE”**

Further to Minute No. EDS/4 of 1st June 2006, the Committee received an update on discussions with Visit Peak District and Derbyshire (VPD&D), leading to a proposed Service Level Agreement (SLA). It was reported that VPD&D had formulated its constitution and operational procedures for both its Partnership and Board. This was an unincorporated voluntary association of public sector and business sector partners. The Derbyshire Chamber was the agreed accountable body and a copy of the constitution and operating procedures were attached to the report.

The Partnership Board's composition was reported. Discussions regarding the SLA had taken place both with VPD&D and the other local authorities within the County. This had resulted in a two-part agreement, with a common core and elements unique to each authority. A copy of the proposed agreement was also appended to the report. It set out the principle purpose of VPD&D, its distinct roles and objectives. The proposed agreement set out the general principles for collaboration, support and communication, together with performance reporting and the conditions of operation of the agreement.

The role of local authority tourism services in the agreement was a commitment in line with agreed action plans. These were aligned to VPD&D's objectives and were reported. The section of the SLA that was unique to this Council set out its financial and “in kind” contributions. This included staff time of the equivalent of one day per week, to perform a liaison role between visitor related businesses and VPD&D. That organisation was committed to supporting the development of the National Forest as a destination and an identifiable brand. It was also required to take forward discussions with other destination management partnerships and other relevant regional bodies, with the objective of establishing a clear lead for the National Forest area.

In terms of financial implications, the SLA confirmed the contribution of £5,000 per annum for the current and next financial years. VPD&D had taken on the management of the Derbyshire Destination website and it was anticipated that this Council's contribution to the website would be approximately £1,000 per annum, which could be met from existing budgets. This was increasingly a key marketing tool for visitor businesses and the shared website was substantially cheaper to operate than a standalone site operated by the Council. The redesigned VPD&D website had already achieved a significantly increased profile, with the National Forest & Beyond destination benefiting from a marked increase in brochure requests.

There was a discussion on the value of tourism for the local economy and this was now thought to be worth in excess of £100 million each year. A large proportion of this income still came from day visitors and by increasing the number of overnight stays, tourism income would increase dramatically. Members felt the growth in income justified the work undertaken on tourism.

Reference was also made to the National Forest branding and the improvements in tourism work in recent years.

RESOLVED:-

That the Council enters into a Service Level Agreement with Visit Peak District and Derbyshire, on the terms set out within the report, in partnership with the Derbyshire Chamber and Business Link for the period 2006/07 to 2007/08, subject to any minor modifications being approved by the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee.

EDS/53. **IDEAS INTO ACTION**

A report was submitted to inform the Committee about responses to the “Ideas Into Action” campaign. A report was considered at the Council Meeting on 9th November 2006 and a copy of that report was provided as background. It listed all the ideas submitted and in an Annexe, grouped some of them into key issues, with proposals that could be progressed relatively quickly. The Council agreed that all policy committees should consider the ideas submitted and make recommendations to Finance and Management Committee regarding the proposals they wished to bring forward in the short and longer term. There was the possibility that a limited amount of funding might be made available by the Finance and Management Committee for short term proposals that required one off or low level funding.

The Leader reminded that the Council wished to devolve decision making to the community as far as possible and had sought feedback from people of all ages, from groups and individuals. He referred to those schemes identified with a low cost, which could have a significant impact and he proposed that they be supported. The Head of Environmental Services noted the requests for removal of graffiti and litter, commenting that it would be helpful to have a sum of £5,000 for this year to achieve these aims. The Leader felt it was important to address such problems and then to discuss with other authorities and businesses who was responsible and should pay for such works.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) That the Committee notes the ideas submitted during the recent campaign.***
- (2) That Officers progress those schemes identified that can be delivered in the short term and where appropriate, the Finance and Management Committee be requested to fund those proposals, including providing the sum of £5,000 for the removal of graffiti and litter.***

EDS/54. **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 5th October 2006 were received.

FRAMEWORK CONTRACT FOR THE PROCUREMENT OF THE COUNCIL'S REFUSE COLLECTION VEHICLES (Paragraph 3)

The Committee accepted a tender for the framework contract for the supply of the Council's Refuse Collection Vehicles.

S. TAYLOR

CHAIR