

COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

22nd March 2004

PRESENT:-

Labour Group

Councillor Harrington (Chair), Councillor Bambrick (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Lane and Mrs. Mead.

Conservative Group

Councillors Hood, Lemmon and Martin.

In Attendance

Councillor Murphy (Labour Group).

CYS/45. **MINUTES**

The Open Minutes of the Meeting held on 16th February 2004 were taken as read, approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

CYS/46. **BEST VALUE REVIEW – CLEANSING THE ENVIRONMENT, PROGRESS ON DELIVERING THE ACTION PLAN**

The Committee was advised that this Best Value Review was completed in Autumn 2001 and inspected in October 2001. The resulting Action Plan contained over 70 actions. A summary of the progress made to date was circulated.

It was noted that the Compost Scheme would be introduced to a further 3,000 households in Hartshorne and Woodville in March 2004. Plans had been approved to extend the scheme to a further 6,000 households during 2004/05. The expansion of the scheme would be instrumental in helping the Council to meet its statutory recycling standard in 2005/06.

It was reported that Government funding had been obtained for a pilot scheme for the kerbside collection of cans, bottles and textiles in addition to paper from 12,000 households in the District. The Government would fund the start-up costs (boxes, marketing etc.) but subsequent revenue costs would be borne by the Council. The scheme commenced in January 2004 and had proved popular and successful to date. A further bid for funding an extension of this scheme was submitted in December 2003 but was unsuccessful.

The Committee was advised that the following issues had impacted on the programme for the delivery of actions arising from the Best Value Review scheduled for the previous six months:-

- The implementation of the new kerbside collection scheme described above.
- The closure of Bretby Landfill site and the subsequent rescheduling of the refuse collection rounds.

- The introduction last April of a new Best Value Performance Indicator in Street Cleansing that required 900 inspections of different categories of land every year.
- CPA.
- A Members' Working Panel Review of the Compost Scheme.

Accordingly, a revised programme had been included in the Technical Services Division's Service Plan (2004/07) approved by the Environmental and Development Services Committee. The Waste and Cleansing Manager advised that the Working Panel established to look at such schemes as the Compost Scheme had concluded that the Council needed to be focused on raising awareness and improving education with regard to the maintenance of composting bins arising from the problems experienced during the Summer of 2003.

Councillor Lane queried what assistance had been received by District Audit on the reasons for high waste levels in the District. The Waste and Cleansing Manager advised that the District Auditor had conducted a "light touch" review on this issue and established that the Auditors could assist councils with the county-wide production of waste statistics.

Councillor Martin referred to the reduction in income of £14,000 during the past three years on trade waste income and queried whether the Council was still making a profit or merely breaking even. The Waste and Cleansing Manager advised that the Council did not have a dedicated trade waste collection round and incorporated such collections as part of the general refuse collection service. The commercial waste collections generated approximately £200,000 per year and cost the Council approximately £175,000. The Waste and Cleansing Manager was of the view that the same number of refuse collection rounds would be required even if the trade waste collection service was not undertaken by the Authority. Councillor Lane queried how the Authority marketed this service and was advised that the Council undertook very limited marketing as it did not really want a lot more business than it had currently. Councillor Mrs. Mead queried why the customer survey of this service had only indicated a 76% satisfaction rating and was advised that many clients wanted the service to be cheaper and that some clients were not happy with the reliability of the service. Councillor Lemmon advised that many residents of Etwall had indicated a desire for plastic bottles to be collected but the Waste and Cleansing Manager advised that if the Council collected plastics then the cost of refuse collection per household would rise from £4 to £8. The Chair suggested that the Council could look at a shredding machine for the reduction of such plastics if the Council were able to collect them and Councillor Murphy suggested that it might be economical for the Authority to purchase a van to collect plastics rather than incorporate this service as part of the general collection round. The Waste and Cleansing Manager agreed to pursue the idea of a shredder and van service for the collection of plastics and to report back to a further Meeting.

Councillor Bambrick expressed concerns regarding litter problems within the urban core and referred to the key task for the development and implementation of the Litter Action Plan. The Waste and Cleansing Manager advised that most of the litter problems in the District were experienced in the urban core. The Council was looking to improve street cleansing resources but a service development proposal submitted in this regard had

failed during the budget process. Accordingly, Officers were endeavouring to make more effective use of the resources currently available to target litter problems. Councillor Martin felt that the issue of litter was a problem of attitude and yet there was a need to educate children to take social responsibility for their environment. The Waste and Cleansing Manager advised that the Council needed to consider an enforcement plan regarding litter problems. Councillor Mrs. Mead advised that at William Allitt School litter picking was undertaken regularly but the pupils still dropped litter when they left the school premises and this was a problem.

The Action Plan circulated referred to Derbyshire County Council being lobbied to meet the full cost of 12 grass cuts per annum to highways grass. Councillor Lane queried the progress made on this and was advised that until two years ago the County Council only funded 4 cuts per year and the District Council funded an additional 4 cuts making a total of 8 per year. The County Council did not pay for any grass cutting of public open space and the Best Value Review had indicated that the public were concerned that highways grass was not cut often enough. Derbyshire County Council were now paying for more than 4 cuts per year but not for the 12 times that the grass was actually cut by this Authority.

With regard to joint discussions held with neighbouring authorities on waste management activities, Councillor Lane asked why the Council had not included North West Leicestershire District Council and was advised that this Authority had declined to join the Consortium.

A general discussion took place regarding the preparation of a Communication Plan on cleansing the environment issues. The Waste and Cleansing Manager stated that this action had slipped from the original timescale and needed to be actioned accordingly. Councillor Harrington felt that there was a need to keep publicising the success of the Clean Team. Councillor Murphy advised that waste minimisation/recycling was not something which could be delivered purely by the Waste and Cleansing Department. He felt that the Communication Strategy needed ownership and co-ordination and that public education on cleansing the environment issues also needed co-ordinating. The Waste and Cleansing Manager talked about ideas for the improvement of the service which had been included in a Communication Plan and it was agreed that the preparation of a Communication Plan should be incorporated into the future Work Programme for the appropriate Scrutiny Committee.

A general discussion took place regarding the cleaning of bins by external companies and the use of public drains for such cleaning which was prohibited. Councillor Lane felt that there was a need to support the cleansing of bins in some way without the Council endorsing it. The Waste and Cleansing Manager advised that his department was hoping to give information to residents about keeping bins clean/managing waste and that this publicity could include key questions to ask companies cleaning bins (information which could come from the Environment Agency).

Councillor Lane queried the revenue costs of the kerbside collection scheme and was advised that the collection costs for 12,000 households next year was £40,000 (£3.50 per household). If all 36,000 properties in the District were incorporated into the scheme then the total cost would be £150,000 per year. The Chair queried whether the Council was planning financially for the

development of the scheme and the Waste and Cleansing Manager referred to the bid submitted to the Government in December 2003 being unsuccessful. The Council would be in a position and indeed would be submitting a further bid as and when monies were available. Councillor Lane asked whether any negative feedback had been received from the general public regarding the kerbside collection scheme commenced in January 2004 and was advised by the Waste and Cleansing Manager that the Authority had employed a graduate to survey customers and produce a report encompassing all aspects of the kerbside collection scheme which would be made available to Members.

CYS/47. **COMMUNITY SAFETY BEST VALUE REVIEW**

The Community Safety Officer advised that to date no formal improvement plan had been developed because a number of issues had preceded the requirement. For example, the CPA Inspection had recognised key issues identified in the Best Value Review and had included these issues in the CPA Improvement Plan. This included the recognised need for improved services around nuisance and disorder. The key issues were outlined as follows:-

- (1) Service and departmental plans to reflect crime and disorder improvements.
- (2) Neighbourhood Wardens.
- (3) Local Crime Reduction Group for Swadlincote (retail and residents).
- (4) Anti-Social Behaviour Officer.
- (5) Youth Engagement through Sports Officer.
- (6) Youth Needs Survey (identify requirements of young people).
- (7) CCTV.

It was reported that Section 17 improvements had been included in the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership Self Assessment and Improvement Plan. This would seek to raise Section 17 on all agency agendas and key partners within the Council. Issues included building S17 into Induction processes, an awareness Guide to Section 17, CBT for employees and information sited on the Council's proposed Intranet and new website.

The Community Safety Officer advised that the County Council's Best Value Review was complete and recommendations were currently being consulted on. These included the formation of:-

- (a) Safer Derbyshire Partnership including grouping together of key crime and disorder specialists (YOTs, Police, DAAT and Community Safety Unit).
- (b) Recruitment of additional Community Safety Officers to work across Derbyshire County Council Departments.
- (c) Increased Jupiter Team to include all Partnership Analysts.

- (d) Joined up processes for funding applications, policy and media issues.

Councillor Martin queried who was funding the minimum of 5 or a maximum of 8 additional posts for community safety and was advised that these posts would be funded by Derbyshire County Council and the Police. Job descriptions for these posts were currently being written. Councillor Hood referred to a local Crime Reduction Group meeting that should have taken place on 1st March 2004 at Peartree Court, Etwall. Councillor Hood had been advised on the day of the meeting that it was taking place at Peartree Court and had arrived at the meeting only to find that it was not being held there. The meeting was actually held at John Port School and accordingly, no-one had attended. Councillor Hood expressed concern regarding the poor arrangements for this meeting, particularly in view of the fact that he had missed other meetings that day specifically to attend. The Community Safety Officer apologised for this incident and agreed to raise it with the Crime and Disorder Team.

CYS/48. **CRIME AND DISORDER STRATEGY**

An Action Team update was circulated providing a summary of the work undertaken to date by the partnership. It was reported that the Council needed to develop a strategy for 2005 to 2008 and accordingly all Officers were currently assuring that 2002 objectives had been delivered. The Council's Community Safety Officer (Michelle Collins) was taking the lead on this issue and participating on the County Audit Team. District Council and County Council colleagues were to work together to develop an audit to develop national, county and local statistics to facilitate accurate future service delivery. The Chair queried what work was being undertaken regarding the fear of crime and was advised by the Community Safety Officer that the Citizens Panel had recently been consulted regarding the fear of crime. This issue was also to be raised at Area Meetings and the Local Crime Reduction Group. The public would be consulted on Liberation Day on this matter. The Chair suggested that a performance indicator assessing work undertaken on the fear of crime could be devolved for monitoring purposes.

CYS/49. **SOUTH DERBYSHIRE COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

The Committee was advised that the Local Strategic Partnership Board had held a Visioning Day to determine an overall vision for the Partnership, the possible themes for a Community Strategy and some governing principles. This was held at the Bretby Conference Centre on 28th January 2004. The results of these exercises, together with a suggested programme for preparing the Community Strategy were considered at the South Derbyshire Local Strategic Partnership Board Meeting held on 18th March. At this Meeting the Board had concluded that the vision for the Partnership would be "Working Together for a Better South Derbyshire". Six themes were agreed as part of this vision, namely:-

- Safe Communities.
- Healthy Communities.
- A Vibrant Economy
- A Sustainable Environment
- Lifelong Learning and Culture
- Creating opportunities for all

Specific Board Members had been appointed to lead on these themes. A programme for preparing the Community Strategy had been agreed and it was intended that the Strategy would be approved at the Local Strategic Partnership's AGM in September 2004.

CYS/50. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Chair advised that the end of year report would be prepared shortly and any Member's comments to be incorporated as part of the report should be submitted to the Chair, the Vice-Chair or the Council's Policy and Best Value Manager. The Chair advised that a Special Meeting would be arranged regarding the Car Park Review, within the next few weeks.

K. HARRINGTON

CHAIR

The Meeting terminated at 5.35 p.m.