

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & ENVIRONMENT POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD AT COUNTY HALL, CHELMSFORD ON 23 SEPTEMBER 2010

Membership

Councillors:

* S Barker (Chairman)	* D Kendall
* B Aspinell	* M Mackrory
A Brown	* G McEwen
* R Callender	* L Mead
P Channer	G Mitchinson
J Dornan	* J Roberts
R Howard	J Schofield

* Present

41. Apologies and Substitution Notices

The Committee Officer reported that apologies had been received from Councillors P Channer, R Howard, G Mitchinson and J Schofield.

42. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 July 2010 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

With reference to the Winter Service Review (Minute 36/July 2010), Members requested that clarification be sought on the proposed issue of salt bags at a local level.

43. Declarations of Interest

The Chairman declared a personal interest in Minute 44/ July 2010 on Corporate Carbon Reduction and Energy Efficiency, and informed the Committee that she would leave the meeting for that item which would be chaired by Cllr McEwen.

44. Scrutiny Review on Corporate Carbon Reduction and Energy Efficiency

Councillor McEwen acted as Chairman for this item.

The Committee considered report EDE/19/10 concerning this scrutiny review 'to investigate the effectiveness of the County Council's carbon reduction and energy efficiency agenda, and consider how it may be taken forward and monitored in the future.'

The Chairman emphasised how important it was to monitor the County Council's Carbon Reduction and Energy Efficiency Agenda, and his concern that many County Councillors were still unaware how important the issues were. He added that the financial implications for non compliance were severe.

Councillor McEwen welcomed Graham Tombs, Executive Director Commercial Services, and Jo Smith, Director Commercial Services to the meeting. The Cabinet Member for Major Services and Commercial Services, was not available to attend the meeting, and the Committee wished to record its disappointment that he was unable to attend on this occasion.

Mr Tombs confirmed that his powerpoint presentation was aimed at outlining the principles of the National Carbon Reduction Commitment Energy Efficiency Scheme (CRC) and its impact locally. He reassured Members that the County Council had registered with the CRC as required.

The Carbon Reduction Scheme is:

- A regulatory incentive to improve energy efficiency in large public and private sector organisations and would operate in a similar way to the landfill tax.
- A mandatory scheme aiming to improve energy efficiency

The National Carbon Reduction Agenda aims to -

- cut CO2 emissions;
- increase reliability of supplies with a reduction on imports;
- promote competitive, sustainable markets; and
- enable every home to be adequately and affordably heated

In his presentation and briefing paper attached to report EDE/19/10, Mr Tombs referred to:

- The Key Drivers.
- The implications for Local Authorities.
- The contribution that the County Council's Transformation Programmes will have on the carbon reduction agenda.
- The risks including financial, reputational issues, non-compliance, data from the schools sector, and climatic conditions.
- The Financial Pressures.
- How the County Council will meet the challenges of the Agenda. An important action being to ensure everyone understood the concept of carbon reduction

The Chairman thanked Mr Tombs for his presentation, and during the course of questioning that followed Members established that:

- Baseline figures for the position on the league table are based on 2010 data, and current estimates for carbon emissions are 230,000 tonnes.
- Any savings made as a result of the switching off of street lights will count towards the required reductions.
- The Schools Forum will be used as the main conduit to encourage carbon reduction investment.
- Many schools do regularly monitor energy consumption but this practice is not universal.
- The County Council has a carbon reserve for introducing Automatic Meter Readings with schools being asked to make parallel investments for their own buildings. It was acknowledged that there are concerns about the repercussions if schools do not meet their carbon reduction targets particularly as they will fall on the County Council. It is the Council that will

be responsible for meeting both the financial and reputational responsibilities of non compliance.

- The target reduction is 42,300 tonnes over a five year period.
- Investments in smart metering, a reduction in the number of County Council owned properties and general awareness raising will go towards meeting the statutory targets. Alternatively, credit can be purchased through the incentivisation scheme which is similar to the landfill tax. However, the Committee expressed the view that the Council should be seen to be leading the way in carbon reduction in Essex and that it would attract a bad reputation if it had to fall back onto purchasing carbon credits.
- The County Council has a policy of seeking to support industry in Essex to help towards the reduction of carbon through reduced transportation.
- The County Council's purchase of energy is being centralised to get best price from sources that are, where practicable, renewable resources.
- There has been in year reductions to energy costs of £241,000 with a further £103,000 saved from the school sector budgets. It was agreed that carbon reduction figures would be supplied to Members.
- New County Council buildings are constructed to be compliant with European directives and will have energy saving measures built in as standard.
- The position of the County Council on the ranking table will not be known until early 2011.
- Standard models are used to help assess CO₂ emissions across all aspects of energy consumption.

During the discussion the witnesses undertook to provide Members with further information on issues relating to school compliance, CO₂ tonnage savings, street lighting, and energy recording.

Cllr McEwen thanked both Graham Tombs and Jo Smith for their contribution.

In conclusion the Committee **agreed** that a Task and Finish Group should be established to follow up issues identified at the meeting.

45. Banking on Essex (Minute 37/ July 2010)

The Committee considered report EDE/20/10 seeking approval of a draft scrutiny report collating the evidence that had been gathered on 'Banking on Essex' (BOE), and a draft scoping document for the next stage of the review, and enclosing a template that had been drawn up to provide Members with information on the initiative.

Councillors Kendall and Mackrory advised that since Committee's last meeting, they had been invited by Council's Initiatives Officers to a meeting with Santander. While it had been an interesting meeting, there remained a number of answers outstanding.

With particular reference to a proposal that the Committee had made at its meeting in July that Members be provided with regular updates on BOE, a template for an update had been circulated as part of report. The Committee agreed that it would be preferable that all the information being as part of that templates should be in figures rather than the proposed mixture of figures and percentages, and that the update should be circulated to all County Councillors.

The Chairman confirmed that the Committee's approval of the draft scrutiny report was being sought as a baseline for further consideration of the BOE initiative at its meeting in January 2011. Councillor Martin, the Leader of the Council, will be invited to that meeting to provide a progress report on BOE after a full year of operation, and to answer Members' questions.

Following discussion the Committee agreed the draft Scrutiny Report and identified a number of issues that remain outstanding including:

- The marketing budget and plan
- A full breakdown of costs
- Clarification on the creation of a local municipal bank
- The number of declined applications
- The details of potential new partners
- A full explanation of the intellectual costs

Members were encouraged to forward to her any questions that they wished Councillor Martin to address at the January meeting.

46. Bus Telematics Review (Minute 28/June 2010)

The Committee considered report EDE/21/10 seeking approval of the final Scrutiny Report entitled 'A Review On Bus Telematics In Essex, And The Outcomes Of The Committee's Original Recommendations Set Out In Its Scrutiny Report Published In 2009', and a recommendation that no further action be taken in respect of the review.

The Chairman reported that she had been informed that a revised project proposal was being submitted to the Contract Board on 7 October 2010.

While the Committee **agreed** the Scrutiny Report as submitted, Members were nonetheless concerned about the length of time that had been taken before a decision on real time passenger information would be reached, and that as the current bus telematics scheme was not effective it should be abandoned.

While it was agreed that no further action would be taken on this particular scrutiny review, the Chairman proposed that consideration should be given to a future review on issues associated with subsidised public transport.

47. Forward Look

The Committee considered report EDE/22/10 on its latest work programme.

At the meeting the following updates were given:

- Use of Inert Waste for Recreational Development

A final report was in the process of being considered by the Task and Finish Group and would be brought to Committee in due course.

- Essex Legacy from 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games

A response on the Committee's original recommendations was awaited from the Cabinet Member for Education and the 2012 Games, which will be considered by the Task and Finish Group.

- Relationship with Statutory Undertakers

The Task and Finish Group would be meeting on the rise of the Committee's meeting to plan arrangements for the meetings on this review.

- Generation of Energy

A scoping document would be drawn up for this review in due course.

- Local Transport Plan

The Chairman was due to meet with the Cabinet Member and Highways Officers to discuss his request for this scrutiny review.

- Corporate Scorecard: Jobs and Foreign Direct Investment

The Committee agreed that it wished to discuss this item at its next meeting.

- Post Offices

The Committee agreed that it wished to consider this matter at its meeting in January as Councillor Martin had already been invited to that meeting on the Banking on Essex Initiative.

48. Date of Future Meetings

The Committee noted that the next meeting of the Committee was scheduled for Thursday, 21 October 2010.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 11.40am

Chairman