



<u>Committee and Date</u>
Council
22 November 2012

Item
8
Public

**Councillor Vince Hunt,
Protecting and Enhancing our Environment
Scrutiny Committee Chairman**

**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PROTECTING AND ENHANCING OUR
ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2011-2012**

1.0 Summary

1.1 This is an overview of the work of The Protecting and Enhancing our Environment Scrutiny Committee during 2011-12, the plans for the forthcoming year, and its achievements in providing positive outcomes for local people.

2.0 What have we done?

2.1 Since the last Annual Report, the Committee has met seven times.

2.2 The Committee reviewed the street works management of utility companies on the Shropshire Highway. The Committee concluded that it supported the development of a permits scheme which would ensure a more proactive management of all work on the Highway. Later in the year it received a report detailing more information about establishing a permits scheme. The Committee supported the recommendation to devise a business case for Cabinet to consider in April 2013.

2.3 A review was conducted on the preparations for the winter of 2011/12. The Committee made some useful suggestions to further enhance the service and noted the improvements that had been made since the previous year. A review for the forthcoming winter will be conducted in December.

2.4 Members considered a report on Community Transport. The Committee had invited a representative from the Community Transport Consortium to talk to the Committee about their relationship with the Council. It was agreed to set up a joint Task and Finish Group on Transport issues. This Task and Finish Group is currently concluding its findings and will be reporting to the Performance and Strategy Scrutiny Committee on 28th November and subsequently to Cabinet.

- 2.5 The Committee was consulted on the part night lighting initiative and was supportive of the Officer recommendations to switch off street lights in certain areas from 12.30am to 5.30am.
- 2.6 The Committee commissioned a report on Choice Based Lettings. Consequently this led to the inception of the Choice Based Lettings Task and Finish Group which reported in July of this year and helped to develop the Shropshire Affordable Housing Allocation Policy and Scheme.
- 2.7 Early in the New Year the Committee considered a report on the Sustainable Transport Fund. Members were able to provide useful feedback to Officers. The item on Project Flex (Flexible Staff Working Arrangements) was well received by the Committee. The benefits of Project Flex had been numerous and it was clearly a project which would considerably influence the future working practices of the Council.
- 2.8 In March the Committee considered a report on the introduction of a tenant reward scheme for Landlord Services and a report on Biomass Wood Pellet Boilers for Schools. The Committee was supportive of a tenant reward scheme and the need for investment in renewable energy projects that would generate a long term income stream for the Council and efficient, cleaner and cheaper fuel for heating Council buildings.
- 2.9 At the request of Cabinet, the Scrutiny Committee was requested to conduct a review of the removal of the Pedestrian refuge in Smithfield Road. The Committee concluded that the refuge should be removed and commissioned a further report in six months' time.
- 2.10 Members have also been kept up to date on the Waste PFI Contract Management review and the Highways and Environment Team Contract. The Committee intends to review progress on both of these areas in the future.
- 2.11 At the last meeting, the Committee considered reports on local flood risk management, the Customer Access Strategy and Shropshire Council's Energy efficiency and renewable energy. It was agreed that progress on the Customer Strategy Action plan would be reviewed by the Committee. A number of useful recommendations on flood risk management were made.

3.0 What are our Future Plans?

- 3.1 The Committee is looking forward to having an impact on the following areas, where reports will be commissioned:-
- Winter Maintenance Review
 - Tenant Reward Scheme Progress
 - The Arms Length Management Organisation

- Update on the Action Plan Resulting from the DEFRA review of the Council's Waste PFI Contract
- Highways and Street Scene Contract – Initial Review
- Drought issues in the County
- The Shropshire Way
- Wildlife Trust in Shropshire

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)
 Reports to Protecting and Enhancing our Environment Scrutiny Committee

Human Rights Act Appraisal

The recommendations contained in this report are compatible with the provisions of the Human Rights act 1998

Environmental Appraisal

There are no environmental issues relating to this report.

Risk Management Appraisal

There are no risks associated with this report.

Community / Consultations Appraisal

Consultation is a component of Scrutiny work to collect information to support the development of conclusions and recommendations.

Cabinet Member

Councillor Simon Jones, Councillor Malcolm Price

Local Member

All

Appendices

None