



Committee and Date

Environment and Services Scrutiny
Committee

8 September 2014

ENVIRONMENT AND SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**Minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2014 in the Shrewsbury Room, Shirehall,
Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY2 6ND
2.00 - 4.00 pm**

Responsible Officer: Jane Palmer
Email: jane.palmer@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 252748

Present

Councillor

Councillors Vince Hunt, Keith Roberts, Peter Adams, Ted Clarke, Nigel Hartin,
Roger Hughes, Vivienne Parry and Arthur Walpole

1 Election of Chairman

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Vince Hunt be elected as Chairman of the Environment and Services Scrutiny Committee for the ensuing year.

2 Apologies for absence and substitutions

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor C Lea [Sub: Councillor D Lloyd] and Councillor P Moseley.

3 Appointment of Vice Chairman

RESOLVED:

That Councillor K Roberts be appointed as Vice Chairman of the Environment and Services Scrutiny Committee for the ensuing year.

4 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

None were declared.

5 Minutes of the meeting held on 24 March 2014

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Environment and Services Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 24 March 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

6 Public Question Time

No questions had been received from members of the public.

7 Member Question Time

There were no questions from Members.

8 Public Petition - Save the Shropshire Badgers

The Committee considered its response to the following public petition:

This is a national issue which will be of direct concern to the people of Shropshire when DEFRA "rolls out" its culling policy in 2014. The object of the petition is to ensure that Shropshire's badger population is as safe as possible from slaughter and that the already available injectable badger vaccine against bovine TB is used in as many cases as possible. We ask this because we believe the culling policy is inhumane (DEFRA's measurement of "humaneness" is to time the screams of wounded badgers), inefficient (previous culls showed an increase in bovine TB because of badger movement) and unscientific (the majority of scientific opinion hold that a cull will have "no meaningful result").

We, the undersigned, call on Shropshire Council to prohibit the culling of badgers on council-owned land and invest in vaccination programmes locally. We ask this because we believe culling to be inhumane, inefficient and unscientific'.

It was noted that this ePetition had run from 5 December 2013 to 6 May 2014 and had been signed by 465 people.

Mrs Michele Vaughan presented the petition on behalf of the Shropshire Badger Group. A copy of her introductory comment is included as part of the formal record of this meeting. Members noted that the Group were now seeking either financial or 'in principle' support for its scheme offering free badger vaccination to six farms in Shropshire at a cost of approximately £8,000.

Members fully debated the issues raised and held some differing points of view. A Member considered that, as there was no planned badger cull in Shropshire at this time, a decision on the content of the petition was unnecessary.

Responding to Members' queries, the petitioner, Mrs Vaughan, explained that badgers could be trapped and vaccinated rather than trapped and culled. She stressed that proper measures, bio security, to counter bovine TB was the answer rather than culling the animals, she added that badger numbers were exaggerated.

A Member commented that the counter argument from landowners/farmers etc. should be sought before making any decision on this issue. He stated that the petition only presented one point of view.

The Committee Chairman added that vaccination of badgers could only be carried out on land with the landowner's consent and added that most of Shropshire Council's own farms were agricultural rather than livestock. The petitioner re-iterated that the Shropshire Badger Group was standing the whole cost of the vaccination programme on six identified farms in Shropshire and the Council was being asked only for its 'in principle' support of the vaccination programme.

The Committee Vice Chairman agreed that every tool in the box should be used to combat bovine TB and it was an important issue to discuss. However he believed that it was premature to single out Council owned livestock farms.

Another Member added that, given the inefficacy of the Government's culling trials and the inconsistency of data following vaccination, the private vaccination process as described by the petitioner should be supported in principle at the current time. The majority considered that 'in principle' support should be given to Shropshire Badger Group's local initiative of a six farm vaccination programme.

RESOLVED

- i) That, should the Government consider it necessary to extend the badger cull in to Shropshire, the Council will consider its position at that time in the light of the latest information;
- ii) That it be agreed that, at this point in time, it would be premature for the Council to consider its position ahead of a formal decision and before it has had an opportunity to evaluate the latest evidence in support of any proposal regarding a badger cull in Shropshire; and
- iii) That, in the interim, 'in principle' support be given to the Shropshire Badger Group's local, trial vaccination programme as described by the petitioner on behalf of the Group and wholly funded by that organisation.

9 Update on Waste Collection Service Redesign

The Committee received a PowerPoint presentation update on the redesign of the Waste Collection Service from the Waste Contracts Manager. A copy of the presentation slides is included as part of the formal record of the meeting.

The Committee noted particularly the two prototype services being trialled in the Bayston Hill/Meole Brace area and the Hanwood area, as follows:

- Option 1 - Bayston Hill/ Meole Brace – 102 properties – Week 1 mixed containers, paper/cardboard, garden waste, food waste; Week 2 residual waste and food waste.
- Option 2 - Hanwood – 102 properties – Week 1 card/paper, mixed containers and garden/food waste mixed; Week 2 residual waste.

The Waste Contracts Manager explained that broad estimates of the savings expected from each prototype amounted to approximately £250k for Option 1 and £1m for Option 2, but these figures may be subject to significant change following further information from the prototypes themselves and negotiations with Veolia.

The Committee Chairman added that Option 1 delivered potential for income generation and partnership working. The Waste Contracts Manager confirmed this and stated that there were other potential benefits to option 1 that had not yet been included in the savings estimate. The Area Commissioner North explained that an application for the development of an anaerobic digester in the Whitchurch area could potentially see energy savings for that area but it was too early to provide a clear estimate. The Committee noted that no decision had as yet been made regarding the re-instatement of the Ludlow facility.

Referring to Option 2, the Waste Contracts Manager explained that there were potentially more savings from this option. The Area Commissioner North assured the Committee that the benefits of 'doing things differently' were being closely scrutinised and costs across the whole scheme were being analysed.

In response to a Member's query on the impact of the closure of the recycling centre at Coder Road, Ludlow, the Waste Contracts Manager stated that any impact on the Council's recycling rates were being closely monitored and would be taken into consideration as part of the county-wide picture. He added that contract savings would be made by waste collection vehicles being more adaptable with more compaction and therefore the need to use fewer vehicles. He added that the aim was to dispose of less, recycle more and promote income generation by selling capacity to other organisations at the incinerator.

Members voiced some concern regarding food waste; its smell and the frequency of collection. The Area Commissioner North explained that the two trials were very specific regarding the food waste collection and added that currently food waste constituted 36% of the waste in household bins. The Waste Contracts Manager explained that food waste related to any food and the waste could be collected in caddies that could be lined with caddy liners or newspaper.

Referring to co-mingling of waste [glass, cans and plastic], the Waste Contracts Manager acknowledged that residents had been used to sorting out their recycling but the anticipated increase in tonnage from co-mingling would offer increased diversion of waste from disposal. In answer to a Member's concern about cardboard recycling, he confirmed that cardboard folded and placed next to residents' collection materials would be taken away by operatives.

The Chairman suggested that members of the Committee may benefit from accompanying a waste collection to witness the service in action in order to inform future scrutiny of this subject. It was agreed that those interested make contact with the Chairman and the appropriate arrangements would be made.

A Member requested feedback from the Portfolio Holder on the Council's progress in meeting the 11 recommendations from DEFRA following its contract management review report on the Waste Infrastructure Delivery Programme [considered at the meeting of the former Protecting and Enhancing our Environment Scrutiny Committee 9 July 2012]. The Area Commissioner North assured that Committee that the Council had to comply with the requirements of DEFRA and the Treasury but an update could be provided to a future meeting.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the update information provided on the Council's Waste Collection Service redesign, be noted;
- ii) That members of the Committee interested in witnessing the waste collection service in action inform the Chairman so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

10 Performance Dashboards

The Performance Portfolio Holder and the Performance Manager presented the Quarter 4 performance monitoring information illustrated by performance dashboards that had been produced on relevant indicators for each of the Council's priorities. The following dashboards summarised the latest performance measures relating to the three areas relevant to the Committee's remit, namely:

- Financially Secure Outcome Dashboard
- Economic Growth Priority Dashboard
- Environment Outcome Dashboard

The Performance Manager explained that presentation of the dashboards at this meeting afforded Members the opportunity to take an overview of the situation relevant to the Committee's remit. He urged the Committee to liaise with relevant Directors and Portfolio Holders to encourage meaningful consideration of the issues highlighted in the dashboards.

RESOLVED

- i) That the three dashboards [Financially Secure Outcome Dashboard, Economic Growth Priority Dashboard and the Environment Outcome Dashboard] appropriate to the Committee's remit be noted;
- ii) That the work of the Portfolio holder, his Deputy and a Member Working Group to refine the performance reporting mechanism to provide greater and clearer understanding of the information presented, be noted;
- iii) That, at future meetings of this Committee, the dashboards be presented in colour and on screen in order to facilitate Members' understanding of the information presented; and
- iv) That ongoing scrutiny of the performance measures appropriate to this Committee be added to the Committee's Work Programme.

11 Date/Time of next meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the Environment and Services Scrutiny Committee was scheduled to be held at 2.00pm on Monday 8 September 2014.

Signed (Chairman)

Date: