



MEETING OF THE HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

TUESDAY, 7 NOVEMBER 2006 2.30 PM

PANEL MEMBERS PRESENT

Councillor Elizabeth Channell
Councillor Nick Craft (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Mike Exton
Councillor Bryan Helyar

Councillor Stan Pease
Councillor Mrs Margery Radley
Councillor Jeff Thompson (Chairman)

OFFICERS

Scrutiny Officer
Scrutiny Support Officer
Energy Officer

1 Member of the Public

42. MEMBERSHIP

The Panel were notified that Councillor Exton would be substituting for Councillor Brailsford for this meeting only.

43. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Brailsford, Fisher and F. Hurst.

44. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None declared.

45. ACTION NOTES

Noted. The notes from the special meeting of the Panel held on Thursday 19th October 2006 were circulated at the meeting. These were also noted.

The Chairman agreed to take the next item as urgent business because of obligations that were placed on the council on signing the Nottingham Declaration on climate change.

46. ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Copies of report number CEX359 were circulated at the meeting. The Energy Officer explained that the Leader and Chief Executive had signed the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change on behalf of the Council on 24th October 2006. To meet the

obligations of the declaration and potential government directives on climate change, a Climate Change Strategy would be needed. The strategy would power consumption in all council buildings, the use of fuel in council vehicles, the saving in greenhouse emissions resulting in the improved recycling rate in the district and the impact of encouraging sustainable transport within the community.

Officers from relevant corporate areas had been appointed to a working group to produce the strategy. Three members were needed to sit on the working group. The Panel agreed that Councillors Craft, Exton and Helyar should be appointed.

The Energy Manager added that all fuel used in the Grantham offices was green energy, produced from renewable sources. Members of the Panel asked the Energy Manager to investigate why renewable energy had not been incorporated into the Welham Street multi-storey car park development. He was also asked to find out the cost of oil used at the Deepings Leisure Centre.

Members briefly considered whether it would be possible to promote sustainable transport within the community when the district council did not operate a cross-border travel scheme.

CONCLUSIONS:

- 1) ***To appoint Councillors Craft, Exton and Helyar to the Climate Change Strategy Working Group.***
- 2) ***To task the Energy Manager with finding out:***
 - i. The reason renewable energy sources were not incorporated in the Welham Street car park development in Grantham;*
 - ii. The cost of oil used at the Deepings Leisure Centre.*

47. UPDATES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

Note 25

The Scrutiny Officer had contacted Mandy Renton regarding Stamford Hospital. She had agreed to attend the meeting of the Panel on 16th January 2007 to provide an update report.

Note 26

The recommendation made to the Portfolio Holder was addressed at the Cabinet meeting on Monday 6th November 2006. At that meeting the Cabinet approved additional policies to be included in the Local Development Framework Core Strategy. These were flood risk, energy efficiency in new buildings and renewable energy schemes.

48. GORSE LANE - UPDATE

County Councillor Chapman and Bryan Gault from Lincolnshire County Council's Highways Department had provided updates on recommendations made at the meeting on 5th September 2006.

Recommendation 1 – the costing of a capital scheme to widen Gorse Lane, Grantham

The costs of this kind of scheme would be prohibitive and as such could not be

considered. Costs would include the installation of a new kerb line, road construction, drainage works, soiling and seeding of verges and relevant traffic management.

Recommendation 2 – the application of a 7.5 tonne weight restriction to Gorse Lane, Grantham

An order had been issued to carry out a week long classified vehicle count at two locations on Gorse Lane, one either side of Wyville Road, which would show the number of vehicles that used the Spittlegate Level to Wyville Road aspect of the road only. The automated radar classifiers would record the vehicle type, volume and speed making it possible to assess the extent of the HGV problem on the road, which would determine whether there would be further action regarding a weight limit. The results of the counts were expected in December 2006.

A resident of Gorse Lane, Grantham, was present at the meeting and given permission to speak. He was disappointed at the expected duration of the process although acknowledged the need for a vehicle count. He argued that outlay for widening the road would be a one-off expense. He also felt that expenditure per head would be reasonable given the number of people affected. He stated that local residents had tried to find out the amount of money spent filling in potholes on Gorse Lane.

Members discussed the issue. They were concerned that residents had not been able to access information on the amount spent filling in pot holes. The Scrutiny Officer was tasked with requesting this information from Lincolnshire County Council under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

As the results of the count were expected in December 2006, the Panel requested another update on 16th January 2007 to which Councillor Chapman and Bryan Gault would be invited.

The member of the public stated that residents were grateful for the support of the Panel.

CONCLUSIONS:

1. ***The Scrutiny Officer should request costing information on repair work to potholes on Gorse Lane under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.***
2. ***An update on the Gorse Lane issue following the vehicle count should be provided for the next meeting on 16th January 2006.***

49. SHAPING ACUTE SERVICES IN LINCOLNSHIRE - 'CREATING THE FUTURE'

The consultation paper from Lincolnshire NHS Primary Care Trust on Shaping Acute Services in Lincolnshire – 'Creating the Future', was referred to the Panel by full Council on 26th October 2006. The deadline for responses was 8th November 2006.

Panel members felt the template provided was unclear and assumed the reader had medical knowledge. It was suggested that the paper would be more useful if it was written in plain English. The consultation exercise was considered to be a waste of time and money because it was not possible to submit a constructive and informed response. The Panel agreed that they would be able to respond if the paper was re-issued in a more accessible format.

The District Council representative on Lincolnshire County Council's Health Scrutiny

Committee stated that they had looked at the document and had responded similarly.

Panel members decided to ask the Council's Corporate Management Team what they had made of the paper. The Scrutiny Officer informed the panel that Dr. Martin McShane to whom completed templates had to be returned, would be attending the Parish Council Conference on 7th December 2006. Members thought that could provide an opportunity for them to talk to him about the consultation exercise.

CONCLUSIONS:

- 1. *To return the incomplete template with a letter stating that members were unable to respond because the document was inaccessible and assumed a medical background.***
- 2. *To ask the views of the District Council's Corporate Management Team on the consultation paper.***

50. CEDAR SYSTEM

Copies of a financial update report were circulated at the meeting. The Vice-Chairman briefly explained the new accounts software, Cedar, to members of the Panel. The software allowed budgets to be monitored on a monthly basis. All DSPs would receive regular financial reports. An additional column including "Budget – Year to date" was needed so that figures could be compared against projected figures. This would allow anomalies to be identified and corrected earlier than if they had been reviewed at the end of the financial year. Service Managers were being encouraged to project budgets in increments to provide comparator data. This was supported by the Resources and Assets Portfolio Holder.

The Vice-Chairman of the Panel stated that he had been pushing for access to the Cedar system to enable him to scrutinise financial records for all departments. Panel members agreed that there should be a member champion with access to financial records on Cedar. Access to the system would alleviate officer capacity. The Scrutiny Officer advised that the request was reasonable under Part 4 of the Council's constitution: Executive Procedure Rules, 10(c): "*Development and Scrutiny Panels...may go on site visits, conduct public surveys, hold public meetings, commission research and do all other things that they reasonably consider necessary to inform their deliberations*" and 13(a): "*In addition to their rights as Councillors, members of Development and Scrutiny Panels have the additional right to documents, and to notice of meetings as set out in the Access to Information Procedure Rules in Part 4 of [the] constitution.*" The Scrutiny Officer suggested that the request for access to the system could be included in the annual Scrutiny Report to Council.

CONCLUSION

To recommend to the Resources and Assets Portfolio Holder that access to the Cedar system should be available for at least two scrutiny Councillors including the Chairman of the Resources DSP.

51. REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS

A brief update on the progress of the Deepings Leisure Centre Working Group was given by the Vice-Chairman. A copy of the recommendations made to the Healthy Environment Portfolio Holder was circulated to all members of the Panel. Misinformation had been received about the operation of the boilers. The Working Group had been told that the boilers were faulty causing downtime, however it had

been discovered that poor usage had caused the filters to become blocked. A recommendation had been made that new boilers should be installed. This was still supported because it would improve their operating efficiency from 62% to 92%. The Portfolio Holder was positive about the recommendations and it was hoped that they would be taken into account during the budget process.

One member suggested looking at the original contract to see whether poor usage of the boilers constituted a compliance failure. Other members felt that this would not be productive because the contract would not be that specific.

52. BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Noted. The Scrutiny Officer advised that updated figures for September had been received and reported them to the Panel. All indicators were still green. No updated information was available for BVPI 199, "Cleanliness of relevant land and highways".

53. WORK PROGRAMME

Noted.

One Panel member requested an update on the adoption of designated areas for the restriction of the consumption of alcohol. The project was on target for zones to "go live" in March 2007.

54. REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

The Chairman stated that there had been a meeting of the Arts Forum. He had been could not attend the meeting and had not received the minutes so was unable to provide a report. Lots of work had been planned. It was suggested that the Service Manager, Cultural Services should be invited to the meeting of the Panel on January 16th 2007 to discuss initiatives within the service.

CONCLUSION:

To invite the Service Manager, Cultural Services to the meeting on the 16th January 2007 to discuss proposed initiatives within Cultural Services.

55. MEETING: 16TH JANUARY 2007

It was agreed that the meeting of the Panel to be held on 16th January 2007 should be held at the Meres Leisure Centre.

CONCLUSION:

Invite the new Leisure Centre Manager to the meeting on 16th January 2007 for a progress update.

56. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting was closed at 15:56.