

# minutes



Meeting ENVIRONMENT SELECT COMMITTEE

Date Monday, 4<sup>th</sup> April 2005 (commencing at 10.30 am)

## **Membership**

Persons absent are marked with `A`

## **COUNCILLORS**

Andy Freeman (Chair)  
V H Dobson (Vice-Chair)

A John Bell  
A Kenneth Bullivant  
W J Clarke  
Yvonne Davidson  
Stan Heptinstall MBE  
Richard Jackson

A J T A Napier  
A Mrs Nellie Smedley  
A Mrs S Smedley  
P Tsimbiridis  
Keith Walker

## **ALSO IN ATTENDANCE**

Councillor J R Stocks  
“ Martin Brandon-Bravo

## **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the last meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> January, 2005 having been circulated were confirmed and signed as a correct record, subject to the inclusion of Councillor Heptinstall in the list of Members present.

## **APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from:-

Councillor John Bell  
“ Kenneth Bullivant  
“ J T A Napier  
“ Mrs S Smedley\*

\* Denotes other County Council business

## **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS**

None.

## **REPORT BY THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT FOR THE PERIOD DECEMBER 2004 – JANUARY 2005**

The Director of Environment introduced the report on behalf of Councillor Butler, and answered questions from Members. Councillor Brandon-Bravo praised the recently introduced Lynx Bus Service in West Bridgford, and felt it was important that there be no break in service between the temporary and permanent contracts. Mr Webster offered to check the timing of the contract process. Councillor Jackson asked whether there were plans to install cameras on normal bus services used by schoolchildren. Mr Webster replied that for the time being cameras had been installed on contracted services, and an extension of the concept could be discussed with bus operators at one of their quarterly meeting with the authority. Councillor Heptinstall was disappointed that so little notice had been taken of the County Council's response to the consultation about airports. He was also concerned by the limited success of some schemes under Building Better Communities.

## **REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBERS FOR RESOURCES FOR JANUARY 2005**

Councillor Stocks introduced his report. In reply to questions from Councillor Tsimbiridis, he indicated that there was no shortage of waste wood to use in woodheat boilers. He thanked officers for putting together the successful Beacon bid. In relation to school meals, he indicated that the County had supported healthy eating for some time. He offered to provide information on the cost of school meals if this did not come out during the following item. Councillor Brandon-Bravo commented that these costs should be in the public domain and not withheld on grounds of commercial sensitivity. Councillor Stocks pointed out that the County Council spent more than 37p on the ingredients of each school meal.

## **DIRECT TRADING SERVICES TO SCHOOLS**

Kevin McKay, Group Manager, Catering and Cleaning, introduced the report and gave a presentation on the Environment Department's Direct Trading Services to Schools. He outlined the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats faced by the services, and pointed out that each of them had to break even. He explained that the target cost of the food content of a school meal was 51p.

During the discussion which followed the presentation, Councillor Freeman asked about the potential for longer term contracts, and the position of vending machines in private finance initiative (PFI) schools. Mr McKay replied that the service could not offer a discount for a long term arrangement because services were provided at cost. In relation to vending machines, he explained that at Harry Carlton Comprehensive School, the contractor was insisting that the vending machines should stay. However, the Bassetlaw schools PFI contract did not include vending machines. Councillor Tsimbiridis wondered how the service would reduce its costs as required by the Gershon Review. Mr McKay explained that there would be procurement savings, which

would however conflict with the wish to encourage local suppliers. He emphasised that there would be no compromise in quality. Councillor Clarke asked for Members to be sent a copy of the slides from the presentation.

### **PUBLIC HIGHWAYS CLAIMS AND ASSOCIATED INSURANCE**

The report outlined the County Council's approach to insurance against public highways claims, and summarised the cost of premiums and value of claims in recent years. Members noted that the level of claims differed between districts, and wondered whether this related to the condition of roads or the preparedness of residents to make claims. Mr Hundal explained that claims generally arose in busy town centres but that the condition of the network was also a factor. Councillor Freeman believed it was difficult to make correlations at this stage, and asked for further information. Mr Hundal stated that the Department was working with the Risk Management and Insurance Section to identify sources of claims and minimise risks.

It was agreed that:

- 1) Reports be presented on giving details of the claims summarised in the appendix of the report.
- 2) That a report be brought during the course of the next financial year to discuss the risk management strategy for Public Highway claims and liability.

### **TRAFFIC CALMING STUDY GROUP – FINAL REPORT**

Councillor Freeman introduced the report and explained the Study Group's recommendations. During discussion about the recommendation of £15,000 to be available in each division for highway safety initiatives, he explained that the intention was that the allocation would be spent after officer advice. Councillor Clarke commented that speeding was clearly a general problem. He stated that the Chief Constable had reduced the traffic wing by 50%, and was resisting arguments for its restoration, although there was increasing pressure nationally to do so.

It was agreed that the report and its recommendations be endorsed for consideration by Cabinet.

### **REVIEW OF THE FORWARD PLAN**

Martin Gately, Scrutiny Officer, introduced the report which invited members' comments on the Forward Plan. Councillor Freeman commented that it should be possible to give a better contact that the Leader for each item. Councillor Heptinstall referred to the difficulty in commenting on the basis of the small amounts of information in the plan. He suggested that Committee could look at items which related to it, and Mr Hundal suggested that items from the plan could be included in the item on the work programme.

It was agreed that relevant items from the Forward Plan be included on each agenda of the Environment Select Committee, with the work programme.

### **PERFORMANCE OF CENTRAL NETWORKS IN RELATION TO STREET LIGHTING**

Phil Rankin, Group Manager (Services and Safety) referred to the declining performance in repairing faults (possibly because of bad weather in February), which would be monitored. However there had been a big improvement with new connections. Councillor Tsimbiridis felt that repairs in winter took far too long. Councillor Clarke suggested that Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships be made aware of the problem in case there was any correlation with crime. Councillor Jackson suggested a sticker on each lamp post to show whose responsibility the lamp post was.

### **SCHOOL TRAVEL PLANS PROGRESS REPORT, JANUARY – MARCH 2005**

Mr Rankin introduced the progress report. Councillor Clarke commented that the recent rises in bus fares would impact on journeys to school, for example from Burton Joyce to Carlton-le-Willows School.

### **HIGHWAY SERVICES BEST VALUE REVIEW IMPROVEMENT PLAN – PROGRESS REPORT**

The report indicated that good progress was being made in implementation of the Improvement Plan arising from the Best Value Review of Highway Services.

### **HIGHWAYS AGENCY TRANSFERS – PROGRESS REPORT**

The report detailed progress in the transfer of highway functions from Gedling and Rushcliffe District Councils to the County Council. Mr Hundal assured the Committee that there would be a seamless transfer of service.

### **DEVELOPMENT OF LTP2 – PROGRESS REPORT**

The Committee noted progress being made in developing the second County Council Local Transport Plan (LTP2).

### **REPLACEMENT MINERALS LOCAL PLAN: MAIN FINDINGS OF INSPECTORS' REPORT**

The Committee noted the Inspector's recommendations arising from the public inquiry in 2004, and the next steps to be taken.

### **WORK PROGRAMME**

The work programme was noted. Councillor Freeman thanked everyone who had been involved with the Committee for their contribution.

The meeting closed at 12.30 pm.

**CHAIR**

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