

# minutes



Meeting ENVIRONMENT STANDING SELECT COMMITTEE

Date Tuesday, 29<sup>th</sup> June 2004 (commencing at 2.00 pm)

## Membership

Persons absent are marked with 'A'

## COUNCILLORS

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

A	John Bell		J T A Napier
	Kenneth Bullivant	A	Mrs Nellie Smedley
	W J Clarke	A	Mrs S Smedley
A	Yvonne Davidson		P Tsimbiridis
	Stan Heptinstall MBE		Keith Walker
	Richard Jackson		

## MINUTES

The Minutes of the last meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2004 having been circulated were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

## APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from:-

Councillor John Bell  
“ Yvonne Davidson\*  
“ Mrs S Smedley\*

\* - denotes on other County Council business

## DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

None.

## **REPORT BY THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT FOR THE PERIOD APRIL – JUNE 2004**

Councillor T H Butler introduced his report. Councillor Bullivant referred to concerns expressed by parish councils in his area about the lengthy form and approved list of contractors for grass cutting. Councillor Butler replied that it was important for parish councils to use contractors which were approved and complied with requirements. Councillor Tsimbiridis referred to the cost of removing abandoned cars, and the need to co-ordinate with the Police and District Councils. Councillor Butler believed that the problem was diminishing, as the scrap value of cars was increasing. However fly-tipping in Clipstone Forest had been persistent.

### **DECRIMINALISATION OF PARKING ENFORCEMENT**

Peter Lowe, of RTA Associates Limited, gave a presentation on the study to assist the County Council prepare for taking over the responsibility for enforcing parking from the Police. The study had considered a number of alternatives, with one of them recommended for implementation from July 2006 at the earliest. In response to a comment from Councillor Tsimbiridis, Mr Lowe explained that parking enforcement would become an administrative process, and no longer an issue for the Magistrates Courts. Councillor Clarke was keen to see this work transferred from the Police. He emphasised the importance of clear signage. Councillor Heptinstall believed it was important for equipment like ticket machines to work, so that reputation was not damaged. Mr Lowe commented that it was a few bad stories which attracted attention. He did not see the County Council making use of wheel clamping.

Councillor Freeman observed that some councillors did not like the idea of cross subsidy. Mr Lowe stated that this had been the experience in Lancashire but the sums involved were small. Councillor Napier wondered whether a pilot study was worthwhile. Mr Lowe replied that this would leave other District Councils exposed for a further two years, during which time the Police might cease to enforce parking infringements. It was, he indicated, more cost effective to cover all areas at the same time, and it would be possible to learn from experience elsewhere in the country. Councillor Jackson asked about the costs of setting up the service and whether there was a case for transferring staff or the ticket office. Mr Lowe replied that there would be sufficient business for the County Council to set up its own ticket office, while the Police would have other business for their existing operation. He observed that it was very rare for any staff to transfer. In reply to a question from Councillor Freeman, Mr Lowe said that some authorities had involved Members in steering groups.

At the suggestion of Councillor Freeman, it was agreed that the Chair of the Select Committee, or his substitute be involved along with the Cabinet Member in any steering group, with regular reports presented to the Select Committee.

## **STREETLIGHTING PERFORMANCE**

Malvin Trigg, Assistant Director (Transportation) introduced the report on progress in reducing street lighting outage in Nottinghamshire and in trying to secure a service level agreement with the main electricity distribution company. The report showed improved performance in most parts of the county, while a service level agreement satisfactory to the County Council had not yet been negotiated. Councillor Clarke commented that good street lighting cut both crime and the fear of crime. He wished to put pressure on MPs. Councillor Freeman suggested that the Committee could ask Councillor Butler to do that. Mr Trigg commented that power companies saw street lighting as a low priority compared with lighting for housing. Councillor Heptinstall suggested that the Chief Executive raise the Committee's concerns with MPs at one of his regular meetings.

It was agreed to support the proposals to convey the Select Committee's concerns to MPs through Councillor Butler and the Chief Executive, with a report back to a future meeting.

## **BUILDING CLEANING, LANDSCAPE AND CATERING SERVICES – SERVICE PERFORMANCE PROGRESS TO JUNE 2004**

Kevin McKay, Group Manager (Catering and Cleaning) introduced the report, pointing out there were deficits for some services resulting from the decision not to pass increased costs to clients. Councillor Napier wondered how, if the County Council was a good employer, improvements could be made. Councillor Freeman said trades unions could help by encouraging training, and that job evaluation might alleviate some problems, while adding to budgets. Mr McKay indicated that recruitment was no problem in relation to County Council premises, but could be at some more difficult schools. Councillor Napier observed that staff should not have to face difficult situations. Jas Hundal, Deputy Director of Environment pointed out that any deficits had occurred recently, as a result of rising costs and that Members were prepared to take a long term view.

## **SCHOOL TRAVEL PLANS – PROGRESS REPORT**

The report summarised progress in response to the additional Government funding for school travel plans. Mr Trigg indicated that the third School Travel Plan Officer was due to be appointed soon. It was agreed that progress reports on the initiative be presented.

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HIGHWAYS SERVICE REVIEW ACTION PLAN – PROGRESS REPORT**

A copy of progress against the action plan was circulated. In introducing the report, Mr Hundal drew particular attention to the areas of concern. Councillor Tsimbiridis was worried by the slippage identified in the report. Councillor Napier referred to the increased demand from new housing for drainage (target 4) and wondered whether compulsory competitive tendering was still

used as the rationale for the highways maintenance service. Mr Hundal replied that the Authority had moved away from structures based on the CCT model, to a Best Value, partnership approach.

It was agreed to report to the next meeting in more detail on the areas of concern and slippage in the improvement plan.

### **BEST VALUE REVIEW OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT OPERATIONS – FINAL PROGRESS REPORT**

Mr Trigg introduced the report on actions arising from the Best Value review of public transport operations, which had been completed in 2002. In reply to a question from Councillor Tsimbiridis about different ways of collecting fares, Mr Trigg stated that there had been a Government grant for a Smart Card system on a pilot basis. Councillor Napier congratulated the Department on its actions, especially on its joined up approach.

### **WORK PROGRAMME**

In presenting the work programme to the Committee, Councillor Freeman indicated that one of the Scrutiny Officers would be assisting the Committee in its scrutiny of traffic calming and speed cameras. He invited the Committee to suggest further items for scrutiny.

The meeting closed at 3.50 pm.

### **CHAIR**

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