

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

6.00 P.M.

9TH JULY 2014

PRESENT:- Councillors June Ashworth (Chairman), Caroline Jackson (Vice-Chairman), Tony Johnson, Roger Mace, Ian Pattison, Pam Pickles and Emma Smith

Apologies for Absence:-

Councillors Roger Dennison and David Whitaker

Also in Attendance:-

Councillor Tim Hamilton-Cox - Cabinet Member with responsibility for Climate Change, Property Services and Car Parking
Roy Halliday - Senior Project Officer, Lancashire County Council (part)
Christine Stebbing - Chairman, Morecambe Town Team (part)

Officers in attendance:-

Mark Davies	Chief Officer (Environment) (part)
Stephen Metcalfe	Principal Democratic Support Officer
Jenny Kay	Democratic Support Officer

11 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings held on 11th and 18th June, 2014 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

12 RENEWABLE ENERGY STRATEGY

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Tim Hamilton-Cox, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Climate Change, Property Services and Car Parking and the Chief Officer (Environment) to the meeting.

Members were advised that Cabinet, at its last meeting, had considered the developing Renewable Energy Strategy, and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been requested to consider the draft Strategy as part of the consultation process.

It was reported that the Corporate Plan 2014-16 had a clear message that the Council would ensure it contributed positively to challenge climate change and minimise the Council's impact on the environment. It was made clear that it was essential for the Council as a whole, Members and officers, to take ownership of the Renewable Energy Strategy.

Cabinet had agreed that the Strategy was a priority and its preferences for renewable energy projects were biomass boilers, biomass supply chains, small scale wind farms and exploring the potential through partnership for a wind turbine in Middleton. Officers had been tasked to report back to Cabinet with options to take the strategy forward.

It was suggested that methane at Salt Ayre should be re-examined as an option.

Members asked a number of questions relating to the supplies for biomassing, the invest to save budget, the potential risk and planning applications for wind turbines.

Resolved :-

- (1) That Councillor Tim Hamilton-Cox and the Chief Officer (Environment) be thanked for their attendance at the meeting.
- (2) That the Renewable Energy Strategy be included in the Committee's 2014/15 Work Programme.

13 UPDATE ON THE BEYOND THE CASTLE PROJECT

The Chairman welcomed Roy Halliday, Senior Project Officer, Lancashire County Council to the meeting.

Members were given a presentation which gave details of the work that had been undertaken on the 'Beyond the Castle' project which covered land around Lancaster Castle covering 14 hectares which aimed to realise the site's historic importance.

It was reported that the area was a nationally important archaeology site which had little or no interpretation. The project aimed to link up the area to the city centre and improve the poor connections from the Castle down to St George's Quay.

A series of targeted workshops on heritage, ecology and landscape had taken place identifying substantial gaps in knowledge about the archaeology and the site's history. The project was drawing in local people by holding events both onsite and in the city centre.

The Committee was informed that the project had secured £59,600 in March 2014 from the Heritage Lottery Fund 'Our Heritage' programme for an 18 month programme of learning and engagement activities.

A geophysical survey had taken place which had used a combination of magnetometry, ground penetrating radar and resistivity techniques to provide new information on the presence and location of roman and medieval archaeology. The main focus of the survey was the Scheduled Ancient Monument Site/ Vicarage Fields with samples also taken from the Priory Churchyard, Quay Meadow and Lancaster Castle surrounds.

Members asked a number of questions.

Resolved :-

- (1) That Roy Halliday Senior Project Officer, Lancashire County Council be thanked for his attendance at the meeting.
- (2) That a further update be provided to the Committee at a later date.

The meeting was adjourned at 7.10 pm

The meeting was reconvened at 7.13 pm

14 UPDATE ON PORTAS PROJECT

The Chairman welcomed Christine Stebbing, Chair of the Town Team to the meeting.

The Committee was given an update on the progress of the Portas project. Members were reminded that the project, which had received £100,000, concentrated on Victoria Street in Morecambe which was seen by the Town Team as an important thoroughfare linking the Arndale Centre to the Festival Market.

Since the last update, the Town Team had awarded a contract for a town website which would be launched over the summer. The Team had also received the results of a survey that had taken place in the town centre comprising of a mystery shopper exercise, a shopkeeper survey and an analysis of available data of the town. The strengths of the town were seen as the Promenade and seaside with the weaknesses being the lack of variety, car park charges, lack of destination shops and also toilet facilities.

It was reported that the Team had also allocated a further £20,000 to the Art Street project on Victoria Street and work was undergoing on options for this project.

Members were advised that the Team was no longer pursuing a market on Victoria Street as it was felt to be unsustainable.

It was noted that the Town Team had attracted new members from the wider Morecambe area including the Chamber of Commerce. The Team now envisaged continuing beyond the Portas project to investigate a BID for Morecambe as it had been successful in Lancaster.

Members were invited to ask questions.

Resolved :-

That Christine Stebbing be thanked for her attendance at the meeting.

15 CONSULTATION ON SUBSIDISED BUS SERVICES ASSESSMENT CRITERIA - LANCASHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL BRIEFING NOTE – JUNE 2014

The Principal Democratic Support Officer introduced a briefing note from Lancashire County Council detailing a consultation on Subsidised Bus Services Assessment Criteria.

It was reported that currently, subsidised bus services were ranked by their financial performance which could result in those services that under perform financially being more likely to be withdrawn irrespective of the communities needs. The County Council was proposing to revise the criteria to measure each subsidised service by scoring it in relation to the purpose of the journey and how accessible it was to the local community.

It was agreed that the Committee would set up a working group to look at the consultation in more detail with its remit to report directly to Council Business Committee with its findings.

Resolved :-

- (1) That a working group consisting of Councillors be established to consider the County Council's consultation on Subsidised Bus Services Assessment Criteria.

(2) That the working group report directly to Council Business Committee with its findings to assist the Committee in its response to the consultation.

16 CONSIDERATION OF ANY REQUESTS FOR COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION (IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROCESS)

It was noted that there had not been any requests for items to be considered in accordance with the Councillor Call for Action process.

17 CONSIDERATION OF ANY PETITIONS (IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROCESS)

It was noted that there had not been any requests for items to be considered in the accordance with the Consideration of Petitions process.

18 LOCALITY WORKING

As Councillor Whitaker had submitted his apologies, no update was available.

19 WORK PROGRAMME REPORT

Members were requested to consider the Committee's Work Programme for the forthcoming year.

The Committee was reminded that each year a press release was issues requesting members of the public for suitable topics to include in the annual Work Programme, as well as Councillors and Management Team. Four issues had been suggested by the public but these were operational matters not suitable for the Committee to consider.

It was reported that Management Team had suggested that the Committee consider the recent Care Quality Commission's report on the Royal Lancaster Infirmary which was now in special measures.

It was agreed to invite the University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust to the September meeting to discuss the Care Quality Commission's report.

It was further agreed to invite the County Council's Health Scrutiny Chairman and local County Councillors to the meeting.

Members went on to consider a suggestion that had been put forward regarding Fire Plans for large buildings. It was agreed to request information on whether the City Council had a Fire Plan.

Considering the current items on the Work Programme, it was agreed to remove the following :

- Update from Healthwatch Lancashire
- Leisure Uses of Morecambe Bay

and that the outstanding briefing notes be requested relating to Electronic Cigarettes.

It was further agreed to include CCTV provision and the Review of PACT meetings to the Community Safety meeting to be held in November 2014.

Referring to the recent Call-in, it was agreed that the relevant Cabinet Member be requested to enable the Committee to scrutinise the Arts Commissioning Framework to allow for consultation prior to consideration by Cabinet.

The Committee considered an addendum to the Work Programme Report which gave details on a draft Consultation Strategy that had been produced.

Regarding consultations, the following was agreed:

- That any comments on the draft strategy be submitted to officers within the next week, deadline for comments being 16th July 2014.
- That the 2014/15 Consultation Plan be submitted to the Committee.
- That the Chairman and Vice-Chairman are notified of all consultations received by the City Council from external organisations.

Finally, it was agreed that the Chairman of the County Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee be invited to attend a meeting of the Committee to discuss possible areas of joint scrutiny.

Resolved :-

That the agreed actions, as set out above, be included in the Committee's Work Programme for 2014/15.

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 8.30 p.m.)

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
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