

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, 18 MARCH 2003 AT 10.30 A.M.

Agenda Item No.

8

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2003

Report of the County Secretary

Author: Nicola Hayden, Committee Administrator
Tel. 01992 555560

Executive Member: Iris Tarry

1. Purpose of the report

To review the work programme for 2003 and to consider whether items referred from the Resources, Prosperity, Partnership and Consultation Scrutiny Committee in January 2003 should be included.

2. Summary

The report details the items referred from the Resources, Prosperity, Partnership and Consultation Scrutiny Committee and reviews the work programme agreed to date for this committee for 2003. The report also includes, as Appendix 1, a summary of progress made to date from the Street Lighting Topic Group.

3. Conclusion

The Committee should discuss whether or not they wish to scrutinise the items referred from the Resources, Prosperity, Partnership and Consultation Scrutiny Committee, and if they choose to do so, how this may be done, for example:

- by questioning officers/executive members at the meeting
- by requesting a further report
- by referring the matter to a panel/topic group

The Committee is also asked to consider whether to amend the programme for 2003 in order to rebalance the workload for Members and Officers.

4. Items Referred from Resources, Prosperity, Partnership and Consultation Scrutiny Committee

- 4.1 At the last meeting of the Resources, Prosperity, Partnership and Consultation Scrutiny Committee, the Committee considered a report on the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) Corporate Assessment. The Committee recommended to the Environment Scrutiny Committee that they might wish to consider scrutinising the following issues arising from the report:

Paragraph 26 of the CPA – Plans to Reduce Congestion

Residents recognise few plans to reduce congestion on the roads, address the transport needs of those without or unable to use a car, or influence the behaviour of those who use cars explicitly. This issue is not included as one of the county's 23 promises to its citizens

Paragraph 10 of the CPA – Public Transport Objectives

Inform the public of the council's key public transport objectives and targets to ensure greater clarity of what to expect from these services.

- 4.2 The Committee also referred the following target from the Traffic Light Monitor to the Environment Scrutiny Committee for possible scrutiny:

Local L075 – Number of Affordable Homes Built

Not on target for 2002-2003 (will go down to 16%)

5. Work Programme 2003

- 5.1 As previously agreed by this Committee, the work programme for the June and October 2003 meetings currently stands as follows:

17 JUNE 2003

1. Town Centre Improvements

To conduct a joint review with North Herts DC to examine the long-term impact of the comprehensive enhancement of Hitchin Town Centre. The review will examine the implementation in terms of disturbance and impact on local businesses and their ongoing viability as a result of the changes. The review will also examine provision of long term maintenance and the way in which split responsibilities for highway and environmental maintenance are handled.

2. Best Value Reviews undertaken during the coming year

To receive and comment upon the Improvement Plan proposed as part of the BVR of Planning and Transport Policy.

3. Thameslink 2000

To review the progress of this project, including the actions of the Strategic Rail Authority in failing to bring forward the project within an acceptable timescale.

4. Environmental Management System (EMS)

To monitor progress following the introduction of the Environmental Management System (ISO 14001) throughout the Service.

5. Restoration of Minerals and Waste Sites

To consider examples of best practice and whether there are lessons to be learnt for inclusion in the County Council's two new Local Plans.

21 OCTOBER 2003

1. TravelWise

To provide an update on TravelWise, following previous scrutiny.

2. Scrutiny of new Highways Contract (operational performance only - effectiveness of delivery and outcomes)

To review the evolution of joint Highway working with Districts. Examples would be drawn from the variety of different arrangements with District Councils to examine the extent to which these have developed to provide an effective balance between strategic and local service delivery.

3. Performance Indicators

To receive and comment upon the Improvement Plan following the Best Value Review of Planning and Transport Policy.

4. Review of Drainage/Flooding

To consider the implications of forming an independent drainage authority and to review the joint working with Community Information and Protection Scrutiny Committee on flooding.

5. Street Lighting Contract

To receive the final report and recommendations from the Street Lighting Topic Group and to review the effectiveness of the Street Lighting Contract to date.

- 5.2 If the Committee decide to scrutinise the items referred from the Resources, Prosperity, Partnership and Consultation Scrutiny Committee, it should be agreed when this should be done, and the work programme amended accordingly, including any revisions to already programme activities.

6 Financial Implications

- 6.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.
- 6.2 The Assistant Chief Executive holds a small budget for providing support to scrutiny committees. If the Committee identifies that they may need additional resources for any scrutiny item, this can be considered in consultation with the Scrutiny Coordination Panel.

Background information referred to by the author whilst compiling this report:

Previous reports to Environment Scrutiny Committee

STREET LIGHTING TOPIC GROUP – UPDATE REPORT

1 Background

1.1 At the Environment Scrutiny Committee meeting on 25 June 2002, Members reached the following conclusions:

- The Committee asked the Director of Environment to use the opportunity presented by new contracting arrangements to ensure that our own installations always sought to minimise light pollution
- Members would be included in the development of the emerging Good Practice Guide through a small Topic Group
- A report on the wider issues of street lighting would come to the Committee for scrutiny at a later date

2 Progress to date

2.1 A Topic Group consisting of the following Members:

Mary Bayes (Chairman)
Sherma Batson
Nigel Copping
Doug Drake
Sue Jones

has now met on Tuesday 7 January and Monday 10 February 2003. So far they have heard presentations from the Police Authority and a street lighting designer, each offering comments on the issue of street lighting from their own organisation's perspective.

2.2 The Topic Group is still gathering information at this stage, on which future recommendations to the Scrutiny Committee will be based.

3 Future Work Programme

3.1 The Topic Group will hold at least 3 more meetings before reporting back and making their recommendations to the Environment Scrutiny Committee on 21 October 2003.

3.2 Witness statements on the district perspective, environmental effects and more detailed aspects of street lighting will be heard at the next meeting on 11 March 2003. The following meetings will be used to debate the group's findings and agree their recommendations and final report.