

ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
UPDATE AND WORK PROGRAMME 2003/4

Agenda Item No.

9

21 OCTOBER 2003

RECOMMENDATIONS MADE TO CABINET/EXECUTIVE MEMBER/CHIEF OFFICER AT THE LAST MEETING:

1. *“Withdrawal of the Traffic Warden Service in Hertfordshire*

The Committee agreed with the recommendations of the Transport Panel that the scheme should be delayed and that a phased implementation should be requested to allow districts more time to make effective plans. The Committee recommended that the Cabinet should assure themselves that adequate contingency plans had been made for a situation where Districts are unwilling or unable to bring in DPE schemes and finally the Committee recommended that the County Council should not become involved in DPE schemes.”

Response: Cabinet on 23 June 2003 decided:

1. To continue with the current approach of working with the District Councils to find a local solution to on and off street parking in order to implement Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE) across the remainder of Hertfordshire in a phased manner in liaison with the Police and individual Districts.
2. Supports the comments of the Environment Scrutiny Committee (17 June 2003) as a useful aid in ensuring the minimum disruption arising from the decision of the Chief Constable.

[Also see item 9 in main table]

UPDATE ON PETITIONS PRESENTED TO THE LAST MEETING:

None presented

UPDATE ON PREVIOUS SCRUTINY ITEMS

	ITEM	C'TTEE DATE	EFFECTS OF SCRUTINY	STATUS* (see endnote)
1	Planning Obligations	23/01/01	<p>A Topic Group has been established comprising of 8 members to scrutinise planning obligations. H M Government is due to publish new draft guidance on planning obligations in 2003. A meeting is to be arranged in 2003 to consider the current situation.</p> <p>The Topic Group membership consists of B N W Hammond, R S Clements, R N Copping, M Green, S E Jones, D E Lloyd, S J Mills, R J Smith with the Labour Group substitute being : I H Laidlaw – Dickson</p>	Ongoing investigation
2	Transport Operations Best Value Review Implementation Monitoring	19/03/02	<p>The Scrutiny Committee considered this issue in response to a request by the Resources, Prosperity & Consultation Select Committee (July 2001).</p> <p>The Committee considered a progress report on the original Best Value Review recommendations, a revised Improvement Plan and the Outcome of the Audit Commission's Best Value Inspection into this service.</p> <p>The Committee welcomed the Inspector's report, accepted its recommendations for incorporation into the Improvement Plan and noted that it may consider scrutiny at a later date.</p>	Monitoring
3	Light Pollution and Conservation Areas (Street Lighting – it's Impact on Hertfordshire)	25/06/02	Final report of the Street Lighting Topic Group on this agenda.	Ongoing Investigation

4	Hertfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan – A Review of Actions to Date	21/01/03	The Committee's concerns about realistic targets and clear reporting lines have been conveyed to the Hertfordshire Environment Forum. Member briefings on Green Tourism and the BAP review timetable are currently being prepared.	Monitoring
5	The Provision of the Highway Grass Cutting Service	21/01/03	The Scrutiny Committee recommendation to adopt the Contractors Frequency Method for cutting County managed verges has been adopted as operational practice commencing April 2003. A further report reviewing the performance achieved with the new method of specification together with an overview of District managed Highway grass performance will be provided after 12 months operation.	Monitoring Due to report in 2004
6	Fly Tipping and Dumping in Hertfordshire	18/03/03	The Scrutiny Committee recommended that this issue be taken forward through the Waste Management Panel potentially by setting up a joint working group to include the Police, the Fire Service, the National Farmers Union, District Councils and the Environment Agency.	Work outside Scrutiny
7	Review of North Herts Partnership	18/03/03	The Scrutiny Committee asked for a single report to be brought to a future meeting on the issues that are arising across the panels. NHDC Scrutiny Committee in June established a need for a Topic Group to take forward a structured scrutiny programme. They resolved to invite County Members to engage in a joint process, the details of which, together with the invite, are awaited.	Ongoing investigation
8	Managing S106 Agreements	18/03/03	Report on this agenda	Ongoing investigation
9	Withdrawal of the Traffic Warden Service	18/03/03	A Topic group was set up to discuss with Chief Supt. Burden the timetable for withdrawal and the principle of interim cover post 1 April 2004. The Group met and subsequently, the Assistant Chief Constable formally confirmed that Area Police Commanders had been requested to discuss transitional arrangements with District Councils. County Council officers meanwhile are supporting and facilitating District Councils in their feasibility studies and preparations. [The matter was reported to Cabinet on 23 June 2003; see page 1 of this report]	Ongoing investigation

10	Thameslink 2000	17/0603	Initial meeting held on 2 September 2003. Scope of scrutiny further extended to include current franchise. Further meetings being planned by Keith Shephard.	Ongoing investigation
11	Review of Performance of EDT (24/7)	17/06/03	Report on this agenda	Ongoing investigation
12	Review of Flooding	17/06/03	<p>The Committee agreed to set up a topic group with 3 members, in consultation with the Community Services Scrutiny Committee (to be invited to the meetings), to look at the issues surrounding flooding in more detail. The remit of the topic group was agreed as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examining the effectiveness of current land drainage and flood defence arrangements. • Addressing issues of long-term, cross-boundary, integrated flood prevention and relief planning. 	Ongoing investigation

* Status definitions:

- **Ongoing Investigation** – The scrutiny committee has commissioned work, which could be from a topic group, officers, consultants or other parties which is not yet complete but will report to the main committee in the future.
- **Work outside scrutiny** – an item which has been raised by the scrutiny committee where work is being taken forward through another mechanism in response to the item being raised by scrutiny– a panel, external body or officer mechanism for example.
- **Monitoring** – Items which the scrutiny committee has scrutinised in the past where it has asked for occasional or regular updates. This update could be a planned report, in which case the dates should be given, or monitoring through the update report. Items where there is work outside scrutiny can also be monitoring items.
- **Awaiting Action** – Items the committee wishes to scrutinise or review where the timing is unclear due to awaiting events or the outcome of other investigations. E.g. government guidance

SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

	ITEM	C'TTEE DATE	SCRUTINY FOCUS
1	Environment Proposed Resource Budget 2004/05 – 2007/08	20/01/04	To consider the Environment proposed resource budget 2004/05 – 2007/08
2	Thameslink 2000	20/01/04	To receive the final report and recommendations of the Thameslink 2000 Topic Group
3	Traffic Light Monitor – Local L075 Number of Affordable Homes Built	20/01/04	Referred from the Resources, Prosperity, Partnership and Consultation Scrutiny Committee – to be considered in a Topic Group once the Topic Group looking at the two items regarding the CPA assessment has finished.
4	Town Centre Improvements	Not yet decided	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.
5	Environmental Management System (EMS)	Not yet decided	To review progress on the introduction of Environmental Management System (ISO 14001).
6	Restoration of Minerals and Waste Sites	Not yet decided	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
7	GM Crops	Not yet decided	To consider the issues surrounding the current debate over GM Crops.

8	Obstructions on rights of way	Not yet decided	Requested by Brian York.
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