

**THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

HELD ON TUESDAY 19 FEBRUARY 2008

- Present: Councillor C. Patching (Chair)
Councillors B. Burn, R. Burnip,
Mrs. A.E. Laing, T. Longstaff,
Mrs. S. Mason and T. Unsworth
- Also Present: Councillor G. Patterson - Executive Member for Liveability
- Apologies: Councillors P.J. Campbell and
D. Milsom

1. **THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING** held on 29 January 2008 a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were confirmed.

2. **MATTERS ARISING**

- (i) **Consideration of the Extension of the Green Waste Kerbside Collection Service
(Minute No. 6 refers)**

The Chair explained that he had attended the Executive when the report was considered and highlighted a number of key points arising from consultation with the Community Services Scrutiny Committee. Executive endorsed the report and the Committee was congratulated on the way the work had been carried out.

RESOLVED that the information given be noted.

- (ii) **Visit to Aerobic Digester
(Minute No. 7(i) refers)**

The Chair commented that this had been a successful visit and an excellent presentation had been given by the Director of Community Services including reference to the role of scrutiny in policy formation and development.

The Director of Community Services explained that he had received an e-mail of thanks from Stockton Borough Council and their Members had been appreciative of the morning session.

RESOLVED the information given be noted.

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(iii) **Presentation by Greecycle (Minute No. 7(ii) refers)**

The Chair explained that there was a full attendance which included representatives from partner Authorities. This had been an opportunity to meet the new contractor who gave a presentation on recycling as well as their aspirations for the future.

RESOLVED that the information given be noted.

3. **THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE** held on 5 February 2008, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were submitted.

RESOLVED that the information contained within the Minutes, be noted.

4. **PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION**

There were no members of the public present.

5. **FEEDBACK FROM SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD**

At the last meeting of the Scrutiny Management Board held on 11 February 2008, the following issue was discussed:-

Transitional Plan for Local Government Review - Impact on the 2008/9 Scrutiny Work Programme

RESOLVED that the information given be noted.

6. **SERVICE UNIT PERFORMANCE REPORTING - ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES**

Consideration was given to the report of the Environmental Services Operations Manager and Environmental Health and Licensing Manager which provided information on performance of the Environmental Operations Unit and the Environmental Health and Licensing Unit for the period from April through to 31 December 2007, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

Appendix 1 outlined Best Value Performance Indicator and Local Performance Indicator Outcomes for the first three quarters of 2007/8. A colour system signified performance against targets where green indicated success, yellow a borderline situation and red showed where targets were not met. Appendix 2 detailed complaints received in relation to Environmental Operation services.

The Environmental Services Manager gave details of refuse collection and recycling, refuse collection service, introduction of new refuse collection policy, Parc It Pilot Recycling Scheme, kerbside collection re-cycling, garden waste recycling, furniture and white goods re-use scheme, bring sites and re-cycling banks.

The overall recycling performance had improved dramatically over the past year as a result of a number of initiatives. This improvement had continued into the financial year, largely due to increased apportionment from the aerobic digester.

Tonnage of material collected by the kerb it scheme had increased by 14% on the same period the previous year. Participation rate had increased to around 40-45%.

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The Council's partnership working arrangements within the probation 'Mayors Project' which was introduced in 2007 had been very successful in completing 15 pre-selected environmental projects throughout the District.

The Environmental Services Manager explained that the Audit Commission had expressed concern about the level of secondary deliberate fires with the numbers being higher than elsewhere in the County. In response, a cross agency working group was established with the Fire Service, Police and Community Services Directorate, identifying the causes and developing an Action Plan. In the run up to bonfire night, which was traditionally a time when materials were gathered for illegal bonfires, many of which were unsupervised and could get out of control, diverting services away from potential life saving work. An Action Plan was developed and there was an estimated saving of over £120,000.

Details were given of nuisance vehicles, dog fouling and strays, litter, fly tipping and pest control.

The Director of Community Services explained that there had been a huge amount of works in different areas. The levels of street cleanliness had improved and only 10% did not meet the high standards. Education and awareness and the improved operations was bringing dividends and the Authority had been shortlisted in three national awards. This demonstrated the improvements that had been made in recent years.

The Executive Member for Liveability explained that the Council had listened to the public when they had requested an extension of the Green Waste system once finance was available. Greencycle was also extending the service to what the public wanted ie. cardboard and plastics.

A Member queried how many of the 27 young people that had been fined for dropping litter were from the Peterlee area. The Environmental Services Manager explained that a high proportion of fines were issued in Peterlee and Seaham and he would feedback on the detail and include the Ward Members for Denehouse.

The Chair referred to the Agency workers that had been employed for the refuse collection service and queried over what time frame it was expected to return to normal. The Director of Community Services explained that the refuse service at one time used the street cleansing team to cover for sickness and holiday absence. Since reviewing the service, there was a need to employ Agency staff.

The Chair commented that figures in tonnages should be expressed as a percentage in future reports.

The Chair referred to the enforcement on fly tipping and queried if this was an upward trend. The Director of Community Services explained that the best case had been achieved the previous year with the number of fly tipping instances down and the enforcement going up. This enabled the Council to achieve a Grade 1. Currently the Council was at a Grade 3 as there was a slight increase in incidents.

The Chair referred to Appendix 1 and the Corporate Strategy Indicators and felt that in the comments section there needed to be some timeline and a measure of improvement.

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The Chair commented that the Committee valued the success and the service developments that had been put in place and the Action Plans for future improvements.

RESOLVED that the information given be noted.

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