MINUTES OF CUSTOMER AND PARTNERSHIPS COMMITTEE

1st September 2011

PRESENT:

Members of the Committee:

Councillors Ms Edwards (Chairman), Mrs Watson (Vice Chairman), G Francis, Miss Lawrence, Mahoney, Mrs New, Sewell, Warwick

Officers:

Anthony Devonish (Environmental Protection Officer), Debbie Dawson (Scrutiny Officer), Veronika Beckova (Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer)

In attendance:

Councillor Ms Robbins (Chairman of Air Quality Monitoring Network Task Group)

11. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 23rd June 2011 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

12. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence from the meeting was received from Councillor Hazelton.

13. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Ms Robbins and Mrs Watson declared a general personal interest by virtue of being Warwickshire County Councillors.

14. AIR QUALITY MONITORING NETWORK REVIEW – FINAL REPORT

The Committee considered the final report (Part 1 – agenda item 5) of the Air Quality Monitoring Network Task Group from Councillor Ms Robbins (Chairman of the Air Quality Monitoring Network Task Group). The report presented the findings and recommendations of the review.

Further comments were made:

- The Committee commented that it had been a thorough, evidence based review, where logic prevailed. It had been a good piece of scrutiny.
- PM$_{10}$ (particulates) has been monitored in Rugby since 1999. There have been no recorded exceedences of PM$_{10}$ which led to the conclusion that there was no requirement to continue to monitor PM$_{10}$ in Rugby.
- The task group had considered a lot of information provided by officers and by Warwickshire County Council, as well as comparisons with other neighbouring authorities.
The task group’s recommendation is that officers are given the flexibility to
determine the suitable areas for monitoring, within the budget set by councillors.
Given this flexibility, officers would be able to respond to any specific areas of
concern raised by councillors.

Following discussions with Finance Officers regarding the potential savings arising
from the task group’s recommendations, it was apparent that the figures included
in the review report over-state the potential savings.

The actual savings that will be offered up for 2012/13, based on the task group’s
recommendations, are likely to amount to around £14,250 (detail below).

Air Quality Monitoring budget for 2011/12 is £20,250.

Anticipated budget for 2012/13 is:

- £4,500 for diffusion tubes
- £1,500 annual progress report
- £1,000 3 yearly USA
- £6,000 total

Saving of £14,250 for 2012/13.

Customer and Partnerships Committee will monitor and keep an overview of
management of air quality in Rugby.

RESOLVED THAT:

(1) Section 6 of the report be revised when the report is submitted to Cabinet, to ensure
the potential savings are accurately reflected;
(2) Councillor Ms Robbins and everyone involved in the review be thanked for their work;
(3) the recommendations of the task group be endorsed; and
(4) the report and draft action plan of the Air Quality Monitoring Network Task Group be
submitted to Cabinet.

15. AIR QUALITY MONITORING AREA ACTION PLAN

The Committee received a brief update from the Environmental Protection Officer (Part 1
– agenda item 6) on air quality monitoring area action plan.

The Environmental Protection Officer gave the Committee a brief verbal report. The main
points were:

- The air quality monitoring area action plan needs to be reviewed. Officers
decided to wait until the Task Group had concluded its review before progressing
this work.
- The task group review highlighted the value in having a wider network of diffusion
tube monitoring, which will be more effective than monitoring a limited area using
the Automatic Monitoring Station.
- The review also identified some of the likely areas where there is an increasing
risk of exceedence of objectives for NO2
- The latest Air Quality Progress Report is awaiting approval from DEFRA following
some concerns that were raised, which were discussed with the Task Group.
- The Council must set targets to improve air quality in its action plan. The
Council’s air quality consultants, AECOM, have advised that a 44% reduction in
traffic in the Air Quality Management Area is needed to meet national standards.
• This is not an achievable aim, particularly as Rugby Borough Council has no control over traffic in the borough. It was also emphasised that high traffic-related NO2 emissions are a national problem.
• The Environmental Protection Officer and the Regulatory Services Manager will shortly be attending training on effective air quality action planning in order to gain more knowledge on how to reduce emissions and identify meaningful targets against which progress in improving air quality can be assessed.
• The Localism Bill is expected to change responsibility for air quality significantly and may result in local authorities having to pay fines for failure to meet EU emission targets.
• It was suggested that officers report to the Committee on the action plan in April / May 2012, to tie in with the latest air quality progress report, and thereafter the Committee should review air quality annually.
• The revised action plan will be subject to a 12 week statutory consultation period.

RESOLVED THAT –

(1) the Environmental Protection Officer be thanked for his update; and
(2) an update on the Air Quality Monitoring Area Action Plan be added to the Committee’s agenda for April 2012.

16. REVIEW OF YOUTH PROVISION – DRAFT ONE PAGE STRATEGY

The committee considered the draft one page strategy (Part 1 – agenda item 7 – Appendix 1) for the light touch review of youth provision in the borough.

All Councillors will be informed about the Special Customer and Partnerships Committee meeting taking place on 13 October 2011 in the Learning Resources Centre at the Lawrence Sheriff School.

The Committee agreed it would be important to maintain structure within the meeting, for example by
  o inviting written submissions beforehand
  o asking contributors to speak for up to 5 minutes
  o then open the topic to a discussion by those present

A key purpose of the meeting was to gather information and get different partners talking. The aim was to identify any existing gaps within youth provision across the borough, find out what is already being done to address these gaps, and identify any further action required. It was suggested that this could be made clearer in the one page strategy, and that the questions should be prioritised so it was clear to those invited to make a written submission what the focus of the meeting would be.

The Committee emphasised the importance of involving young people, and inviting members of the Youth Council to identify their priorities, expectations and needs Members also emphasised the importance of capturing youth provision in its widest sense, not just youth club-based activities.

The Committee would take time at their November meeting to draw together key points arising from the special meeting and decide how to take the matter forward.

RESOLVED THAT –

(1) the draft one page strategy be approved; and
(2) a revised version be sent to key contributors and interested parties, with the focus and aim of the meeting clearly identified.
17. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered a report (Part 1 – agenda item 8) concerning updates on the progress of task group reviews and details of the Committee’s forward work programme.

2. Planning for next meeting

2.1 Biodiversity Strategy

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board had raised concerns that aspects of the Covalent action plan may no longer be relevant or achievable. The Committee asked the Biodiversity Task Group Chairman, Councillor Miss Lawrence, to revisit the action plan in liaison with officers.

The Biodiversity Task Group Chairman will report back to the Committee on 3 November 2011. Following that meeting Overview and Scrutiny Board will be provided with a revised action plan, as appropriate.

2.2 Energy/warmth plans/seasonal deaths (Part 1 – agenda item 8 – Appendix 2)

The Committee emphasised the importance of this proposed review due to the increase in fuel bills and fuel poverty. The item would include a report on the Affordable Warmth Strategy 2009 – 2012 and its progress.

RESOLVED THAT –

(1) the forward work programme for the Committee be approved; and
(2) the draft one page strategy for the light touch review of seasonal deaths and affordable warmth plans be approved.

CHAIRMAN