

West Wiltshire District Council

Minutes

- Minutes of the:** Scrutiny Committee
- Held on:** Wednesday 13 June 2007
- Held at:** Council Offices, Bradley Road, Trowbridge
- Present:**
- Councillors:** Blakemore, Bryant, Burden, Carr, Hawker, Hedley, Jenkins, Mudge, J Osborn(Chairman), Parks, Ridout, Seager and Walker
- Also in attendance:** Cllrs Brown & Martindale
- Officers:** Corporate Director (TD), Development Control Manager (DH), Policy Officer (DK), Member Support Officer (KH) and Democratic Support Officer (KF)

29. Appointment of Vice-Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee

Cllr Bryant was appointed Vice-Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee.

30. Apologies and Membership of the Committee

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Swabey.

31. Declarations of Interest

Agenda Item 6 : Cllr Mudge - Member of the Northern Area Committee, not present at the Bradford on Avon Gasworks site planning decision.

32. Announcements from the Chairman

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and made the point that he hoped this Committee would be the focus of much back bench activity.

33. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 4 April 2007 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

34. Outcome of the Ombudsman's Investigation into the handling of a planning application for the erection of a terrace of five dwellings at the former gasworks site, Frome Road, Bradford on Avon.

Open Forum Speakers

Mr J Seekings
Mrs G Allison
Mr C Steel
Mr T Tees

Cllr Tony Phillips OBE (Planning Portfolio Holder) and Dave Hubbard (Development Control Manager) presented a report that provided the Scrutiny Committee with information of the outcome of the investigation by the Ombudsman for Local Administration in England.

RESOLVED:

- **That the Committee requests that the Council apologise for the maladministration that has occurred.**
- **That the Committee notes the improvements to the Development Control process in light of this complaint.**
- **That the Committee requests that negotiations are opened with both the occupants and developer to consider ways to lessen the impact of these dwellings on the conservation area.**
- **That the Committee requests that landscaping is undertaken around the site in accordance with the conditions.**
- **That a further report be brought to this committee in three months to report on progress in respect of the further action if required in respect of outstanding enforcement issues and in respect of the payment of £2,000 to the Preservation Trust to be used for a project of benefit to the Conservation Area.**

35. Feedback from Scrutiny Training – 6 June 2007

Debbie Kilroy (Policy Officer) presented a verbal report that provided the Scrutiny Committee with information on the recent Scrutiny training Members had received.

It was agreed by Members that this training had been very worthwhile.

36. Review of the Scrutiny Performance Monitoring Group

Debbie Kilroy (Policy Officer) presented a verbal presentation to the Committee on the role of the Scrutiny Performance Monitoring Group and to consider the options for its further development

RESOLVED:

- **That the Committee would use option three as its preferred option.**
- **That the new group would comprise Cllrs Ridout, Carr, Bryant and Burden and that the Chairmanship of this group would be discussed at it's first meeting.**

37. Implications for Scrutiny from the IdeA peer review and recent legislative changes

Debbie Kilroy (Policy Officer) presented a powerpoint presentation to the Committee on the IdeA peer review and recent legislative changes, a handout of the slides were also provided for Members and are attached to these minutes.

. RESOLVED:

That the Committee:

- **Agrees to encourage back bench members to make greater use of Scrutiny.**
- **Raises its profile within the community by publicity and appropriate use of issues.**
- **Agrees that it needed to be aware of the new proposed powers of community calls for action and use them when they are legally established.**
- **Agreed that the next meeting would have time set aside for detailed focus on developing the Forward Plan.**

38. Forward Workplans

The Chairman asked Members to consider and put forward any topics for discussions on forthcoming workplans, Cllr Burden suggested "Changing Places", The Chairman requested that the Policy Officer obtain background information on this topic for future debate.

39. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next ordinary meeting of the Scrutiny Committee would be held on Wednesday **18 July 2007** in the Council Chamber at the Council Offices, Bradley Road, Trowbridge at **7pm**.

(7.00pm – 9:00pm)

These minutes were prepared by Kevin Fielding Democratic Support Officer who can be contacted on direct line 01225 776655 ext 115 or email kfielding@westwiltshire.gov.uk

Implications for scrutiny from the IDeA peer review and recent legislative changes

IDeA Peer Review

- Role of 'critical friend'
- Members need to –
 - Be more visible within the Council and community
 - Develop their community leadership and policy development roles
 - Have access to training to fully equip them to undertake these roles

Legislative changes

- Increased power in relation to –
 - Crime and disorder
 - Local Area Agreement targets
- Community Calls for Action –
 - CCA
 - CCfA

Community Calls for Action - CCA

- Police and Justice Act 2006
- Originated by member of public
- Local crime and disorder matters
 - Environmental
 - Anti-social behaviour
 - Drug and alcohol misuse
- If refused, can be referred to executive
- Comes into effect April 2008
- First guidance November 2007

Community Calls for Action - CCfA

- Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill
- Originated by local councillor
- Covers most matters, apart from –
 - Crime and disorder
 - Already have appeal process
- If refused, no further action taken
- Comes into effect April 2008
- First guidance November 2007

Community leadership and policy development

- What does it mean in practice?
- Proactive not just reactive
- Issues affecting the district as well as wards
- Upcoming national issues
- Forward work plan
- Raise profile of the Council and Members
- Consider balance between overview and scrutiny

Partnerships and joint external scrutiny

- Legislative changes
- Community Calls for Action
- Local Strategic Partnership and Community Area Partnership
- Strengthening Area Seminars?
- Health
- Emphasis on co-operation
- Balance with other roles

Next Steps

- Further guidance available in November 2007
- Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill with House of Lords
- Development of forward work plan
- Further training
- Raising profile of Council, Scrutiny Committee and Members
- Development of community leadership role