

**Lead Officer's Report. Functions of the Committee
Environment, item 4**

Committee: Environment

Agenda Item

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Title: Lead Officer's Report. Functions of the Committee

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Item for noting

Summary

This report updates Members on matters arising from the minutes that are not on this Agenda. The functions of the Committee are also explained.

Recommendations

That the report is noted.

Background Papers

Minutes of meeting of 13th March 2007

Reports referred to in this report

Scheme of Delegation

Impact

Communication/Consultation	Consultation on the LDF continues and its outcome will significantly help shape the Core Strategy. Some of the reports on the agenda concern responses to Government consultations
Community Safety	None
Equalities	None specifically but considerable implications within some of the reports on this agenda
Finance	None
Human Rights	The EERA consultation on Traveller accommodation has implications for Human Rights
Legal implications	No direct implications
Ward-specific impacts	All
Workforce/Workplace	None

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Situation

- 1 There are no updates on matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting that are not on this agenda. Since the last meeting the Heads of Division have been appointed and personal development programmes are in place. The Airport Policy Task Group responded to the Stansted G2 Surface Access Strategy consultation reflecting the concerns of the County Councils.
- 2 The remainder of this report concerns the functions of this Committee. These are set out below with appropriate Officer Comments where necessary. Essentially it is the function of this Committee to formulate and agree policy on a variety of matters including planning, waste management, energy management, access for people with disabilities and car parking.

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE –AREAS OF WORK	OFFICER COMMENT
1. The preparation of plans and related documents as district planning authority.	This includes preparation of the Local Development Framework (LDF) which will shape the future development of the District. It will supersede the Local Plan. Reports on the LDF will be presented to the next meeting of this Committee. Consultation on a range of options for the Core Strategy has recently finished and the results are being processed. The function falls within the Development Directorate
2. Advice on regional planning and related issues, including transportation policy.	The Committee finalises the responses on a range of Government policy consultations, including the preparation of the East of England Plan. There are two such consultations on this agenda, one by the East of England Regional Assembly (EERA) on Traveller accommodation and another by DCLG on the Planning White Paper. The function falls within the Development Directorate
3. Advice on aviation matters generally and specifically relating to Stansted Airport.	The Committee does not determine applications for expansion of the airport (that is done by the Development Control Committee) but it rather responds to Government policy consultations and will set the Council's policy for future development of the airport. The function falls within the Development Directorate

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<p>4. The maintenance, management and development of open spaces, ornamental gardens, play and recreational areas (and statutory and non-statutory allotments).</p>	<p>The Council has few areas of public open space, having traditionally worked with Town and Parish Councils for its provision. One of its principal areas of responsibility however is Bridge End Garden in Saffron Walden. The function falls within the Operations Directorate</p>
<p>5. The preparation and implementation of an integrated waste strategy. The provision of refuse collection, recycling, street cleansing and cesspool emptying services. Contract monitoring, quality control and client management in relation to refuse collection, street cleansing, cesspool emptying and grounds maintenance services.</p>	<p>The Council is responsible for the collection of waste. The disposal of waste is the responsibility of the County Council, who also operate the Civic Amenity Sites. Both authorities are responsible for reducing landfill in increasing rates of recycling. The function falls within the Operations Directorate</p>
<p>6. The provision, maintenance, management and development of the Council's housing amenity areas and amenities, including: open spaces and recreational areas; parking areas and garages; unadopted roads, verges, footways and street lighting.</p>	<p>The Council is only responsible for maintenance of its estate, not for general highway maintenance and street lighting. The function falls within the Operations Directorate</p>
<p>7. Environmental monitoring (including the monitoring of water supplies).</p>	<p>This also includes air quality and noise monitoring. The function falls within the Operations Directorate</p>
<p>8. The Council's statutory responsibilities for land drainage and sewerage.</p>	<p>For the most part this concerns the Council's own properties. The Environment Agency is the responsible authority for main rivers. The function falls within the Development Directorate</p>
<p>9. The provision of advice and financial assistance, as appropriate, to help maintain and enhance the District's environment and encourage appropriate economic development.</p>	<p>The function falls within the Development Directorate</p>
<p>10. To review periodically and, if necessary, amend the Council's policy on the exercise of its functions with respect to the Building Regulations and allied legislation, and to discharge those functions.</p>	<p>The Building Regulations cover the safety of, energy conservation aspects of, and access to, buildings. Implementation of the regulations is delegated to officers. The function falls within the Development Directorate</p>

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11. The administration of grants within the scope of the Committee.	
12. The provision and maintenance of off-street vehicle parking facilities, including the making of the appropriate orders, and the administration of on street parking i.e. residents parking schemes. The management of decriminalisation of parking enforcement	The Council manages car parks in the major towns and villages. It also administers residents parking schemes and is responsible for enforcement of the traffic regulations. The function falls within the Operations Directorate
13. The provision of or assistance in the provision of travel initiatives to help the elderly and people who are disabled who have real transport needs.	The function falls within the Operations Directorate
14. The approval and monitoring of the locally determined highways programme.	The function falls within the Development Directorate
15. Comment on Essex County Council's highways maintenance plan.	The function falls within the Development Directorate
16. The making of traffic regulation orders and the exercise of such other relevant order making powers as the Essex County Council may delegate to the Council within the prescribed budget where such matters relate to areas covered by more than one area panel.	Traffic regulation orders, such as residents parking schemes, are delegated to the Area Panels, but where a scheme may cross boundaries between Areas then this Committee has the final say. The function falls within the Operations Directorate
17. The provision, management and maintenance of the council's fleet of vehicles	The function falls within the Operations Directorate
18. Street names and house numbers	The function falls within the Development Directorate
19. Disability issues appropriate to the facilities and activities within the purview of the Committee.	The function falls within the Development Directorate
20. Clean Neighbourhoods Enforcement	The public awareness campaign continues, posters are available and are being circulated in the community prior to enforcement action being taken on litter by use of fixed penalties.
21. Car Parking Section	Officers have initiated discussions with Braintree District council to investigate if there are any opportunities for a shared service. Braintree have confirmed they

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	<p>are interested and a proposal will be developed for consideration by members.</p>
22. Waste Strategy for England 2007	<p>This policy briefing highlights the role of local authorities in the government's Waste Strategy 2007 in five areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Prices - in particular proposals for new powers for local authorities to provide financial incentives for recycling. A consultation on this is open until 16 August 2007.2. Regulation - including an action plan for tackling illegal activity.3. Investment in waste collection and treatment - outlining the new Waste Infrastructure Development Programme and considerations for local authorities on food collection, energy recovery and waste.4. Local and regional governance - highlighting changes to the performance standards for local authorities and legislative changes planned for joint waste authorities.5. Shared agenda - emphasising the need for local leadership to encourage re-use, recycling and composting of waste.
23. Essex Waste Partnership	<p>Members are aware that this council has been working in Partnership with Essex County Council (as the disposal authority) and the 11 other District and Borough Councils (as waste collection authorities) to draft and develop a Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy (JMWMS) for Essex.</p> <p>The objective of the partnership is to deliver the policies and targets contained in the draft JMWMS for Essex.</p> <p>The three area (East, West and Thames Gateway) Waste Management Joint Committees have been fully involved in the development of the PFI application.</p>

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	<p>In order to bid for PFI credits, an Outline business Case, which includes a Reference Project, has been produced giving details of what a new waste management system for Essex may look like that meet high recycling and landfill diversion targets and deliver the objectives of the JMWMS.</p> <p>To support the application for PFI the collection authorities have been asked to sign a Memorandum of Understanding and a letter of support for the Outline Business case.</p> <p>1. Memorandum of Understanding</p> <p>The primary purpose of this document is to provide evidence to Defra that each Waste Collection Authority is committed to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The principle of making an application to Defra for PFI credits to assist in the delivery of long term infrastructure; • Partnership working on integrated waste management; • Delivering a rate of kerbside recycling which supports the Reference Project set out in the PFI application Outline Business Case (OBC) ie a rate of kerbside recycling which meets the existing commitments of each WCA towards the County wide target of 39.5% contained in the Local Area Agreement; • Working to develop a cost allocation and funding formula to equitably share the costs and benefits derived from managing municipal waste together. <p>The MoU needs to be signed off by</p>
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	<p>each Partner Authority before the OBC is formally submitted to Defra at the end of July 2007. It is for each Partner Authority to determine who the signature to the MoU should be based on their own constitutional and delegated authority arrangements.</p> <p>2. Letter of Support The primary purpose of this document is to evidence support of the Joint Committees to the Reference Project described in the OBC. You will appreciate that agreement to the detailed Reference Project is separate from agreement of the principles outlined in the MoU. In exceptional circumstances it is conceivable that an authority would be able to sign the MoU but the Joint Committee Member for that Authority would be unable to actively support a Joint Committee resolution to endorse the technology and assumptions in the Reference Project and may therefore abstain from voting. Bearing in mind that the Joint Committee decisions are based on a majority vote, a successful outcome of support for the OBC could still be achieved.</p>
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Risk Analysis

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
The Committee takes decisions that are outside its remit	Low	Significant	Reference to the scheme of delegation.