
Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Corporate & Strategic Framework)

Report of the meeting held on 20th February 2007

Matter for Information

9. ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY

The Panel has received a presentation on the draft Environment Strategy which has been approved by the Cabinet for consultation with Members, the Council's partners and other organisations. It is intended that a final Strategy will be adopted in the Autumn for implementation in 2008/09 with any financial implications being considered as part of the Medium Term Plan from 2008/09 onwards.

The Panel's attention has been drawn to the growing problem of climate change and those aspects of the Council's strategic and policy framework which impact on the environment. Draft action plans will be prepared as part of the Strategy implementation process which will provide the Council with an opportunity to balance environmental aspirations against the cost of their achievement and assess the pace at which progress can be made.

The Panel raised a series of questions concerning green technologies, best practice at other local authorities, governance arrangements for delivery of the Strategy, monitoring of environmental change, the financial implications of the Strategy, the role of building control and sustainable drainage. Whilst some Panel Members expressed the view that the Strategy should be more focused in order to promote public engagement, others formed the opinion that a comprehensive document should be produced which could be used to inform future spending decisions. It was also suggested that the problems of noise and light pollution should be included in the Strategy.

Members discussed the role of Overview and Scrutiny in the Strategy's development. In order to enable detailed scrutiny to take place it has agreed that the project group to be established to deal with "Greening the Business" should be scrutinised by the Service Support Panel and that dealing with "Service Impacts" by the Service Delivery Panel. The "Sustainable Communities" project group will be dealt with on a more ad-hoc basis as appropriate.

S J Criswell
Chairman