

Policy & Service Review Community Forum



Date	6 October 2005
Venue	Council Offices, Derby Road, Wesham
Committee members	Simon Renwick (Chairman) John Prestwich (Vice-Chairman) Stephen Carpenter, Peter Collins, Raymond Norsworthy, Martin Taylor
Other Councillors	Barbara Pagett
Officers	Phil Woodward, Jamie Dixon, Lyndsey Lacey, Michael Rogers, Oliver Shimell, Mike Walker

1. Declarations of interest

Members were reminded that any personal/prejudicial interests should be declared as required by the Council's Code of Conduct adopted in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000.

2. Confirmation of minutes

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the Policy & Service Review Community Forum meetings held on 15 September 2005 as a correct record for signature by the chairman.

3. Substitute members

There were no substitute members.

4. Update on the work of the Public Convenience Task and Finish Group

Jamie Dixon (Waste Management Officer) presented an interim report on the work carried out by the Public Conveniences Task and Finish Group.

Members were reminded that Councillor Pagett had submitted a request for the Forum to consider this matter following the closure of certain public conveniences. She had requested that the provision of public conveniences be looked in to in its wider context.

It was reported that the Task and Finish Group had considered a general option appraisal for the service (a copy of the appraisal was included as an appendix to the report)

The following six options for future service delivery were considered and as a result of this the Group recommended an in depth analysis of options 2, 3 and 4 and to include option 1 but only on a partial basis.

Option 1 - Cessation of Service

Option 2 - Joint commissioning

Option 3 - Market Testing

Option 4 - Transfer

Option 5 - Externalisation

Option 6 - Improved approach

Members expressed concern about the technical terms used in the report and requested that future reports on this subject be presented in plain English.

Following consideration of this matter the Forum RESOLVED:

1. To note the progress to date of the Task and Finish Group.
2. To note the time scales indicated within the report and request that a report of the Task and Finish Group be presented to the 3 November meeting of the Forum detailing the findings of the in depth analysis of options 2, 3 and 4 including option 1 (on a partial basis only)
3. To thank Mr Dixon for his report and attendance at the meeting.

5. The Media Policy

Michael Rogers (Communications Officer) presented a revised Media Policy to the Forum for its consideration.

Mr Rogers reported on the main areas of change within the document. He explained that the aim of the Policy was to provide a clear and simple channel for media contacts and to maximise positive coverage. The Policy built on the exiting Media Policy that was devised in 2004 and incorporates best practice from other local authorities and the IDeA local government reputation survey.

Members raised the issue of libellous statements and whether the Media Policy should address this. The Forum was advised that this was outside the scope of the Policy and that such matters should be referred to the Council's Legal/Monitoring Officer.

A copy of the revised Policy was circulated with the agenda for members consideration.

The Forum RESOLVED:

1. To recommend the Media Policy (as amended) for approval by the Executive Committee.
2. To thank Mr Rogers for producing the document

6. Implementation of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005

Mike Walker (Environmental Protection Manager) provided the Committee with an overview on the provisions contained in the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 and its associated implications

Members were advised that the legislation allowed councils to deal with complaints regarding a variety of anti social behaviour that have been broadly described as “enviro crime”. It was explained that the measures were designed to strengthen existing powers and provide improvements in the enforcement regime to secure a more effective impact.

A summary of the main areas that the new powers were designed to tackle was set out in the appendix attached to the report.

Members enquired about the effects of this legislation on the staffing/ policing and the budget. Reference was also made to the new fixed penalty scheme and the proposed default level. Mr Walker indicated that at this stage, the new Act was subject to further consultations and advice from central government.

Following a full discussion it was RESOLVED:

1. To note the content of the report.
2. To ensure that the media are made aware of the forthcoming implementation of the Act and the benefits it will have for the Borough.
3. To seek Council approval to include the new powers in the existing Scheme of Delegation.
4. To present an updated report on this matter to the Forum shortly after the implementation of the Act.
5. To thank Mr Walker for his report and attendance.
