

MINUTES of a meeting of the **IMPROVEMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - PLACES** held at County Hall, Matlock on 27 March 2013.

PRESENT

Councillor Mrs J A Twigg (in the Chair)

Councillors Mrs S M Allsop, Mrs G Birkin, Mrs M W Booth, R L Hosker, B C Lucas, W Major, A H Rogers and G D Wharmby.

Councillor J A Allsop was also in attendance

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Mrs E Atkins, D Bowley, S J Bradford, Mrs G A Farrington and C R Moesby.

6/13 **MINUTES** **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 16 January 2013 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

7/13 **CABINET MEMBER UPDATE** Councillor J A Allsop, Cabinet Member for Technology and Recycling, attended the meeting to give an update on waste disposal and recycling. He was accompanied by Ms A Thomas, Environmental Services Department.

Progress towards the recycling target for 2020 of 55% was set out along with the performance of the individual Waste Collection Authorities. The probable rate to be achieved in 2020 was currently estimated at 51%. Issues affecting performance were discussed including the waste strategy and the collection/recycling services offered by the WCAs. There were also industry developments and behavioural changes.

Future challenges were that the quick wins had been achieved, maintenance of services in difficult financial circumstances, increasing public participation, improving quality – reducing contamination, delivering infrastructure and future housing and economic growth.

8/13 **LOWER DOVE FLOOD PREVENTION SCHEME** A presentation was made at the Committee meeting on 31 October 2012 by the Environment Agency on the Lower Dove Flood Management Scheme. The Committee's Flooding Risk Working Group had visited the Lower Dove area in March 2010 and met with the Environment Agency officers to view the sites where improvement works were proposed - Hatton, Scropton and Egginton.

As a result of the working group's visit, the County Council's Highways Engineers worked with the Environment Agency to facilitate the raising of the road level at Egginton and officer time in this respect was provided as a contribution from the Council.

At the presentation in October, the Committee was informed that, following a lengthy process of planning and technical issues, work on the scheme had

recently commenced. However, the Environment Agency officer referred to communication problems which were being encountered between the project managers and Network Rail. The Agency had experienced delays in Network Rail responding to requests for permissions to work on Network Rail property and this was beginning to hamper the scheme's progress. The situation was such that prolonged delays were beginning to add costs to the project.

The Committee agreed that it should endeavour to influence Network Rail to be more active in contributing to this and any future schemes and that a meeting with Network Rail should be arranged to facilitate this. A meeting was held on 30 January to enable the working group to explore and potentially help improve, the working arrangements between the Environment Agency (EA) and Network Rail (NR).

As well as considering the permissions process for projects such as the Lower Dove Flood Management Scheme, the County Council (DCC) also wished to improve the process by which track possessions were managed between NR and DCC. These were necessary when undertaking structural maintenance of the Council's bridge stock and for prevention of, and repairs following, bridge strikes by road vehicles. In particular, DCC sought to develop a more rapid invoicing process with Network Rail. The meeting provided the opportunity for a candid dialogue between all parties, with each organisation's representatives explaining the constraints under which they worked. Whilst these were accepted, it was agreed that there was common ground for improvements to be made, especially to speed up the permissions process where delays could jeopardise projects.

At the conclusion of the meeting it was agreed that a protocol be developed between appropriate parties which would:-

- Identify a single point of contact in each organisation for individual project managers and contractors to refer to throughout the lifetime of a project;
- Advice and guidance be provided by Network Rail at the outset of any project which would impact on their assets and infrastructure. This would help determine a "best option" to work into a project and limit any delays which would result from permission being refused;
- Agree deadlines for responding to requests for information and permissions
- Streamline the invoicing process for payments for work undertaken by one partner on behalf of another.

All parties agreed to this approach and, in respect of the Lower Dove Flood Management scheme, the Environment Agency and Network Rail agreed to process the necessary permissions as soon as possible.

It was proposed that the Committee monitor the progress of both this and the development of the agreed protocols which should improve partnership working arrangements in the future.

RESOLVED (1) that the Committee notes the agreement made by the Environment Agency, Network Rail and the County Council to improve partnership working arrangements as set out in the report and;

(2) that the Committee monitor the development and implementation of the agreed protocols with progress reports being made to the Committee as appropriate.

9/13 WORK PROGRAMME AND KEY DECISIONS

RESOLVED (1) that the summary report on the Committee's work undertaken during 2012/13 be noted and the appreciation of the Chairman of the contribution of Members and officers in this work over the last 4 years be recorded; and

(2) to note the list of Key Decisions – March 2013.