



AGENDA ITEM 9 (d)

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

8 MAY 2012

ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY PANEL

- PROGRESS REPORT

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. To provide members of the Overview and Scrutiny Board (OSB) with an update on the work of the Environment Scrutiny Panel.

RECOMMENDATION

2. That the Overview and Scrutiny Board notes the updated position.

BACKGROUND

3. Since the last update to OSB, the Environment Scrutiny Panel has met three times - on 5 and 29 March and 26 April 2012. Details of those meetings are as follows:

5 March 2012

4. At this meeting, Members considered an introduction/overview on the topic of Maintenance of Natural Woodland and Highway Trees.
5. The panel heard that, following a scrutiny investigation of Countryside Matters in 2010, a Council Tree Policy was approved and adopted. This sets out criteria in a number of areas - including inspections, removal, pruning, conservation areas, high hedges etc.

6. Information was also submitted on the Treewise system that has been introduced. This is a recording system/database that is used for mapping and inspecting large trees and for use in pro-active planning and risk management.

29 March 2012

7. This meeting considered updates on previous scrutiny topics, namely:
 - Fleet Services Review - This update explained the position regarding the scrutiny panel's 2010 recommendations on this subject. Members agreed that, at the next panel meeting, clarification would be sought regarding a legal liability issue relating to use of school minibuses.
 - Street cleaning/24 hour economy - This update explained the implications of recent budget reductions in regard to this service. Previous scrutiny recommendations had related to proposals to offer an enhanced/more responsive service. However, the panel heard that this is now likely to be unachievable given the authority's current financial position.

26 April 2012

8. This meeting considered two reports, as follows:
 - A report on flood risk management in Middlesbrough - This issue is required to be considered by the scrutiny panel annually. Details were submitted of local flood prevention arrangements, progress made in the last year and work that is undertaken in conjunction with the Environment Agency. The panel highlighted a number of issues and agreed to receive a further update from officers and the Environment Agency in approximately six months' time.
 - An update on Fleet Services/the issue of potential Council liability concerning the use of school minibuses (and also maintenance of school boilers). It was confirmed that, depending on the circumstances, the authority could be held to be liable in cases of accident or non-maintenance.

COUNCILLOR BOB KERR

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