

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT
GROUP HELD AT FOLLATON HOUSE, TOTNES ON THURSDAY,
22 NOVEMBER 2005**

MEMBERS

* Cllr R W Hallett - Chairman

* Cllr A R Vale - Vice-Chairman

∅ Cllr H D Bastone

* Cllr J Brazil

* Cllr B E Carson

* Cllr M Stone

* Cllr A Ward

* Cllr J A Westacott

* Denotes attendance

∅ Denotes apology for absence

(Cllr Rowe, the Executive Member with responsibility for the distinct environment, sent her apologies).

EPDG.05/05 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Environment Policy Development Group (EPDG) held on 26 May 2005 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

EPDG.06/05 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were invited to declare any interests in the items of business to be considered during the course of the meeting but none was made.

**EPDG.07/05 REVIEW OF SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE – NEW
WORK IN CONSERVATION AREAS**

A report was considered which sought a review of the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) – New Work in Conservation Areas which was adopted in February 2001. The report concluded that this SPG was still a valuable source of information and advice. However, it was noted that when the guidance was subject to a re-print, it should be remodelled to reflect the new corporate logo and 'house' communication style.

During discussion, a Member was concerned about the accessibility of the document. It was felt that the language was not user friendly and the diagrams were complex and it was therefore suggested that a review should be undertaken to make it more comprehensible to a wider audience. In response, it was noted that, whilst these comments were accepted and appreciated, due to the capacity and resource implications, it was problematic at this time to undertake such an exercise.

Members debated the continuing relevance of the guidance particularly in light of the need for it to reflect the emerging Local Development Framework and new legislation. It was subsequently agreed however that the current guidance was appropriate for the interim period.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Executive be **RECOMMENDED** that the Group finds that the New Work in Conservation Areas Supplementary Planning Guidance is still fit for purpose; aligns with Council planning policies; and fulfils a continuing valuable function, but will need to be up-dated in due course to reflect the Local Development Framework.

EPDG.08/05 A JOINT ORAL PROGRESS REPORT FROM THE HEAD OF OPERATIONS AND HEAD OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT ON THE ROLL-OUT OF THE NEW WASTE SCHEME

The Group was informed that phase 4 of the roll out programme, the western end of the district, had been completed. The next step was to roll out round 3, which incorporated the outline areas of Ivybridge, Kingsbridge and Totnes.

During discussion, the following points were made:-

- a) To date, it was noted that approximately 26,600 properties (85%) had received wheeled bins. Prior to receiving the wheeled bins 1251 properties had requested 120ltr containers, 50% of which were now satisfied with the 180ltr containers. Following a query it was noted that the collection vehicles were capable of handling both size containers;
- b) Concern over the varying needs of different households and the need to offer alternatives where possible. In response, it was noted that, the policy stipulated that households with 5 or over people in a household could apply for further containers. However, single households would still receive a wheeled bin even if they stipulated that they would not be required. It was important to remember that the council can not enforce council policy and indeed statutory obligations for waste separation if suitable containers were not in place.
- c) It was noted that all reports of missed collections were investigated. This was to ensure that the bins were being put out for collection at the correct time and location. In the eventuality that this was the case, then further investigation would proceed;
- d) The recycling rate was estimated to be currently at 30%, with an estimated target of 35% for the end of 2005/2006. It was anticipated that the 2006/2007 municipal year would achieve a 40% recycling rate. Concern was noted with regard to the

- amount of garden waste being collected and the adverse effects this could have on local businesses which collected garden waste. In response it was noted that the council only collected garden waste that was placed in the organic wheeled bin. It was therefore considered that there was still opportunity for any business to collect the excess material. Furthermore, it was highlighted that any change in the agreed policy now, could effect the government funding grant obtained for the scheme;
- e) A Member noted their concern over food waste and felt that a weekly organic waste collection should be implemented. In response, it was noted that the council had already considered all the options including a weekly collection of organic material. The financial cost to the Council would have been in the order of a further £500,000 to administer.
 - f) The number of phone calls received by the Council on the roll out of the waste scheme was noted to be approximately 36,800 between February 2005 and November 2005. The Group was informed that, out of this total, 1,033 were repeat callers. This gave rise to concern over why this many households were phoning more than once. In response, the Group was informed that a number of callers admitted that they had not read the information leaflets which were distributed with the bins. Furthermore, it was felt that certain callers were challenging the policy because they did not necessarily agree with its implementation;
 - g) Concerns over maggots in wheeled bins were raised and it was noted that DEFRA were currently researching this issue and would report back on its findings;
 - h) Problems experienced across the district were varied and it was felt that this was due to the differing social and demographic composition of towns and villages;
 - i) In reference to second home owners it was noted that, if given advance warning wheeled bins could be collected on a different day than actually allocated for collection;
 - j) The addressing of trade waste was the next issue for the Council to consider and it was highlighted that it was intended that the trade waste operation would be self-sufficient.

In conclusion, the Beacon Status in relation to waste (which the Council had been short listed for) was highlighted. Furthermore, a Member of the Group felt that the waste roll-out should be a recurring item on the Environment Policy Development Group agenda. It was agreed that this would be considered at the next Programming Panel meeting.

(Meeting commenced at 10.00 am and concluded at 12.30 pm).

Chairman