

ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

Report of the Chairman

COUNCILLOR CAROLE RUTHERFORD

There has been one further meeting of the Panel since my last report the minutes of which are presented to this meeting. As indicated in my last report the Panel continues to follow the progress of the Strategic Waste Partnership- Enhanced Initiative Working Project. An update on this item was provided at the meeting. I understand that this group met again in August and we look forward to hearing the outcomes at future meetings. A workshop is also planned for the Autumn/Winter.

One of the major items on the agenda was the Issues and Options paper which is set to go out to public consultation in September. The paper had been to the Local Development Framework working group prior to coming to the Panel which proved to be very helpful. Both the group and the panel were tasked with seeing that the options being presented for consultation passed the “reasonableness” test and were viable options that could actually be achieved. Comments and suggested changes to the document from both the group and the panel have been taken into account in the final document which is being presented to Council tonight. The panel endorsed the document and apart from suggesting some minor changes to wording asked that the following be taken on board:

More emphasis should be placed on safeguarding present employment opportunities.

More flexibility should be given to the allocation of housing between the rural and urban conurbations.

Every effort should be made to ensure that the document was user friendly so that sufficient people would respond to make the consultation meaningful.

The Sustainable Energy Strategy provoked a deal of discussion, particularly concerning the Holme Head Bay hydro turbine project. At the moment there is government funding for energy efficiency and micro-generation projects. Whilst there is much publicity for wind energy we hear little about hydro schemes. Initial investigations suggest that the water at Holme Head could be harnessed to provide energy not only for local use but to feed into the National grid. This could then earn valuable income. However, the present scheme comes to

an end in April 2012 and it not clear what, if anything will replace it. It is therefore necessary that speedy progress is made to undertake a feasibility study before the deadline next year.

Finally the Task and Finish Working Group on the Enterprise Centre met to receive background information and set its terms of reference. A visit to the Centre has been arranged for September 15th. A date has also been set for a workshop on Claimed Rights.

Carole Rutherford Chairman

August 29th