

ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL

Tuesday 28 July 2009 at 6.00pm

Panel Members Present

Councillor Harris (Chair)
Councillor Anson (Vice Chair)
Councillor Carpenter
Councillor C Bott
Councillor Douglas-Maul
Councillor Phillips
Councillor D Shires
Councillor B Tweddle
Councillor M Yasin

Portfolio Holders Present

Councillor T Ansell – Transport
Councillor M Flower - Environment

Officers Present

Nick Alamanos – Partnership and Performance Officer
Paul Leighton – Group Leader Traffic Management
Jamie Morris - Executive Director (Neighbourhoods)
Andy Ody – Grounds Services Manager
Stuart Wootton – Service Finance Manager
Angela Walker - Performance and Scrutiny Officer

08/09 APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for the duration of the meeting

09/09 SUBSTITUTIONS

There were no substitutions for the duration of the meeting

10/09 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP

Member	Agenda Item	Interest
Councillor A Harris	5 – Civil Parking Enforcement	Prejudicial
Councillor A Harris	6 – 2008/09 Final Budgetary Position Prior to External Audit	Prejudicial

11/09 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2009, copies having previously been circulated, be approved as a true and accurate record

Due to the prejudicial interests declared earlier in the meeting, Councillor Harris left the meeting at this point. Councillor Anson took the Chair.

12/09 CIVIL PARKING ENFORCEMENT

Paul Leighton gave specific details on two areas that had been identified by the Panel at its last meeting, these being:

- **Number of complaints**

Rather than monitor complaints, the team use nationally defined procedures to record appeals against parking tickets and the number of these appeals that are accepted. The Panel were informed that a common reason for an appeal being accepted was where a blue badge had been displayed incorrectly, resulting in a ticket being issued on the assumption that the badge was no longer valid. The badge holder would be able to appeal and as long as they could prove the badges validity, the appeal would be accepted.

- **Concerns about loading and unloading times**

The Panel heard that there were no time restrictions for loading and unloading in designated loading bays, as long as the activity was continuous. If a warden observed a vehicle parked in a loading bay for more than 10 minutes, without witnessing any activity, the warden would issue a parking ticket. There would be the option for the recipient to appeal against the ticket, and, if they could demonstrate a legitimate reason for the lack of loading activity, the appeal would be accepted. Work was ongoing in ensuring these rules were communicated appropriately. Some Members felt that a 20-minute time limit would be fairer; however, Paul Leighton explained that this would mean specifying a time restriction of 20 minutes within the traffic regulation order and would result in people using the bays to park for 20 minutes. The approach currently being taken appeared to strike the right balance.

Members raised several questions on this item, a summary of the responses is below:

- The Council did not currently have powers to enforce restrictions on driving in bus lanes, this was the responsibility of the police. Councils could apply for these powers, but this was not something that would happen at Walsall within the next 4 years.
- Blue badges relate to an individual, not a particular vehicle and were renewed every 3 years
- Wardens in Walsall were not given targets for the issue of parking tickets and never would be, the Department for Transport did not recommend the setting of such targets
- A campaign had commenced to address parking in roads near schools across the borough. This would include a back of bus and banner advertising campaign. Members should inform Paul Leighton of any schools in their wards where this is a particular problem.

Paul Leighton suggested Members might look at new Council responsibilities for enforcement of parking restrictions in front of dropped kerbs. Officers were working in partnership with neighbouring authorities to produce procedures for this enforcement and would welcome Scrutiny input once a draft had been created. This would be within 3-4 months. Members agreed that this would be of interest and requested data

on the impact of the new enforcement officers on other issues such as fly-tipping.

RESOLVED

That:

- a) the Environment Scrutiny and Performance Panel will examine the draft procedures for dropped kerb parking enforcement at its October / November meeting; and**
- b) Paul Leighton will provide data on the impact of the new enforcement team on other issues such as fly-tipping at the October meeting**

13/09 FINAL BUDGET POSITION 2008/09

Stuart Wootton presented the report on the outturn position for the 2008/09 financial year. He explained that the accounts were currently being audited and figures were not final until the audit had been completed.

In response to a Member's question, Stuart Wootton agreed to circulate detail on the overspend on hire of equipment and additional overtime of £96,540 for the Highways service to all Panel Members outside of the meeting. He also agreed to contact Councillor Yasin outside of the meeting regarding the relocation of the coroner.

Councillor Flower explained that the mercury abatement programme at Streetly Crematorium had been carried out to install new filters within the cremators, which would prevent mercury from dental fillings being released into the atmosphere.

RESOLVED

Stuart Wootton to provide a breakdown of the overspend on hire equipment and additional overtime for the Highways Service to all Panel Members

Councillor Harris rejoined the meeting at this point and resumed the Chair

14/09 REVENUE AND CAPITAL MONITORING – 2009/10 FIRST QUARTER FORECAST

Stuart Wootton summarised the predicted revenue and capital outturn position for 2009/10 based on the performance for Quarter 1 (April to June 2009) for services within the remit of the Panel.

The Panel noted the 2009/10 forecast under spend of £0.203m and capital expected to deliver within budget.

15/09 LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT

Nick Alamanos of Walsall Partnership informed the Panel of progress against Local Area Agreement (LAA) targets at the end of 2008/09. He highlighted the performance of the 5 indicators that were relevant to the Panel, with 4 of these being green and 1 having a red status. He explained that NI186 – Per capita % reduction in CO2

emissions in the LA area – had a 2-year data lag, the next update would be for 2007 and would be available in November 2009.

Members stated that the report, in particular the commentary on each measure, should be written in plain English. The Panel felt that commentary should be kept brief to give a clear understanding of the progress of the indicator.

16/09 PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT OF THE STREET CLEANSING SERVICE

Jamie Morris gave some background information on the Street Cleansing Service. He asked Members to give consideration to who should participate in the Street Cleansing Working Group and where they would like to visit as part of this group. Andy Ody provided detail on the activity carried out by the service and highlighted in particular that Walsall was one of the cleanest boroughs in the country in terms of fly posting.

A vote was taken on membership of the Street Cleansing Working Group and the following was agreed:

Councillor D Anson – Lead Member
Councillor R Carpenter
Councillor B Douglas-Maul
Councillor K Phillips
Councillor D Shires

The Panel agreed that the following work streams should be pursued by the Working Group:

- Meet with town centre cleaning and enforcement staff
- Visit known “hotspots” for graffiti, fly tipping, litter
- Visit household waste recycling centres
- Visit streets that experience problems with bins being left on the footpath and examine how enforcement could be utilised to reduce this
- Meet with Registered Social Landlords about their properties
- Meet with club owners to discuss fly posting and the use of stickers on lamp posts etc
- Meet with traders in the town
- Meet with transport organisations

Andy Ody agreed to provide a list of registered transfer stations to the working group Members.

The Panel discussed where the findings of the working group should be reported and agreed that in the first instance all findings would be reported to the full Panel. They would then decide whether Council or Cabinet were the most appropriate body to receive the report. Councillor Flower reminded Members that any recommendations which had monetary implications would need to be reported to Cabinet and would need to tie into the budget setting process

RESOLVED

That:

- a) Councillor Anson be appointed as lead Member and Councillors Carpenter, Douglas-Maul, Phillips and Shires be appointed as Members of the Street Cleansing Working Group**
- b) The Working Group Terms of Reference be updated to include the items agreed for the work programme**

17/09 INTEGRATED TRANSPORT WORKING GROUP

Terms of Reference for the Integrated Transport Working Group were tabled (annexed) for Members agreement.

The Panel agreed the following Members should represent the Environment Scrutiny and Performance Panel on the Working Group, alongside 3 representatives of the Regeneration Panel:

Councillor C Bott
Councillor B Douglas-Maul
Councillor A Harris

The Panel decided that a briefing with officers should be arranged for the working group, to enable them to scope out a work programme.

RESOLVED

That:

- a) Councillors Bott, Douglas-Maul and Harris be appointed as Members of the Integrated Transport Working Group**
- b) 3 Members of the Regeneration Scrutiny and Performance Panel should also be nominated onto the Integrated Transport Working Group; and**
- c) A briefing should be arranged with officers for the Working Group to scope out a work programme**

18/09 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Chair confirmed the date of the next meeting was 5 October 2009.

The meeting terminated at 7.50pm