

**NEIGHBOURHOODS SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL**

2 August 2007 at 6 pm.

**Panel Members present**

Councillor Towe (Chair)  
Councillor Beeley  
Councillor Beilby  
Councillor Bott  
Councillor J. Phillips  
Councillor Sears

**Portfolio holders present**

Councillor Harris (Transport)

**Also present**

Councillor Griffiths

**Officers present**

Jamie Morris Executive Director  
(Neighbourhoods)  
Carol Mason Community Development  
Manager  
Tim Challans Assistant Director (Leisure,  
Culture and Lifelong Learning)  
Heather Growcott Senior Policy Officer  
Nozmul Hussain Director SWBP  
Alison Jarrett Head of Finance -  
Neighbourhoods  
Paul Leighton Group Leader - Traffic  
Management, UTC & Car Parks  
Glyn Oliver Traffic and Transportation  
Service Manager  
Steve Pretty Head of Engineering and  
Transport  
Keith Stone Assistant Director (Built  
Environment)  
Simon Evans Principal Performance & Scrutiny  
Officer

**13/07 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Councillors Creaney and Mushtaq.

**14/07 SUBSTITUTIONS**

There were no substitution(s) for the duration of this meeting.

**15/07 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP**

Councillors Bott and Towe declared a personal interest with regards to agenda item 10.

## **16/07 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

### **Resolved**

- That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 June 2007, copies having previously been circulated, be approved as a true and accurate record.

## **17/07 TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES**

The panel noted the training opportunities as previously circulated.

## **18/07 FORWARD PLAN**

The forward plan as at 9 July 2007 was submitted: Members discussed items which fell within their remit and agreed to discuss these under the appropriate agenda item later in the meeting.

### **Resolved**

- That the Neighbourhoods Scrutiny and Performance Panel note the forward plan.

## **19/07 CONSULTATION ON DRAFT CAR PARKS STRATEGY**

Paul Leighton tabled the report entitled 'draft parking strategy' and delivered a supplementary presentation (annexed)

Councillor Towe asked whether the consultation would only be web based.

Paul Leighton confirmed that information would also be available in public libraries and this would be promoted through the press. The consultation period lasts 3 months and would also include the LNPs.

Councillor Woodruff asked whether the parking situation at the hospital was being considered within the consultation particularly as a bus service to the hospital had been dropped.

Paul Leighton confirmed that the health authority were part of the working group who were looking at a number of possibilities including temporary parking and sustainable transport services.

Councillor Bott asked whether the council had a policy to re-instate the lorry park.

Paul Leighton stated that there was no formal policy currently but the document contained freight transport plans.

Jamie Morris reminded the panel that the proposed action plan that went to cabinet in June 2007 showed short and medium term planned actions. He asked members if they had any views to offer regarding this.

After a general discussion it was agreed that the LNPs should be invited to offer their views on a local level.

### **Resolved**

- Officers to present the plan at the next cycle of LNP meetings any updated plan to come back to the Neighbourhoods Panel prior to being presented to cabinet.

### **20/07 VERGE PARKING**

Paul Leighton tabled the report entitled 'verge parking framework' and delivered a supplementary presentation (annexed)

Councillor Bott asked how the cost of a dropped kerb in Walsall compared to neighbouring authorities.

Paul Leighton said it would be difficult to give an exact answer as it depends on the width and depth of the kerb. He stated that the council were looking to offer subsidised drop kerb parking to encourage residents to park on their own property and not on verges. He confirmed that Wolverhampton and Dudley currently have free drop kerb scheme available for disabled residents but this was part of a strategic choice made by their Council.

Members asked for further details of the de-criminalised parking proposals and asked why Walsall was not at the forefront of this approach.

Paul Leighton confirmed that de-criminalised parking becomes the responsibility of the council from June 2008. This would mean the council would have responsibility for road safety and congestion and could direct resources to help control this. At present around 60% of councils have responsibility for de-criminalised parking. He confirmed that it has significant financial implications, particularly in the early years, and was not viewed as an urgent priority as the Council had a good partnership arrangement with the Police. However, as Police priorities have changed the council decided to push ahead with the decision to take responsibility from June 2008.

Councillor Phillips asked if consultation was being sought on a local level regarding the potential for new traffic regulations.

Paul Leighton stated that they are currently reviewing existing traffic regulation orders for ongoing relevance, whilst noting locations where potential new orders may assist with the management of traffic congestion in the future. Prior to any new orders being implemented, a full and thorough consultation exercise would be undertaken with local residents. Implementation of new traffic regulation orders has to be done within a legal framework that includes an invitation to object to the proposal

Councillor Towe suggested that the proposed plans for new traffic regulations be put to the LNPs for their comment

Councillor Harris endorsed the idea of full consultation with the LNPs and would actively encourage this amongst his colleagues.

## **Resolved**

- Invite LNPs to present their comments on any proposals for new traffic regulations within district areas prior to the production of a final list.

## **21/07 HIGHWAYS MAINTENANCE PARTNERSHIP – Progress Update**

Keith Stone informed the panel that this was an update to the briefing given to the panel on 12 June 2007. Following member questions he confirmed that there were still a number of options to be considered including the possibility of developing the Norfolk Place site.

## **Resolved**

- The report was noted and Officers will provide the panel with regular updates.

## **22/07 BRIEFING ON WASTE MANAGEMENT**

Keith Stone delivered a presentation on waste management (annexed)

Councillor Towe asked for details about the proposed consultation.

Keith Stone informed the panel that 5000 randomly selected households were going to be consulted and this was going to be further supported with on- line questionnaires and a “door knock” team. If any other individual wanted to offer their input and views they could ring the council and request a leaflet.

Councillor Woodruff suggested that Age Concern is contacted to help get more informed views from the elderly population.

Members asked further questions about facilities for flats and maisonettes.

Heather Growcott said that they were working on proposals for recycling centres for these sites; however there were complications based on the availability of space and the technical difficulties associated with access. She informed the panel that members of the public could ring the Street Pride hotline number and request additional facilities.

Members then had a discussion around the availability of bins and recycling facilities and the level of recycling in each ward.

## **Resolved**

- Officers to provide members with the recycling rates currently achieved by ward.
- Establish a work group on Waste Management to review proposals for the new waste collection service.

## **23/07 UPDATE ON COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS**

Carol Mason informed the panel that this item builds on the work that Scrutiny have already provided into this subject. Further information was requested by Cabinet

regarding the repairs and maintenance. As a result of this an officer will be obtaining an updated costing for work that was previously identified through a conditions survey. It is anticipated that a revised report will then go to Cabinet in September taking into consideration the further information. Panel members requested sight of the draft report and this was agreed.

## **Resolved**

- Officers to circulate the report to members of the Neighbourhoods panel before it goes to cabinet on 17 September

## **24/07 UPDATE ON ILLUMINATIONS STEERING GROUPS**

Tim Challans informed members that the steering group last met on 19 June and had made rapid progress. The illumination would open 19 October – 2 December, the move in schedule would also allow the illuminations to open earlier as it would be darker. The opening times were discussed:

Mon-Fri	6.45pm	-	9.45pm
Sat	6.30pm	-	10pm
Sun	4.30pm	-	Varied closing

The marketing of the event would focus on a drip feed approach and would be targeted through Radio as this was seen as being more effective. A text campaign was also being considered. A brochure is being produced along with a comic. The latter will be produced to help promote the event with the under 8's and this will be distributed to schools, it will include quizzes, popular characters and the group are working with children's services to help promote some of the key children's messages.

Sponsorship has been secured with some key strategic partners including IKEA, Co-op, Walsall FC and the University of Wolverhampton.

Councillor Towe asked whether opening at 6.30pm on Saturday was too late as this meant shoppers would have to go home prior to the illuminations. He also asked whether the group had the buy-in of the town centre manager.

Tim Challans confirmed he would investigate the opening times and report back to the panel and that meetings with the sub group had been held although the town centre manager was yet to attend any of these meetings.

Councillor Towe re-iterated his desire that the town centre manager must be engaged with the illuminations and it had to be his priority. He confirmed that he was employed by Walsall Council and as such had a commitment to ensure the town took advantage of the possibilities the illuminations offered. He then asked whether the corridor of light along Lichfield Street had been agreed.

Tim Challans confirmed that conversations had taken place but technical difficulties were being encountered as the lampposts were not owned by the council. He confirmed that there was a desire to achieve the corridor of lights but needed to explore the technical difficulties in more detail.

Councillor Griffiths confirmed that Amey, who operate the lampposts, charge heavily for any additional items that are hung or wired into the lampposts.

Councillor Towe stated that he wished for the illuminations to be carried right through into the town and felt that it would have a negative impact if they didn't. He asked for an agreement that this would be achieved.

Councillor Bott asked if any deals had been reached with local bus companies regarding transportation to the illuminations.

Tim Challans confirmed that conversations will be taking place.

### **Resolved**

Officers to review the following items and report back to the panel:

- opening and closing times of the illuminations
- hanging of lights along Lichfield Street
- Possible deals with local bus companies

### **25/07 COMMUNITY SAFETY**

Nozmul Hussain informed the panel of the two Government proposals regarding Community Call for Action (CCfA). He suggested that the panel establish a work group to look to see how guidelines could be established for this as procedures need to be developed and the panel will also have a role in the scrutiny of the 6 national minimum standards for the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, in our case the Safer and Stronger Communities Partnership Board.

Simon Evans informed the panel that the CCfA proposed by the Home Office had been paused pending the Sir Ronnie Flanagan review but that any work would still need to tie in with the version proposed by The Department for Communities and Local Government

### **Resolved**

- Establish a work group on Community Call for Action.

### **26/07 DATE OF NEXT MEETING:**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 4 October 2007.

The meeting terminated at 8.35pm

Chair:

Date: