

ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL

Monday 5 October 2009 at 6.00pm

Panel Members Present

Councillor Anson
Councillor Carpenter
Councillor Douglas-Maul
Councillor Phillips
Councillor D Shires
Councillor M Yasin

Portfolio Holders Present

Councillor T Ansell – Transport

Officers Present

Nick Alamanos – Partnership and Performance Officer
Jamie Morris - Executive Director (Neighbourhoods)
Andy Ody – Grounds Services Manager
Paul Screen – Traffic and Transportation Team Leader
Steph Simcox – Service Finance Manager
Angela Walker - Performance and Scrutiny Officer

19/09 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received on behalf of Councillor A Harris and Councillor C Bott for the duration of the meeting. Councillor D Anson was appointed Chair for the duration of the meeting in Councillor Harris's absence.

20/09 SUBSTITUTIONS

There were no substitutions for the duration of the meeting

21/09 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of interest and party whip for the duration of the meeting

22/09 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 28 July 2009, copies having previously been circulated, be approved as a true and accurate record

23/09 INTEGRATED TRANSPORT WORKING GROUP

Councillor Douglas-Maul detailed the progress to date of the Integrated Transport Working Group. Members agreed that the issues raised by the working group were important, in particular the lack of signage and the use of Bradford Place as a bus stop, which was considered dangerous. Members were also concerned about the way taxis parked in the town centre and how double parking was enforced. The Executive Director (Neighbourhoods) agreed that he would make arrangements for an officer from taxi licensing to attend the next working group meeting.

The Portfolio Holder for Transport stated that he would be meeting with officers from Centro and bus operators on 15 October, where discussions on resolving some of the issues raised would take place. He added that to convert the existing bus stops at Bradford Place into a fully functional bus station would cost around £10 million.

24/09 STREET CLEANSING WORKING GROUP

Councillor Anson detailed the progress made by the Street Cleansing Working Group.

Members of the wider Panel added their concerns to those of the working group, on enforcement of litter, household bins being left on pavements and fly tipping. Panel Members suggested camera surveillance should be used to catch fly tippers and any resulting prosecutions should be publicised. The Grounds Services Manager stated that cameras were used in certain locations, however the images produced were rarely clear enough to pick out a vehicle registration number. The Executive Director (Neighbourhoods) added that the press were very co-operative with coverage of such issues and this was essential to conveying the message.

Members also identified chewing gum as a big problem as it was extremely difficult to clear up from pavements. The Grounds Services Manager responded that a trial of 4 boards on which people could stick their chewing gum would commence soon. Trials of this method had been successful in other local authority areas.

25/09 BUDGET PROCESS AND TIMETABLE

The Service Finance Manager explained the forthcoming budget process to the Panel. The Panel would receive draft budget proposals at its 30 November meeting. Any recommendations made by the Panel regarding the budget would be presented to Cabinet, along with all other Scrutiny Panels and the results of other consultation on 13 January 2010. At the 19 January 2010 Environment Scrutiny Panel, Members would receive the final draft budget proposals; and the final Scrutiny budget recommendations would go back to Cabinet on 3 February 2010. The budget was due to be approved by Council on 22 February 2010.

26/09 LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT

The Partnership and Performance Officer informed the Panel of progress against Local Area Agreement (LAA) targets at the end of Quarter 1 2009/10. He highlighted the performance of the 5 indicators that were relevant to the Panel, with 3 of these being green, 1 having no data and therefore having a grey status and 1 having a red status.

Members were pleased to note that household waste had reduced by almost 50%. The Executive Director (Neighbourhoods) stated that a review of waste management arrangements would commence in Autumn 2009 and the findings of this review would be reported back to the Panel, before being presented to Cabinet.

RESOLVED:

That the Environment Scrutiny and Performance Panel will receive the findings

of the waste management review before they are presented to Cabinet

27/09 TOWN CENTRE TRANSPORT PACKAGE

Councillor M Yasin left the meeting at 7.15pm

Paul Screen summarised the results of the recent assessment into the effectiveness and values for money of the Town Centre Transport Package (TCTP) project, which completed behind schedule in May 2009.

Members heard that the main reason for the delay in completing the project was the slow response times and poor performance of statutory undertakers such as British Telecom and Network Rail. Project costs had escalated due to the delay, but remained within the budget, pending resolution of contractor claims.

The ensuing discussion highlighted Members concerns that although the ring road had brought about improvements to journey times, particularly along Pleck Road, the traffic light sequences at various points needed to be reviewed and synchronised appropriately. Paul Screen stated that this was already under investigation.

The chair stated that it was his opinion overall that the ring road had been a success, but had also been a learning curve for the authority.

28/09 GROUNDS MAINTENANCE REVIEW

The Grounds Services Manager presented the report on the changes to the Council's Grounds Maintenance Service, particularly the transfer of the Parks' Maintenance Team from Green Spaces to Street Pride. He stated that it was timely to now review the structure of the service to ensure it reflected the requirements of the new neighbourhood areas.

Members felt that the concept of combining services and hence pooling resources including equipments was good and provided the flexibility to move staff between departments according to requirements.

As part of a wider discussion around parks, Members tended to agree that Park Wardens should be re-introduced to prevent anti-social behaviour in parks. The Executive Director (Neighbourhoods) stated that there was an associated cost with reinstating wardens and that the budget was not available to fund this. New play areas, through the "Playbuilders" project for under 12s were being designed in such a way that the scope for anti-social behaviour would be reduced and that such play areas would be managed by local communities. Community Payback schemes were also discussed to repair damage to parks and cemeteries caused by anti-social behaviour. Members were informed that this was being investigated and that a meeting with the probation service was due to take place.

29/09 WORK PROGRAMME 2009/10

Members agreed the work programme as presented.

30/09 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 16 November 2009.

The meeting terminated at 8.15 pm

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