

## **ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL**

Monday 26 July 2010 at 6.00pm

### **Panel Members Present**

Councillor L. Beeley (Chair)  
Councillor K. Chambers (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor J. Cook  
Councillor A. Griffiths  
Councillor M. Yasin  
Councillor C. Bott

### **Officers Present**

Jamie Morris	Executive Director (Neighbourhood Services)
Mark Holden	Head of Streetpride
Paul Leighton	Group Leader - Traffic Management, UTC & Car Parks
Steph Simcox	Service Accounting & Financial Training Manager

### **Portfolio present**

**Holder** Councillor T. Ansell

### **Other Present**

**Members** Councillor M. Arif

## **07/10 APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received on behalf of Councillors B. Tweddle, D. Anson, and R. Carpenter, also Keith Stone

## **08/10 SUBSTITUTIONS**

There were no substitutions for the duration of the meeting,

## **09/10 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP**

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

## **10/10 MINUTES**

### **RESOLVED:**

**That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 June 2010, copies having previously been circulated, be approved as a true and accurate record.**

## **11/10 PROVISION OF RESIDENTS ONLY PARKING ZONES**

The Chair explained that it was important for the Panel to consider this item out of sequence with the published agenda as members of the public were in attendance and wished to speak in relation to this issue. The Group Leader - Traffic Management, UTC & Car Parks explained that the current policy had been in place for twenty years and officers felt it was important that

it was updated to ensure it was up-to-date and to reflect budgetary constraints. The revised policy had now been developed and officers now wanted to invite responses from the Panel prior it being considered by the Planning Committee. The following is a summary of the report (annexed) and subsequent discussion:

- The purpose of residents only parking zones was to protect the interests of local residents who had been suffering from the impact of parking of vehicles by non-residents. This would be as a consequence of the proximity of these residential roads to football stadia, hospitals and town centres and where non-residents were parking for significant periods of time;
- Each household is entitled to one residents parking permit and one visitors parking permit, each costing £20.00 per year. The cost of one permit equated to two hours enforcement, with the overall cost of introducing the parking zone scheme currently £10,000. A key challenge was determining the appropriate number of permits that could be issued for a street as fluctuations in parking space usage meant that at different times of the day there might be high or low volumes of vehicles parked.
- The key options for consideration included: whether the cost of a permit should be linked with the level of the associated vehicles emissions. This would also support the council's carbon agenda; whether the cost of permits should be linked to the overall cost of scheme; whether consideration should be given to the treatment of carers and health workers visiting a resident; the criteria that should be applied to determine which roads would be treated as a priority within the scheme given the limited funding available. Officers were keen to produce a fair and equitable scheme;
- The Chair invited Councillor Arif and two local residents to explain their concerns regarding the existing parking zone scheme. A range of problems had been experienced in the St Matthew's ward with a number of petitions from local residents requesting the introduction of schemes having been produced and some residents remain waiting for schemes after four years. Issues have included residents returning after delivering their children to school to find no available parking spaces. Elsewhere a limited number of permits would be required on one street to respond to difficulties caused by the presence of a training centre. Councillor Arif suggested that consideration could be given to introducing some permit-holder only parking spaces in a number of the existing free to all car parks;
- The Group Leader - Traffic Management, UTC & Car Parks explained that with limited funding it was not possible for comprehensive parking zone schemes to be introduced in the borough. At present where a potential scheme meets specific criteria it is then entered into a competing budget. Officers were keen to understand in the context of limited financial resources Member's views on what the criteria of the new policy should be and how priority should be established. However, there was some limited additional funding available as the surplus generated through parking enforcement was ring fenced for this type of management of the public highway;
- Members identified a number of key responses to the draft policy: that permit costs should be linked to emissions; that consideration should be given to capping the number of permits to available spaces, although flexibility should be provided to local residents; that the scheme should seek to manage the parking requirements of health care workers and carers visiting residents sympathetically; that consideration should also be given to increasing the cost of permits; that consideration should be given to the provision of some permit-holder only parking in free car parks.
- The Panel agreed with the Executive Director that a revised version of the proposed policy which took account of the comments and proposals made by the Panel be

presented at the next meeting prior to its consideration by the Planning committee.

**RESOLVED:**

**That a revised version of the Residents Only Parking Zones policy reflecting the responses of the Panel be presented at the next meeting.**

**12/10 REPLACEMENT PROGRAMME FOR WHEELED BINS**

The Head of Streetpride introduced the report (annexed) explaining that following the full introduction of green wheeled bins in 1993 there were now around 300,000 bins used in the borough for waste and recycling collections. Some green bins have now been in service for up to eighteen years and it is likely that a significant proportion of the 98,000 introduced are coming to the end of their useful lives, evidenced by small numbers of bins beginning to fail, it would now be necessary to determine the most appropriate solution. The following is a summary of the report (annexed) and subsequent discussion:

- A charging policy for replacement wheeled bins had been previously introduced, with a fee of £18.50 charge made to residents. However, this policy did not tackle the issue of replacement of bins which have reached the end of their useful life;
- At present 5,000 bins can be replaced within existing resources. However, there would not be sufficient funding available to replace all 100,000 bins with an estimated total cost of in excess of £1 million;
- A series of options were presented to the Panel: 1. Continue to charge for replacing such bins; 2. Provide replacement bins in these circumstances free of charge; 3. Introduce a programme of replacing bins when they reach a certain age or condition or; 4. Replace such bins on an ad-hoc basis;
- Members recognised the current budgetary challenges faced by the council but did not think it reasonable to require residents to meet the cost of replacement bins in the event of their current bin reaching the end of its useful life. Officers agreed that there might also be potential difficulties created with a charging policy that might effectively place a value on bins and encourage potential thefts;
- The Panel was unanimous in recommending that bins that have reached the end of their useful life should be replaced on an ad-hoc basis with the council meeting the full cost of replacement.

**RESOLVED:**

**That bins that have reached the end of their useful life should be replaced on an ad-hoc basis with the council meeting the full cost of replacement.**

**13/10 2009/10 FINAL BUDGETARY POSITION PRE-AUDIT**

The Executive Director introduced the report (annexed) explaining that it set out the outturn revenue and capital position for those services within the remit of the Panel. The following is a summary of the report (annexed) and subsequent discussion:

- Table 1 – Financial revenue outturn 2009/10 provided guidance regarding each of the

services annual budget and outturn. These services had delivered an overall net underspend of over £1.1 million. The council had faced an unusual year as a consequence of significant overspends in Children's Services, in relation to the cost of the provision of child protection services, and Social Care and Inclusion's provision of adult social care. To support the council's overall budget position all other services have sought to limit spending and this has been achieved within the Environment portfolio by freezing vacancies and preventing unnecessary spending;

- The waste management service was highlighted where overall performance had exceeded expectations, and savings made through renegotiation of the gate fee for the processing of the borough's waste which had produced a saving in excess of £1 million;
- Other key highlights included savings of over £187,000 as a consequence of vacancy management, car park rates refund and various cost reductions and income; around £147,000 of expenditure was witnessed in roadworks management as a result of the severe winter which resulted in the poor condition of roads and the need to repair extensive numbers of pot-holes;
- The Panel gave an expression of thanks to the Streetpride team for their work in delivering significant budget savings of over £1 million during the 2010/11 financial year.

**THAT:**

**1. the 2009/10 final budgetary position pre-audit report be noted;**

**2. the Panel's thanks for the significant financial savings delivered by the Streetpride team over the 2009/10 financial year.**

#### **14/10 WORK PROGRAMME 2010/11 AND FORWARD PLAN**

The Chair explained that he had agreed to a request made by a Panel Member for a report regarding car parks within the borough, with officers seeking clarification on the specific details required. The Chair explained that the issue of dropped kerbs, including the process, costs and issues in relation to Walsall Housing Group was also to be added to the Panel's work programme.

It was noted that the date of the next meeting was 4 October 2010.

*The meeting terminated at 7.05 p.m.*

Signed:

Date: