

NEIGHBOURHOODS SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL

12 June 2007 at 6 pm.

Panel Members present

Councillor Towe (Chair)
Councillor Creaney (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Beeley
Councillor Beilby
Councillor Bott
Councillor Mushtaq
Councillor J. Phillips
Councillor Sears

Also present

Mr Mike Harris

Officers present

Jamie Morris Executive Director
(Neighbourhoods)
Julie Ball Head of Neighbourhood
Partnerships & Programmes
Tim Challans Assistant Director (Leisure,
Culture and Lifelong Learning)
Nozmul Hussain Director SWBP
Paul Leighton Group Leader - Traffic
Management, UTC & Car Parks
Keith Stone Assistant Director (Built
Environment)
Nikki Ehlen Scrutiny Officer

01/07 APOLOGIES

Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Councillor Woodruff.

02/07 SUBSTITUTIONS

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

03/07 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP

Councillor Bott declared a personal interest with regards to agenda item 9.

04/07 LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Members noted that there were no items for consideration in private session at this meeting.

05/07 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 29 March 2007, copies having previously been circulated, be approved as a true and accurate record.

06/07 TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

The panel noted the training opportunities as previously circulated.

07/07 FORWARD PLAN

The forward plan as at 18 May 2007 was submitted: Members discussed items which fell within their remit.

Keith Stone briefed members on the item 'outcome of street trading review – impact on highways policy'. Members were informed that a policy was needed to give clear guidelines for officers carrying out enforcement duties.

Councillor Phillips asked if the item 'approval to proceed with expressions of interest for alternative waste disposal options', included methods of recycling or simply disposal of waste. Keith Stone stated that this would cover a review of waste disposal options taking account of issues around dry recyclables.

Resolved

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

08/07 UPDATE ON CAR PARKS STRATEGY

Paul Leighton tabled the report entitled 'parking strategy and parking standards' (annexed).

Paul Leighton reminded members of their involvement in decriminalised parking during the previous municipal year and stated that this was an intrinsic part of the car parks strategy. Members were informed that the responsibility for parking enforcement will be coming to the Council in April 2008. A key requirement of this was that a formal car park strategy was in place. Members were informed that the Council had recognised that a more comprehensive strategy was required to allow it to consider the way parking was managed in the future, and in addition to this disabled parking needed to be improved. Members were asked to provide their recommendations on the strategy at its next panel meeting, which would be during the 12 week consultation period.

Councillor Phillips raised a point of clarity about district centres and how they could be consulted. Paul Leighton stated that LNPs would be consulted.

Resolved

That the Neighbourhoods Scrutiny and Performance Panel:

Request the car parks strategy consultation document at its next panel meeting, on 2 August 2007.

09/07 CABINET REPORT ON COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION LEASES

Julie Ball explained that the Cabinet report would no longer be going to Cabinet as intended, as the new leader of the Council was keen to look further at the details of the community association leases. Officers stated that this was viewed as a positive move as it could avoid exposing the Council to the risk of liabilities.

Resolved

That the Neighbourhoods Scrutiny and Performance Panel:

Request the Cabinet report on community association leases prior to submission to Cabinet

10/07 Update on Illuminations steering groups

Councillor Towe informed members that the scrutiny panel had been instrumental in proposing that the dates of the illuminations were changed. Tim Challans advised members that the following four steering groups had been formed and had met:

- Marketing
- Links with the town centre
- Development
- Investment

Members were informed of the activities that had been taking place in the steering group. This included a lantern procession from the art gallery to the illuminations, and coordination with the 'Christmas lights switch on'. Councillor Towe asked if there were still plans for a corridor of lights, Tim Challans explained that it was a possibility but that there were some technical and resource issues associated with this.

Councillor Bott asked if there were any plans to reduce the cost of transport to the illuminations. Tim Challans stated that he would note this point for consideration.

Councillor Phillips asked if the environmental impact had been assessed. Councillor Towe explained that the arboretum users group had been involved at all stages. Tim Challans informed members that bids had been submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund for restoration of the Arboretum which will make the environment impact more subtle.

Members further discussed issues relating to the illuminations, including opening times. Tim Challans explained that the service was considering introducing different zones with themes such as history and art. Also more interactive services, improved amenities, and a better visitor centre.

Members were advised that a business manager had been employed to increase the income potential of the illuminations.

Councillor Towe informed members that a steering group meeting would take place on Tuesday 19 June 2007 in Tameway Tower.

Resolved

That the Neighbourhoods Scrutiny and Performance Panel:

Request regular updates on the work of the illumination steering groups.

11/07 NEIGHBOURHOOD'S WORK PROGRAMME

Jamie Morris presented the Neighbourhoods work programme, and tabled the 'Review of Achievements 2006/07' document (annexed).

Members were informed that the Neighbourhoods directorate senior management team consisted of:

- Julie Ball
- Tim Challans
- Nozmul Hussain
- Keith Stone

Jamie Morris discussed the carry over work items, potential new items and the budgetary pressures. Members expressed a desire to carry over the work items highways maintenance, community associations, and de-criminalised parking.

Community Safety

Nozmul Hussain briefed the panel on the community call for action, and tabled the item 'Community Call for Action: a brief summary' (annexed). Members were advised that where there were complex cases that could not be resolved, the matter may be raised with the appropriate scrutiny panel. The scrutiny panel would conduct their own assessment to determine if it would consider the issue. This would give the scrutiny panel the powers to call any agency to account. Nozmul Hussain stated that he was meeting with constitutional services to discuss the practicalities, and the possibility of holding a pilot.

Highways maintenance

Keith Stone tabled the briefing note on 'Highways Repairs and Maintenance Partnership' (annexed). Members were advised that a project board had been established and Knowles Legal Services had been appointed to provide specialist procurement advice. Members were also advised that arrangements had been put in place to keep staff, and unions informed about progress.

The panel discussed how updates would be received, and decided that regular updates would be provided to the panel and a special meeting could be arranged if necessary to update the panel and seek their views.

Members considered the items for inclusion on the work programme for the 2006/07 municipal year.

Resolved

1. That the work programme be established to include the following issues:

- Community Associations
- Parking strategy
- Community Safety
- Highways maintenance
- Verge parking
- Waste management
- Environmental enforcement

With the potential to review the items 'waste management' and 'community safety'.

2. At the next meeting of the panel, the following items will be considered

- Consultation on the car parks strategy
- An update on the illuminations
- A briefing from the portfolio holder on Waste Management
- An update on the highways maintenance partnership

3. At the subsequent meeting, the following item will be considered

- A briefing from the portfolio holder on Community Safety

12/07 DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 2 August 2007.

The meeting terminated at 7.40 pm.

Chair:

Date: