

ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL

Thursday, 8 September, 2011 AT 6.00 p.m.

Panel Members Present

Councillor R. Carpenter (Chair)
Councillor F. Westley (Vice Chair)
Councillor C. Creaney
Councillor B. Douglas Maul
Councillor S. Fitzpatrick
Councillor G. Illmann-Walker
Councillor M. Munir
Councillor J. Rochelle (Sub for Councillor J. Murray)
Councillor V. Woodruff

Officers Present

Keith Stone -	Assistant Director (Neighbourhood Services)
Steve Pretty –	Head of Service, Engineering and Transportation
Paul Leighton -	Group Leader, Traffic Management / Urban Traffic Control / Parking Services
John Myatt -	Senior Transport Planner, Transportation
Steph Simcox –	Service Accounting & Financial Training Manager
Glyn Oliver –	Engineering and Transportation
Marion Parry –	Highways Inspection
Neil Picken –	Senior Constitutional Services Officer

Representatives Present

Pete Bond –	Centro
Babs Coombes –	Centro
Tim Geoff –	Midland Buses
Andy Foster –	National Express

Portfolio Holders present

Councillor T. Ansell – Transport and Environment

90/11 APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Councillor J. Murray.

91/11 SUBSTITUTIONS

Councillor J. Rochelle was substitute for Councillor J. Murray.

92/11 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP

None.

93/11 MINUTES

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 26 July 2011, a copy having previously been circulated, be approved as a true and accurate record.

94/11 RESPONSE TO PETITION REGARDING THE 333 BUS ROUTE AND DISCUSSION ON TRANSPORTATION

The Panel received a report detailing a response to a petition, presented by Councillor Madeley to Council on 11 July 2011, regarding the withdrawal of the 333 bus service through the Wolverhampton and West Walsall Bus Network Review. The 333 service previously operated between Walsall, Darlaston, Bentley, Lodge Farm and Wolverhampton

Mr Bond and Ms Coombes, representing Centro, were invited to expand on the report. At this juncture a map was circulated which detailed the old 333 bus route. Members were advised that thorough consultation had been undertaken with Members as part of the bus network review. It was this review that led to the 333 route being replaced. It was reported that the purpose of the reviews was to ensure that residents would benefit from new, improved and easy to understand bus networks, providing more frequent services to key destinations. Mr Bond emphasised that the old route was retained however it was provided in different formats. Members were further advised that the number 9 route operated by Midland operated an enhanced service which duplicated much of the old 333 route. An early morning service had also been introduced on this service.

There then followed a period of questioning in relation to the revised service. Members asked whether sufficient publication was made available and also whether enough promotion was carried out advising the public of the revised service. In response, members were assured that minimal complaints had been received since the route was introduced. Awareness of the new routes was key to their success and so this would be improved.

Members asked why services offered throughout the day often involved a number of operators. This often involved additional costs for passengers as many passes/tickets were operator specific and not universal. In response, it

was stated that the deregulated model enabled operators to provide commercial tickets. An nbus ticket was available which enabled a person to use all bus operators however it was acknowledged that this came at a premium. Members were advised that when compared to other areas the cost of an Nbus pass was competitive and a Direct Debit facility was available. In exploring this matter further Members noted that the cost was still higher which was detrimental to those reliant upon public transport. This point was acknowledged however services were reliant on generating sufficient revenue. Should a service prove unable to meet targets then it may be deemed unviable.

With regard to services to Walsall Manor Hospital, the Panel were advised that a request had been received to provide a service from Kings Hill/Pleck to the hospital. This service had been implemented.

During further consideration, a petition was handed in by a resident, Margaret Hayes, requesting improved bus routes for Shelfield and High Heath, no's 98 and 25, to include Fordbrook & Mill Road. The petition was accepted and the Clerk advised that it would be processed accordingly. Various service providers present at the meeting undertook to contact the lady whom submitted the petition directly to try to establish if amendments to the services were viable.

RESOLVED

- 1) That operators liaise with Margaret Hayes to try to establish the viability of adjusting routes 98 and 25 in line with the petition as submitted;
- 2) That the report be noted.

95/11 STREET CLEANSING

The Panel received a report providing a further update on the actions undertaken following the Panels Street Cleansing Working Group which undertook a review in 2010.

The Panel recalled that the Street Cleansing Review Working Group produced a report that which was submitted to the Panel on 4 January 2010. This report made recommendations for improvements to the service. The Panel approved the report and improvements were subsequently approved as investment bids by Cabinet. At the Environment Services Scrutiny and Performance Panel meeting on the 27 April 2010, the Panel received an update report providing detailed progress on the action plan for street cleansing service improvements.

Officers advised the Panel that this report provided a further update and advised Members of key improvements. In relation to removing Graffiti, it was noted that the Council now removed from private properties. Previously graffiti

was only removed from Council owned premises. The service to private property dwellings was free of charge with one day per week allocated to removal.

Officers further advised that the implementation of the Cleaner Greener Investment programme had made a real difference to the Borough.

In relation to the restructure of the service, it was noted that the restructure was almost complete and that greater flexibility was now available as employees could be utilised within any service area.

There then followed a period of questioning by Members in relation to fly tipping and commercial waste. Officers advised that tips would not receive commercial waste and operatives would question those attempting to use the tip if they believed them to be commercial. Improvements in relation to fly tipping had been made as part of the Working Smarter Review. Litter Hit Squads had been trained to gather evidence from Fly Tipping to support prosecutions.

Discussion ensued as to the cleanliness of the Market in Walsall Town Centre. The Panel were assured that the area was in good order and well cleaned at the start of each day. There was however further work required to ensure that the market was kept in good order throughout the day although this was difficult as consumers dropped litter instead of using the bins available.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

96/11 1ST QUARTER FINANCE MONITORING REPORT

The Panel received a report which summarised the predicted revenue and capital position for 2011/12, based on the performance for quarter 1 (1 April to 30 June 2011), for services within the remit of the Environment Scrutiny & Performance Panel.

The Panel noted that the 2011/12 forecasted year end financial position for services under the remit of the Environment Scrutiny & Performance Panel was net revenue overspend of £144k, after the use of approved reserves and carry forwards and action planning. The capital forecast was for a break even position.

RESOLVED

That the 2011/12 forecasted year end financial position for services under the remit of the Environment Scrutiny & Performance Panel be noted.

97/11 2010/11 FINAL BUDGETARY POSITION PRE-AUDIT

The Panel received a report which summarised the outturn revenue and capital position for the year ended 2010/11, subject to external audit, for services within the remit of the Environment Scrutiny and Performance Panel.

The Panel noted that the 2010/11 year end financial position for services under the remit of the Environment Scrutiny and Performance Panel, was a revenue overspend against budget of £0.097m (net of use of earmarked reserves/ carry forwards), and a capital underspend of £0.029m (net of approved slippage into 2011/12).

RESOLVED

That the 2010/11 year end financial position for services under the remit of the Environment Scrutiny and Performance Panel be noted.

98/11 UPDATE ON TOWN CENTRE PARKING WORKING GROUP REPORT

The Panel received a verbal update on the Town Centre Parking Working Group report. The final report was considered and approved by the Panel at its meeting held on 16th June, 2011.

The Panel were advised that Cabinet noted the report on 27th July, 2011 and agreed that a portfolio holder response be provided to the Cabinet meeting to be held on 14th September, 2011. Members were advised that once Cabinet had considered the matter and taken a view as to the recommendations, regular updates on progress of the recommendations would be brought back to the Environment Scrutiny Panel.

RESOLVED

That the update be noted.

99/11 WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD PLAN

RESOLVED

That the Work Programme and Forward Plan be noted.

100/11 WINTER SERVICE WORKING GROUP

The Panel considered the final Working Group’s report of the Winter Service Working Group, established by the Panel at its meeting held on 16th June, 2011.

RESOLVED

- 1) That the Winter Service Working Group’s final report and recommendations be approved.
- 2) That the final report be submitted to Cabinet for consideration.

101/11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the date and time of the next meeting would be 20 October, 2011 at 6.00 p.m.

The meeting closed at 7.45 p.m.

Chair:.....

Date:.....