

## **COMMUNITY SERVICES AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL**

**Tuesday 8 January, 2013 at 6.00 pm in a Conference Room at the Council House**

**Panel Members Present:** Councillor V. Woodruff (Chair)  
Councillor C. Creaney (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor I. Azam  
Councillor B. Douglas-Maul  
Councillor G. Illmann-Walker  
Councillor L. Rattigan

**Portfolio Holders present:** Councillor T. Ansell – Transport and Environment  
Councillor I. Shires – Community Engagement and  
Voluntary Sector

**Officers in Attendance:** Jamie Morris – Executive Director (Neighbourhoods)  
Steve Pretty – Head of Engineering and Transportation  
Mark Holden – Head of Street Pride  
Tracey Evans – Lead Accountant  
John Rosedale – Engineering and Transportation Group  
Leader  
Hannah O’Callaghan – Flood Risk Manager  
Craig Goodall – Committee Business and Governance  
Manager

### **45/13 Apologies**

There were no apologies for absence.

### **46/13 Substitutions**

There were no substitutions for the duration of the meeting.

### **47/13 Declarations of Interest and Party Whip**

There were declarations of interest and party whip for the duration of the meeting.

## 48/13 Minutes

Following the information request at the last meeting it was agreed that the Head of Libraries, Heritage and Arts speak to Councillor G. Illmann-Walker.

### **Resolved**

**That:**

**1) the minutes of the meeting held on 14 November 2012, copies previously been circulated, be approved as a true and accurate record;**

**and;**

**2) the Head of Libraries, Heritage and Arts contact Councillor G. Illmann-Walker regarding E-Books.**

## 49/13 **Draft Revenue Budget 2013/14 and Capital Programme for Leisure and Culture, Public Protection, Community Engagement and Voluntary Sector and Transport and Environment Portfolios**

Members considered the Capital Programme for the Portfolios within their remit namely the Leisure and Culture and Highways and Transportation Portfolios.

The Executive Director (Neighbourhoods) introduced the report and highlighted the principal capital schemes as featured in table 1 and table 2 to the report.

(annexed)

Members of the Panel asked questions on the proposed schemes. The following are the principal points from the ensuing discussion:

- Members suggested that budget consultation with Area Partnership meetings could be valuable;
- Following queries from Members it was reported that support to assist voluntary and community sector organisations applying for external funding was being sought.
- Arboretum play area – match funding from Council funds was required to attract external funding from the Big Lottery, Partners, Land Fill Tax and Section 106 funds;
- Willenhall Cemetery Extension – Members requested oversight of the feasibility study regarding a potential extension. Members noted that care was required to ensure that flood risks to neighbouring properties from the proposed new extension were mitigated.
- Retained Housing Land Allocation money was used to maintain footpaths. Due to budget pressures a high degree of prioritisation was required.
- Low Emissions Towns and Cities was a regional strategy across the West Midlands to tackle air pollution caused by vehicle emissions. The strategy focused on reducing pollution from HGVs, freight vehicles and buses. Members requested a report on the scheme at a future meeting due to its importance to the health of local residents.

- The Council lease some and purchase other vehicles depending on value for money.
- Work was ongoing to prevent chewing gum debris being dropped.
- Members requested oversight of the car park strategy and play strategy once they had been drafted.

### **Resolved**

#### **That:**

- 1. the Capital Programme for Leisure and Culture and Highways and Transportation Portfolios be noted;**

**and;**

- 2. the following items be added to the Panels programme:**

- a) Play Strategy;**
- b) Low Emissions Town and Cities;**
- c) Car Park Strategy;**
- d) Willenhall Lawn Cemetery extension feasibility study (2013/14)**

### **50/13 Flood Risk Management**

Members were informed of the latest position in relation to the Councils duties and responsibilities from the Flood Risk Regulations 2009 and the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.

The Panel received a presentation from the Flood Risk Manager highlighting a number of issues, including: flood issues in Walsall, flood risk management responsibilities, partnership working and progress to date with the local risk management strategy.

The following are the principal points from the ensuing discussion:

- Recurrent flooding from surplus water near Junction 10 at the M6 is a significant ongoing problem. The Head of Engineering and Transportation agreed to investigate this matter and identify potential improvements to the current situation.
- The Environment Agency identified areas at risk of flooding. This could often affect the insurance premium paid by some residents if their property was deemed at risk. Members noted that very often these properties were at little risk of flooding.
- Problems with smells in Walsall town centre were often caused by Seven Trent pumping effluent to water treatment plants. The Panel requested further information on this issue at a future meeting.
- Future funding allocations cannot be confirmed as they would be subject to the annual budget set in process.
- It was agreed that the Flood Risk Manager would share her work programme with Members.

- The Council had a duty to investigate flooding incidents. A procedure on how and why these investigations would take place was currently being drafted.
- Members were keen to see the development of sustainable drainage systems, including rain water gardens.
- Members raised issues with flooding in High Heath Park.

### **Resolved**

#### **That:**

- 1. The Head of Engineering and Transportation investigate flooding from surface water near Junction 10 M6;**
- 2. A report be considered at future meeting on drainage and effluent in Bridge Street, Walsall;**
- 3. The Flood Risk Managers work programme be shared with Members;**  
**and;**
- 4. The Flood Risk Manager contact Councillor L. Rattigan to discuss flooding problems in High Heath Park.**

*At this point the meeting moved into Private Session due to the discussion of exempt information*

### **Resolved:**

#### **That:**

**Members of the public and press be excluded from the meeting due to the discussion of exempt information relating to the financial business or affairs of any particular person (including the person holding that information) as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended)**

***Whilst the item was heard in private session the following is a full and open account of the discussion which took place.***

### **51/13 Recycling**

The Panel considered the report on recycling following problems regarding contamination of recycled material at the last meeting.

The meeting discussed the current and previous contract with Greenstar and Casepak respectively. Members were informed that under the previous contact the Council paid Greenstar to process the recycling. Under the new contact, with Casepak, the Council was paid by the contractor to take local recyclables. A secondary contract was available but not currently used.

The contract was awarded through the Official Journal of European Union procurement rules and had been assessed as offering the best overall package. The rate of contamination for pricing purposes was set in the tender document based on intelligence from the previous contractor. Contamination was now much higher than the rates set out in the contract. The Council was working with Casepak to verify the current situation and identify mutually beneficial ways to move forward. Members of the Cabinet were set to visit the company and the invitation was extended to Panel Members.

Contamination was a problem across the borough but higher in specific areas. Therefore work was ongoing to assist local communities understand what items were recyclable and those that were not. This included leafleting, newspaper adverts and door knocking at 3,000 plus houses.

In addition to these education campaigns refuse collectors had also been instructed not to empty bins if contamination was present. It was acknowledged that with some teams initial non-collection of contaminated bins had been overzealous and following feedback a more measured approach was implemented. The rejection of contaminated bins had substantially improved the quality of materials put out by residents for recycling. However, as the enforcement reduced contamination levels had increased at the recycling plant. This demonstrated that enforcement worked but needed to be maintained in order to be effective.

Members felt that stickers should be placed on each bin in the borough as a constant reminder of what products can be placed in each one.

The Panel acknowledged that there was a minority of householders in the borough who never recycle and questioned what ought to be done to encourage change of habits.

A Member reported that he had received complaints from elderly residents, whose carers had made mistakes which meant that their bins had not been emptied. It was suggested that a communication be sent to local carers network regarding recycling as many carers would live outside the borough and could therefore be unaware of local recycling conventions.

Members requested that the leaflet that had been sent out be amended. Currently batteries were listed as an acceptable item for grey bins when they should really be disposed of through battery collection points due to their high toxicity.

Finally, the Panel requested to review progress with contamination levels with recycling at their meeting on 28 March 2013. At this meeting data was requested regarding the amount of waste being sent to recycling and landfill over a long term period so that trends could be identified. Data was also requested on rejection rates both on street and at Casepak.

**Resolved**

**That:**

1. a further report on contamination and recycling be considered at the 28 March 2013 meeting of the Panel. This should include data on:
  - a) Waste being sent to recycling;
  - b) Rejected recycling on street and by contractors;
  - c) Amount of waste, data sent to landfill;
  - d) Any other data.
2. batteries should not be promoted as an item suitable for grey bins;
3. the Carers Network be contacted regarding the Councils recycling scheme;  
  
and;
4. Panel Members be invited to attend a visit to Casepak.

**52/13 Work Programme 2012/13 and Forward Plan**

**Resolved**

**That:**

1. the following items be considered at the 14 February 2013 meeting of the Panel:
  - a) Quarterly financial monitoring;
  - b) Progress report for the scrap metal working group
  - c) Devolution and area partnership;
  - d) Sports and leisure strategy.
2. the following items be added to the Panels work programme.
  - a) Progress report with the recommendations to the litter working group;
  - b) Low emissions tanks and cities.

**53/13 Date of next meeting**

It was noted the date of next meeting was 14 February 2013.

*There being no further business the meeting terminated at 8.15 pm.*

Signed:

Date: