

## **NEIGHBOURHOODS SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL**

Thursday 2 April 2009 at 6.00 p.m.

**Panel Members present**            Councillor C Towe (Chair)  
   Councillor C Creaney (Vice-Chair)  
   Councillor D. Pitt  
   Councillor I. Robertson  
   Councillor B. Tweddle  
   Councillor V. Woodruff

**Portfolio Holders present**        Councillor R. Walker - Environment

**Officers present**

Jamie Morris	Executive Director – Neighbourhood Services
Julie Gethin	Head of Neighbourhood Partnerships & Programmes
Kevin Kendall	Head of Property Services
Dave Roberts	Waste Services Manager
Craig Goodall	Acting Principal Scrutiny Officer

### **77/08 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Councillors L. Beeley and V. Woodruff.

### **78/08 SUBSTITUTIONS**

Councillor B. Tweddle substituted for Councillor L. Beeley.

### **79/08 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP**

There were no declarations of interest or party whip.

### **80/08 MINUTES**

#### **Resolved**

**That, the minutes of the meeting, as amended, that took place on 19 February 2009, copies having previously been circulated, be approved as a true and accurate record.**

(annexed)

### **81/08 FORWARD PLAN**

#### *15/09 Highways Maintenance Strategy*

Members were informed that the strategy was being updated to reflect new Government initiatives.

## 82/08 COMMUNITY ACTION TASKING – PROGRESS AND UPDATE

The Panel were provided with an overview of the purpose of the Community Action Tasking (CAT) meetings and given an update on progress to date across each Local Neighbourhood Partnership (LNP) area.

Julie Gethin explained that a CAT had been established for each LNP area as a forum where operational staff would meet to share issues that had been raised by the local community and find ways to tackle them.

The Panel outlined the following issues and problems experienced with CAT's:

- Lack of feedback on issues discussed and proposed actions
- Lack of awareness on how to report issues
- Lack of awareness of CAT membership
- Lack of Member engagement at every stage of process

To improve the process Members asked for:

- A designated contact officer for each CAT as used by Manchester City Council
- A generic referral form
- Timely feedback from each meeting

Julie Gethin explained to Members that it was the intention for each CAT to have a designated contact officer, and that feedback from meetings would be provided to local Members after each meeting. In terms of a generic referral form for all the organisations that sat on a CAT this was an aspirational aim in the long term. On this point Clive Wright explained that Walsall Partnership was currently investigating ways that collected data could be held and shared across the borough.

Following a request from the Panel, Julie Gethin agreed to send a copy of the current CAT referral form to all Members.

In closing the item a Member asked for information on how anti-social behaviour orders were communicated to the public.

### **Resolved**

**That:**

- 1. Community Action Tasking referral forms be sent to all Councillors;**
- 2. Members be advised on how anti-social behaviour orders, and other similar community orders, are communicated to the public;**

**and;**

- 3. Community Action Tasking be reviewed during 2009/10.**

## 83/08 NEW WASTE COLLECTION SERVICE

Members considered the implementation of the waste collections service.

Keith Stone reported that the roll out of the new waste collection service had been a success. The success of the implementation had been credited to good planning and a desire by local residents to recycle. This was reflected by the significant number of calls that had been received by residents requesting an increase in their recycling capacity.

The new recycling scheme should see the borough reduce the amount of waste it was sending to landfill by 13,000 tonnes. This would have equated to £1.95m in Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme penalties.

Dave Roberts explained that there had been some teething problems in the early stages of implementation. For example, there were problems with the compaction machines on vehicles which resulted in reduced loads and increased trips to the recycling centre.

The Panel congratulated the staff of the Waste Service for their hard work in successfully implementing the new scheme. The following are the principle points from the ensuing discussion:

- Increased recycling facilities and collections were required for flats.
- There was a need to monitor the recycling capacity for large families.
- Bins were not micro chipped.
- Assistance in moving bins to enable them to be collected was still available.
- There were some concerns about the cost of replacement bins should they be stolen through no fault of the owners. It was suggested that consideration should be given to providing these residents with reconditioned bins.
- Decriminalised parking enforcement wardens should target streets where poor vehicle parking prevented refuse vehicles travelling up streets.
- Consideration should also be given to adding smaller collection vehicles to the refuse fleet to assist collections in narrow streets.
- Composting should be encouraged. The special offer for reduced price compost bins as due to end in September but work was underway to try and continue the scheme.
- Figures on recycling rates across the borough would be available in the autumn.
- The new collection rounds had added 15 minutes to the working day.
- The possibility of including a clause in all Walsall Housing Group tenancies to require all tenants to recycle should be investigated.

The Chair asked the Portfolio Holder for Environment to explain if there were any plans to use enforcement powers on residents who did not recycle. Councillor Walker reported that the Council could use enforcement powers in the future as a means of last resort. Any enforcement would only take place after a support and education programme for offending residents had been offered and delivered.

The Chair invited Steve Mellor from Links to Work (LtoW) to address the Panel.

Steve Mellor explained that the new recycling collection service had had a detrimental impact on recycling collections for LtoW. This was having a negative impact on the company's turnover that was currently threatened with a series of redundancies.

The Panel expressed concern with this situation and requested Councillor Walker assist LtoW to identify new waste streams. Councillor Walker explained that Streetpride had recently met with representatives from LtoW where it had been identified that they could concentrate on commercial collections as the Councils focus was domestic collections. A letter was circulated explaining the potential waste streams that LtoW could diversify into to support their service.

(annexed)

The Chair reported to the Panel that the Health, Social Care and Inclusion Scrutiny and Performance Panel had been considering the wider restructure proposals at LtoW and had made a recommendation for those LtoW staff under threat of redundancy to be given priority in terms of being redeployed.

## **Resolved**

### **That:**

- 1. Members be provided with the recycling rates for Walsall on a round-by-round basis;**
  - 2. investigations take place to establish whether or not Walsall Housing Group tenancy agreements can be amended to include a requirement that all tenants recycle;**
- and;**
- 3. the Panel reconsider the new recycling scheme in September 2009.**

## **84/08 WALSALL PARTNERSHIP**

The Panel were informed of progress in agreeing Local Agreement (LAA) targets with the Government and developing Target Action Plans (TAPs) – the means by which LAA targets are delivered.

Following a question Clive Wright explained that the LAA was monitored through themed groups operated by Walsall Partnership. Individual targets were considered as when information became available to monitor them, for example, at GCSE results time. Proxy measures would also be used to assess the likelihood of achieving the target to assist in identifying the need for interventions, so in the case of school exam results school attendances would be monitored throughout the year.

Members discussed the potential problems that could occur when collecting data that went towards LAA targets.

It was suggested that the LAA should be considered at LNP meetings.

In terms of monitoring the LAA at scrutiny in the next municipal year Clive Wright proposed that the LAA could be monitored on an exception basis and that the Panel may want to consider the Walsall Partnership service plan as part of its work

programme setting meeting to identify any issues they may wish to review. Members were happy with this suggestion.

### **85/08 COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION LEASES**

Members received an update on community association leases.

Kevin Kendall reported that standard lease terms had been agreed but to date no community association had signed up to the new terms, although a handful had expressed an interest. However the scheme had been on hold because there was no available budget to complete condition surveys of buildings before they could be handed to community bodies.

Members expressed concern that situation had been allowed to stagnate for so long and called for finance to be made available for condition surveys could take place to move the issue on.

### **Resolved**

**That finance be made available to allow condition surveys to take place to remove the blockages with Community Association Leases be resolved to allow the new lease scheme to be implemented.**

### **86/08 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting of the Panel was noted as being 30 April 2009.

The meeting terminated at 8.07 p.m.

Chair:

Date: