

## **NEIGHBOURHOODS SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL**

Tuesday 27 November at 6 p.m.

### **Panel Members present**

Councillor Towe  
Councillor Beeley  
Councillor Beilby  
Councillor Bott  
Councillor Sears  
Councillor Woodruff

### **Officers present**

Jamie Morris, Executive Director Neighbourhoods  
Keith Stone, Assistant Director, Built Environment  
Tim Challans, Assistant Director, Leisure, Culture and  
Life-long learning  
Alison Jarrett, Head of Service Finance  
Simon Evans, Performance and Scrutiny Officer

### **41/07 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Councillors Phillips and Andrew.

### **42/07 SUBSTITUTIONS**

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

### **43/07 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP**

There were no declarations of interest or party whip identified at this meeting.

### **44/07 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

Councillor Bott thanked Jamie Morris for responding to his requested for information about George Rose Park. He went on to raise further concerns about the costs for maintenance as there is no cricket pitch. He informed the panel that he had arranged to meet with the Interim Chief Executive on Thursday to discuss this issue.

Jamie Morris offered to meet with Councillor Bott and with the managers involved to review the concerns.

Councillor Towe also asked to be involved in this meeting.

### **Resolved**

- Officers to arrange a meeting with Councillors Bott and Towe to discuss issues further.
- The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as true and accurate.

#### **45/07 CORPORATE FINANCIAL POSITION 2008/09**

Councillor Towe introduced the item by stating that the previous nights Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Panel had voiced concerns as the settlement figure was not yet known. As such it was difficult to arrive at final recommendations. Accordingly the Corporate Services Panel has agreed on a further meeting. He asked the panel to consider whether this was an option the panel would like to consider.

Members agreed to go through the agenda and to see how they felt about the process.

Alison Jarrett gave the presentation and asked members for questions and comments.

(annexed)

Councillor Bott asked whether the replacement funding for NRF would be based on a bidding process.

Alison Jarrett confirmed that the replacement NRF grant would be based on a bidding process.

Councillor Towe asked for the NRF funded schemes to be circulated to members.

#### **Resolved**

- Officers to circulate details of NRF funded schemes.

#### **46/07 NEIGHBOURHOODS FINANCIAL OVERVIEW 2007/08**

Alison Jarrett gave the Neighbourhoods Financial Overview presentation and asked members for questions and comments.

(annexed)

Councillor Towe questioned the extra £45k service charge that New Deal have requested as part of the Blakenall Library contract and asked for clarification.

Alison Jarrett agreed to provide this information to members.

Jamie Morris stated that the largest overspend within neighbourhoods came from the lack of take up of school meals since the introduction of healthier choice options.

Tim Challans confirmed that a number of options are currently being explored to minimise the impact of this overspend. This included reviewing costs, overheads, working with teachers and parents and the introduction of a management fee.

Councillor Woodruff asked whether the council could stop mobile chip vans from trading near schools.

Jamie Morris stated that some schools now require all children, other than those in the sixth form, to be kept in school during lunchtime and asked for member support as governors.

Councillor Towe said it was extremely difficult to stop vendors from trading on such sites. Jamie explained that the main reason for the projected overspend in Engineering & Transportation was the 3-month delay in the introduction of car park fee increases due to the need to fully address the concerns about the impact on council employees.

### **Resolved**

- Officers to provide information to members on the additional service charge for Blakenall Library.

### **47/07 DRAFT NEIGHBOURHOODS BUDGET 2008/09 PROPOSALS**

Alison Jarrett presented the Draft Neighbourhoods proposals for 2008/09 including new investments, efficiencies and further “could do” options and asked members for their comments and questions.

Councillor Towe questioned the costs of lighting within the borough and asked for a review of the need for street lighting on main roads during the evening into morning and the need for traffic lights during the night.

Councillors Beeley and Bott said they disagreed with the idea to turn off the traffic lights in the evening and said street lights offer an excellent way of reducing crime.

Councillor Towe said he felt it was a good idea to consider radical ideas and asked for officers to explore the impact of efficiency savings for turning off street lighting and traffic lights during the evening but acknowledged members concerns and asked for the impact assessment to include all information relating to potential accident rates.

Councillor Bott asked what consultation had taken place with WHG to ensure residents are encouraged to recycle and also passed his thanks on to an individual officer for their commitment and work in this area.

Jamie Morris stated that officers were meeting with senior managers from WHG and would raise this issue with them. However, he reminded members that communication had already gone out to residents via a WHG newsletter to which the Council had contributed.

Councillor Bott asked how section 106 monies were apportioned across roles as he thought the monies could only be spent in the relevant areas where they were designated.

Jamie Morris acknowledged this point but stated that the monies were aggregated to fund a post to pay for the services identified as section 106 services.

### **Resolved**

- Officers to prepare a briefing note for the Neighbourhoods Panel meeting in January 2008 exploring the possibility of turning off street lighting and traffic lights on selected main roads during the late evening and early morning, to include a cost breakdown for supplying electricity for these activities across the borough in general and at Junction 10 of the M6 in particular.

- Of the 24 investment bids, 4 not supported, 1 partially supported and 1 request for further information.
- Chair of the Panel to write to the Regeneration Scrutiny and Performance Panel and request them to review how section 106 monies are spent across the borough.
- All proposals presented in efficiencies fees and charges approved.
- Councillor Towe to present the findings of the Neighbourhoods SPP to the Corporate Services SPP.
- Officers to investigate scope to enforce or, where necessary, amend tenancy agreements in areas of WHG Housing to encourage recycling take-up.

**48/07 DATE OF NEXT MEETING:**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as

The meeting terminated at 8.40 pm.

Chair:

Date: