

ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL

Thursday, 12 January, 2012 at 6.00 p.m. in a Conference Room at the Council House, Lichfield Street, Walsall.

Panel Members Present

Councillor R. Carpenter (Chair)
Councillor F. Westley (Vice-Chair)
Councillor D. Barker
Councillor C. Creaney
Councillor B. Douglas-Maul
Councillor G. Illmann-Walker
Councillor J. Murray

Portfolio Holder present

Councillor T. Ansell

Officers Present

Jamie Morris - Executive Director, Neighbourhood Services
Steve Pretty - Engineering and Transportation
Steph Simcox - Service Accountant and Financial Training Manager
Neil Picken - Senior Democratic Services Officer

119/12 APOLOGIES

Apologies for non-attendance were received on behalf of Councillors S. Fitzpatrick and V. Woodruff.

120/12 SUBSTITUTIONS

Councillor Barker substituted for Councillor Woodruff.

121/12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP

Councillor Westley declared an prejudicial interest in Item 9 as he is employed as a Civil Enforcement Officer.

122/12 MINUTES

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 28 November, 2011, a copy having previously been circulated, be approved as a true and accurate record.

123/12 DRAFT REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET PROPOSALS 2012/13 FOR CONSULTATION AND CORPORATE FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE FROM 2011/12

Members received a report as submitted to Cabinet at its meeting on 14 December, 2011 outlining changes from the first draft budget to Cabinet on 14 September, 2011 and subsequent amendments in the second draft budget report to Cabinet on 9 November, 2011.

Members noted that there was a change to proposed revenue savings options and investment 2012/13 in relation to temporary repairs. This had previously been reduced from 24 hours to a 28 hour response in accordance with national guidelines. This had been revised to state that temporary repairs would be reduced from 24 hours to a five day response.

A discussion ensued in relation to car parking. Members were advised that revenue generated from car parking had not been as high as expected which had resulted in a projected net overspend for the car parks service of £150k. Members sought and were given assurances that this deficit was being reduced on a monthly basis and officers were confident that the vast majority of the overspend, if not all, would be mitigated with actions being taken by the directorate as whole.

Resolved

That the report, as submitted to Cabinet on 14 December, 2011, detailing the second draft Revenue and Capital Budget Proposals 2012/13, be noted.

124/12 BUDGET CONSULTATION FEEDBACK 2012/13

Members received a report summarising the findings from the budget consultation to support decision making regarding the Council's draft budget proposals for 2012/13.

Resolved

That the report, as submitted to Cabinet on 14 December, 2011, detailing Budget Consultation Feedback, be noted;

125/12 ESTABLISHMENT OF A LITTERING WORKING GROUP

Members considered a report setting out the proposed scope and objectives of a Littering Working Group.

It was suggested that the objective of the working group should be amended to read:-

To review the operation and effectiveness of the street cleansing and other relevant services and Partners to promote cleaner streets.

The Clerk to the meeting sought nominations for membership of the Working Group and it was,

Resolved

1. That the Littering Working Group be established
2. That the following Member be appointed to the Working Group:-

Councillor Carpenter
Councillor Creaney
Councillor S. Fitzpatrick
Councillor Illmann-Walker

3. That the objective of the working group be amended to read:-
 - To review the operation and effectiveness of the street cleansing and other relevant services and Partners to promote cleaner streets.

126/12 FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT

Members received a report advising the Panel of the Council's duties and responsibilities under the Flood Risk Regulations 2009 and the Floods Water Management Act 2010.

It was stated that the Environment Agency had approved Walsall's Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment . The Council were seeking to appoint a Flood Risk to take this work forward.

Resolved

1. That the requirements of the Flood Risk Regulations 2009 and the Floods and Water Management Act 2010 establishing Walsall Council as a Lead Local Flood Authority and establishing specific duties, be noted;
2. That it be noted that the Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment, submitted to the Environment Agency in June, 2011 had been approved;

127/12 MONITORING OF TOWN CENTRE PARKING WORKING GROUP

Members received a report providing an update on the recommendations made by the Working Group to reduce parking charges on certain car parks and implementing permit holder/pay and display parking charges in Frederick Street, Charles Street and Brook Street car parks.

Discussion took place on whether it would be viable to introduce a one hour parking charge. Officers advised that a parking review had been undertaken which suggested that a one hour charge was not favoured. Due to this the Council reduced the overall cost of parking for two hours to £1.40. Walsall also had a number of on street parking spaces which allowed those only wishing to park for a short period of time to do so. This meant that they would

not be required to pay a full £1.40 as the cost of on street parking was 20p for 10 minutes. This ensured a balanced approach to parking within Walsall.

Members were advised that a review of car parking provision was being undertaken to ensure that a more strategic approach was taken with future delivery.

In closing, it was stated that with an overall budget of £1.5 million it was important that sufficient parking charges were in place in order to provide for the management of car parks within the Borough.

Resolved

That the report be noted.

128/12 SCRAP METAL WORKING GROUP UPDATE

Members received a report detailing the work undertaken by the scrap metal working group. The report also sought for approval of the working groups initiation document.

It was advised that a number of meetings had taken place with witnesses from the scrap metal industry, the public and the police. It was anticipated that the working groups final report would be ready for submission to the Environment Scrutiny and Performance Panel at its meeting scheduled to be held on 9 February, 2012.

Resolved

1. That the initiation document be approved;
2. That the update be noted.

129/12 WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD PLAN

The Executive Director (Environment) suggested that Members may wish to consider the Tarmac contract which was due for renewal. Having given the matter consideration it was,

Resolved

That a special meeting be established in April, 2012 to review the Tarmac contract.

130/12 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the date and time of the next meeting would be 9 February, 2012 at 6.00 p.m.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7.20 p.m.

Chair:.....

Date:.....