

## **ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL**

Thursday, 9 February, 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 C. Creaney  
Councillor B. Douglas-Maul  
Councillor S. Fitzpatrick  
Councillor G. Illmann-Walker  
Councillor J. Murray

### **Portfolio Holder present**

Councillor T. Ansell – Transport and Environment  
Councillor A. Harris – Leisure and Culture

### **Officers Present**

Jamie Morris - Executive Director, Neighbourhood Services  
Keith Stone – Assistant Director, Neighbourhood Services  
Steph Simcox - Service Accountant and Financial Training Manager  
Neil Picken - Senior Democratic Services Officer

## **131/12 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for non-attendance were received on behalf of Councillors V. Woodruff and M. Munir.

## **132/12 SUBSTITUTIONS**

None.

## **133/12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP**

There were no declarations of interest or party whip.

## **134/12 MINUTES**

### **Resolved**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 January, 2012, a copy having previously been circulated, be approved as a true and accurate record.

## **135/12 THIRD QUARTER FINANCE MONITORING REPORT**

The Panel considered a report summarising the predicted revenue and capital position for 2011/12, based on the performance for quarter 3 (1 April to 31 December, 2011), for services within the remit of the Environment Scrutiny and Performance Panel.

The Service Accountant and Financial Training Manager reported that there was an underspend of £122k.

There then followed a discussion on the reasons for the capital variances. In response, it was stated that there was no spend attached to the hot wash as it was no longer required. The same was true for the costs attached to the wind turbine. The remainder of the variances were due to re-phasing projects. Officers undertook to provide further commentary on these issues on future reports.

### **Resolved**

That it be noted that the 2011/12 forecasted year end financial position for services under the remit of the Environment Scrutiny and Performance Panel was an underspend of £133k, after the use of approved reserves and carry forwards into 2011/12 and action planning and that the capital forecast was an underspend of £592k for which slippage of £448k would be requested into 2012/13.

## **136/12 UPDATE ON DOG FOULING**

The Panel received a report confirming the actions which had been undertaken following the Dog Fouling Working Group's recommendations to Cabinet in March, 2011.

Members were updated on each of the thirteen recommendations. A discussion was held on the progress of acquiring dog stencils. These would be used to spray a warning sign in hotspot areas. Members raised concern that the stencils should have been circulated to Members some time ago but appeared to have been lost or fallen into disuse. In response, Mr. Elrington stated that ten new stencils had been received which were made of a different material. The new stencils differed to the old stencils as they were flexible and easier to use. The new design ensured that overspray should not occur, as this was a criticism of the old stencils. The stencils would be used by the Environmental Health service and Park Rangers. Members were pleased to see that the stencils had arrived but questioned the cost of the original stencils which were no longer being used. Officers undertook to provide a response directly in writing to Members of the Panel.

Members stressed the importance of taking enforcement action through to prosecution. Officers were in agreement with Members in relation to this matter and advised that a clear message needed to be delivered to show that the Council would take action against individuals who do not comply with the rules. The Council had trained Park Wardens to issue enforcement notices although police presence was required to ensure the co operation of the public. Members suggested that those responsible for issuing

enforcement notices should be fitted with web cams to capture evidence. Officers undertook to investigate this matter further.

In relation to publicity, members suggested that given the serious implications of toxocara the leaflet should be endorsed by the NHS and placed in doctors waiting rooms and hospitals etc. They also expressed the view that the image on the leaflet should be more shocking to achieve greater impact on those whom viewed it.

## **Resolved**

- 1) That the actions taken to date be noted;
- 2) That Officers undertake to advise Members of the cost of the original stencils.

## **137/12 SCRAP METAL WORKING GROUP**

Members received a report seeking approval of the Scrap Metal Working Group final report.

The Clerk to the meeting indicated that there had been a further amendment (annexed) to WHG's submission which had been circulated at the meeting.

There then followed a discussion on the final report to which a number of suggested amendments were made as follows:-

- Recommendation 10 be amended to read:-
  - 10 That Walsall Council seek to establish a regional scrap metal working group whose purpose would be to join forces with our neighbouring authorities to seek collaboration on all aspects of strategy including combating metal theft, introducing a licensing scheme and byelaws, as proposed within Walsall;**
- Additional recommendations to state:-
  - 16 That registered social landlords be urged to enforce breaches of tenancy conditions and that they be fully supported where necessary by the relevant enforcement powers of the Council and partners.**
  - 23 That an update be submitted to the Environment Scrutiny and Performance Panel in June, 2012.**

Members considered the report and recommended that, subject to the inclusion of the above amendments that the report be approved for submission to Cabinet at its next available meeting.

## **Resolved**

That, subject to the inclusion of the amendments and additional recommendations below that the Scrap Metal working group final report be approved for submission to Cabinet at its next available meeting:-

**10 That Walsall Council seek to establish a regional scrap metal working group whose purpose would be to join forces with our neighbouring authorities to seek collaboration on all aspects of strategy including combating metal theft, introducing a licensing scheme and byelaws, as proposed within Walsall;**

- Additional recommendations to state:-

**17 That registered social landlords be urged to enforce breaches of tenancy conditions and that they be fully supported where necessary by the relevant enforcement powers of the Council and partners.**

**23 That an update be submitted to the Environment Scrutiny and Performance Panel in June, 2012.**

## **138/12 LITTERING WORKING GROUP - UPDATE**

The Panel received an update on the progress made by the Littering Working Group .

Members noted that the Working Group had held its first meeting and discussed the following matters:-

- legislation in relation to litter,
- enforcement powers,
- budget management
- staffing.

## **Resolved**

That the update be noted.

## **139/12 WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD PLAN**

The Executive Director (Neighbourhoods) advised that the Panel had previously requested that the Tarmac Contract be considered at a meeting to take place in April, 2012. It was suggested that this item be considered by the Panel at an earlier date to enable any comments to be included prior to submission to Cabinet due to take place on 4<sup>th</sup> April, 2012.

## **Resolved**

- 1) That the meeting to consider the Tarmac contract be convened week commencing 19 March, 2012

2) That the report be noted.

**140/12 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the date and time of the next meeting would be 5 April, 2012 at 6.00 p.m.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7.25 p.m.

Chair:.....

Date:.....