

## **ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES AND WASTE POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP**

MEETING, 30TH JULY 2014

Present – Councillors Irving (Chairman), Allen, C. Burrows (as deputy for Councillor Sherrington), Chadwick, Darvesh, Martin, Peel and A. S. Walsh.

### Officers

Ms. D. Ball                                      Assistant Director Waste and Fleet Management

Mr. J. Davies                                    Senior Engineering Manager

Mr. I. D. Mulholland                      Principal Democratic Services Officer

Councillor Irving in the Chair

Apologies for absence were submitted by Councillors Bashir-Ismaila and Sherrington.

### **1. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Housing Policy Development Group held on 1<sup>st</sup> april, 2014 were submitted and signed as a correct record.

### **2. PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE POLICY FOR DIRECTION SIGNING TO INDIVIDUAL PREMISES INCLUDING TOURISM SIGNS**

The Director of Environmental Services submitted a report which sought members views on a possible amendment to the policy regarding signing to places of worship in Bolton.

By way of background information members were advised that in October, 2013 the Executive Cabinet Member Environmental Services approved the Policy for Direction Signing to Individual Premises Including Tourism Signs. The aim of the Policy was to provide a framework to aid decisions, which could be used when requests for signing were received. In developing the policy there was an aim not to make it too rigid and build in some flexibility when applying it to requests.

A recent request however, for signage to a church had identified that the flexibility built in to the policy was confusing to requestors and did not provide sufficient clarity in the decision making process. In relation to places of worship the policy stated:

Signs would only be allowed if the place of worship was located off well signed routes, regularly attended by a substantial number of people unfamiliar with the area.

It was accepted that given the wording within the Policy any decision made relating to the signage of places of worship would be subjective, based on officer knowledge and experience. It was also evident that the wording of the policy in relation to places of worship and similarly for community centres needed to be made clearer and more definitive to those requesting signage.

The report went on to explain about the difficulty in setting specific criteria levels and whether signage to places of worship and community centres and halls should not be provided.

Members were advised that it was not intended that any amendment should be applied retrospectively and existing signs removed, although any signs that need replacing through maintenance would be subject to any new policy and would therefore not be replaced.

In conclusion the non provision of such signs was in line with the Department for Transport policy on the decluttering of streets.

Members in their discussions referred to –

- discussing requests with ward Councillors;
- possible criteria;
- allowing signage in some circumstances; and
- matters around the possible retention of the geographical element of the Policy.

It was agreed that the Executive Cabinet Member for Environmental Services be recommended to amend the Policy in relation to places of worship, community centres and halls in that signage to these places would only be permitted if they were located on an unclassified route.

(The meeting started at 5.30pm and finished at 6.13pm)