

EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEETING, 19TH JULY, 2007

Present – Councillors Hussain (Chairman), Hollick (Vice-Chairman), P. Brierley, Burrows, Darvesh, Mrs. Fairclough, Gradwell, Hamilton, Hayes, Hornby, J. Walsh and Williamson.

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| Councillor Morris | - | Vision Steering Group Representative |
| Councillor Clare | - | Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive Nominated Spokesperson for Bolton Council |

Also in attendance:

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| Mr. D. Grogan | - | Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services (Democratic Services) |
| Ms. C. James | - | Head of Strategic Projects |
| Mr. I.D. Mulholland | - | Scrutiny Team Leader |

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Bashir-Ismail and Rushton.

Councillor Hussain in the Chair.

1. REMIT OF THE COMMITTEE

The Director of Legal and Democratic Services submitted a report which set out the powers and duties of the External Organisations Scrutiny Committee for the 2007/08 Municipal Year.

Resolved – That the Committee's remit be noted.

2. EXTRACT OF PROCEEDINGS OF A MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – MOOR LANE TOILETS

An extract of the proceedings of a meeting of the Environmental Services Scrutiny Committee held on 27th June, 2007 were submitted in relation to the refurbishment of Moor Lane Public Conveniences and the reasons behind the delay in the completion of the project as managed by the Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive (GMPTE).

The Council's nominated spokesperson on the GMPTE, Councillor Clare, attended the meeting.

By way of background information, Councillor Clare explained that the Moor Lane public male and female toilets had undergone a substantial refurbishment which commenced at the beginning of May, 2007. The condition of the toilets prior to the refurbishment had deteriorated substantially and they were not fit for purpose. In partnership with the GMPTE, a project to invest in the facility was established and GMPTE let a contract for the work to be undertaken, with Bolton Council contributing 40% of the refurbishment costs.

Members were advised that the scheme had been project managed by GMPTE. The toilets were closed on 1st May and it was anticipated that following a snagging check with GMPTE and Bolton Council officers and the construction contractor, that the work would be completely finished the week beginning 16th July, providing a provisional opening to the public the week beginning 23rd July. Thus, the project had been completed within the original timescale.

Councillor Clare indicated that the new toilets would be comprehensively improved over what had existed before.

In terms of the cost of the project, Members were informed that this had come in at approximately £15,000 less than the original capital estimate which meant that Bolton's share (40%) of the scheme would now be in the order of £80,000 which was being funded from Bolton Council's allocation of the Transport Infrastructure Fund for 2007/08. Furthermore, in future, the routine maintenance and cleaning would be provided by the Environmental Services Department.

In their deliberations, Members discussed the possibility for this type of project to take place again in the near future and the need for adequate reporting and monitoring arrangements to be put in place.

Resolved – (i) That Councillor Clare be thanked for her explanation as to the current position regarding the Moor Lane Toilets.

(ii) That Councillor Clare be asked to attend a future meeting of this Committee in order to provide Members with details of the Council's contribution to the ongoing revenue costs of the Moor Lane Toilets.

(iii) That the Director of Environmental Services be asked to prepare a report for submission to a future meeting detailing other jointly managed projects in this regard and projects managed by the GMPTE alone currently being undertaken and the monitoring arrangements that are in place.

3. APPOINTMENTS MADE BY COUNCIL TO OUTSIDE BODIES

The Director of Legal and Democratic Services submitted a report which set out a possible process for a review of the way the Council engaged with partner bodies and organisations.

By way of background information, the report reminded Members that at its initial informal meeting held on 7th June, 2007 the Committee agreed, inter alia, that work should be commenced with regard to the way the Council engaged with outside bodies and specifically the role of elected Members appointed, nominated or co-opted onto those bodies.

The report went on to indicate the possible scope of a review and also initial thinking on how this would be undertaken.

Members discussed the possibility of undertaking the review via a series of reports to future meetings of this Committee.

Resolved – That a report be presented to a future meeting of this Committee setting out the present position in respect of appointments made by the Council to outside bodies.

4. ISSUES IN RELATION TO JOINT AUTHORITIES

The Director of Legal and Democratic Services submitted a report which advised Members of the appointments made by Council to joint authorities together with details of the financial contributions made. Also explained was the proposal in future to apprise Members with details of any decisions taken by the joint authority which impacted on Bolton Council.

Also circulated were extracts from the Greater Manchester Association of Metropolitan Treasurers setting out facts, figures and finance, 2006/07 in respect of Greater Manchester Police, County Fire Service, Passenger Transport, Waste Disposal and other shared services.

Resolved – That the position be noted.

5. LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN HEALTH BILL – DEVELOPING SCRUTINY

The Director of Legal and Democratic Services submitted a report which set out for Members the current thinking around the development of the Scrutiny function as the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill continued its path through Parliament.

The report particularly updated the Committee in terms of:-

- Neighbourhood Scrutiny;
- Scrutiny and Community Engagement;
- Scrutiny of the Local Area Agreement;
- Community Call for Action; and

Sustainable Community Strategies.

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Resolved – (i) That the update be welcomed.

(ii) That an update be given to a future meeting of this Committee on proposals announced for the abolition of the North West Regional Assembly and to devolve power to the Government Office North West and Local Councils.

6. LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

Ms. Carol James, Head of Strategic Projects, gave a presentation in order to provide the Committee with details of the work of the Local Strategic Partnership.

By way of background information, the Committee was advised that local partners had come together to consider Borough issues and to start to develop a vision for the future in 1996. This followed on from good practice identified in other major cities. Following this, in 1997, the Vision for the Future Steering Group and other partnerships were formed.

The Committee was further advised that the Local Government Act, 2000 required every area to establish a Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and each area to prepare a Community Strategy – a plan for the area.

In terms of what the Government expected of the LSPs, Ms. James indicated that included were:-

- Bring together at local level different parts of the public sector, private, business, community and voluntary sectors, so that different initiatives and services supported each other and worked together; and
- Operated at a level which enabled strategic decisions to be taken but was close enough to individual neighbourhoods to allow actions to be

determined at community levels.

With regard to Bolton in 2003, the main aim of the Vision Partnership was the regeneration of communities, the priority areas being:-

- building on strong local communities;
- improving the image and strengthening pride in the Borough;
- improving health, wellbeing and the quality of life;
- enhancing local living and the environment;
- improving accessibility;
- lifelong learning and developing potential;
- improving safety, reducing crime and tackling drugs;
- investing in the future – children and young people; and
- improving the economy and employment opportunities.

Ms. James went on to outline the current drivers for change in respect of Bolton's refreshed Vision for 2007-2017:-

- national developments;
- the White Paper, Strong and Prosperous Communities; and
- Local Area Agreements.

Members were advised that the refreshed vision currently being worked on was, 'A place where everyone had an improved quality of life and the confidence to achieve their ambitions,'

with a focus on two aims:-

- 1) To narrow the gap between the most and least well off; and
- 2) To ensure economic prosperity.

Furthermore, outcomes would be achieved via Bolton's Local Area Agreement and through partnership arrangements.

The Committee was further advised that the role of the refreshed Vision Partnership was:-

- Establish and promote a realistic shared 'vision' for Bolton Community Strategy;
- Vision Steering Group manages the performance of the Community Strategy;
- Each partnership oversees the performance of outcomes in their themed areas;
- Provide a network for all sectors and stakeholders, to work together for the benefit of the Borough;
- Responsibility to promote community cohesion and value diversity; and
- Promotion of trust and openness and a participative approach from all members and partnerships.

In terms of the next stage, Ms. James indicated that high level partnerships would be developed and consideration given to the sub/project groups beneath. Following this updated terms of reference, protocols and memberships would be agreed.

Resolved – (i) That the presentation on the background to the work of the Local Strategic Partnership and the work being undertaken to refresh the Partnership be noted.

(ii) That the Committee be provided with regular updates in terms of the progress of the work to refresh the Local Strategic Partnership.

(The meeting started at 2.00 p.m. and ended at 3.20 p.m.)