

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEETING, 20th AUGUST, 2012

Present – Councillors Kell (Vice-Chairman), Allen, Burrows, Critchley, S. Harkin, Pickup, Spencer, Silvester, A. S. Walsh and Wild.

Lay Members

Ms J. Horan - BATRA

Also in Attendance

Councillor Peel - The Executive Cabinet Member for Environment, Regulatory Services and Skills

Councillor J Byrne - Cabinet Member, Economy, Housing and Skills

Councillor Chadwick - Cabinet Member, Highways and Transport

Mr. S. Young - Assistant Director Highways and Business Development

Ms. D. Ball - Assistant Director Waste and Fleet Management

Ms. J. Pollard - Head of Service Finance and Business Development

Mr. I. D. Mulholland - Principal Democratic Services Officer

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillors Sherrington as Cabinet Member for Waste and Recycling and Challender and Ibrahim.

Councillor Kell in the Chair.

7. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 26th June, 2012 were submitted.

Resolved –That the minutes be received and signed as a correct record.

8. THE WORK PROGRAMME

The Deputy Chief Executive Submitted a report which set out details of the proposed work programme for the remainder of the Municipal Year.

Members were reminded that following the discussions that had taken place at the last meeting and relevant consultation, the draft work programme had been prepared for the approval of the Committee.

Resolved- (i) That approval be given to the work programme, as outlined in the report.

(ii) That in respect of the item, Street Lighting and Carbon Management, scheduled for consideration at the next meeting, the Director of Environmental Services be asked to include in the report matters around the effects of reduced street lighting including, complaints, crime and the savings made.

9. THE TOWN CENTRE TRANSPORT STRATEGY

The Director of Environmental Services submitted a report and Mr. Stephen Young, Assistant Director Highways and Business Development gave a presentation which advised Members of the current status of the Town Centre Transport Strategy.

By way of background information, the report explained that in 2005 the Executive Member for Environmental Services adopted the Bolton Town Centre Transport Strategy (TCTS) as

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part of the wider Bolton Town Centre Action Framework. Since then the Strategy had been used as a basis to:

- provide strategic guidance for detailed design work being carried out on transport schemes in Bolton Town Centre;
- be the catalyst for detailed studies resulting in policy documents about issues such as Parking, the Public Realm Implementation Framework and Intelligent Transport Systems; and
- identify Town Centre projects to be included in the Highways Capital Programme.

Over the last seven years work had been carried out on planning, programming and building the necessary transport infrastructure works to deliver the Strategy. The progress was reported by dividing the Town Centre into sectors and producing detailed Highway Policy Notes that were developed for each area and brought forward for approval by the Executive Member for Environmental Services.

.A TCTS update and future proposals presentation was delivered to an “all Member briefing” on the 16th November 2011. This was followed by a Policy Development Group on the 27th February where issues raised at the “all Member meeting” were answered/resolved/updated.

The Executive Member Environmental Services approved the recommendations developed through the two meetings above on 26th March 2012.

In terms of the Strategy for the next 5 years, the Committee was informed that it was likely to be one of containment and consolidation. Transport projects were more likely to be about traffic management, maintenance and small scale public realm work.

The recommendations to the Executive Member for Environmental Services developed through wide Member involvement at the two meetings noted above were to:

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- (a) Note the progress made in delivering the Bolton Town Centre Transport Strategy;
- (b) Approve that the original principles of the Town Centre Transport Strategy should remain unchanged but the Council should further develop it by:
 - extending Public Realm improvements to meet further development needs;
 - developing further the use of Intelligent Transport Systems;
 - continuing to improve Town Centre Signage; and
 - publishing an updated version of the Transport Strategy on the internet.
- (c) Agree to the update of the Town Centre Transport Master Plan to recognise known changes to town centre development proposals; and
- (d) Agree to the development of Transport Sector Plans for Regeneration Areas including the introduction of protected highway alignments.

In conclusion, the report advised that over the next five years the most significant transport development to take place in the town centre would be the construction of the Bus / Rail Interchange. Much of the strategy transport infrastructure was already in place so when the Interchange and associated highway infrastructure was complete, it was likely that the main emphasis would be the redevelopment of the various town centre regeneration sites.

Members in their deliberations referred to the following –

- vehicles using the route of Crown Street to Deansgate to Bridge Street within the restriction period;

- matters concerning the current position regarding the Southern Link Road;
- issues relating to the car parking strategy;
- the Interchange and the services that would stop there in the future;
- the traffic lights being erected on Deansgate / Blackhorse Street; and
- bus lane enforcement cameras.

Resolved – (i) That the update presentation on the Town Centre Transport Strategy be noted.

(ii) That this Committee be notified of more detail in terms of the Crown Street / Deansgate/ Bridge Street restricted traffic area, the services that will use the Interchange facility in the future and the use of traffic lights at Deansgate / Blackhorse Street.

10. ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES FINANCIAL AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT, 2011/12

The Director of Environmental Services submitted a report which advised the Committee of information relating to the financial and performance final outturn position for the Environmental Services portfolio for the 2011/12 financial year.

The report highlighted that the revenue expenditure was underspent against the budget by £72,000. In terms of Capital Expenditure this totalled for the year £11.678 m against a programme of £21,432.

With regard to the reserves position, the report explained that the Department's deficit reserve had been repaid in full and a general reserve of £72,000 had been created.

In terms of efficiency targets, the Committee was advised that for the Department those were £3,794,000 which included demand led of £200,000 to repay the deficit reserve. All planned efficiencies were achieved.

In conclusion, the report explained that specific areas of financial risk related to loss of income due to the economic downturn, energy prices for street lighting and winter services.

Members in their discussions referred to –

- matters concerning the opportunities for external business owing to the savings that need to be made in the Department; and
- further to paragraph 6.2.1, relating to waste and recycling, the positive recycling statistics were discussed and the envisaged performance for 2012/13.

Resolved – (i) That the financial and performance report be noted.

(ii) That a report be submitted to a future meeting of this Committee providing details of the opportunities the Department has for undertaking external business.

11. DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION SERVICES PERFORMANCE AND FINANCE – FINAL OUTTURN REPORT, 2011/12

The Director of Development and Regeneration submitted a report which advised the Committee with details of the financial and performance and outturn position for Development and Regeneration including Housing Services for the 2011/12 financial year.

With regard to Revenue expenditure, the final outturn position was an underspend of £526,000. The Department had repaid the deficit reserve as planned.

In terms of capital expenditure, it was indicated that the year totalled £13,398,000 against a programme of £16,227,000.

The Department's Deficit Reserves had been repaid in full and a general reserve of £238,173 had been created.

Members were also informed that the budgeted efficiency savings for the Department were £1,093,000 and all planned efficiencies were achieved.

In conclusion, the report mentioned that specific areas of risk related to loss of income due to the economic downturn, loss of grants and occupancy within Benjamin Court.

Members in their discussions referred to the following –

- paragraph 7.2.4 in the report relating to housing advice and in particular the reform around housing benefit and welfare being proposed and the need for Members to be aware of the changes; and
- paragraph 7.2.5 in the report and the disappointing percentage of minor planning applications determined within eight weeks.

Resolved- That the financial and performance report be noted.

12. MEMBERS' BUSINESS

The Committee considered a members Question in accordance with Standing Order 36, which had been submitted by Councillor Silvester.

Q.

Bolton Council was one of the Councils who signed up to the Nottingham Declaration which was a great success.

The Local Government Association was now launching a follow up initiative called 'Climate Local' which would see councils

committing to their own local actions to reduce carbon emissions and improve their ability to protect people and services from the anticipated changes in the weather.

As part of the new scheme, local authorities would be sharing ideas and advice on the best ways to save money on their gas and electricity use and ensure there were preparations in place for keeping to a minimum disruption caused by extreme weather like snow, floods and heat waves.

The Climate Local Commitment had the support of the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) , Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC) and the Environment Agency.

So far 18 councils had signalled their intent to sign up to 'Climate Local', with many more expected over the coming months.

Would officers here at Bolton Council look into the merits of signing up to 'Climate Local' perhaps via the appropriate Policy Development Group or directly to this Scrutiny Committee with a report when Committee looks at Carbon Management and Sustainability at the meeting scheduled in the Work Programme ?'

A.

The answer to the question was prepared by the Director of Environmental Services in consultation with the Executive Cabinet Member for Environment, Regulatory Services and Skills.

The Climate Local scheme is something that the Greater Manchester authorities were aware of and a commitment had been made at AGMA level to work with the LGA on how this could be implemented in the region. As this work was currently in progress it was suggested that this particular initiative be included in the presentation on Sustainable Development which the Committee had identified as a future agenda item.

The Committee also received extracts of other meetings of the Council relevant to the remit of this Committee:-

- (a) Executive Cabinet Member for Environment, Regulatory Services and Skills held on 2nd July and 13th August, 2012.
- (b) Waste, Recycling, Highways and Transport Policy Development group held on 20th June and 24th July, 2012.

Further to minute 20, Gully Cover Replacement, of the meeting of the Executive Cabinet Member for Environment, Regulatory Services and Skills held on 13th August, 2012, Members referred to the possible use of rubber compound gully covers.

Resolved – (i) That the Members question and the answer provided be noted and that an item on Sustainable Development be included in the work programme which also incorporates matters around the, Climate Local Scheme.

(ii) That the minutes of the various meetings be noted.

(The meeting started at 5.00 p.m. and finished at 5.50pm)

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NOTES