

PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEETING, 26TH JUNE, 2019

Present – Councillors Bagnall (Chairman), Weatherby (Vice-Chairman), Abdullah, Allen, Brady, Bullock, Connor, Evans, Gibbon, Mistry (as deputy for Councillor Darvesh), McKeon, Peel, Radcliffe, Silvester, Walsh and Wilkinson.

Also in Attendance

Councillor Cox	Executive Cabinet Member Deputy Leader
Councillor Haslam	Executive Cabinet Member highways and Transport
Councillor Galloway	Executive Cabinet Member Environmental Regulatory Services
Councillor Hewitt	Executive Cabinet Member Strategic Housing and Planning
Councillor Warren	Executive Cabinet Member Environmental Services Delivery
Ms. H. Gorman	Borough Solicitor
Mrs. D. Ball	Deputy Director of Place
Mr. J. Morrissy	Assistant Director Policy, Projects and Public Sector Reform
Mr. I. D. Mulholland	Principal Democratic Services Officer

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor Darvesh.

Councillor Bagnall in the Chair.

1. MINUTES

Resolved – That the minutes of the Environmental Services Scrutiny Committee held on 2nd April, 2019 be agreed and signed as a correct record, subject to the inclusion of

Councillors Critchley and Harkin in the, Vote of Thanks as they were retiring as Members of Council .

2. THE COMMITTEE REMIT

The Committee were apprised of the remit for the 2019/20 municipal Year and the dates of future meetings.

Resolved – That the position be noted.

3. THE COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received presentations on the key issues facing the Place Department and members engaged in discussions in order to formulate a robust work programme for the ensuing Municipal Year.

The following items were put forward as possible items for Scrutiny from the three member discussion tables, viz –

- Business plan for income generation to protect the social value of services such as building cleaning and catering
- Criteria for fixing highways defects / potholes
- Clean air plans
- Future of leisure trust and leisure provision in the Borough including alternative delivery models
- Whole area of waste management including charges, criteria for extra capacity, fly tips, unadopted land etc
- Bowling greens and allotments – future provision
- Future regeneration of townships
- Gritting
- Skills audit to match future jobs
- Parking charges
- Public rights of way – knotweed
- Grass cutting
- Value for money on using sub-contractors
- Borough wide regeneration
- Shop mobility system
- Waste
- Highways – road markings

- Cycling routes – Beelines
- Bowling Greens
- Neighbourhood Watch
- Leisure Services – information on current arrangements and opportunities in the future. Possible establishment of a Scrutiny Panel.
- Trading accounts / non-statutory services – detailed profit and loss accounts to help focus improvement
- Waste and recycling – plastics. Commercial waste
- Highways - quality of repairs. Latest techniques ? repair schedule
- GM Initiatives – clean air. Cycle plan
- Grounds maintenance – knotweed. Outsourcing ? Community ? Grass cutting .
- Regeneration – impact on existing infrastructure. Bolton and towns.

Resolved – That the discussions and suggestions be noted and that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman together with relevant officers discuss the formulation of a draft work programme for presentation to the next Committee meeting.

4. MEMBERS' BUSINESS

The following questions were submitted by Councillor Silvester in accordance with Standing Order 36 and the response was prepared by The Director of Place.

Q1.

Following the Leader of the Council's announcement at full Council on Wednesday 19th June 2019, that there would be a budget of £10million for Highways schemes and each Ward would receive £500,000 of this budget, can the Executive Cabinet Member please explain if this £10million budget was extra monies? As the Leader of the Council had said that he wished to be open and transparent, it would be very helpful for members to know, because we had no details of how this £10million budget had been found, if this budget of £10million was extra monies, where those monies had been found from? Have those monies come from external funding from the

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Government for example or from any other external outside organisation or partnership budget? If internal existing Council monies, had those monies come from other existing budgets which had been combined or monies previously allocated to other projects that would now not take place? The Leader of the Council also indicated that each Ward would only receive those monies in the Autumn. Why was this and why could the Executive Cabinet Member not allocate these monies to each Ward now instead of waiting several months to allocate the monies? Were those monies not available to allocate at this present time? '

A.

Details of the proposal would be included in a paper for Cabinet decision on 8th July. The Executive Cabinet Member Deputy Leader further confirmed this was additional Council funding made up of a combination of capital receipts and borrowing. It was not a replacement for funding allocated to projects previously. The intention was to allow Ward Members to consider an extended list of priority schemes that the Highways & Engineering team prepare and suggest others they might wish to be considered for the funding. Any non-priority schemes would then have to be assessed and included in final proposals that would be approved in September. No additional funding could be allocated until after the 8th July Cabinet decision.

Q2.

The previous Labour Cabinet announced at the Budget meeting in February of this year, that an extra £2million budget would be made available for Highways and it was stated at the budget meeting that Labour would allocate £100,000 per Ward of this budget. At full Council last week on Wednesday 19th June 2019, the Executive Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport confirmed that each Ward would indeed receive £100,000 of this budget. Was this £2million budget to be incorporated into the £10million budget that the Leader of the

Council announced at full Council last week or not because if not, can the Executive Cabinet Member therefore confirm that each Ward would receive in total £600,000 for Highways. '

A.

The £2m was not part of the additional £10m of investment in Highways. The allocation to Wards will be subject to a final decision on the Highways Capital Budget that would come to a future meeting of the Executive Cabinet Member Highways & Transportation.

Q3.

It was illegal for taxi and minicab drivers to refuse access to assistance dog owners unless they have a valid medical exemption certificate. Any refusal to do this could have a devastating effect on assistance dog owners independence and wellbeing; so it was vital that local authorities in England had a robust policy that ensured their drivers uphold this law. Under the Equality Act 2010, licensed drivers of taxis and private hire vehicles were under a duty to carry passengers with guide, hearing and other assistance dogs, at no extra charge. What was the situation in this Borough and how was this Council monitoring compliance with the Act '.

A.

The Council haven't issued any medical exemption certificates for refusing access to assistance dogs therefore all Bolton licensed private hire and hackney carriage drivers have a legal obligation to take assistance dog owners and their dogs on a journey.

The Council don't have a policy specifically covering the Equality Act, however we enforced the provisions of the Act and investigate all complaints which we receive and we consider action in accordance with our enforcement policy which you could access via the link below.

<http://www.bolton.gov.uk/sites/DocumentCentre/Documents/Enforcement%20Policy%202015%20final.pdf>

The Council don't receive a huge number of complaints:

2015 – 3
2016 – 2
2017 – 1
2018 – 2

The Council prosecuted two drivers in 2015 for refusing to take assistance dogs – one driver pleaded guilty, the other was found guilty at Magistrates and Crown Court. We also took them before Committee, one was revoked (other issues as well as this offence), the other was given a two weeks suspension and required to sit training in relation to disability awareness which he completed.

The minutes of various meetings relevant to the remit of this Committee were also submitted, viz –

- Executive Cabinet Member for Environmental Services held on 8th April, 2019;
- Executive Cabinet Member Culture and Sport held on 8th April, 2019;
- Executive Cabinet Member Highways and Transport held on 8th April, 2019.

Resolved – (i) That the members questions and responses be noted.

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

(The meeting started at 6.00pm and finished at 7.00pm)