

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP

MEETING, 14TH MARCH, 2011

Present – Councillors Zaman (Chairman), Cottam, Critchley, Peel, A. Walsh, J. Walsh (as deputy for Councillor Mrs Fairclough) and D. Wilkinson.

Also in Attendance

Mr. M. Cox	-	Director of Environmental Services
Mr. S. Young	-	Assistant Director, Highways and Business Support
Mr J. Kelly	-	Head of Highways and Engineering Development Services
Mr D. Houghton	-	Head of Highways and Engineering Delivery Services
Mr K. Roberts	-	Head of Service Community Services
Mr J. Davies	-	Senior Engineering Manager – Transportation and Road Safety
Mr M. Atherton	-	Senior Engineering Manager – Business and Performance Manager
Mr P. Worthington	-	Assistant Manager - Lighting
Mr D. Shepherd	-	Group Accountant
Mrs S Bailey	-	Principal Democratic Services Officer

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Darvesh (Vice-Chairman) and Mrs Fairclough.

Councillor Zaman in the Chair

43. MINUTES

The minutes of the proceedings of the meeting of the Group held on 14th February, 2011 were submitted and signed as a correct record.

44. HIGHWAYS MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME TO ADDRESS DETERIORATION FOLLOWING SEVERE WINTER WEATHER

The Director of Environmental Services submitted a report which outlined proposals for the allocation of an additional one off sum of £2m from the Executive to address the deterioration of the roads following the severe winter weather.

The report advised members that the impact of this year's severe winter weather on the Council's road network, the Executive had authorised a one off allocation to be made available to the Environmental Services Department to minimise the impact on road users and the community.

An indicative programme of works was attached to the report at Appendix A which had been developed from the latest available asset intelligence supported by engineering judgement. It focused on the Council's strategic classified network and busy arterial roads including bus and gritting routes.

It was proposed that the funding should be allocated as follows:

- £1.1m – partial reconstruction
- £700k – structural patching
- £200k – potholes/minor repairs

It was agreed that the Executive Member for Environmental Services be recommended to approve the additional £2m highway maintenance programme to address deterioration as a result of the severe winter weather, as outlined at Appendix A to the report.

45. HIGHWAYS CAPITAL PROGRAMME SETTLEMENT – UPDATE

Mr J. Kelly, Head of Highways and Engineering Development Services, gave a presentation in relation to the Highways Capital Programme 2011/12 settlement.

Members were provided with an update on the progress of the 2010/11 Programme, as follows:

- PRN Maintenance – the programme had been successfully implemented within budget with savings helping to deliver additional programmes and assist in the severe weather delivery;
- Bridges and Structures – the programme would be delivered on time and within budget;
- Local Safety and Minor Works – the programme had been delivered on time and within budget with a small carry forward to 2011/12; and
- Transport Infrastructure Fund - £2.5m of schemes had been delivered. A balance of £5.5m could be carried forward to 2011/12.

With regard to the 2011/12 settlement, the presentation highlighted the following issues:

- there was no Section 31 Grant funding for bridge strengthening schemes on the Primary Route Network;
- all Integrated Transport Block Funding retained by the Combined Authority for use in the GM Transport Fund - no Local Safety or Minor Works Schemes;
- TIF ended March 2011 but the balance of funding could now be carried over into 2011/12.

The presentation then went on to detail the proposed overall allocation and the allocation in terms of maintenance.

With regard to the future of the Highways Capital Programme beyond 2011/12, members were advised that

- Highways, Bridges and Street Lighting Maintenance funding levels would reduce further over the next few years;
- there would be no Integrated Transport Block funding until 2014/15 at the earliest;
- there would be no TIF funding beyond 2011/12;
- the Local Sustainable Transport Fund would be through CA / TfGM;
- some highway improvements would be undertaken as part of the new Bolton Interchange 2013/14.

It was agreed that Mr Kelly be thanked for his informative presentation.

46. STREET LIGHTING CARBON REDUCTION AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROPOSALS

The Director of Environmental Services submitted a report which sought members' views on a proposed initiative to reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions in street lighting through an invest to save project funded via prudential borrowing.

The report advised members of the serious challenges faced by the Council in terms of energy costs, carbon reduction targets and potential carbon tax issues.

As a result, proposals to use emerging technologies as part of an energy saving lighting programme had been approved by the Executive Member in September, 2009. This had allowed for the use of LED replacements, a Central Management System and highly reflective materials in place of illuminated bollards/signs.

Since that time, it had become more apparent that street lighting was a key contributor to the Council's Carbon Management Plan and therefore major savings in energy and carbon emissions could be made in this area. However, this could only be achieved with an appropriate invest to save initiative.

In this regard, the report went on to outline proposals that would enable this to be achieved. Details of schemes in other areas were provided where the introduction of lighting programmes was bringing about significant energy savings and CO2 reductions. Similar schemes could be introduced in Bolton where 100% of the lighting stock was CMS/LED compatible. In addition:

- varying lighting levels to 50% would deliver savings in energy of approximately £330k per annum;
- CO2 savings of 2473 tonnes per annum were achievable;
- estimated combined energy and operational savings of £777k were possible; and
- there would be reduced future liability on Carbon Tax of £89k.

The report went on to outline proposals and a business case for the introduction of a street lighting carbon reduction and energy plan over 4 phases which were summarised in table 3 of the report. The cost of implementing the scheme had been calculated based on prudential borrowing of £9.8m over a 7 year period. Full details of the costings, delivery and payback timescales over the individual phases were provided in the report.

The report outlined the range of social and financial efficiencies that would be achieved by the project, as follows:

- asset improvements;
- improved control of the network;
- better energy consumption reporting;
- improved lighting for communities;
- delivery of the scheme would require internal staffing and would sustain employment;
- the initiative had been costed on an invest to save basis;
- the project would ensure compliance with National Standards and Guidelines.

In summary, the report put forward the following 3 options for consideration:

Option 1 – continue with existing arrangements using maintenance programmes to deliver efficiencies over a period of time – this would result in the continuation of high energy charges and failure to achieve carbon reduction targets;

Option 2 – secure the full value of the initiative through borrowing and deliver as a one off project – this would result in significant local disruption but deliver savings over a faster time period but would not allow benefits from technological advancements in the next few years; and

Option 3 – draw down funding on a phased basis over a prolonged period of time focusing efforts on areas of high gain and quick wins, as shown in table 3 – the last phase would be completed in years 5-7 allowing the Council to take advantage of technological developments in variable lighting and the dimming of LED lanterns.

Following consideration of the report, members felt that the phased approach offered in option 3 was the best route for the Council. However, further details

on how that option would be progressed would need to be reported back to this Group.

It was also felt that any areas suggested for dimming and trimming of lighting would need to be fully considered and deemed to be appropriate to ensure that health and safety were maintained.

It was agreed that the Executive Member be recommended to approve Option 3, with dimming and trimming to be undertaken in appropriate areas only, and that a report back on how the option would be progressed to being submitted to a future meeting of this Group.

47. BEREAVEMENT SERVICES STRATEGY

The Director of Environmental Services submitted a report which updated members on the stakeholder engagement exercise recently undertaken in respect of the Bereavement Services Strategy.

Members were reminded that over the past 18 months, work had been ongoing to develop a strategy for Bereavement Services which described a vision for the service and presented a prioritised action plan in response to key issues. Part of this process had been to engage with stakeholders on the main elements of the strategy. These had included service users, funeral directors, Faith groups and staff.

In this regard, the report updated members on the stakeholder exercise that had taken place over the last few months and sought views on a proposed on-line survey for bereavement services.

In order to reach a wider audience of service users, it was also proposed to undertake a general public survey to supplement the feedback already received from key stakeholders. A copy of the survey questionnaire was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

It was intended to carry out the survey in June/July, 2011 and the questionnaire would be supplemented by a newsletter providing more detail around the key service issues together with a press statement to support the initiative.

Findings from the focus groups and the public survey would then be reported back to members in the summer to help to finalise the future strategy.

Members discussed the survey and made a number of observations. It was felt that the survey should be publicised at the Area Forums to reach a wider audience. In addition, it was felt that the wording of question 20 should be slightly amended.

It was agreed that the on line survey in respect of Bereavement Services, as detailed in the report and with the amendment to question 20, be supported and that Area Forums be used to publicise the questionnaire.

48. STRATEGIC BUDGET REPORT – ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES – 2011/12 TO 2015/16

A joint report of the Directors of Environmental Services and Corporate Resources was submitted which set out details of the proposed Environmental Services Strategic Budget 2011/2012 to 2015/2016.

The report represented the final stage of the Corporate Business Planning Process for 2011/12 and outlined the revenue budget for the Environmental Services Department. In addition, the report included the Capital Programme bid for the period 2011/12 to 2015/16 and information relating to the Department's staffing establishment.

The report explained that the Executive Member had considered reports on 26th and 27th July, 2010, 22nd and 23rd November, 2010 and 24th and 25th January, 2011 regarding the savings and efficiency options relating to the Environmental Services Department. The report had identified demand led growth requirements and options available to meet corporate financial guidance.

The report advised that since that report was presented, the Authority had received its financial settlement and the corporate financial position had been identified.

The proposed Revenue Budget for Environmental Services Department, prior to the implementation of strategic redirection options, amounted to £31,162,000. Table one of the report provided an objective analysis of the budget with the information analysed by Standard Spending Accounts, Trading Accounts, Markets and unapportionable overheads.

In addition to the budget analysed in the report, reference was made to a budget relating to Environmental Services which was being held corporately. During the next financial year, a virement was expected for the Working Neighbourhood Fund. A budget of £100,000 had been identified following a review of the activities currently funded by the Working Neighbourhood Fund. This budget had been identified for behaviour change in areas such as Neighbourhood Services and the Waste Service.

Other changes from the previous budget report in January, 2011 included additional savings and efficiencies for 2011/12 of £1,400,000 and additional capital allocation of £2,000,000. Full details of these were provided in the report.

The report went on to outline the Strategic Resource Bid for 2011/12. Appendix C to the report provided an analysis of proposed redirections which amounted to £3,705,000, as follows:-

STRATEGIC BUDGET REDIRECTIONS

Division	Description of Option	FTE Change	£'000
Efficiency Options			
Waste and Fleet Management	Joint Transport and Authority Working	0	90
		0	90
Policy and Performance	Management of Cash Limited Budgets	0	50
		0	50
Community Services	Social Needs Transport Review	0	25
		0	25
Total	Total Efficiency Options	0	165
Increase in Fees and Charges			
Community Services	Income Optimisation	0	75
		0	75
	Total Increase in Fees and Charges	0	75
Service Redirections			
Highways and Engineering	Full Service Review	-68	1,370
	Additional amount brought forward		875
		-68	2245
Neighbourhood Services	Full Service Review	-80	605
	Additional amount brought forward		400
		-80	1,005
	Suspension of Green Waste	-9	90

Waste and Fleet Management			
	Vacancy Management	-8	125
		-17	215
	Total Service Redirections	-165	3,465
	Total Strategic Redirections	-165	3,705

The proposed strategic budget for the Environmental Services Department, incorporating the redirection target, amounted to £27,457,000. Details of the efficiency savings, increases in fees and charges and services redirections were also provided.

Appendix A to the report outlined a detailed variance of analysis of changes between the original budget for 2010/11 and the proposed budget for 2011/12.

Appendix B to the report provided a summary subjective analysis of the budget.

Appendix D to the report detailed the Department's Capital Programme Bid which amounted to £8,361,000 in the 2011/2012 Financial Year.

Appendix E to the report provided information relating to the current staffing establishment of the Department.

A further report would be shared with members if additional options needed to be found.

It was agreed that the Executive Members for Environmental Services and Cleaner, Greener, Safer be recommended to agree the proposed Revenue Budget of £31,162,000 prior to the adoption of strategic options and to approve the strategic redirection options outlined in Appendix C to the report totalling £3,705,000 which would result in the Strategic Budget amounting to £27,457,000.

(The meeting started at 1.30pm and finished at 3.10pm)