

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES, REGENERATION, HOUSING AND SKILLS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

22 JUNE 2011

Present – Councillors R Allen (deputy for Woodward), Burrows, Chadwick, Critchley (Chairman), Mrs Fairclough (Vice-Chairman) Harkin, Mrs Kellett, Lord, Morgan, Pickup, Silvester and P Wild.

Also in Attendance

Councillor Sherrington	-	Executive Member, Cleaner, Greener, Safer
Councillor Zaman	-	Executive Member, Environmental Services
Mr M Cox	-	Director of Environmental Services
Mr A Donaldson	-	Assistant Director, Policy, Partnerships Communications and Chief Officer Support
Mr T Hill	-	Chief Planning Officer
Mrs S Wootton	-	Senior Scrutiny Officer

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Francis, D A Wilkinson and Woodward. Also, an apology for absence had been submitted by Joan Horan, representative for BATRA.

Councillor Critchley in the Chair

1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the proceedings of the meeting of the Environmental Services Scrutiny Committee held on 6th April 2011 were submitted.

Further to minute 53, Monitoring of Decisions, Members highlighted that although the SCOOT Traffic Management System was operational in some areas of the Borough, it would be useful if further information could be made available.

Resolved – (i) That the minutes of the proceedings of the Committee be signed as a correct record

(ii) That a briefing note be brought to a future meeting of this Committee regarding the SCOOT Traffic Management System that was operation in Bolton.

2. DECISION MONITORING REPORT

The Director of the Chief Executive's Department submitted a report detailing the progress of decisions previously taken by the two Scrutiny Committees that had now amalgamated to form this Committee.

Members were advised that although there were many parts of the report that required a response, this would be done in due course.

Resolved – (i) That the report be noted

(ii) That responses be made to the outstanding issues for the forthcoming meeting of this Committee.

3. THE COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

a) THE COMMITTEE REMIT 2011/2012

The Director of the Chief Executive's Department submitted a report which set out the powers and duties of the Environmental Services, Regeneration, Housing and Skills Scrutiny Committee for 2011/2012.

Members were informed that although the town centre development no longer falls within the remit of this Scrutiny Committee as it falls under the Leader of the Council's portfolio, there will still be an update in the form of a short briefing note which will come to this meeting for noting purposes and not for scrutinising.

Resolved – That the Committee Remit be noted

b). WORK PROGRAMME FROM 2011/2012

The Director of the Chief Executive's Department submitted a report which puts forward a list of issues that the Environmental Services Scrutiny Committee looked at in the last Municipal Year in 2010/2010.

Members were advised that although this document was from last year's Scrutiny Committee, it would be useful when deciding on what items should appear on the new Work Programme.

Resolved – That the report be noted

c) PRESENTATION FROM THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Mr Malcolm Cox, Director of Environmental Services, attended the meeting to provide Members of the Scrutiny Committee with a presentation that outlined the "Big Issues" the Department were currently experiencing to allow Members to discuss and decide on relevant items for the Committee's Work Programme.

By way of introduction, Mr Cox explained the Department's purpose in-so-far as "To improve the Quality of Life for the Bolton Family." The vision for the Department was "To make Bolton's local areas cleaner, safer and greener places that local people own were proud of and in which they wanted to spend their time."

The presentation outlines the Department's strategic priorities:-

- Financial Management Culture;
- Savings and Efficiencies;
- Reputation Management and Political Awareness;
- People Management;
- Environmental Cleanliness and Behaviour Change;
- Queens Park Re-Development;
- Waste Minimisation and Recycling;
- Asset Management;
- Town Centre Transport Strategy and Southern Link Road;
- City Region and Transport Governance;
- Traded Services Income (Schools, Bolton at Home); and
- Bolton Market Redevelopment.

With reference to the Neighbourhood Services Behaviour Change, Members were informed that much education and in particular enforcement had taken place around cigarette litter, for which there had been public support for and was very encouraging. The same applied to dog fouling, which was still proving to be a problem around many areas of the borough, however, there had been an advertising campaign regarding this, allowing dog owners to be aware of the consequences of dog fouling. The Big Bolton Tidy Up had also proved to be a very successful campaign, with an educational stance prevailing over enforcement. Much work had been undertaken with Faith Leaders to help reduce the amount of litter around particular areas, which had proven to be useful and successful.

Service Standards, in terms of Cleansing and Grounds Maintenance formed part of the presentation, with much focus being given to cleanliness around the borough and how often this was being carried out. The Town Centre areas were cleaned daily, a three weekly clean of the outer town centre areas and either six or three times a year within the suburban areas. Additional information was provided regarding the main mowing regimes in 2010 and for 2011. Mowing had been carried out every two weeks, depending on the weather. The Department was currently looking at where mowing was required and how often and by doing so, adhering to the requests of Members and the general public.

The Queens Park Development had taken shape with helpful photos within the presentation to illustrate the point, following the £4 million Lottery Grant that had been received. The Dobson Bridge had received significant re-development, as well as the trees and bushes which surrounded the lake and had been trimmed back to appear tidier. The lodge roof had also been given attention and was now fixed and completed, as was the play area within Queens Park.

Members were informed of the Waste Strategy Minimisation and Recycling Initiatives and the rising costs associated with this. The Greater Manchester Waste Disposal Authority deals with waste throughout the Greater Manchester region and due to the amount of waste being dealt with, the cost seemingly had to rise, with the same applying to Landfill Tax. Waste bins formed part of the presentation and Members were appraised with information regarding the amount of waste that had been decreasing, in particular by 5000 tonnes in 2009/2010 from the black bin, 1800

tonnes in paper recycling, 8000 tonnes in co-mingled bins and 11000 tonnes as part of green waste. The next steps for this section of the Department, was to produce a five year Waste Strategy which would document how Bolton would be dealing with its waste, whilst reducing its costs as well as the implementation of changes agreed during the course of 2011.

A range of strategic priorities was also highlighted for the Highways and Engineering Division of the Department, of which covered the following:-

- Asset Management;
- Town Centre Transport Strategy and Southern Link Road; and
- City Region and Transport Governance.

Services that were provided within Community Services included the following:-

- School Meals Service;
- Building Cleaning;
- Vulnerable Persons Transport;
- Supported Employment;
- Security Services;
- Bereavement Services (including looking at the future of video streaming funerals); and
- Markets.

The final part of the presentation focussed on the Bolton Market Re-Development Actions:-

- Brand creation and re-enforcement;
- Play to strengths;
- Reduce costs;
- Increase occupancy;
- Raise awareness; and
- Generate a partnership approach.

In relation to the Bolton Market Re-Development, proposals would be submitted to the relevant Policy Development Group and Executive Member to ensure they are carried through. In terms of the other markets around the borough, Farnworth market could be subjected to a re-development proposal and it was currently losing money and not being well frequented. The market at Westhoughton had work recently completed and it was seemingly doing very well, however, much of the building that housed the market in Horwich was destroyed by a fire and it was highly likely that the cost to re-build it was unaffordable at this time.

Throughout the presentation, Members highlighted and discussed the following issues:-

- Cleanliness and how behavioural change could be the way forward;
- Realisation that the Council had fewer resources, including staff;

- Possibility of trialling a test bed of groundcover plants across the borough;
- Improving the water quality of the river at Middlebrook through closer working with the Environment Agency;
- Improving the traffic flow at junctions; and
- Cigarette litter around the entrances of the Town Hall.

Resolved – That the useful presentation be noted.

d) Issues to be taken into account when putting forward Work Programme items

The Director of the Chief Executive's Department submitted a brief report outlining the system which Members should follow when discussing items to appear on the Work Programme. It also highlighted the Council's objectives which should also be considered in Member's deliberations.

Resolved – That report be noted.

e) Discussion on items to be included on the Work Programme for 2011/2012

The Director of the Chief Executive's Department submitted a report which detailed the criteria that should be taken into consideration when formulating the Work Programme for this Scrutiny Committee, for the Municipal Year, 2011/2012.

Members were presented with a blank document which allowed them to discuss and look at the appropriate date as to when each item should be considered at forthcoming Scrutiny Committees.

The following discussions took place and subsequent items were drawn for the Work Programme:-

- A possible review of Waste Minimisation and Recycling Initiatives;
- A review on Road Safety and how speed humps across the borough were maintained. Also, within this review, it would be useful to look at the implementation of 20mph speed limits in most residential areas;
- Bridges and how weight restrictions were applied to some, but not all bridges, with some regard given to the management and the future proposals;
- A report would be useful on the Transport Strategy as and when it would become available after it had gone via the appropriate Constitutional channels;

- A report would be brought forward regarding On Street Civil Parking Enforcement;
- Improvement of traffic flows at junctions;
- A report should come to a future regarding the SCOOT Management System in Bolton.

Resolved – That these items would be pooled together following the next meeting of this Scrutiny Committee with the items from Development and Regeneration and this would be shared with the Committee in due course.

4. MEMBER'S BUSINESS

The following question was submitted by Councillor Andrew Morgan in accordance with Council Standing Order 36. The answer was prepared and circulated by the Executive Member for Environmental Services. The Executive Members proceeded to give verbal explanations where necessary.

Can officers/Executive Member please advise if this council has any contracts with Dickinson's (Horwich)? Residents are reporting that this council's vehicles are entering their premises on a daily basis. When previously asked Ward Councillors were advised that no formal contracts were in place.

If no formal contracts are in place can they please advise why our vehicles are entering their premises?

The Executive Member advised that: Environmental Services had a number of divisions that purchased goods and services from Dickinsons. In the main this related to waste disposal of recyclable materials and the purchase of materials for construction of highways, play areas and landscaping. The Authority had three contracts with Dickinsons that had been through Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) procurement. Greater Manchester Waste Disposal Authority (WDA) were also using the Dickinson's site on a temporary basis, this meant the Council's waste disposal vehicles were entering the site to dispose of waste to the WDA. This arrangement was expected to cease at the end of July.

Bolton at Home as a housing association had separate arrangements with Dickinsons.

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

a)	Executive Member for Environmental Services held on 6 th June 2011; and
b)	Environmental Services and Cleaner, Greener, Safer Policy Development Group held on 13 th June 2011.

Members, in their discussions referred to the extensive decision monitoring appendix to the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Member for Environmental Services,

paying particular attention to parking charges, the Transport Strategy and On Street Civil Parking Enforcements.

Resolved – (i) That the Member's Question and response presented in accordance with Standing Order 36 be noted

(ii) That a report be made available in due course regarding the Transport Strategy and the costs to Transport for Greater Manchester and the associated benefits

(iii) That the Head of Parking be made available to attend a future meeting of this Scrutiny Committee to discuss and provide a report regarding the On Street Civil Parking Enforcements.

(The meeting commenced at 6.00pm and ended at 7.13pm).