

ENVIRONMENT, DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEETING, 6TH FEBRUARY, 2006

Present – Councillors Williamson (Chair),^{TL} Lord (Vice-Chair) Allen (as deputy for Councillor P. Brierely), Collison, Critchley, Hamilton, Ibrahim, Morgan, Peel, Mrs. Rothwell, R. Silvester, Stones and J. Walsh.

Lay Member

Mrs. J. Horan

Also in attendance

Councillor David Wilkinson	- Executive Member for Development and Regeneration
Councillor Hayes	- Executive Member for Environmental Services
Mr. D. Grogan	- Assistant Director (Civic & Admin)
Mr. A. Fisher	- Director of Environmental Services
Mr. K. Davies	- Director of Development and Regeneration
Mr. D. Smith	- Policy Accountant, Environmental Services
Mr. M. Russell	- Greenspace Manager, Environmental Services
Mr. C. Bullough	- Head of Service, Environmental Services
Nr. J. Smethurst	- Chief Housing and Regeneration Officer
Mr. E. Mellor	- Financial Services Manager, Bolton at Home

Mr. J. Layer	- Assistant Director (Highways and Maintenance)
Mr. A. Scott	- Policy Accountant, Development and Regeneration
Mr. D. Houghton	- Head of Highways Services
Mr. M. Williamson	- Democratic Services Officer
Ms. K. Treadwell	- Graduate Trainee Democratic Services Officer
Mr. N. Aspey	- Democratic Services Officer

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P. Brierley and A. Walsh

Councillor Williamson in the Chair

41. MINUTES

The minutes of the proceedings of the meeting of the Committee held on 28th November, 2005 were submitted and signed as a correct record.

42. PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETINGS OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

The minutes of the proceedings of the meetings of the Executive Member for Environmental Services held on 12th December, 2005, and 25th January, 2006 were submitted.

Following consideration of the minutes a question was raised in relation to Minute 46. concerning the proposed improvement and land acquisition at the junction of Longcauseway and Albert Road. Concern was expressed as to the delay in the land acquisition scheme. The Executive Member was asked if the principle of the scheme could be looked at.

Further to the monitoring report appended to the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Member held on 25th January, 2006,

an update on the revocation of the Traffic Regulation Order at Bath Street was requested.

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings be noted and that the Executive Member undertakes an investigation into the principal of the land acquisition scheme and that an update be provided to the next meeting of the revocation of the Traffic Regulation Order at Bath Street.

43. PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETINGS OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION

The minutes of the proceedings of the meetings of the Executive Member for Development and Regeneration held on 13th December, 2005, and 24th January, 2006 were submitted.

Resolved – That the minutes of the proceedings be noted.

44. PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETINGS OF THE DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP

The minutes of the proceedings of the meetings of the Development and Regeneration Policy Development Group held on 1st December, 2005, and 17th January, 2006 were submitted.

Further to Minute 24 of the Development and Regeneration Policy Development Group held on 1st December, 2005, a question was raised as to what was the Council's position in adopting the Regional Spatial Strategy. It was explained that at present, the Council was awaiting an update report from AGMA.

Resolved – That the minutes of the proceedings be noted.

45. PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING OF THE HOUSING POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP

An extract of the minutes of the proceedings of the Housing Policy Development Group held on 1st December, 2005, and 12th January, 2006 were submitted.

Resolved – That the minutes of the proceedings be noted.

46. PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETINGS OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP

Extracts of the minutes of the proceedings of the Environmental Services Policy Development Group held on 15th December, 2005, and 23rd January, 2006 were submitted.

Resolved – That the minutes of the proceedings be noted.

47. COMMITTEE'S FORWARD PLAN

The Director of Central Services submitted the Committee's Forward Plan for the submission of items to this Committee. The document contained a list of the items identified by Members to be submitted to future meetings of this Committee.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

48. BUDGET UPDATE RELATING TO THE DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO

The Director of Environmental Services submitted a report which provided an update on the implementation of the strategic options that were agreed as part of the Strategic Budgets for the Environment, Highways Management and Direct Services portfolio's.

Members were advised that a budget increase of £58,000 had been identified in relation to the training and development of Officers and Members. A final decision on the proposed increase would be taken upon completion of the Departmental realignment process.

The report went on to advise Members that a number of areas for budget reductions had been identified. These were as follows:-

- business process re-engineering;
- manager car mileage;
- directorate budget;
- increased income from planning fees; and
- savings from AGMA budgets.

Members were advised that, in total, budget reductions of £125,000 had been identified.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

49. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT

The Director of Environmental Services submitted a report which provided information on the Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report.

Members were advised of the following significant variations and highlighted matters:-

- the monitoring report was the first prepared for Bolton under the new planning system that came into force in September, 2004;
- from the monitoring work carried out for 2004/05, none of the existing Unitary Development Plan policies had been identified as not being implemented;
- informal consultation had taken place on the statement of Community Involvement with key stakeholders in November, 2005, to which five responses had been received. Formal consultation would be rescheduled for early 2006, prior to the submission to the Secretary of State;
- ten authorities within Greater Manchester had agreed to produce a Joint Waste Development Plan document. Consultants had been commissioned to produce an initial strategy and project plan;

- preparatory work had commenced in 2005 on three Supplementary Planning Documents which would be incorporated into the revised 2006 Local Development Scheme timetable; and
- the Annual Monitoring Report would be developed further in future years to establish whether indicators, in addition to Government core indicators, were necessary to measure the progress and success of the Unitary Development Plan.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

50. RENT REPORT

Councillor J. Walsh declared a personal interest in the following item

The Chief Housing and Regeneration officer submitted a report which set out the factors impacting on the 2006/07 rent increase and the strategic options to meet this.

By way of background information, the report indicated that the publication of HM Government's Guide to Social Rent Reform required authorities to set their rents by reference to a specified formula which reflected earnings, property value and bedroom size.

The Government allowed 10 years to move towards these new rents but acknowledged that authorities might not have been in a position to move individual rents towards formula rents in 2002/03. However, rents had to be set with reference to the formula rent from 2003/04 for each individual property.

The report went on to cite details of changes to the 2006/07 formula rents calculation following HM Government guidance and how this would affect Bolton.

Members were also informed that the average rent for 2006/07, over 48 weeks would be £51.05, which was a 5% increase on

the 2005/06 figure.

The report also went on to advise on the factors influencing the HRA Budget, the 2006/07 subsidy entitlement and planned programmes for 2006/07.

In conclusion the report set out the changes in the HRA between the original budget for 2005/06 and the estimate for 2006/07, viz:-

	<u>£000</u>	<u>£000</u>
<u>Inflation and Demand Led Changes</u>		
Inflation- - Prices	58.3	
- Repairs	334.0	
Rental income from dwellings	-2,070.2	
Debt charges	3,032.2	
Management fee	350.0	
Rent rebates (net cost to the HRA)	-200.0	
Subsidy Changes	1,813.1	
Increased employers superannuation rate	47.0	3,370.6
<u>Growth</u>		
Funding switch from commissioning fee	604.8	
Strategic and legislative	50.4	
Other Management fee	146.0	
Council tax bills on void properties	339.8	
Bad debts provision	101.6	1,242.6
<u>Savings/New income</u>		
Management fee	-135.6	
Tenants Incentive Scheme -	-70.0	
Reduced repairs		
Reduced rent loss due to void properties	-87.5	
Removal of one-off growth	170.0	
Reduced budget for compensation payment	-227.4	-690.5

Sale of Council Houses and
Redevelopment

Housing subsidy	-360.9	
Loss of Rental Income	670.8	
Reduced R&M requirement	-263.0	46.9

Other changes

Reduced Revenue Contribution to Capital	-2,012.7	
Rent drift due to RTB sales	86.4	
Housing subsidy formula changes	-886.0	-2,812.3

<u>Total Variations from 2005/06</u>		1,157.3
--------------------------------------	--	---------

Original

Resolved – That the report be noted.

**51. WASTE SERVICE - AUTHORISATION AND
REPORTING PROCESS**

The Director of Environmental Services submitted a report that identified the process by which the Managed Weekly Collection Service had been authorised and reported within the Council, with particular reference to the resources required.

It was explained that the roll out of the Managed Weekly Refuse and Recycling Service commenced with phase 1 in the west of the borough in June, 2005. Missed collections and delivery of bins and containers had been key issues for the service.

Members were advised that un-audited recycling rates in phase 1 were approaching 40%. This was an encouraging sign and, dependent on subsequent roll out, the Council was on course to achieve its statutory recycling target of 20%.

The report went on to detail the following significant reasons for budget variances within the service:-

- higher sickness levels;
- increased fuel costs;
- recycling facility roll-out;

- collection of trade waste;
- changes to national terms and conditions; and
- Christmas waste collection.

It was reported that the Council had made available an additional one off sum of £400,000 to implement the introduction of the managed weekly service in order to achieve the Waste Management Strategy. It was identified that in future years, there would be an ongoing revenue commitment of £450,000 required.

The report went on to detail the strategic resource bid, in relation to the waste collection area of the Department. This was summarised as follows:-

	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Essential demand led growth			
MWWRCS	450	450	450
Implementation on National Terms and Conditions	70	70	70
Fuel price increases	60	60	60
Additional households	50	50	50
Grant Fall Out - GLNMP	40	40	40
Grant Fall Out - EBR	96	96	96
Total essential demand led growth	766	766	766
Corporate Efficiency Target	79	158	237
Total redirection target	845	924	1,003
Options to meet redirection target			
Efficiency savings			

Transport costs	100	100	100
Total	100	100	100
Alternative Methods Of Service Provision		79	158
Total Options Less than Redirection Target	745	745	745
Unfunded big issues			
Cardboard collection	100	500	500

It was reported that the ongoing additional budget requirements of the new service (£450,000 per annum) were required to fund three additional teams undertaking the collection of green waste and standby payments. The implementation of this option allowed the Authority to maintain a sustainable service, meet statutory targets, avoid LAT penalties and minimise future disposal costs.

Members were informed that to fund future years redirection targets, it would require an assessment of alternative methods of service delivery, or a fundamental review of the levels of service provided. The options available to fund demand led growth, were significantly less than the redirection target required to meet corporate financial guidance, therefore, corporate funding was requested to bridge the gap.

Furthermore, it was reported that in relation to Waste Service, the increased resources and consequent spending in 2005/06 had been correctly reported with explanations as to how they had arisen. The ongoing increases in the service budget had been identified at an early stage and had been clearly reported in the Council's CBPP reporting process.

Various questions were then answered which related to identified areas within the report. It was emphasised that at this stage, a detailed breakdown of costs in relation to LAT penalties could not be provided, however, the Director of

Finance was preparing a report for Members which would answer the questions that had been raised.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

52. PLAY PROVISION AT FARNWORTH PARK

The Director of Environmental Services submitted a report that informed Members of the current situation of children's equipped play areas and car parking facilities at Farnworth Park.

Members were informed as to the location and current provision at Farnworth Park, most notably, the lack of any formal children's play facilities. The last play facilities in the park were removed following vandalism. The area where these facilities were situated was isolated and not overlooked by passing traffic, and therefore considered unsuitable for the re-establishment of a play area.

Members were advised that there was a general view held that the park should once more have equipped play facilities, however, a suitable location could not be identified within the accessible park area. The most appropriate location was considered to be the now redundant depot area, where a car park could also be created.

At present, detailed costing's were not available, however, it was felt that such a development would cost a significant sum. The initial outline estimate for clearance of the depot, improving access, creating a car park and developing a new play area was approximately £400,000.

Members were advised that the only significant funding currently committed to the development of facilities was £41,735 from a section 106 agreement. The Parks capital project for 2006/07 was anticipated to be £495,000. It was explained that the commitment of a very significant amount of this to a single park would be difficult to justify.

Furthermore, the report detailed that Corporate Property had identified the former depot for potential social housing.

Corporate Property had been advised of the Environmental Services Department's aspirations for the site, but also of the reality of the funding position. Environmental Services had advised, that if the proposed development was the best use of the land, the Department would fully support the proposal, but request that some, if not all, of any capital receipt be ring fenced for reinvestment into Farnworth Park.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

(The meeting started at 10.00 a.m. and finished at 11.05 a.m.)