
EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

06 NOVEMBER 2008

Present - Councillors Lever (Chairman), Hollick (Vice-Chairman), Burrows, Hayes, Iqbal, Mistry, Norris, Rushton, J. Walsh, White and Williamson.

Councillor Morris Vision Steering Group
Representative/Executive Member for Strategy and
External Relationship
Councillor A.N. Spencer Greater Manchester Police
Authority Representative
Councillor Bashir-Ismail Council Representative on Council
for Voluntary Service (CVS)

Also in attendance

Mr. A. R. Eastwood Director of Legal and Democratic
Services; Mrs. M. Stoney Assistant Director of Legal and
Democratic Services; Mr. I. D. Mulholland Scrutiny Team
Leader; Ms. C. James Assistant Director Partnerships and
Neighbourhood Renewal; Mr. M. Kane Special Projects
and Partnerships Manager; Ms. V. Mather Policy and
Performance Manager; Mr. P. Dunne Executive Director
Greater Manchester Waste Development Agency; Mr. K.
Patrick Greater Manchester Geological Unit; Ms. P.
Lane Greater Manchester Geological Unit.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors
Chadwick and Hornby.

Councillor Councillor Lever in the Chair

15 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 11th
September, 2008, were submitted.

Attached Reports:

[Minutes](#)

16 COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Director of Legal and Democratic Services submitted a report which provided members with suitable criteria to aid in the selection of topics for scrutiny and outlined possible subjects which could be included in the work programme.

Members' views and comments were sought in relation to any further items and issues that they wanted included on the Committee's work programme.

Members in their deliberations discussed inviting Councillor Critchley, the Council's representative on the Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Authority, to provide an update in terms of the TIF Bid and also with regard to the policy on vandalised bus shelters.

Resolved - (i) That the work programme be noted.

(ii) That Councillor Critchley, as Council representative on the Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Authority, be invited to attend the next meeting of this Committee.

Attached Reports:

[Committee Work Programme](#)

17 MEMBERS' BUSINESS

A question was submitted by Councillor Hollick in accordance with Standing Order 36, viz:-

Q. Bearing in mind recent press reports about the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) and some closing down nationally, what was the position in the Borough of Bolton. The following response was provided by the Assistant Director Partnerships and Neighbourhood Renewal. A. Members of the Scrutiny Committee would be aware that Bolton CAB currently received £166,170 in funding from Bolton Council via a Service Level Agreement that supported the core activity of Bolton CAB. The detailed response below derived from information received from Bolton CAB following discussions with their Chief Executive, Barry Lyon on the national and local outlook for CAB with specific reference to the issues raised by Councillor Hollick. Response received from Bolton CAB The issues surrounding the possible closure of the Citizen Advice Bureau and other advice agencies stems from changes being introduced by the Legal Service Commission (LSC) in managing the Civil Legal Aid budgets. Essentially there were three themes to the changes: 1. The introduction of Fixed and Graduated Fees All agencies now received a national fixed fee for each case they closed. They called those New Matter

Starts (NMS) and agencies got paid once a case was closed. 2. Single Unified Contract This replaced the two tier contract that was in place for not for profit agencies and solicitor firms. 3. Community Legal Advice Centres and Networks These were CLACs and CLANs. They were centres that combined the funding from the LSC and Local Authority, to provide a service that covered basic to specialist advice. This was done via a tendering process. Hull had recently been in the news as the local CAB did not win the tenders which instead went to a private company called A4E. By 2010 the LSC was looking at Stockport and Manchester locally as possible CLACs. In effect what was happening was that the LSC wished to contract with larger, more financially solid organisations that were capable of delivering at least 5 areas of Social Welfare Law:

(i) Community Care; (ii) Debt; (iii) Employment; (iv) Housing; (v) Welfare Benefits. This could potentially put at risk smaller organisations that might have not adapted to the fixed fee culture and did not have the relevant areas of Social Welfare Law. By 2010 all LSC contracts would come up for tender, so organisations might be at risk of other organisations who met the criteria tendering for the work. A consultation paper regarding those proposed changes in 2010 came out on Friday 31st October, and it suggested reducing the number of contracts from 400+ to around 130. At a local level, Bolton CAB over the past two years had aligned itself to this national strategy, by changing the role and nature of caseworkers, and how it organised its front end delivery of advice by seeing more clients, by specialist drop ins - previous annual reports outline this approach. Furthermore, Bolton CAB had extended its categories of social welfare law, by changing its constitution to widen the "area of benefit" to be able to tender for work outside Bolton. This had resulted in successful tender applications to deliver social welfare law in Tameside, Stockport and Wigan. Ultimately, this put Bolton CAB in a sound position to respond successfully to the proposed changes should the LSC look to develop a CLAC in Bolton.

Resolved - (i) That the question and response be noted.
(ii) That the Council representatives on the Citizens Advice Bureau and the Unemployed Persons Advice Centre (Drop-In Centre) be invited to attend the next meeting.

18 EXTRACT OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE

EXECUTIVE

An extract of the proceedings of a meeting of The Executive, held on 27th October, 2008, was submitted in respect of AGMA Executive Board - Key Decisions.

Resolved - That the extracts be noted.

Attached Reports:

[Extract of the Proceedings of the Executive](#)

19 AGMA WASTE MANAGEMENT - PRESENTATION

Mr. Paul Dunne, Executive Director of the Greater Manchester Waste Development Agency gave a presentation on waste site planning in terms of Bolton. Mr. Dunne highlighted the statutory duties and powers which were:-

- disposal and operation of sites for the public; -
- provision and operation of recycling credits; -
- discretionary payments of recycling credits; - own and maintain plant and equipment; and - preservation of non-statutory waste strategies.

In terms of the overall Municipal Waste Strategy, members were advised that the aims were to arrest increases in waste, increase recycling and composting, retain and optimise use of existing Thermal Recovery Facility, meet bio-waste diversion targets through residual waste treatment with use of Refuse Derived Fuel and investment for new infrastructure.

Mr. Dunne referred to the existing infrastructure across Greater Manchester which included 25 household waste recycling centres. He also indicated that Bolton would have three new key sites, viz:-

- Raikes Lane Transfer Loading Station and Thermal Recovery Facility; - Hurstwood Court Household Waste Recycling Centre; and - Exide Batteries in-vessel composting facility.

The Committee was informed that the new system of in-vessel composting was a managed process to turn biodegradable material into a composting product for agriculture and horticultural use. This used natural occurring micro organisms with oxygen to break down materials and produce a stabilised residue.

In conclusion, Mr. Dunne, mentioned that Blackrod and Union Road Household Waste Recycling Centres would be retained.

Mr. K. Patrick and Ms. P. Lane from the Greater Manchester Geological Unit gave a short presentation on the development of the Greater Manchester Joint Waste

Development Plan Document.

Mr. Patrick explained that consultations were on-going but the document needed to set out:-

- the best available evidence, the likely future need for waste management facilities;
- indicate where any new facility could be located and suggest options for how the best sites were chosen; and;
- set out policies to which any new waste development would have to conform.

The Committee was reminded that the ten GM authorities had agreed to produce a Joint Waste Development Plan Document.

Ms. Lane went on to refer to the waste management requirements and identification of sites and areas.

In terms of next steps the Committee was advised that:-

- The Stage 2 Issues and Options Report was subject to a six week period of consultation which commenced on 6th October, 2008;
- launch event, letters to a broad range of consultees, engaging with statutory bodies, major businesses, neighbouring authorities and LSPs;
- deposit of documents and use of posters in local libraries and other public buildings.

In their deliberations, Members referred to the time taken to date to get the PFI contract up and running and the position of LATs across Greater Manchester.

Members were advised of the reasons for the contractual delays and also that Greater Manchester was on course to meet its LATs targets in 2009/10.

In terms of the Waste Development Plan document it was indicated that information in this regard would go via the relevant Policy Development Group and then to the Executive Member.

Resolved - That Messrs. Dunn, Patrick and Lane be thanked for their informative presentations.

20 PROCESS FOR AGREEING SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS WITH THE MAIN VOLUNTARY SECTOR ORGANISATIONS.

Ms. Carol James submitted a report and gave a presentation which provided an overview of the current process for agreeing and managing the Service Level Agreements that the Council had with a number of groups in Bolton and the financial support provided by the Council to those groups.

These were:-

- Bolton Council for Voluntary Service;
- Bolton District Victim Support and Witness Service;
- Octagon Theatre Trust;
- Bolton Citizens' Advice Bureau;

- Bolton Community Transport and Furniture Services;
- Relate;
- Bolton Shopmobility;
- Bolton Unemployed Workers Advice Centre;
- Bolton Racial Equality Council; and
- Bolton Volunteer Centre.

The report went on to set out details of the existing monitoring arrangements in place in respect of those agreements, which included Council member representation on various organisations in the Borough including a number of the groups with which the Council had a Service Level Agreement.

The report went on to set out the following areas that the Committee might wish to give consideration to:-

- a review of the Service Level Agreements process outlined;
- developing criteria that would help to guide how the Council made appointments to external organisations;
- develop criteria to support members appointed to external organisations. This could include:-
 - (a) Proposed briefing sessions for newly appointed members on the purpose, role and activity of the organisation they were appointed to. Those briefings could include some background to why those relationships were important and what the Council hoped to achieve from them;
 - (b) A programme of review meetings where members of this Committee could consider whether the Council's objectives were met through relationships with these groups;
 - (c) Potentially members who were appointed to external organisations could meet periodically as a forum to share experiences and learning.

Councillor Bashir-Ismail explained to the Committee that she had been a member of the CVS Executive Committee since 2006. She indicated that she had defined her own role based on CVS judgement calls around champion/advocate critical friend and ward issues.

Councillor Bashir-Ismail went on to indicate that there was in existence a job description for a role at CVS but not one from the Local Authority in terms of its expectations from such a representative.

She went on to refer to the need for induction briefings for new members appointed on to outside bodies. Also alluded to was the need to be aware of any potential conflicts.

In their deliberations members enquired of Councillor Bashir-Ismail if there was anything the Council could do better to assist the CVS. Members were advised that

additional resources would always be helpful to expand their work.

Members enquired as to the involvement of Councillor Bashir-Ismael in the general funding arrangements for CVS. Members were advised that it was the role of the CVS Executive Committee to scrutinise the officers in this regard. Councillor Bashir-Ismael indicated that she would refer any such issues to Ms. C. James and colleagues.

Resolved - (i) That the presentations from Ms. C. James and Councillor Bashir-Ismael be welcomed.

(ii) That the Executive Member for Strategy and External Relationships be asked to establish a Task and Finish Policy Development Group regarding Voluntary Sector Organisations to primarily focus on:-

- the service level agreement process; - development of criteria that would help the Council make appointments to external organisations; and - development of criteria to support members appointed to external organisations.

Attached Reports:

[Process for agreeing Service Level Agreements with the Main Voluntary Sector Organisations.](#)

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21 ISSUES IN RELATION TO JOINT AUTHORITIES

The Director of Legal and Democratic Services submitted a report advising of the appointments made by the Council to the joint authorities together with details of the financial contributions made. Attached to the report were reports from:-

- Greater Manchester Police Authority on applications granted from Bolton based organisations for funding from the Police Property Act Fund;
- GM Waste Disposal Authority in relation to;
- Treasury Limits 2008/09 to 2010/11 increase the potential PFI funding;
- Joint Waste Development Plan Document: stage 2 issues and options consultation; and
- WRAP Support for a GM Waste prevention project;
- GM Passenger Transport Authority in relation to the Bolton Smartcard Scheme.

Resolved - That the report be noted.

(The meeting started at 2.00 p.m. and finished at 4.03 p.m.)

Attached Reports:

[Issues in Relation to Joint Authorities](#)