

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEETING, 5TH FEBRUARY, 2019

Present – Councillors Silvester (Chairman), Evans (Vice-Chairman), Allen, Critchley, Darvesh, Flitcroft, Gibbon, Haslam, Kirk-Robinson (as deputy for Councillor Hewitt), Iqbal, Kellett, Khurram, Mistry and Wilkinson.

Also in Attendance

Councillor Peel	Executive Cabinet Member for Environmental Services
Councillor Chadwick	Executive Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport
Councillor J. Byrne	Executive Cabinet Member for Culture and Sport
Mr. G. Brough	Interim Director of Place
Mr. J. Kelly	Assistant Director Highways and Engineering
Ms. K. Hopkins	Assistant Director Neighbourhood and Regulatory Services
Mr. M. Russell	Head of Service, Neighbourhood Services
Ms. J. Pollard	Head of Strategic Finance and Accountancy
Mr. I. D. Mulholland	Principal Democratic Services Officer

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors P. Wild and Hewitt.

Councillor Silvester in the Chair.

29. MINUTES

Resolved – That the minutes of the last meeting held on 15th January, 2019 be agreed and signed as a correct record.

30. THE COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Borough Solicitor submitted a report which set out details of the proposed work programme for the remainder of the Municipal Year.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

31. DIRECTORATE OF PLACE REPORT, QUARTER TWO, 2018/19

The Director of Place submitted a report giving details of the dashboard style Directorate of Place performance report for quarter two, 2018/19.

Members in their discussions referred to –

- Matters around the numbers into employment and sustainability going forward;
- How the visitor expenditure was measured and also regarding the number of jobs and tourism economic impact; and
- How the information in the report was produced generally including the graphs.

Resolved – (i) That the report be noted.

(ii) That members of this Committee be circulated with information regarding how the information in the report was produced generally including the graphs.

32. DIRECTORATE OF PLACE FINANCE REPORT, QUARTER TWO, 2018/19

The Director of Place submitted a report which set out details of the quarter two financial position within the Directorate of Place.

Resolved – That the contents of the report be noted.

33. GRASS CUTTING AND WEED TREATMENT

Mr. Malcolm Russell, Head of Service Neighbourhood Services, gave a presentation on matters around grass cutting and weed treatment including the financial aspects.

By way of background information, members were advised that there were three types of mowing regimes in the Borough namely general amenity grass, tractor mowed areas and fine turf / ornamental grass.

Mr Russell went onto explain matters around the machinery used including the tender value.

In terms of weed control, it was explained that this service was contracted out to specialist contractors but supplemented by inhouse staff for one off works. The previous tender value was £18,250 for each of the two applications with the final application costing £16,670.

The contractors and the Council used a Glyphosate based chemical which was a contact herbicide and was applied by teams on quad bikes backed up by pedestrian spraying.

In terms of Japanese Knotweed, which was the recent subject of a Members Question to this Committee, members were advised of the legal position regarding invasive plants under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 and it being an offence to plant them or cause them to grow. It was not an offence to have one or more growing on your land and there was no specific legal requirement to control it. However, allowing an invasive plant, such as Japanese Knotweed to spread onto neighbouring land could be considered a statutory or private nuisance which could result in action under the Environmental Protection Act, 1990.

Members in their deliberations referred to –

- Mowing at cemeteries and the standard;
- General amenity grass and regularity of cutting and cutting requests;
- The Ragwort problem;

- Types and effectiveness of weed kill;
- Floral cover including at roundabouts;
- Tendering for machinery and its disposal;
- The number of grass cutting teams compared to past years; and
- Small grass verges and perhaps an invest to save issue by removing them.

Resolved – That Mr Russell be thanked for his detailed and informative presentation and that the discussions and presentation be noted.

34. HIGHWAYS

Mr. John Kelly, Assistant Director, Highways and Engineering gave a presentation on matters around road repairs including pot holes and the funding options. Also a focus on the extent of bottlenecks in the Borough and the cost to the Borough and the measures to tackle them.

By way of background information, Mr Kelly reminded the Committee of the importance of the highway network as it contributed and supported quality of life as well as the local and regional economy.

He indicated that in Bolton there was 1000km of carriageways, 1800km of footways with a rebuild cost of £1.4 billion.

He also explained to members about the current condition of the various types of carriageway in Bolton with 81% of A roads, 79% of B roads and 65% of U Roads (mainly residential) being generally good.

The Committee was informed that the annual cost to keep the carriageway asset in its current condition was £14.2 million. The budget for 2018/19 was £5.6 million.

Members were also advised of matters around carriageway inspections and their frequency, footway inspections, defect repair response times and urgent / reactive repairs (potholes) and the numbers reported.

Matters around the carriageway and footway maintenance

allocation for 2019/20 and previous years was referred to.

In terms of bottlenecks in Bolton, members were advised about the growing population in the Greater Manchester conurbation and the number of trips made each day and also matters around the effect on the economy and health. The average speed in GM on an A road was the second slowest behind London.

Mr Kelly went onto refer to matters around congestion and including in this a plan to tackle this in GM. He explained about the causes of congestion namely, traffic influencing events and traffic demand exceeded the available capacity.

In terms of current actions on congestion he explained that key route network corridor studies were taking place, a draft Transport Strategy for GM, 2040 had been prepared and also Bolton sustainable transport corridors were being looked at.

Members in their discussions referred to –

- Sustainability regarding GM public transport including the need to get the bus network back, good bus frequency, cheap fares and use of an Oyster type card;
- The impact of roadworks and congestion in general on economic prosperity;
- The congestion charge not being the answer – a potential negative impact;
- Congestion points in the town including yellow box junctions and prosecution of offenders;
- The movement of traffic on Blackburn Road;
- The monitoring of traffic light sequences;
- The problem of smart motorways;
- Introduction of red routes to help with congestion;
- Having a car had changed the way people behaved;
- Changing working patterns might help – where people worked;
- Smart times for schools could help with congestion;
- Out of town parking including at railway stations;
- Funding for road repairs;

- The time it's taken for electrification; and
- The roads can't cope with the numbers and better public transport mix was needed including a link with the Metro.

Resolved – (i) That Mr. Kelly be thanked for his detailed and informative presentation and that the content and discussions be noted.

(ii) It was moved by Councillor Silvester and seconded by Councillor Critchley that a letter be sent to the Department of Transport as follows –

That this Committee supports Transport for Greater Manchester to receive devolved powers from the Government for moving traffic enforcement, just like London and Cardiff, with appropriate funding.

For the Motion, Viz –

Councillors Evans, Iqbal, Kellett, Khurram, Silvester, Mistry, Allen, Critchley, Haslam, Kirk-Robinson, Wilkinson, Gibbon and Flitcroft.

Against the Motion, Viz –

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Abstain, Viz –

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The Motion was declared carried.

35. MEMBERS' BUSINESS

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

- Executive Cabinet Member for Environmental Services

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held on 3rd December, 2018 and 14th January, 2019;

- Executive Cabinet Member Culture and Sport held on 3rd December, 2018 and 14th January, 2019; and
- Executive Cabinet Member Highways and Transport held on 3rd December, 2018.

Further to minute 24 of the Executive Cabinet Member for Environmental Services held on 3rd December, 2018, members discussed matters around the training of young people that work at Heaton Fold.

Resolved – That the minutes of the various meetings be noted.

(The meeting started at 6.00pm and finished at 8.12pm)