

## **ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES, REGENERATION, HOUSING AND SKILLS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

12<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2011

Present – Councillors, Critchley (Chairman), Mrs Fairclough (Vice-Chairman), Francis, Harkin, Mrs Kellett, Lord, McKeon (deputy for Silvester), Mistry (deputy for Burrows), Morgan, Pickup, P Wild, D A Wilkinson and Woodward.

### Lay Members

Mrs B Berry - BATRA

### Also in Attendance

Councillor Sherrington	-	Executive Member for Cleaner, Greener, Safer
Councillor Zaman	-	Executive Member, Environmental Services
Mr M Cox	-	Director, Environmental Services
Mr A Donaldson	-	Assistant Director, Policy, Partnerships Communications and Chief Officer Support
Mr T Hill	-	Chief Planning Officer
Mrs J Pollard	-	Head of Finance
Ms K Carr	-	Head of Strategic Development
Mr D Houghton	-	Head of Service Highways Delivery
Mr M Atherton	-	Senior Engineering Manager
Ms T Gandhi	-	Home Improvement Officer
Mr P Bartle	-	Bolton Arena
Ms S Hayes	-	Bolton Arena
Mrs S Wootton	-	Senior Scrutiny Officer

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Burrows, Chadwick and Silvester

Councillor Critchley in the Chair

## **20. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the proceedings of the meeting of the Environmental Services, Regeneration, Housing and Skills Scrutiny Committee, held on 24<sup>th</sup> August 2011, were submitted.

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

## **21. 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 this was an *ad hoc* document and could be updated at any time.

Members were also advised that the Skills Scrutiny Panel had been through the appointment process at the last Council meeting and the following Councillors were now selected:

Councillor Chadwick;  
Councillor Cox;  
Councillor Critchley;  
Councillor Francis;  
Councillor Harkin;  
Councillor Kellett; and  
Councillor Radlett.

The dates would be finalised and Members would be informed in due course.

Resolved – That the report be noted

## **22. WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2011/2012**

The Director of the Chief Executive's Department submitted a report, which outlined the Committee's Annual Work Programme for the 2011/2012 Municipal Year. This document would be updated on an *ad hoc* basis and would be updated in due course.

Members noted that there were several outstanding issues in reference to the Crime, Disorder and Reduction Partnership Scrutiny Committee. These queries would be dealt with and answers would be provided at the meeting, which was scheduled for 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2011 and would cover items such as the Scrap Metal Regulations, whereby an update had been requested as to the progress being made and if there had been any feedback.

Resolved – That the Work Programme be noted.

## **23. UPDATE ON THE GREATER MANCHESTER REVIEW OF HIGH SPEED ROADS**

The Director of Environmental Services submitted a report, updating the Scrutiny Committee on the Greater Manchester review of High Speed Roads in the Borough.

The purpose of the report was to ensure Members were aware of the progress that had been made over the past 12 months, of which the following three routes had been amended in line with the recommendation from the Speed Limit Review:-

- Syndle Way, the speed limit had been reduced from the National Speed Limit to 40mph. Funding for this had been provided by the Westhoughton North and Chew Moor Area Forum;
- Blackrod Bypass, where the speed limit had been reduced from National Speed Limit to 50mph. Funding for this had been provided from the Highways Maintenance Capital Budget; and
- Wigan Road, Hart Common, the speed limit had been reduced from 40mph to 30mph. Funding for this had been provided by Westhoughton Town Council.

A further seven routes still required addressing and Members were informed that there was currently no funding identified for these routes, which were as follows:-

- Old Kiln Lane, proposed 50mph from National Speed Limit;
- Chorley old Road, proposed 50mph from National Speed Limit;
- Belmont Road, proposed 50mph from National Speed Limit;
- Moss Bank Way, proposed 40mph from 30mph;
- Bradshaw Road, proposed 40mph from 50mph;
- Tottington Road, proposed 40mph from National Speed Limit; and
- Crompton Way, proposed 30mph from 40mph.

Members discussed the report in great detail, with much emphasis being made on funding.

Resolved – That Members noted the position

## **24. WINTER GRITTING REVIEW**

The Director of Environmental Services submitted a report advising Members on the outcomes of the 2010 Winter Gritting Scrutiny Panel, the outcome of the 2010/2011 services, the collaborative working arrangements with Bury and the state of readiness for the winter gritting maintenance programme for 2011/2012.

Members were informed that given the harsh winter of 2010/2011, Bolton maintained its well-structured winter service and these arrangements held strong through the season and resulted in another successful year in terms of service delivery.

With reference to the collaborative working that had been taking place between Bolton and Bury Councils respectively. Winter services was an area which could provide

benefits in terms of increased capacity, mutual support and resilience. It was decided that a fully shared service was not appropriate at this stage, therefore it was determined that a part shared service would be a sensible option.

Both Councils delivered a successful winter service, with the service that Bolton delivered was not unduly compromised by the arrangements. Bury had been added to Bolton's communication group for winter services which was based on intelligence and was not currently available to Bury, therefore allowing officers to make decisions with confidence. Bury were able to access salt which was being stored in Bolton's salt barn, thus allowing Bury to move onto Safecote salt, which was more cost effective and environmentally safer.

Members discussed the report in great depth and the following issues were raised:-

- Replenishing salt in grit bins;
- Gritting of the town centre;
- Industrial estates;
- Surface car parks; and
- Doctors surgeries.

It was agreed that the Panels had significantly added to the success of the service, through improved arrangement, such as the provision of pre-bagged grit, which delivered further savings. A survey had been undertaken with schools to see what could be done to help them in the forthcoming months, equally a Strategic management Group had been established and met monthly in order to deal with these types of issues.

Resolved – (i) That Members welcomed the report and the improvements that had been made

(ii) That an invitation would be sent to Members for a site visit of Ellesmere House to see the work undertaken during the winter maintenance months.

## **25. ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES – FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT 2011/2012, QUARTER 1**

The Directors of Environmental Services and Corporate Resources submitted a joint report to provide the Scrutiny Committee with information relating to the financial position for the Environmental Services portfolio for the 2011/2012 financial year, at quarter one.

With regard to Revenue Expenditure, the report advised that revenue expenditure was projected to underspend against the budget by £91,000.

The Department had budgeted to use reserves of £3,000.

There were no main variances to report.

Capital expenditure for the quarter totalled £620k against a programme of £21.715m.

With regard to reserves, the Department's projected deficit reserve position at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012 was £1,159,000

Detailed repayment plans were included within the report.

Budgeted efficiency savings for the Department were £3,705,000,000 which included demand led of £200,000 to repay the deficit reserve. The current projection was to achieve all planned efficiencies.

Specific areas of financial risk related to loss of income due to the economic downturn, energy prices for street lighting and winter services.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

## **26. ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES PERFORMANCE DASHBOARD – QUARTER 1**

The Director of Environmental Services submitted a report which informed the Scrutiny Committee of the performance of the Environmental Services Department at Quarter One of 2011/12.

Resolved – That Members noted the report.

## **27. BOLTON ARENA**

Mr Paul Bartle and Ms Sue Hayes attended the Scrutiny Committee meeting to inform and update Members of the progress being made at Bolton Arena in its 10<sup>th</sup> year of operation.

Members were reminded that the Arena first opened its doors in 2001, at a cost of £15 million. The Bolton Middlebrook Leisure Trust manages the facility on behalf of the council with all revenue made by the Arena being re-invested into the facility to ensure people obtain an excellent range of activities to suit all ages.

Although the original plans for the Arena was based on primarily being a tennis facility, with the help from the Lawn Tennis Association, it was found not to be sustainable enough to provide the activities being requested by members of the public, therefore the Arena decided to diversify, which in essence added to the success of the facility.

Subsequently, last year, the following was catalogued:-

- 1,077,510 visits through the doors;
- 12,100 educational visits from 22 different schools/colleges;
- 205 football teams playing in weekly leagues, with 8000 players every month;
- 19,200 track and field athletics sessions per year;
- Cycling, Bolton Hot Wheels Club, 2400 sessions a year;
- 3500 monthly health and fitness members;
- 350 gymnasts attending courses every week; and
- Tennis, largest squad of ranked players in the country.

Bolton Arena worked in conjunction with partners, including, the Bolton Disability Sports Association and the School Games Framework. Further work was to take place with the NHS to provide assistance with lowering the rates of obesity, increasing a healthy life expectancy, working with mental health groups and youth offenders. Financially, the Arena had a turnover of £2 million, of which 95% was generated from fees and charges. There was a budgeted surplus after the sinking fund payments of £25,000, however, there had been a re-investment of over £1.5 million in developing facilities.

Members were further provided with information regarding the Community Programmes, in particular with schools.

Following much discussion, Members were impressed with the work being carried out by the Arena over the years and were encouraged with the future work that could take place with the NHS.

Resolved – (i) That Members thanked Mr Bartle and Ms Hayes for attending the meeting and for providing an excellent presentation

(ii) That Members looked forward to hearing of the work being undertaken by the Arena in relation to joint working with the NHS.

## **28. THE ECONOMIC POSITION OF BOLTON**

Resolved – That consideration of this matter be deferred to the next meeting of this Committee.

## **29. DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION – FINANCIAL AND PERFORMANCE REPORT 2011/2012 – QUARTER 1**

A joint report of the Directors of Development and Regeneration and Corporate Resources was submitted which provided information relating to the financial and performance position for Development and Regeneration for the 2011/2012 financial year, as at the end of Quarter One.

The report provided information in relation to the following five elements, viz:-

- Revenue expenditure;
- Capital expenditure;
- Reserve movements;
- Efficiency targets; and
- Areas of financial risk.

Resolved – That the position be noted.

## **30. AFFORDABLE WARMTH**

Resolved – That consideration of this matter be deferred to the next meeting of this Committee.

### **31. MEMBER'S BUSINESS**

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

a)	Executive Member for Regeneration, Housing and Skills held on 25 <sup>th</sup> August 2011 and 27 <sup>th</sup> September 2011;
b)	Executive Member for Environmental Services held on 30 <sup>th</sup> August 2011 and 26 <sup>th</sup> September 2011;
c)	Executive Member for Cleaner, Greener, Safer, held on 31 <sup>st</sup> August 2011 and 28 <sup>th</sup> September 2011;
d)	Regeneration, Housing and Skills Policy Development Group held on 12 <sup>th</sup> September 2011; and
e)	Extract of the Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive held on 22 <sup>nd</sup> August 2011.

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting be noted.

(The meeting commenced at 6.00pm and ended at 7.35pm).