

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEETING, 10TH FEBRUARY, 2010

Present – Councillors Higson (Chairman), R.Allen (as deputy for Councillor A. S. Walsh), Chadwick, Connell, Hollick, Morgan, Iqbal (as deputy for Councillor Hornby), J. Rothwell, R. Silvester, J. Walsh and D. A. Wilkinson.

Also in attendance

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| Ms. S. Johnson | - Deputy Director of Corporate Resources and Committee Chief Officer Support |
| Mr. I.D. Mulholland | - Principal Scrutiny Officer |
| Councillor Bashir-Ismail | - Executive Member Cleaner, Greener, Safer |
| Mr. M. Cox | - Director of Environmental Services |
| Ms. D. Ball | - Assistant Director Waste and Fleet Management |
| Mr. P. Molyneux | - Assistant Director Highways and Engineering |
| Ms. V. Mather | - Head of Performance and Improvement |
| Ms. J. Pollard | - Policy Accountant |

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A. Walsh, Harkin, Hornby and Ibrahim as Executive Member for Environmental Services.

Councillor Higson in the Chair.

40. MINUTES

The minutes of the proceedings of the meeting of the Committee held on 2nd December, 2009 were submitted.

Resolved – That the minutes be approved as a correct record.

41. MONITORING OF DECISIONS

The Director of the Chief Executive's Department submitted a report which provided details of the progress of decisions taken at previous meetings of this Committee.

In respect of the Queens Park Update, it was mentioned that a site visitation had been arranged for 27th February, 2010.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

42. WORK PROGRAMME

The Director of the Chief Executive's Department submitted a report which set out details of the previously agreed Committee Work Programme for the 2009/10 Municipal Year.

Members' views were sought in relation to any further items that they wanted including in the work programme. The report also included information which would aid the Committee in selecting appropriate items for future consideration.

Members discussed the issue of inviting, once again, officers from United Utilities to the next meeting to discuss specific areas of concern in respect of partnership working.

Resolved – (i) That the updated work programme be noted.

(ii) That officers from United Utilities be invited to attend the next meeting in April to discuss specific areas of concern in terms of strategic partnership working.

(iii) That following the arrangements made in respect of (ii) above a note be circulated to all Members of the Council inviting Members to outline specific areas of concern.

43. ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES, QUARTER 2 FINANCIAL REPORT

A report of the Director of Environmental Services was submitted which provided information relating to the financial position for the Environmental Services portfolio for the 2009/10 Financial Year as at the end of Quarter Two.

With regard to revenue expenditure, the report advised that it was projected to exceed the budget by £80,000. The Department had budgeted to repay the reserves by £400,000 and was planning to use £25,600. Taking into account the budgeted reserve repayment, the overall Departmental position was an overspend of £454,000.

The main variances were largely due to Bolmoor, Trade Waste and the Markets.

Capital expenditure to date totalled £3.363m against a programme of £20.788m. In addition, in some areas, the programme reflected available capital allocations rather than anticipated in year spend.

With regard to reserves, the Department's projected deficit reserve position at 31st March 2010 was £2.931m. Detailed repayments plans were included within the report.

Budgeted efficiency savings for the Department were £1.514m. The current projection was to achieve all planned efficiencies.

Members in their deliberations discussed issues around the cost of the winter gritting service for this year. It was indicated that additional financial assistance may be required from the corporate centre.

Members also referred to the bringing forward in future of Capital Programme Planning and a review of trade waste matters being considered at a forthcoming Policy Development Group meeting.

Resolved – That the financial position and Members' observations be noted.

44. ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES, QUARTER 2, PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Director of Environmental Services submitted a report which informed the Committee of the performance for Environmental Services in Quarter 2 of 2009/10.

Members in their discussions referred to:-

- excellent work by the Department to reduce sickness absence;
- NI192, Household Waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting and the implications of landfill tax consequences;
- recycling difficulties in certain areas which would be targeted by education work;
- the effect of the recent bad weather on recycling targets;
It was explained that overall the Council was still on track to meet its targets;
- the quarter 3 statistics which were made available to the Committee in respect of NI191 and NI192; and
- missed collections and reporting arrangements.

Resolved - (i) That the report and Member discussions be noted.

(ii) That the Executive Member for Cleaner, Greener, Safer be asked to consider at a forthcoming meeting of the Policy Development Group the issue of recycling difficulties in certain areas of the town.

45. WASTE AND MODERNISATION UPDATE

Ms. Donna Ball, Assistant Director Waste and Fleet Management, gave a verbal update on the modernisation progress of the Waste Recycling Service.

The Committee was reminded of the matters which needed addressing:-

- huge Cultural Change in the service was required;
- crews (Loaders) had seen a pay reduction following pay and grading and were, “working to rule”;
- was seen that the rounds could be done more efficiently with less staff;
- workloads were unequal in teams with domestic rounds (grey bin) finishing particularly early in the day;
- service was “refuse led” rather than, “recycle led”;
- no major re-organisation of staffing and procedures taken place for many years;
- vehicle damage costs were very high;
- sickness rates in the services were high;
- need for change in order to, “pave the way” for further value for money work.

In terms of what went well, Ms. Ball explained:-

- leafleting and communication to residents pre modernisation launch was extensive;
- extensive communication with Members before and during the launch with cross party agreement that modernisation was badly needed;
- extensive communication through the Bolton News;

consultation with staff before, during modernisation with working groups established and eventual vote and sign up for modernisation to proceed;

- introduction of collection zones;
- decreased costs in vehicle damage;
- equal and balanced rounds across all the services;
- more resources put into recycling (vehicle and crew);
- Call Centre working partnership improved with processes re-examined along the way; and
- much improved ways of working with the transport service and improved turn around times for broken down vehicles.

With regard to issues that did not go to well:-

- the theory looked good;
- from launch it became clear that there were issues with the Domestic rounds;
- initially 18% of rounds did not get completed, (mainly domestic) this reduced and settled at below 5% and now it was between 1 – 2% which was near normal levels expected;
- Call Centre calls and complaints increased as a result; and
- severe weather disruption.

In terms of the current position, Members were advised of the following:-

- the majority of staff were now signed up and completing their rounds as designed;
- intervention methods taking place with those who were not;

- continuing to, “tweak” some rounds that overlap and improve efficiency; and
- once the situation had further settled a communication exercise with residents would be undertaken.

In conclusion, Members of the Committee were advised that:-

- the department continued to modernise;
- withdraw the mop up crews that were currently “soaking out efficiency”; and
- set in motion future VFM review in waste.

Members in their discussions referred to:-

- problems experienced in Westhoughton around communications;
- staffing Issues;
- call Centre staff briefings;
- availability of future details of the savings made; and
- missed collections.

Resolved – (i) That the update presentation be welcomed.

(ii) That the Director of Environmental Services be asked to inform Members of the current policy in respect of missed collections.

46. ROAD SAFETY SCRUTINY PANEL

The Director of Environmental Services submitted a report which advised Members of the progress made on the recommendations set out by the Road Safety Issues Scrutiny Panel and identified any interventions which had proved to be successful in reducing road casualties.

By way of background information, the report explained that at the meeting of this Committee held on 16th August, 2006 it was decided to establish a Road Safety Issues Scrutiny Panel to investigate road safety issues, with particular attention to traffic calming schemes.

The Panel subsequently made a number of recommendations which were reported to the Executive Member for Environmental Services on 7th August, 2007.

The report went on to set out the progress made since the recommendations of the Panel, including interventions made.

Members in their discussions referred to:-

- reductions in accidents.
it was explained that this was due to all round Partnership working;
- that future reports should have more details on the actual specific improvements;
- in Greater Manchester, Bolton was second to Manchester in terms of performance and the issues around this;
- the further inclusion of reasons for road deaths;
- feedback information in response of driver feedback signs;
- reasons for speed camera locations;
- the effect of road safety schemes with and without humps and chicanes; and
- matters around the possible re-establishment of the, Road Safety Forum.

Resolved – (i) That the update be noted.

(ii) That information regarding feedback received from the driver feedback signs and the reasons for the camera locations be circulated to Members of this Committee.

(iii) That the consideration be given to the holding of an annual road safety discussion either at a meeting of the Policy Development Group, possibly augmented by Members of this Committee or via a meeting of this committee.

47. MEMBERS' BUSINESS

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

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- a) Executive Member for Cleaner, Greener, and Safer held on 14th December, 2009 and 18th January, 2010.
- b) Executive Member for Environmental Services held on 25th January, 2010.
- c) Environmental Services Policy Development Group held on 1st December, 2009.
- d) Cleaner, Greener, Safer Policy Development Group held on 14th December, 2009 and 11th January, 2010.

Further to the decision monitoring appendix to the minutes of the Environmental Services Executive Member, the Committee referred to the Victoria Street Lighting Scheme and delays in the creating of Bus Stop Orders.

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

(The meeting started at 6.00 p.m. and finished at 7.46 p.m.)