

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP

MEETING, 8TH NOVEMBER, 2010

Present – Councillors Zaman (Chairman), Darvesh (Vice-Chairman), Chadwick (as deputy for Councillor Peel), Critchley, Mrs Fairclough, A. Walsh and D. Wilkinson.

The following members of the Cleaner, Greener, Safer PDG were in attendance for item 25 (Environmental Savings and Efficiencies 2011/12):

Councillors Bashir –Ismail, Chadwick, Morgan and J. Rothwell.

Also in attendance from the GMPTE for item 26:

Ms M. Watson - Department Manager

Mr P. Traynor – Traffic Manger

Also in Attendance

Mr M. Cox	-	Director of Environmental Services
Mr J. Kelly	-	Head of Highways and Engineering Development Services
Mr D. Houghton	-	Head of Highways and Engineering Delivery Services
Mr T. Kelly	-	Senior Engineering Manager, Traffic Management
Ms M. Stoney	-	Assistant Director, Legal Services
Mr C. Lloyd	-	Assistant Head of Service Performance and Improvement
Ms J. Pollard	-	Policy Accountant
Ms A. Lunt	-	HR/OD Business Partner
Mrs S Bailey	-	Principal Democratic Services Officer

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Cottam, Peel and Pickup.

Councillor Zaman in the Chair

24. MINUTES

The minutes of the proceedings of the meeting of the Group held on 4th October, 2010 were submitted and signed as a correct record.

25. ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES SAVINGS AND EFFICIENCIES PROGRAMME 2011/12

Ms J. Pollard, Policy Accountant, gave a presentation to members on the proposed Environmental Services savings and efficiencies for 2011/12 which had been prepared in response to the Corporate financial guidance approved by the Executive on 28th June, 2010.

The presentation advised that the guidance required that the Environmental Services Department identify savings and efficiencies totalling 10% of its base budget, plus fund essential demand led growth for 2011/12. The Department should plan for savings at the following levels:

2011/12	10%
2012/13	10%
2013/14	5%

Table one of the report outlined the calculation of the Department's redirection target, as follows:-

	2011/1 2	2012/1 3	2013/1 4
Redirections required (Percentage)			
2011/12	10%	10%	10%
2012/13		10%	10%
2013/14			5%
Total Redirection Required	10%	20%	25%
Redirections required (£ Value)			
2011/12	2,105	2,105	2,105
2012/13		2,000	2,000
2013/14			1,452
Total Additional Redirections Required Each Year	2,105	4,105	5,557
Demand Led Growth			
Deficit Reserve Repayment Plan	200	400	400

Total Departmental Redirection Target	2,305	4,505	5,957
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The report went on to outline the options identified to meet the corporate redirection target and demand led growth in the areas of:

Highways and Engineering
Neighbourhood Services
Waste and Fleet
Community Services; and
Policy and Performance

Full details of the options were identified in tables within the report and were summarised as follows:

Highways

Division	Description of Option	FTE Change	£'000
Highways and Engineering	Highways and Engineering savings and Efficiencies Review	68	1,370
		68	1,370
	Total Savings and Efficiencies	68	1,370

Neighbourhood services

Division	Description of Option	FTE Change	£'000
Neighbourhood Services Review	Neighbourhood Services savings and Efficiencies Review	80	605
		80	605

	Total Savings and Efficiencies	80	605

Waste

Division	Description of Option	FTE Change	£'000
Waste and Fleet	Suspension of Green Waste	9	90
	Joint Transport Working	0	30
	Joint Authority Working	0	60
		9	180
	Total Savings and Efficiencies		180

Community Services

Division	Description of Option	FTE Change	£'000
Community Services	Social Needs Transport review	0	25
	Income optimisation	0	75
		0	100
	Total Savings and Efficiencies	0	100

Policy and Performance

Division	Description of Option	FTE Change	£'000
Policy and Performance	Management of Cash Limited Budgets	0	50
		0	50
	Total Savings and Efficiencies	0	50

With regard to other financial risks, the report advised that the Department received a number of grants which helped to fund some of the activities delivered by the Department e.g. Area Based Grant and funds activity through the capital programme. Once the impact of the reduction in these funds was apparent, an update would be provided to members.

It was agreed that the Executive Members for Environmental Services and Cleaner, Greener, Safer be recommended to consider the information included within this report, note its contents and submit it as part of the Corporate Resource Allocation Process.

26. QUALITY PARTNERSHIP SCHEME ON THE BOLTON – ATHERTON-LEIGH BUS ROUTE – PRESENTATION BY GMPTE

Ms M. Watson and Mr P. Traynor from GMPTE, attended the meeting and gave a presentation to members on proposals to introduce a Quality Partnership Scheme on the Bolton-Atherton-Leigh bus route.

Members were informed that the GMPTE, bus operators and the councils had joined together in partnership to improve bus services for users via the use of Quality Partnership Schemes (QPS). The schemes aimed to improve operations, routes and costs to give customers a better quality service.

The proposals were in response to customer demand for a reliable, consistent service which was particularly important to Bolton residents.

Two pilot schemes were currently being proposed, one of which was in Manchester and the other on the Bolton-Atherton-Leigh route.

The presentation went on to outline the key objectives and benefits of the scheme which included reliability, punctuality, bus quality, image, better customer relations, minimum standards of service, improved security, cleanliness, increased patronage and the ability to maintain competitive.

Members were also informed of the legal agreement that all parties entering a QPS would have to adhere to which included the minimum standards required. The scheme would operate for 10 years. Ongoing liaison and consultation was currently taking place in order to progress the pilot QPS.

If successful, there would be the possibility of extending the scheme on to other routes and bus corridors.

Following the presentation, members asked questions and made the following observations:

- the possibility of introducing uniformity of bus lane operation times to avoid confusion although some members felt that different bus lane operation times were beneficial to take into account local conditions;
- bus lane signs should be improved, made clearer and be able to be read at night times – although the Traffic Regulation Order review would address this issue to enable them to be enforced;
- the scheme would only work if bus operators were happy to comply with the conditions.

It was agreed that Ms Watson and Mr Traynor be thanked for their informative presentation.

27. PROVISION OF ACCESS PROTECTION MARKINGS FOR RESIDENTS

The Director of Environmental Services submitted a report which outlined options available for the introduction of access protection markings outside individual properties together with associated issues and implications.

The report advised members that regular complaints were received from members of the public regarding the obstruction of footway crossings and driveways. The Council had no powers to deal with such issues where waiting restrictions were not in place. The Police had the power to deal with obstructive parking.

Generally, complaints received requested the Council to introduce waiting restrictions to remove the problem, however, this was costly as it involved the promotion of a legal order and its subsequent enforcement.

An alternative option to address the issue was an access protection marking which was a prescribed marking contained within the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002 which could be used in these circumstances. The marking could be installed to indicate a part of the carriageway which should be kept clear of waiting vehicles. The marking was not enforceable at present although the Council may be able to enforce these markings at sometime in the future if it chose to do so.

In this regard, the report advised that the Council currently had no available funding to implement such markings and was therefore unable to assist members of the public who were experiencing problems with inconsiderate parking. Area forums had been able to assist in some cases using the monies allocated to them whilst other councils offered to provide access protections markings at the cost of the resident. Details of the costs associated with implementation of the markings were provided in the report.

The report went on to outline the following options to address the issues:

- Option 1 - the Council could consider requests for access protection markings from all residents which would be subject to approval by the Council's Traffic Management Team and implementation would be dependent on existing site conditions and guidance from within the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002. The costs would be recharged to the resident however, there would be an additional survey and assessment fee of £55 per site; and
- Option 2 – the Council could consider and implement all requests for access protection markings from all residents without formal consideration or approval by the Council's Traffic Management Team and in accordance with the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002. The costs would be recharged to the resident.

The concern with the second option was that the Council would have no control over the number of lines being installed which could lead to them becoming ineffective if too many were introduced.

Members of the Group discussed the options and felt that it would be helpful if the Government provided some clarity on what the Council could actually enforce.

It was agreed that the options available for installation of access protection markings be noted.

28. PROVISION OF DISABLED PARKING SPACES FOR RESIDENTS

The Director of Environmental Services submitted a report which outlined the options available for the introduction of Disabled Parking Bays outside individual properties and highlighted the associated resource implications.

The report advised that requests were received by the Council on a regular basis for the provision of disabled parking spaces outside individual properties. Previously, the Council had not supported the provision of enforceable bays because of the resources required to introduce and disestablish them when the resident left the property.

The report went on to outline three options for the provision of bays for consideration by members:

1. Advisory Disabled Bay – this was not enforceable although it could provide a resident with an improved facility to park closer to their home;
2. Mandatory Disabled Bay – this required the introduction of a Traffic Regulation Order which would prevent its use by a non Disabled Badge Holder. However, it would not be person specific and could be used by any Disabled Badge Holder and not just the resident concerned; and
3. Dedicated Disabled Parking Bay – this would be specific to the person and would require them to be issued with a parking permit. A Traffic Regulation Order would be required and an annual renewal of the permit. This would be costly to promote and manage, in addition to removal of the bay if the disabled resident left the property.

It was anticipated that the introduction of disabled parking bays would lead to a large increase in requests. There were approximately 14,000 Blue Badge Holders in Bolton and currently 36 requests which could justify a parking provision.

The report went on to provide details of the estimated costs of introducing and subsequently removing each category of parking bay. Details of the policies in other Greater Manchester authorities were also provided.

Members discussed the report at length and felt that existing arrangements should remain unchanged at present.

It was agreed that the report be noted.

29. URGENT REPAIRS EFFICIENCY OPTIONS

The Director of Environmental Services submitted a report which put forward options for delivering efficiencies within the urgent repairs area of work of the Highways Section.

The report provided details of current costs of flag replacement and repairs across the Borough which were undertaken on a reactive basis during the 2009/10 Financial Year and outlined proposals to reduce these costs by the use of bitumen. The significant savings that could be achieved could then be reinvested in a programme of invest to save schemes.

Following consideration of the report, members discussed the proposals and made the following observations:

- the costs of materials seemed to be high and this should be examined;
- the possibility of repairs being undertaken on a find and fix basis although it was acknowledged that this could not always be the case;
- any changes to existing practices would require communication to the public.

It was agreed that the proposals be supported in general, subject to further discussions.

30. HIGHWAYS SAVINGS AND EFFICIENCIES REVIEW

The Director of Environmental Services submitted a report which set out the results of the formal consultation process in respect of the Highways and Engineering Savings and Efficiencies Review.

The report reminded members that the consultation process with external stakeholders on the proposed Highways savings and efficiencies took place between 1st September and 15th October, 2010. Full details of how the process was undertaken were provided in the report.

The report went on to outline and fully explain the various proposed changes in response to the Trades Unions negotiations.

In addition, various key issues raised by stakeholders were highlighted in the report.

The report would be submitted to the meeting of the Executive Member for Environmental Services on 22nd November, 2010. If formally approved, the next stage of the process would commence.

It was agreed that the report be noted.

31. ANIMAL AID – ADOPTION OF THE COMPASSIONATE CHARTER

The Director of the Chief Executive's Department submitted a report which put forward a suggested appropriate response to the petition submitted to the Council at its meeting on 9th December, 2009 by the campaigning group Animal Aid requesting the Council to adopt an overarching ethical policy that would help animals, people and the planet, as set out in the Group's Compassionate Charter.

The Charter identified the eight specific actions that it requested the Council to implement in adopting the Charter as follows:-

1. purchase only cruelty-free toiletries and cleaning products;
2. ban circuses with animals from Council land;
3. ban the giving of pets as prizes at funfairs;
4. promote and subsidise spaying and neutering programmes;
5. ban the sale of foie gras and veal on Council premises;
6. go fur-free;
7. use only humane, non-lethal methods of wildlife management;
8. make the town a plastic bag free zone.

The report explained that the Council had already agreed to implement a number of the above and the others could be adopted with some modifications without any economic impact. It was proposed therefore that the principles be adopted, as outlined in the report now submitted.

Following consideration of the report, members made the following observations:

- whenever Council officers visited a business or in the course of their duties, staff should generally encourage and educate businesses to be aware of the principles of the Animal Charter and the actions being taken by the Council to promote it; and
- many of the principles contained within the Charter were already being promoted and acted on by the Council.

The report would also be considered by the Corporate Resources, Strategy and Health and Housing, Neighbourhoods and Regulation PDGs.

It was agreed that the Executive Member for Environmental Services be recommended to approve the Compassionate Charter, as detailed in the report now submitted.

32. MOBILE SOLUTIONS

Mr C. Lloyd gave a presentation and demonstration to members on the new mobile working software being utilised by the Environment Department .

The software would have major efficiency improvements and cost benefits for the services provided by the Department.

It was agreed that Mr Lloyd be thanked for his informative presentation and demonstration.

(The meeting started at 10.30am and finished at 1.15pm)

(The meeting started at 1.00pm and finished at 1.40pm)