

## **ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

MEETING, 3RD DECEMBER, 2008

Present – Councillors Higson (Chairman), Allen, L. Byrne, Hornby, Lever, Lord, Mrs. Rothwell, R. Silvester, J. Walsh, Wild and D. Wilkinson

### Also in Attendance

Ms. S. Johnson	- Deputy Director of Corporate Resources
Mr. I.D. Mulholland	- Scrutiny Team Leader
Councillor Peel	- Executive Member for Environmental Services
Councillor Sherrington	- Executive Member for Cleaner, Greener, Safer
Mr. M. Cox	- Director of Environmental Services
Mr. S. Young	- Assistant Director Policy and Performance
Mr. M. Veigas	- Assistant Director Community Services
Mr. D. Doherty	- Highways Lighting Manager
Mr. D. Smith	- Policy Accountant
Ms. V. Mather	- Policy and Performance Manager
Mr. P. Rigby	- Group Engineer Special Projects
Mr. M. Russell	- Greenspace Manager
Mr. D. Houghton	- Head of Highways and Engineering Delivery Services
Mr. G. Lomax	- Assistant Manager Liaison

Mr. W. Humphrey	- United Utilities
Ms. E. Stafford	- United Utilities
Mr. C. Wright	- United Utilities
Mr. M. Williamson	- United Utilities

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Mrs. Brierley.

Councillor Higson in the Chair.

#### **44. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The minutes of the proceedings of the meeting of the Committee held on 8th October, 2008 were submitted.

Further to Minute 34, minutes of the last meeting, members referred to the establishment of the Winter Gritting Scrutiny Panel and the need for the Panel to hold its initial meeting. Members were informed that scoping of the Panel was underway and that an early meeting of the Panel would be arranged for members to formally agree the remit.

With regard to Minute 40, Building Cleaning Value for Money, members referred to the Caretaking Consultation being undertaken and what stage this was at.

Resolved – (i) That the minutes be signed as a correct record.

(ii) That members of this Committee be circulated with an update on the position regarding the Highways Asset Management Plan following the meeting of the Policy Development Group in January, 2009.

(iii) That members be notified of the position regarding the Caretaking Consultation exercise being undertaken by Bolton at Home.

#### **45. MONITORING OF DECISIONS**

The Director of Legal and Democratic Services submitted a report which provided details of the progress of decisions taken at previous meetings of this Committee.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

#### **46. ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME**

The Director of Legal and Democratic Services submitted a report which put forward a list of suggested issues which the Committee might wish to receive reports on or investigate further during the Municipal Year, 2008/2009.

The report also included information which would aid the Committee in selecting appropriate items for consideration in the future.

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

Resolved – (i) That the list of issues identified for consideration, as detailed in the report, be approved.

(ii) That the following matters be moved from the Schedule for the 11th February, 2009 meeting to the 15th April, 2009 meeting:-

- The National Waste Strategy;
- Recycling Performance Update;
- The Highways Asset Management Plan;
- Town Centre CCTV Strategy; and
- Processing of Internal Waste.

(iii) That an update report on the issue of crematorium mercury emissions be factored into the work programme for the 11th February, 2009 meeting.

#### **47. MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

**The following question was raised by Councillor R. Silvester in accordance with Standing Order 36.**

Following on from the comments made by a senior Liberal Democrat Councillor at the last Environmental Services Policy Development Group, the Committee asks the Executive Member to outline the benefits, both to Bolton and Moss Bank Park from having a butterfly house in terms of tourism and educational value to children. Would the Executive Member also advise on whether the butterfly house contributes to the Green Flag status.

**The following response was prepared by the Director of Environmental Services:-**

The Butterfly House at Moss Bank Park was an important part of the formal and informal education offer at Animal World, being used to support a number of National Curriculum linked activities around life cycles, variation and adaption in nature. It contributed to maintaining the high profile of the park and the Borough through the success of the breeding programme and the worldwide reputation of the staff.

The Butterfly House featured recently in the national press launch of a series of Butterfly Stamps from Royal Mail and was now contributing to butterfly conservation through a breed and release scheme linked to habitat development works in the park.

Green Flag judges had recognised that the Butterfly House and Animal World gave Moss Bank Park a unique selling point in the North West.

Members in their discussions particularly referred to issues around the breeding programme.

Resolved – That the question and response be noted.

**48. PROCEEDINGS OF MEETINGS OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES**

The minutes of the proceedings of the Executive Member for Environmental Services held on 28th October and 25th November, 2008 were submitted.

Further to minute 57, Winter Maintenance CBPP options, Members discussed the issues of the recent snow fall and the excellent response by the Environmental Services Department in terms of gritting service.

Members went on to refer to possible issues that could be addressed by the Winter Gritting Scrutiny Panel, namely the type of salt used to grit, a review of the gritting network and the siting of self help grit bins in order for the public to assist in the clearance of snow and ice on pavements.

Mr. D. Houghton, Head of Highways and Engineering Delivery Services, reported on the action that had been taken to address the recent snow fall. He also indicated that staff concerned would be involved in a debriefing.

Resolved – That the minutes of the proceedings be noted.

#### **49. PROCEEDINGS OF MEETINGS OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CLEANER, GREENER, SAFER**

The minutes of the proceedings of the Executive Member for Cleaner, Greener, Safer held on 28th October and 25th November, 2008 were submitted.

In regard to minute 27, Engaging Communities in Fighting Crime, Members referred to the recent appointment of a Neighbourhood Justice Co-ordinator and matters regarding public and member engagement at a local level. It was indicated that this matter would need to be submitted via the Adult Services Scrutiny Committee as this issue lay within its remit.

Resolved – That the minutes of the proceedings be noted.

#### **50. PROCEEDINGS OF A MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES POLICY**

## **DEVELOPMENT GROUP**

The minutes of the proceedings of the meeting of the Environmental Services Policy Development Group held on 17th October, 2008 were submitted.

Resolved – That the minutes be noted.

### **51. PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLEANER, GREENER, SAFER POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP**

The minutes of the Cleaner, Greener, Safer Policy Development Group held on 17th October, 2008, were submitted

Resolved – That the minutes be noted

### **52. PROCEEDINGS OF A JOINT MEETING OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES AND CLEANER GREENER, SAFER POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP**

The minutes of a joint meeting of the Environmental Services and Cleaner, Greener, Safer Policy development Groups held on 17th October, 2008, were submitted.

Resolved – That the minutes be noted.

### **53. PROCEEDINGS OF THE CAR PARKING POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP**

The minutes of the meeting of the Car Parking Policy Development Group held on 17th October, 2008, were submitted.

Resolved – That the minutes be noted.

### **54. UNITED UTILITIES UPDATE**

Chris Wright (Chief Operating Officer United Utilities Electricity Services), Mark Williamson (South Area Operations Manager United Utilities Electricity Services), Bill Humphray (Key

Customer Manager United Utilities North West Water) and Ella-Louise Stafford (Notice Management Centre) gave a presentation, updating the Committee on the progress of Partnership Working arrangements since their last presentation to Scrutiny Committee a year ago.

By way of introduction, the Committee was informed of the current national United Utilities structure.

In terms of changes within United Utilities Electricity Services, Chris Wright informed members of the following:-

- Electricity Assets had been sold to Electricity North West (ENW);
- All assets now owned by ENW and not by United Utilities;
- United Utilities Electricity Services (UUES) had a contract to operate and maintain ENW's assets; and
- Budgets for maintenance, repair and investment determined by ENW, with UUES guidance.

Mark Williamson went on to explain that:-

- Significant investment in Overhead and Underground Network;
- Approximately £2m of capital investment in 2008/09 in Bolton:-
  - Refurbishment of Overhead Lines
  - Replacement of Substation Equipment
  - Cable Overlays.
- All aimed at improving supply reliability;
- Major scheme in Westhoughton – 7.5km cable overlay scheme currently underway. This was the largest investment in the south of UUES in 2008/09;

and

- Liaison with Bolton HA in advance of all major works beginning, at both the planning and pre-construction stage.

With regard to Street Lighting – New Connections and Transfers the Committee was advised of:-

- New Connections and Transfers:-
  - Performance was improving with new contractors (Bethells)
    - 47.3% complete in less than 15 days (Target 60%)
    - 70% complete within 25 days (Target 90%)
    - 75% complete within 40 days (Target 100%)
- 15 day target was tight due to TMA noticing period (10 days);
- Launch of new contractors did not progress well with under-performance from Murphys;
- Bethells had now taken over work in Bolton and service was improving.

Bill Humphray went on to outline information in relation to water and waste water:-

#### Customer Care

- Guaranteed Standards of Service:-
  - Internal flooding incident – response within 2 hours;
  - External flooding incident – response within 4 hours;



- Written complaints – response within 10 working days.

United Utilities (UU ) or not UU (Sewerage/drainage maintenance and repair)

- Not always easy to establish;
- Misunderstandings often occur when issue first reported;
- UU asset maps not 100% accurate and did not display private networks; and
- Happy to assist in any investigation to determine responsibility.

#### Working Relationship with Bolton MBC

- Re-establish quarterly liaison meetings between UU Waste Water Field Staff & Council Officers in 2009;
- Good relationship existed between Bolton Council and UU to resolve environmental health drainage issues;
- Quarterly liaison meeting held to discuss programming of works;
- (Steve Beech – UU Project Engineer liaises with Gary Lomax, Bernie Liptrot or Mark Treen – Bolton MBC; and

Attendance at Scrutiny Committee.

#### Wastewater Customer Satisfaction Ratings

- Approximately 800 customers were contacted every month, including 200 customers who have rang UU about their wastewater service.

- This research programme concentrates on tracking customer experiences of UU including:
  - Overall satisfaction of their experience with UU;
  - First time resolution;
  - Keeping customers informed;
  - Delivery against promises;
  - Call handling;
  - Appointments;
  - Further work evaluation by UU's service partners;
  - Customer perceptions of:
    - Query being dealt with;
    - Impact on reputation; and
    - Value for money.

Ella Stafford, United Utilities Notice Management went on to outline the following:-

#### Payments of Invoices

- Charges relating to Section 74 were processed in approx 15 working days, a meeting takes place with UU and Bolton to agree/discuss the charges. An actual invoice is then raised as paid as soon as received.
- Defect invoices follow a similar process as S74, in the past there had been no meetings to agree charges but moving forward if there were issues with a particular invoice that could not be resolved via email/phone then a meeting would be arranged.
- Sample Inspection charges were agreed with the highway authority and invoiced on a quarterly basis for the agreed amounts. Any invoices that had queries were discussed with the authority.

Members in their deliberations referred to the following:-

- Capacity of the grid system;
- Substation maintenance including issues of vandalism, weeds, graffiti, fencing around substations;
- Partnership working between the Council, United Utilities and other relevant partners.
- Drainage management, in particular Section 24 Sewers which were not included on the sewer map and the need for better liaison with United Utilities on this matter.

Resolved – (i) That the representatives from United Utilities be thanked for their informative presentation.

(ii) That officers from the Environmental Services Department and United Utilities be asked to meet to draw up an action plan on problems that need addressing and that an update be given to the April, 2009 meeting of this Committee.

## **55. SECTION 106 AGREEMENTS**

The Director of Development and Regeneration submitted a report which gave Members a general overview of Section 106 Agreements, their usage and the impact on revenue budgets in the short term.

Section 106 (S106) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, allowed a Local Planning Authority (LPA) to enter into a legally binding agreement or planning obligation with a land developer over a related issue. The obligation was termed a Section 106 Agreement which could cover almost any relevant issue and could include sums of money. The report before Committee dealt with the use of S106 Agreements in relation to open space in new developments and the provision of landscaping, amenity open space and particularly equipped children's play facilities.

The report outlined the Bolton UDP Policy 04 which set out the requirements for the provision of landscaping, amenity open space and children's play relating to new developments of 30

properties or more. Where development included 30 or more family properties, provision for children's play would be made.

Increasingly, except in the case of very large developments, this was facilitated by off site provision on existing parks or open spaces and was prioritised locally by elected members as part of the Equipped Play Area Strategy.

Payment from the developer for this off site provision was calculated on the basis of a contribution per family dwelling. This contribution was partly a capital contribution for the development of the facility and partly a commuted sum to support maintenance for a period of at least 10 years.

Since the adoption of the Equipped Play Area Strategy in 2006, over £1million of S106 receipts had been earmarked for upgrading play facilities across the Borough, with a total of 22 sites delivered to date.

The development of new play areas on existing sites as part of the overall Equipped Play Area Strategy reduced the potential long term impact on revenue budgets for the maintenance of these facilities.

Resolved – (i) That the report be noted.

(ii) That a copy of this report be circulated to all Members for information.

## **56. RECEPTION FREE MEAL PROMOTION**

The Director of Environmental Services submitted a report detailing the early average figures for reception class meal uptake from 1st September, 2008, across all Bolton's primary schools following full admission of reception children. The report also advised of the impact assessment, proposed evaluation needs and the trend analysis for funding needs.

The report concluded that the early signs were that there was significant interest in the promotion of a free school meal for every reception class child in every Bolton primary school

during the 2008 autumn term with a take up level exceeding original estimates of 80%. Some further analysis of the behavioural impacts of the pilot would be very valuable. However, the crucial indicator in gauging the success or otherwise of the pilot would be the parental decision to continue buying a school meal beyond the end of the promotion.

Members discussed the need to be made aware of information following the end of the first trial.

Resolved – That a detailed analysis of the first trial including financial information be submitted to the February meeting.

## **PARKS COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

Resolved – That full consideration of this issue be deferred but the prepared presentation slides in terms of an update on Parks Community Development be circulated to Members of this committee.

### **57. RECYCLING PERFORMANCE 2008/09**

The Director of Environmental Services submitted a report the purpose of which was to present to Committee the household trend data from 2005/06 to 2008/09 and recycling performance to September, 2008.

The performance information was contained in a series of detailed appendices appended to the report.

Members in their deliberations discussed the low percentage figure in Appendix 4 for 2008/09, comparisons with other towns on recycling and pricing for recycling.

Resolved – That Members of this Committee be notified of a detailed explanation of the percentage graph set out in Appendix 4 to the report.

### **58. PROCESSING OF WASTE FOR RECYCLING**

The Director of Environmental Services submitted a report the purpose of which was to provide information to Members on the processing of waste for recycling in Bolton.

As part of the Greater Manchester Waste Disposal Authority PFI contract, the authority sent recyclable materials to Viridor Resource Management Ltd (VRML) which had been created to be Viridor Waste Management's national marketing and sales body for all recycle material and its onward transmission to end users.

The report went on to detail the current and proposed end markets for Bolton recyclates.

Resolved – That the report be noted

## **59. ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES PERFORMANCE DASHBOARD QUARTER 2**

A report of the Director of Environmental Services was submitted, which provided an overview of the Environmental Services performance, in Quarter 2 of 2008/2009.

The report provided details on:-

- overall performance;
- Community Strategy 3 Year Plan indicators (including LAA indicators);
- Corporate health performance, including sick absence, risk and value for money;
- National indicators relating to the Department;
- Local performance indicators relating to the Department, which reflects key service priorities; and
- Service performance, including comparing Quarter Two against Quarter One – Service Improvement Action Plans and complaints.

Resolved – That the report be noted

**60. ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES – FINANCIAL  
MONITORING REPORT 2008/2009 – QUARTER 2**

The Director of Environmental Services submitted a report which provided information relating to the financial position for the Environmental Services portfolio for the 2008/2009 financial year, as at the end of Quarter Two.

With regard to Revenue, the report stated that the expenditure was projected to exceed the budget by £585,000, largely due to a significant reduction in demand for the Trade Waste service and the additional costs of providing school meals.

Capital Expenditure for the quarter totalled £2.8m against a programme of £21.2m. Expenditure was traditionally low in the first half of the year and in some areas, the programme reflected available allocations rather than anticipated in year spend.

The Department's projected deficit reserve position at 31st March 2009 was £3,409,000. Detailed repayment plans were included within the report.

With regards to budgeted efficiency, savings were anticipated to be in line with the Departmental target for 2008/09 of £772,000.

The report also referred to the current year expenditure in relation to the transport replacement programme, which was anticipated to be £2.4m. This was largely in relation to the purchase of split bodied vehicles. The Executive Member had approved an increase by prudential borrowing, and requested the Council to increase its prudential borrowing accordingly.

Resolved – That the report be noted

(The meeting started at 6.00pm and finished at 8.35pm).

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