

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENT CAPITAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD AT THE BOURGES/VIERSEN ROOM - TOWN HALL
ON 19 JANUARY 2012**

Present: Councillors D Day (Chairman), N Arculus, J Peach, N North, B Rush,
JA Fox and N Sandford

Also Present: Councillor M Lee, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Culture,
Recreation and Strategic Commissioning

Officers Present: Paul Phillipson, Executive Director for Operations
Adrian Chapman, Head of Neighbourhood Services
Peter Gell, Strategic Regulatory Services Manager
Andy Tatt, Network Management Group Manager
Mark Speed, Transport and Infrastructure Planning Manager
Paulina Ford, Senior Governance Officer, Scrutiny
Dania Castagliuolo, Governance Officer
Israr Ahmed, Lawyer

1. Apologies for Absence

No apologies for absence were received.

2. Declarations of Interest and Whipping Declarations

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 8 September 2011 and 3 November 2011

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 September 2011 were approved as an accurate record.

The Senior Governance Officer informed the Committee that following Councillor North's query regarding the minutes from the 8 September 2011 meeting she had checked the notes taken and question regarding when the Environment Capital status would be achieved and when it was achieved what it would look like had been covered in the minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 November 2011 were approved as an accurate record.

4. Call In of any Cabinet, Cabinet Member or Key Officer Decisions

There were no requests for call-in to consider.

5. 2012/13 Local Transport Plan Capital Programme of Works (CPW)

The report had been brought before the Committee to seek views on the draft Local Transport Plan Capital Programme 2012/13 and highways maintenance revenue schemes, prior to its consideration by the Cabinet Member for Housing, Neighbourhoods and Planning. The report included the following information:

- 2012/13 Integrated Transport Capital Programme
- 2012/13 Highways Capital and Revenue Maintenance Programme
- 2012/13 Street Lighting Capital Maintenance Programme

- 2012/13 Bridge Capital Maintenance Programme

The Transport Planning Manager advised the Committee that the CPW had input from various areas:

- Local Transport Plan
- Neighbourhood Council Allocation
- Project requests
- Schemes identified through monitoring regime
- Strategic Importance in the Growth Strategy
- Asset management Plan

Methodologies were used in order to determine which schemes were prioritised for each area.

Questions and observations were raised around the following areas:

- What is a footway slurry seal? *It was a surface treatment that was put on footways over the existing black surface and therefore extended the life of the asset. This was done instead of having to remove the existing surface. It was the equivalent to the micro asphalt surface that was put on carriageways.*
- What does a footway slab replacement mean? *Slabs are taken up and replaced with a black surface. The slabs are then recycled and used within the sub-base construction of the new footway.*
- Members felt that residents would prefer to have slabs replaced with slabs within conservation areas so that the footway looked the same. *Small localised areas and conservations areas were replaced with like for like slabs. For longer sections of works it was more cost effective to replace the section with the black surface coupled with the reduction in insurance claims for trips and falls on slabbed footways.*
- Does the council have a significant amount of natural slabs rather than the artificial ones and what was the difference in cost? *There were less natural slabs and they tended to be in the old imperial sizes. It had been much more cost effective to replace slabs with black surface. The cost of replacing slabs was £25 per square meter and much more labour intensive which meant it cost 20% to 30% more than using black surface.*
- Members felt it was important to keep conservation areas in keeping with the natural area.
- The report had stated that under Innovative Travel there would be a contribution to a regional project to introduce charging points for electrical vehicles. How many charging points will there be and where will they be placed. *It was a regional scheme and the council were working with partners to assess where and how many would be needed. It was a match funded scheme and the Government were pushing to get electric vehicles in use. There were some charging points already in place but had not been connected up yet. The Officer was unable to give specific details at this point. It would be a staged implementation over the next five years and as the points became live the use of them would be monitored.*
- Street lighting capital maintenance programme. A number of street lighting replacement schemes were in conservation areas. Had the council considered looking at replacing the street lighting with ones that were more in keeping with the age of the column and the conservations area. *Members were advised that they were working within a budget and the cast iron style columns were much more expensive than the steel columns. Conservations areas would be looked at very carefully. Black street furniture would be used in village conservation areas and the core city centre to ensure continuity. (note: excluding the public realm cathedral square area where street furniture has a stainless finish)*
- When looking at an area like Park Crescent could you look at replacing the street lighting with a type of designer street lighting in keeping with the area. *If there was a building*

within the area of a certain age and character that could be taken into account but it would be difficult within the budget to consider replacing a whole road. The Officer noted the point made and it would be considered.

- *How genuine was the urgency of the five year column replacement programme. Members were informed that the issue was very serious. The columns had been put in by the Development Corporation and were now beyond their shelf life. Surveys were being conducted to assess which columns needed replacing first and then they would be replaced on a street by street basis in order of priority.*
- *Are the street light adaptation programme and the street column replacement programme being done together? The two projects in conjunction with the Energy Efficiency Invest to Save Programme were being planned and co-ordinated through the Transport Planning Managers team.*
- *Where was the funding coming from for the water taxi infrastructure? No public money would be put towards the scheme. It would come from the section 106 planning conditions. If external funding was not found then the scheme would not go ahead.*
- *How will you spend the £100k on the Public Realm Scheme at Crescent Bridge? It would be spent on and around the subway in particular the landscaping to open up the whole area and help prevent anti social behaviour. This would help increase the footfall from the station into Cowgate and the city centre.*
- *Members had noted that the land owned by National Rail along the route to the Station was not being maintained and was covered with litter. Members were advised that the authority were seeking an agreement with Network Rail for the council to clean the area up. The area had since been targeted and once a month a group from probation services had been to clean the area. The site was being considered for a redesign as part of the public realm landscaping works and gateway approach to the city.*
- *Why was £20K being spent on dual carriageway drainage improvements at the Stanground Bypass when the bypass had not been adopted? The drainage work was being done as the original work had not been up to standard and additional work had been required. The adoption of the road was an issue and the council were working with the developers to ensure the road was brought up to standard for adoption.*
- *What was the £700K being spent on at Junction 5 Boongate capacity and safety improvement. There had been an issue with tailbacks at the Junction onto the parkway and a scheme was being put in place to address this. The scheme was still undergoing design.*
- *Members commented that more emphasis should be placed on public transport schemes in line with the Environment Capital Aspirations.*
- *There had been significant concern from Members with regard to the timing of the bus station improvements which had taken place during the winter months. Members were advised that the work that had been carried out had been more significant than had been expected. The Transport Planning Manager would contact the Project Manager to provide more information to Members.*
- *The original Local Transport Plan had stated that the Christmas Park and Ride would be extended over a longer period. The current budget proposals state that the Park and Ride scheme which costs £34K per annum was to be scrapped but a Water Taxi park and ride scheme was to be put in place in the future costing £600K. What was the rationale behind this? The Local Transport Plan had a caveat that stated it would not necessarily continue with a Christmas Park and Ride Scheme. The Christmas Park and Ride Scheme had not been well used and therefore the decision had been made not to continue with it. The scheme had cost the council £34K and in addition to that there had been a loss of income from car parks of £11K. The Director of Operations informed Members that the council had tried putting in place a small charge for park and ride to try and cover costs but it had the worst take up that there had been. Currently Peterborough had been able to sustain the volume of traffic coming into the city within the current car parks but long term as the city grew there would need to be consideration for a permanent park and ride scheme. This was being monitored.*

- Members commented that by using buses there would be a reduction of carbon output and that officers should look into this. *The Officer advised that this would be done when considering a park and ride scheme.*
- How do you set the criteria for highway and footpath resurfacing? Do you survey the roads or do you wait for someone to report a problem. *A robust mechanism of scanner surveys and visual inspections were completed.*
- How will you involve Neighbourhood Committees in the Capital Programme for highways improvements? *Last year and the year before all the Neighbourhood Committees had an opportunity to see the Capital Programme and putting forward schemes. The Development Capital Work Programme included Neighbourhood Committee allocations and project requests. Officers were working closely with the Neighbourhood Committees and this would continue.*

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee noted the report and recommended to the Executive Director of Operations that:

1. Special consideration should be given when replacing street lighting in conservation areas to ensure it was in keeping with the area.
2. Consideration should be given when removing natural flag stones from footways and that every effort is made to replace them with natural flag stones in keeping with the area.

ACTION AGREED

The Committee requested that a report be brought back to the Committee at a future date on plans for Strategic Park and Ride sites when more substantial plans had been prepared.

6. Environmental Enforcement Performance

The report provided the Committee with an overview of regulatory performance in the field of Environmental Enforcement. In March 2011 Regulatory Services had been integrated into the Neighbourhoods Team allowing stronger engagement with communities providing increasingly aligned services to local community needs and priorities. A presentation highlighted areas where Regulatory Services had been proactive in improving regulatory outcomes. These included:

- Fly tipping
- Accumulations
- Business Waste
- Fly posting
- Littering
- Graffiti
- Dog Fouling
- Abandoned vehicles
- Road side sales of cars

Questions and observations were raised around the following areas:

- The budget proposals state that there will be a reduction in Enforcement Officers from seven to four, two of which will be based solely in the City Centre. *The Head of Neighbourhood Services informed members that there was a consultation being undertaken with staff with regard to a restructure in the Neighbourhoods team and there was a proposal to move Enforcement Officers into the city centre where there was more activity. The Enforcement Officers through the consultation had been given the opportunity to come forward with ideas of ways of achieving the financial savings but*

retaining the level of commitment. For example they had looked at heightening their enforcement activity to bring in more revenue and using a company called X4 a private sector business that mainly focused on littering offences.

- *What will be the amount saved from cutting the numbers of Enforcement Officers from seven to four. This would form part of a bigger package but it would be the region of £90K.*
- *How will it be decided which of the seven would lose their jobs. The Head of Neighbourhood Services was optimistic that jobs would be found for all of them but could not guarantee this.*
- *How will it be decided who will work in the city centre? Volunteers would be asked for first and then there would be a selection process.*
- *Could money be taken from the Citizens Power Programme and used towards the Enforcement team. Members were advised that there would be no any further investment in the Citizens Power Programme and therefore this would not be possible.*
- *Members commented that the Enforcement Officers did an excellent job and neighbourhoods relied on the service that the Enforcement Officers provided and would not like to see the service diminish.*
- *The report states that there had been 129 warning letters sent out for fly tipping but there had only been 7 prosecutions. Why had there not been more prosecutions when you know who the people are. It had been very difficult to identify the culprits. Cases were looked at on an individual basis. Householders sometimes paid people to dispose of their household items in the belief that they were legitimately licensed businesses but were not. Unknown to the householder the items would then be fly tipped. The fly tipped items would then be traced back to the householder who had no idea of what had happened and had been under the impression that it had been disposed off correctly.*
- *A Member felt that as the majority of people did not reside in the City Centre the proposed change in policy to concentrate enforcement around the City Centre was not appropriate. The Head of Neighbourhood Services was encouraged by the support of Members for the Enforcement Officers and would take note of that during the consultation. He confirmed that the officers were actively involved in finding solutions and ways of saving money. It had been proven that by making a city centre attractive and safe it encouraged economic growth and would have a positive effect on the city overall. The type of crime within the city centre was more simplistic and had mainly been littering. There had been discussions with the company X4 to negotiate a contract for them to come back and provide enforcement officers within the city centre. If this proved to be a viable contract for X4 then it may be possible to provide enforcement officers to neighbourhoods to solve more complex problems and X4 in the city centre.*
- *Members commented that many litter bins on lamp posts had disappeared but Enterprise have advised that there was not enough money in the budget to replace them. Members were informed that litter bins had become a bit of a grey area between Enterprise and the council and a meeting had been scheduled between Enterprise and the council to discuss the issue and resolve who would be responsible for replacing the bins. The Head of Neighbourhood Services would report back to the Committee with the outcome of the meeting.*
- *Members wanted to know why the council were no longer using the CCTV pictures of people who dropped litter to name and shame them. When used in the past this had proved successful. The Head of Neighbourhood Services would look into why they were not being used and come back to the Committee.*
- *Could the council look into getting some kind of civil recovery for those people littering. Fixed penalty notices were issued and if they were not paid they could be taken to court.*
- *Can you explain what is happening with abandoned vehicles? Previously the complete process relating to abandoned vehicles was provided by City Services. When Enterprise took over it was established that they could not legally do part of the service as they were not the local authority. Enterprise still provides the service to extract the vehicles and the council officers did the investigating regarding the ownership of the vehicles.*

- Councillor Sandford wished it recorded that he did not support the proposal to reduce the number of Environmental Enforcement Officers from seven to four and did not support the proposal to place two of the four remaining officers in the City Centre. He felt that this would reduce the important service previously provided to the neighbourhoods.

ACTIONS

The Committee noted the report and supported the work of the Environmental Enforcement Team.

The Committee requested that the Head of Neighbourhood Services:

1. Report back to the Committee with the outcome of the meeting between Enterprise and the council regarding the responsibility of replacement litter bins.
2. Report back to the Committee on why the name and shame campaign where CCTV pictures of people dropping litter was published on the council website was no longer being used.

7. Parking on Grass Verges

The report informed the Committee on the work being undertaken to assess and tackle verge parking concerns across the city. Various hot spots had been identified across the city which would be dealt with in a holistic and affordable approach. There were now nine officers in post and a CCTV car tackling the issue. Funding would be key to any scheme proposed. Existing highway funds were limited and would need to be supplemented by Neighbourhood Committee funds if considered to be a neighbourhood priority and with Member Community Leadership funding where ward Councillors wished to support a scheme in their ward. Where advantageous to do so and funds were available, schemes to address verge parking problems would be aligned with planned highway improvements in order to reduce scheme costs.

Site specific measures to address the problem that could be considered and used in the highway included:

- Installation of Grass-crete (porous concrete sections which facilitates grass to grow through) which allows parking on verges without the resultant damage.
- Hardening of verge area by tarmacing.
- Planting of suitable trees to act as a physical obstruction.
- Planting of suitable low growth shrubs to act as a physical obstruction.
- Introduction of Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO`s) whereby no waiting at any time (double yellow lines) could be installed which not only cover the road but to the highway boundary which included adjacent verges and footways.
- Installation of suitable bollards or other street furniture which when positioned sensitively can act as a physical obstruction.

Questions and observations were raised around the following areas:

- Members thanked the officers for all the hard work that had been done to try and resolve the verge parking issues and endorsed the approaches being taken.
- Officers advised Members that there would be a rolling programme in place to address the verge parking problems and that the worst areas would be addressed as a priority. It was envisaged that in twelve months time there would be some noticeable progress.
- Members commented that green areas across the city should be taken into consideration when looking to concrete areas and should note areas that may flood. Cheaper alternatives like planting trees and shrubs should also be considered. *Members were informed that site specific needs would have to be taken into consideration and there*

would be a need to be realistic with funding. The aim would be to enhance the look and feel of the locality.

- Members suggested that the officers look at using Capital Funding as it could be used for a strategic approach to tree planting. Members were informed that all avenues of funding would be explored.
- How do you deal with areas of housing that do not have enough parking spaces provided? A particular area of concern was Ploverly. *Members were informed that the authority was working closely with the Housing Associations to try and resolve this issue. It may mean some capital investment for extra parking spaces.*
- Would we be wasting capital investment if enforcement was never going to happen? *Not all of the solutions being put in place would involved a traffic regulation that would end in enforcement. A number of avenues were being pursued to increase the capacity of the existing resources.*
- Residents were very concerned about the issue of verge parking. Could we save resources if we set up a hotline or email address so that neighbours could report people? *There was an email address already in place where people could report any incidents.*
- Members suggested that the email address should be advertised more and especially at Neighbourhood Committee meetings.

The Chair thanked the officers in attendance for an excellent report.

ACTIONS

1. The Committee noted the report and endorsed and supported the approaches being taken to address verge parking.
2. The Committee requested that the officers look at ways of advertising more actively the email address where people could report verge parking.

8. Forward Plan of Key Decisions

The latest version of the Forward Plan, showing details of the key decisions that the Leader of the Council believed the Cabinet or individual Cabinet Members would be making over the next four months, was received.

ACTION AGREED

The Committee noted the Forward Plan.

9. Work Programme

Members considered the Committee's Work Programme for 2010/11 and discussed possible items for inclusion.

ACTION AGREED

To confirm the work programme for 2010/11 and the Scrutiny Officer to include any additional items as requested during the meeting.

10. Date of the Next Meeting

22 March 2012

CHAIRMAN
7.00 - 9.31 pm

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