

**REGENERATION SCRUTINY PANEL**  
**Friday, 4th December, 2009**

Present:- Councillor Boyes (in the Chair); Councillors Gilding, Gosling, Slade, Swift and Turner; Councillor Smith (Cabinet Member, Regeneration and Development Services) and R. S. Russell (Cabinet Member) at the invitation of the Chair; together with Co-opted Members:- Mr. B. Walker and Mr. Ted Kelsey.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Foden, N. Hamilton, Whysall, St. John and Co-optee Mrs. J. Williams

**79.           DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

**80.           QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS**

There were no questions from members of the public or the press.

**81.           MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE REGENERATION SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON 6TH NOVEMBER, 2009**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the previous meeting of the Panel held on 6<sup>th</sup> November, 2009.

Resolved:- That the minutes be approved as a correct record.

**82.           COMMUNICATIONS**

The following items were reported:-

(1)     Phil Rogers, Director of Culture and Leisure

The Panel sent their best wishes to Phil Rogers

(2)     Mrs. Joyce Williams – Co-optee

The Panel sent their best wishes to Mrs. Williams.

(3)     APSE Performance Awards

Councillor Russell, Cabinet Member for Streetpride Services, displayed the following awards:-

- Best and most improved Performance Awards 2009 – Finalist for Street Cleansing (aptus)
- For improved Performance for Streetlighting (iqa)

(4) Christmas Illuminations

A verbal update was given by Marie Hayes, Events and Promotions Service Manager, relating to the Christmas Lights.

It was reported that since the verbal report to Regeneration Scrutiny Panel on 29th December 2008 the following actions had been undertaken:-

(i) The Events Manager for Culture & Leisure Services had sent out the updated Area Assembly Christmas Information Pack to all Parish Council clerks for information and to Area Assemblies.

(ii) There had been no new applications this year.

(iii) Christmas Lights had now been installed in the town centre and the Switch on Night took place on 19<sup>th</sup> November attended by between 7-8,000 people.

(iv) two cross street decorations on High Street had not been installed. A recent survey of the catenary fixings by a Structural Engineer within RMBC Structures section had highlighted that there were several spinning bolts on two plates and maintenance work needed to be undertaken before cross street decorations were hung on the wires. Unfortunately the two decorations on High Street were connected to plates on Royal Bank of Scotland. Approval from the bank to work on the building had now been received, but if the plates need to be moved to a new location and drilling was required then planning permission would need to be sought as it was a listed building. Alternatively, a special resin could be used to fix the spinning bolts. A quotation had been received from 2010. However this was being considered together with alternatives.

(v) Wentworth North Area Assembly had found money locally and within the community for a Christmas tree and lights had been installed on Woodman roundabout. Wath town centre lights had been switched on in line with Rotherham town centre lights.

(vi) Last year Wentworth North Area Assembly funded a Christmas tree at Kilnhurst churchyard. As this was not in the Swinton Ward Wentworth North Area Assembly had not funded the tree again this year. Wentworth South Area Assembly was informed of this in January 2009. To date a tree at this location was not being installed.

(vii) Dalton Parish Council had arranged for a Christmas tree to be installed and lit on Mushroom roundabout. 12 additional pole mounted lights had been hired and would light Doncaster Road from Corus to the Mushroom roundabout. A Christmas Lights switch on was organised for Friday 27<sup>th</sup> November at 6.30pm.

(viii) Lights at Thurcroft would be switched on 4<sup>th</sup> December.

(5) The Scrutiny Adviser, on behalf of Mrs. Joyce Williams, Co-optee, asked about traffic congestion in and around the Retail World/Parkgate area, and she thought this spoilt the whole ambiance of being able to live in Rotherham. Were there any plans for remediating this? What plans were there? and What was the Council doing about it?

### 83. ROTHERHAM TOWN CENTRE CHRISTMAS EVENTS 2009

Marie Hayes, Events and Promotions Services Manager, presented a report which summarised the key Christmas activities and events planned for 2009, together with their potential benefits and their impact on the Town Centre.

Reference was made to:-

- Critical trading period
- The need to maximise footfall
- Evaluation of last year's events
- Consultation via the Town Centre Retail Group
- Car parking initiatives
- What's on this Christmas – guide
- Publicity, information leaflets, websites etc

A comprehensive list of events and promotions scheduled to take place over the festive period, including those within Rotherham Minster, was attached to the submitted report. The following events were highlighted:-

- Sunday street markets
- 'Super Santa' competition in conjunction with Rother FM and town centre businesses
- 'Click-back' vouchers
- Free weekend parking
- Craft Market
- Christmas Galleon
- Real Reindeer
- Winter walkabouts
- Winter wonderland – igloo and craft workshops
- Tap dancing turkeys
- Santa's Grotto
- Frosty the Snowman
- Seasonal music
- Big Screen showing local schools' nativity activities
- Window dressing competition

In addition Paul Woodcock, Director of Planning and Regeneration, referred to:-

- the involvement of the traders
- collecting information re: footfall
- feedback from the traders

- improving shop fronts
- window dressing empty units working in conjunction with The Source
- availability of grants for new businesses

Resolved:- That Panel's thanks be extended to the officers for the initiatives and good programme of events as now reported.

**84. TOWN CENTRE BUSINESS VITALITY SCHEME/RETAIL AND LEISURE STRATEGY- UPDATE**

Paul Woodcock, Director of Planning and Regeneration, presented a report relating to:-

(i) the Town Centre Business Vitality Grant Scheme

This scheme provided a package of grants to both new and existing businesses. It was explained that the aim of the scheme was to increase the quality and diversity of the retail offer in the town centre, and to reduce the number of empty units.

A brief summary was given of the application/evaluation criteria. It was reported that between 84 and 90 enquiries had been received, of which the Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Planning and Transportation, had approved 5 (3 of which were for units in the Imperial Building). The appendix to the submitted report detailed the progress of applications and grants approved to date.

A further application was being considered on 14<sup>th</sup> December for use of the open area within Imperial Building as an artists' quarter. 3 other applications were expected after Christmas.

Street café grants were also available and to date 2 had been approved and implemented:- one for Rotherham Interchange and one for the Old Town Hall.

The Panel discussed the following:-

- Source, and amount, of the grant funding
- Franchising of global brands
- Criteria and approvals process
- Number and flexibility of the available shop units
- Owned units vs. rented and number of existing businesses wishing to take a 2<sup>nd</sup> unit
- Availability of the information about the grants and publicity

(ii) Development of a Retail and Leisure Strategy

It was reported that funding was secured from these same funding sources for the development of a Retail & Leisure Strategy for Rotherham

Town Centre and the progress with this piece of work was also detailed in the submitted report. It was explained that this Strategy would feed into the planning strategy work included in the Local Development Framework. As this strategy needed to be robust both The Retail Group Ltd and Colliers CRE had been commissioned. The steps taken to prepare the strategy were set out in detail in the submitted report and it was pointed out that the final document would be presented to officers, stakeholders and Elected Members shortly.

A broad overview of the Renaissance strategy involving Lots 1, 2 and 3 was given.

Members of the Panel discussed their ideas for various areas of development, together with issues such as the impact of Parkgate Retail World and Meadowhall and the former Enterprise Zone status, free parking, free bus service, range and quality of retail offer in the town centre.

Resolved:- (1) That the contents of the report be noted.

(2) That the finalised Retail Strategy be submitted to the Regeneration Scrutiny Panel.

## **85. GULLY CLEANSING**

Graham Kaye, Principal Engineer, presented a report on the Council's present drainage cleansing operations for the cleansing of all highway gullies, grids and drainage systems, and in response to emergency operations throughout the Borough of Rotherham.

Reference was made to:-

- the Annual Gully Cleansing Schedule
- actual numbers of highway drainage apparatus
- frequency of cleansing
- use of current resources and equipment
- age and capacity of vehicles
- additional constraints and problems e.g. traffic management; increase in highway drainage reports; climate change; seasonal problems
- current funding of the service and budget pressures
- the increased number of gullies that will require cleansing by 2010/2011
- response times and public expectations
- review of operations
- possible ways forward e.g. an additional gully flusher; changes to staffing patterns

Members of the Panel commented on:-

- the need to be more pro-active
- use vehicles to maximum
- possible introduction of a shift system
- possible contribution from building companies
- cost and benefits of an additional gully flusher

Resolved:- (1) That the officer be thanked for this comprehensive report and notes out the existing arrangements and pressures on the service.

(2) That a report be prepared for the relevant Cabinet Member setting out the advantages and disadvantages, costs, risks and uncertainties in respect of the proposed measures to deal with the budget and service pressures for consideration during the budget process.

#### **86. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS - 2ND QUARTER RESULTS - 1ST APRIL TO 30TH SEPTEMBER, 2009/2010**

The Best Value Support Officer presented a report outlining the performance results of the Environment and Development Services Directorate up to the second quarter of the year 2009/2010. The report focused on indicators affected by the following issues:-

- Performance measures in the EDS suite of performance indicators
- Performance indicators that have not reached their target setting
- Performance clinics
- All England upper quartile comparisons 2007/2008
- Direction of Travel (against the previous year)
- Performance clinics held
- PriceWaterhouse Coopers upper quartile comparisons 2008/2009
- The New Performance Framework – Single Set of National Indicators, out of 198 indicators EDS indicators are identified in this report. Local Area Agreement (LAA) indicators for which EDS is responsible – noting that these were due for review
- Equalities report
- Risk Management report.

It was reported that of the 112 indicators :-

- 85 (75.9%) had achieved their target in the green zone
- 14 (12.5%) were slightly out side their target and in the amber zone
- 9 (8%) had not achieved their target in the red zone
- 4 (3.6%) in the grey zone that had no target and or result against them

Reference was made to:-

NI 154	Net additional homes provided:- noting an extra 36 affordable homes for Rotherham
NI 191	Residual household waste per household – number of kg collected per household: noting increased cost of waste and tipping charges for any waste going to landfill
NI 192	Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting
BV 178	Footpaths and rights of way easy to use
BV 224b	Condition of unclassified roads
LPI 1a	Improve Rotherham's overall employment rate: noting the number of people falling out of work

Resolved:- (1) That the performance indicator second quarter results for 2009/2010 be noted.

(2) That the Council's position in comparison with the Audit Commission 2007/2008 All England upper quartile results be noted.

#### **87. HIGHWAYS ASSET MANAGEMENT PLANNING AND GUIDANCE FOR 3RD ROUND OF LOCAL TRANSPORT PLANS**

Bob Stock, Network Principal Engineer, Streetpride, presented a report outlining the changes in priorities for the development of the third Local Transport Plan and associated Transport Asset Management Plans and which illustrated some of the ways in which the management and maintenance of the highway network could contribute to them.

Reference was made to the latest guidance for the third round of Local Transport Plans and to a series of national goals and challenges based on the report 'Delivering a Sustainable Transport System' (DaSTS) published by Dft in November 2008. These five goals were set out in detail in the submitted report.

An example was given as to how the Council might achieve some of these goals with reference to the goal to Improve quality of life and the challenge to manage transport related noise, and it was explained that this could be achieved through the use of noise reducing materials. It was also explained that for example developing and maintaining the public rights of way network illustrated how a small sum of money could make a real contribution.

The HAMP had to demonstrably be integrated with the Local Transport Plan.

In future it was likely that NI 168 (condition of principal roads) and NI 169 (condition of non-principal roads) highway indicators would combine into one.

It was also pointed out that from 2011 the accounting procedure for

highways expenditure reporting would change. The Council would have to declare the current asset value and any change in that value from year to year. Thus it was particularly important that the Council maintained the value of the highway asset in future years.

Resolved:- That the report be noted.

## **88. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING**

Paul Woodcock, Director of Planning and Regeneration, presented a report detailing performance against the revenue budget for the Environment and Development Services Directorate as at the end of October 2009 and which provided a forecast outturn for the whole of the 2009/10 financial year.

The following key pressures were highlighted:-

- reduced consultancy work fee income
- restructuring costs within Culture and Leisure
- under recovery of income due to a reduced number of planning applications
- flood related costs (June 2009)
- security costs at Ulley Reservoir
- under recovery of income on the Parking Budget
- energy costs on Street Lighting and pressures within street cleansing

Attention was also drawn to measures being taken within each Service Area to manage the budget.

Reference was also made to the table within the report which detailed Agency and Consultancy spend within the Directorate for the period April to September 2009 together with a comparison against the 2008/9 total spend.

Members of the Panel raised and discussed:-

- likely contribution of the YES and Waverley projects
- danger to the public and to vehicles due to missing drain covers
- how much of the agency and consultancy work could be done in-house and at what cost?
- Promptness in dealing with invoices

Resolved:- That the current forecast year end outturn position of an overspend of £449,000 for the Environment & Development Services Directorate based on expenditure and income as at October 2009 be noted.

## **89. MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE PERFORMANCE AND SCRUTINY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE**

Consideration was given to the minutes of meetings of the Performance and Scrutiny Overview Committee held as follows:-

- 23<sup>rd</sup> October, 2009.
- 6<sup>th</sup> November, 2009.

Resolved:- That the contents of the minutes be noted.

**90. MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR STREETPRIDE**

Consideration was given to the minutes of meetings of the Cabinet Member for Streetpride held as follows:-

- 2<sup>nd</sup> November, 2009.
- 16<sup>th</sup> November, 2009.

Resolved:- That the contents of the minutes be noted.

**91. MINUTES OF JOINT MEETINGS OF THE CABINET MEMBERS FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION AND STREETPRIDE**

Consideration was given to the minutes of Joint Meetings of the Cabinet Members for Economic Development, Planning and Transportation and Streetpride held as follows:-

- 21<sup>st</sup> October, 2009.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> November, 2009.
- 16<sup>th</sup> November, 2009.

Resolved:- That the contents of the minutes be noted.

**92. MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION**

Consideration was given to the minutes of meetings of the Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Planning and Transportation held as follows:-

- 21<sup>st</sup> October, 2009.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> November, 2009.
- 16<sup>th</sup> November, 2009.

Resolved:- That the contents of the minutes be noted.

**93. MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CULTURAL SERVICES AND SPORT**

Consideration was given to the minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet Member for Cultural Services and Sport held on 20<sup>th</sup> October, 2009.

Resolved:- That the contents of the minutes be noted.

**94. MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE MEMBERS' SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY GROUP HELD ON 30TH OCTOBER, 2009**

Consideration was given to the minutes of a meeting of the Members' Sustainable Development Advisory Group held on 30th October, 2009.

Resolved:- That the contents of the minutes be noted.

**95. MINUTES OF THE RECYCLING GROUP HELD ON 10TH NOVEMBER, 2009**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the Recycling Group held on 10th November, 2009.

Resolved:- That the contents of the minutes be noted.