

REGENERATION SCRUTINY PANEL
13th January, 2010

Present:- Councillor Boyes (in the Chair); Councillors Gilding, N. Hamilton and Swift: Councillor Smith (Cabinet Member, Regeneration and Development Services) and Councillor R. S. Russell (Cabinet Member for Streetpride) 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 Gosling, St. John, Whysall and Co-optee, Mrs. Williams

96. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

97. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

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

98. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE REGENERATION SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON 4TH DECEMBER, 2009

Consideration was given to the minutes of the previous meeting held on 4th December, 2009.

Resolved:- That the minutes be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

99. 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 on 20th November, 2009.

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

100. 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:-

- 30th November, 2009.
- 14th December, 2009.
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Resolved:- That the contents of the minutes be noted.

101. 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 on 30th November, 2009.

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

102. 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:-

- 27th November, 2009.
- 15th December, 2009.

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

103. MINUTES OF A MEETING 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 as follows:-

- 10th November, 2009.
- 2nd December, 2009.

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

104. COMMUNICATIONS

The following items were reported:-

(i) Review of half yearly work plan

The Scrutiny Adviser distributed copies of the Panel's work programme for 2009/2010, which included a half year review of progress and forthcoming work.

The following items were discussed:-

- (a) Joint Scrutiny Review with Democratic Renewal Scrutiny Panel on The Image and Perception of Rotherham.

The first scoping meeting was proposed for early February.

The following Panel Members expressed an interest in taking part in the joint review:-

Councillors Boyes and Swift, together with Co-optees Messrs Kelsey and Walker and Mrs. Williams.

The Scrutiny Adviser would contact Elected Members and Co-optees with further details.

(b) Town Centre Renaissance Tour

It was proposed that the tour be arranged towards the end of March. The Scrutiny Officer would confirm the proposed date.

(c) April Panel meeting

It was noted that it was proposed that April 2010 meeting would be themed around Sustainable Development.

(ii) Forward Plan

Consideration was given to the Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period 1st November, 2009 to 28th February, 2010.

Resolved:- That the contents of the Forward Plan be noted.

(iii) Winter Maintenance

The Panel received an update from the Streetpride Principal Network Engineer on the winter maintenance that had been carried out during the recent weather conditions which detailed the following:-

- Stock level prior to the winter weather
- Number of times roads had been treated prior to the snow
- Weather events on 17th and 20th December, 2009
- Volume of calls requesting side roads to be treated
- Stock levels as at 4th January 2010
- Co-operation of Sheffield City Council to enhance Rotherham's stock level between Christmas and New Year
- Further 6" to 8" snow fall on 5th January, 2010
- Amount of salt used on treating priority roads; response to residents requests; salt spreading teams in the town centre and local centres; re-filling salt bins
- Uncertainty of new supplies as at 7th January, 2010 and decision not to salt minor roads
- Staffing resources supplemented by Grounds Maintenance staff
- Treatment of footways with grit sand only
- Government control of the Salt Cell and request to local authorities on 8th January 2010 to use 25% less
- Notice from the Salt Cell to cut salt by 50% - therefore only able to treat A and B class roads
- 11th January – replenishment of stock:- tonnage received compared with tonnage used

- Anticipated receipt of further supplies
- Forecast national situation regarding further supplies and stock levels to the end of the month
- Purchase and use of white salt
- Length of network treated
- Receipt of favourable comments about the Service from the public and comparison of performance with that of neighbouring local authorities

A questions and answers session ensued and the following issues were discussed:-

- initial stock level and cost
- number of major routes treated
- comparisons with the winters of 1947 and 1963 and social changes that had taken place e.g. more reliance on the private car; less community spirit; fewer severe snow falls
- increased cost to transport imported stocks (some from Europe)
- co-operation of Council teams to ensure waste collection service was maintained
- maximum stock that can be stored due to decline in effectiveness through leaching if stored too long
- provision of grit bins and thefts of
- South Yorkshire Resilience Forum discussion of Salt Union undertakings given last year regarding the rate of supply which had not been as expected
- Domestic supply by Cleveland Potash
- The Council's policy of helping vulnerable and elderly people to remain in their homes and consideration of the provision of further services required by them during extreme weather e.g. shopping; doctors
- Preliminary enquiries about the provision of a small, multi-purpose quad vehicle to be located in each Area Assembly, noting the cost
- The need to identify people who may be considered to be vulnerable etc, noting that the Waste Management Service already had a list of assisted collections
- Increased pressure on A & E hospital services and the need to

work in partnership with Health and Police, thus ensuring more effective use of resources and budgets

- Review of the Neighbourhoods' Service Level Agreement regarding Aged Persons Complexes
- Housing developments not yet completed where roads were not yet adopted
- School closures; noting the impact this has on parents who work and thus on the economy. It was reported that the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People's Services had already requested, as a matter of urgency, a review of the school closures
- Provision of a Salt Barn: noting provision was being made in the design of the new depot. However the cost and lack of budget for this proposal were pointed out.

Resolved: (1) That the Panel's thanks be conveyed to all staff involved in the winter maintenance activity.

(2) That the Panel received a further update at the February 2010 meeting.

(3) That officers continue to explore further initiatives to help vulnerable and elderly to remain in their homes in times of extreme weather conditions.

(4) That a Press Release be issues to encourage members of the community to give help and support to their neighbours in the event of severe winter weather.

105. NI186: PER CAPITA REDUCTION IN CO2 EMISSIONS IN THE LA AREA

The Panel received a PowerPoint presentation by the Strategic Director, Environment and Development Services, relating to National Indicator 186, Per Capita reduction in CO2 emissions in the Local Authority area.

The following salient points were highlighted:-

- Associated reporting on NI's 167; 185; 187; 194 (Air Quality – noting Motorway traffic was not included) and 198 (noting the work of the Council's Road Safety Team)
- Issues relating to how Environment and Development Services might deliver on these indicators
- Conflict in trying to reduce emissions whilst trying to grow the local economy
- Total reduction in CO2 emissions – Rotherham compared to the

- UK; noting 16.21% decrease
- NI 186:- noting 18.88% reduction 2005 to 2007
- Rotherham – 5th in the UK and leading in the region
- The Local Picture: Industry and Commercial – noting economic change in Rotherham; Domestic – noting steady reduction and more energy efficient homes; roads – noting the slight increase due to Sheffield city region economic growth
- Changes in the methodology for collecting and collating the statistics
- Estimated emissions savings in 2010 in Yorkshire and Humberside
- What might the Council do locally? – establish a local evidence base and focus on 4 key areas:- reducing domestic (Eco-homes), transport (influence how people travel; 3rd LTP; use of alternative fuels, car share/pool cars), non-domestic (use of biomass and ground source heating; energy from wind) and cross community emissions
- Barnsley's Top 10 initiatives – noting the aspiration to double rail passenger kilometres
- Next steps: including development of an Environment and Climate Change Strategy for consultation; South Yorkshire Climate Change Network; use of TrACE national tool for base lining

A questions and answers session ensued and the following issues were discussed:-

- how to encourage businesses and school to vary start times to reduce the peak time congestion
- timing of road works to be carried out at non-peak times or weekends
- Why, who and how the information was collected and collated and associated cost
- Statutory requirement
- Proposed changes to the Council's performance management in 2010-2011
- The need for better rail infrastructure and better passenger facilities across the region to make rail travel more attractive
- The forthcoming tram/train pilot
- Influencing the design of homes including insulation; improving people's satisfaction with living in the borough
- Cost of fuel and initiative to tackle fuel poverty

Resolved:- (1) That the Strategic Director be thanked for the informative presentation.

(2) That the Affordable Warmth and Sustainable Energy Co-ordinator be invited to report to a future meeting of the Panel on energy saving initiatives.

106. ASTON AND RAWMARSH CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTRES - PROGRESS/UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report, presented by the Director of Asset Management, detailing the progress to date in respect of the development of the Aston and Rawmarsh Customer Service Centres.

Information was given in respect of:-

- location
- services proposed to be delivered from the Centres
- partners involved at each of the Centres
- % occupation by each service provider
- projected build and completion dates
- financial profiles

Members of the Panel commented as follows:-

Re: Aston CSC:- the need to provide connected local bus services to ensure people living in outlying areas could access the centre

Re: Rawmarsh CSC:- background to its development and the need to consult the local Ward Members about its design

Members also commented on issues that had arisen following the opening of the Maltby CSC.

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

(2) That the Director of Asset Management arranges to meet with the Ward No. 10 (Rawmarsh) Councillors.

107. VERGE PARKING AND TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDERS OUTSIDE SCHOOLS

Consideration was given to a report, presented by the Street Works and Co-ordination Engineer, updating the Panel on progress with the implementation of the Council's 'Verge Parking Policy'.

Feedback was also given to the Scrutiny Panel on issues raised at the 5 October 2009 meeting.

Reference was made to:-

- Background to the problems
- Solutions:- including a pilot scheme of TRO's to prohibit the parking of motor vehicles on highway verges and waiting restrictions at certain locations
- Target areas/pilot sites
- Commencement of enforcement on 3rd November 2008

- Monitoring of the condition of the grass verges
- Reduction in the number of Penalty Charge Notices issued
- Assessment of comments received

Members of the Panel raised and discussed the following issues:-

- Use of bollards to prevent parking
- Areas of terraced housing which had no parking provision
- Increased accidents at some locations due to displacement parking
- People not using their garages and drives
- Planning guidance re: parking provision in new developments
- Town centre car parking – location, capacity and costs

Resolved:- (1) That the progress with the implementation of the ‘Verge Parking Policy’, together with the assessment criteria, be noted.

(2) That members of the Panel highlight for officers specific areas where there are known problems.

108. LTP AND NON-LTP CAPITAL SCHEMES UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report, presented by the Acting Transportation Unit Manager, detailing progress made on highways capital schemes both funded from the LTP capital programme and from other funding sources.

The tables in the Appendix attached to the submitted report detailed all LTP funded schemes and all non-LTP funded schemes as follows:-

Table A:- LTP Integrated Transport Schemes:- schemes completed, schemes issued/in progress and schemes with approval but not yet issued for construction

Table B:- Maintenance Schemes funded by the LTP Capital Programme from April 2007

Table C:- Maintenance Schemes funded from the Council's capital programme

Table D:- LTP Major Schemes: - A631 West Bawtry Road Improvement; A57 M1 Junction 31 to Todwick Crossroads Improvement; Waverley Link Road

Table E:- non LTP funded schemes

An explanation was given in the Finance section of the report regarding how the LTP allocations were awarded and divided amongst the South Yorkshire LTP Partnership of the four South Yorkshire authorities and the PTA. Reference was made to the South Yorkshire Strategic pot receiving 50% of the allocation and the additional £11m Regional Funding Allocation virement towards the Strategic Pot for 2009/10 and 2020/11.

Members present commented on:-

- Road improvements/junction improvements at Catcliffe Interchange
- Highfield Spring, Waverley new roundabout

Resolved:- (1) That the progress made on the schemes be noted.

(2) That a briefing be arranged for the local Ward Members re: the Waverley Link Road.

109. LIBRARY STRATEGY PROPOSALS

The Cultural Services Manager introduced the Manager, Library and Information Services to the Panel, and presented a report relating to the development of a strategy for Rotherham's Public Libraries.

It was pointed out that the provision of a Library Service remained statutory and emphasis was given to the important role played by the Council's libraries in helping to change lives and transform communities by provision of a service striving for excellence. It was explained that the Service had to provide a comprehensive and efficient service.

It was explained that it was time that a new Library Strategy was developed and this would be based on a full assessment of local needs in order to ensure the Council fulfils its statutory duties under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964. It was proposed to complete the Strategy within the next calendar year.

Reference was made to NI 9 which measured the % of people who visited a library within the last year which was currently 43%.

Members of the Panel commented on:-

- Current Book Fund provision
- Library stocks and reference stocks
- Changing facilities now offered by libraries
- The need to link with other partners to better utilise current library buildings e.g. at Swinton and Wath
- New methods within libraries of making information available e.g. through subscriptions
- Information from case studies
- New libraries at Wickersley and Mowbray Gardens
- Better display of materials
- The important role played by libraries in changing lives and transforming communities

Resolved:- (1) That the Panel supports the development of a strategy for libraries to help embed the positive change and improved performance already being delivered by our public libraries.

(2) That officers report to a future meeting of the Panel on the completion of the Strategy in order for the Panel to comment.

110. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved:- That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended March 2006) (financial/business affairs).

111. NEW CULTURAL ACCOMMODATION

Consideration was given to a report, presented by the Director of Asset Management, which summarised the position in respect to the provision of cultural accommodation within the town centre.

It was explained that proposals for the provision of new cultural accommodation formed part of Lot 2 of the Renaissance programme. Developments to date were noted.

A brief outline was given of the brief which went to the market for the envisaged accommodation for the Cultural Centre.

The Panel's attention was drawn to the costs associated with the preferred site and reference was made to contingency measures currently being considered and investigations into alternative options and sites. It was also pointed out that if the selected long term Cultural accommodation solution was not in place by December 2011 then temporary accommodation to house interim Cultural Services displaced from the existing Library and Arts Centre would be required.

It was reported that funding had not yet been allocated and the project was not included in the current Capital Programme.

The Panel emphasised the importance of the provision of Cultural Services as a means to regenerate the town.

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

(2) That a monthly update be provided for the Panel.