

REGENERATION SCRUTINY PANEL
12th January, 2011

Present:- Councillor Whysall (in the Chair); Councillors Ellis, Gilding, Gosling, N. Hamilton, Slade and Swift; Councillor St. John (Cabinet Member for Culture, Lifestyle, Sport and Tourism) (at the invitation of the Chair); together with Co-opted Members:- Parish Councillor C. Jepson and Mr. B. Walker.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Turner, Wright and R. S. Russell (Cabinet Member for Town Centres); Parish Councillor Brennan

92. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Whysall declared a personal interest in the Chesterfield Canal Partnership.

93. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

There were no questions from the public or the press.

94. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE REGENERATION SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON 24TH NOVEMBER, 2010

Consideration was given to the minutes of the previous meeting held on 24th November, 2010.

Members present considered:-

(i) Minute No. 82 – Waste Collection

The Panel congratulated the Waste Management Team on its efforts to maintain service during the severe winter weather.

(ii) Minute No. 83 – Performance Indicators

It was reported that the Government had launched an online consultation for Local Government to comment on the development of a new performance framework. Our own Performance Team are preparing a response to the consultation on how Local Authorities should measure performance. The Performance and Scrutiny Overview Committee will also be discussing the consultation document. In the meantime the current format will be used for Quarter 2 reporting. The LAA indicators are in place until 31st March 2011.

Resolved:- That the comments made above be noted and the minutes be approved as a correct record.

95. COMMUNICATIONS

(i) Work Programme

Bronwen Moss, Scrutiny Adviser, reported on the half yearly work programme and pointed out that there were 3 more Panel meetings in the current municipal year.

The Panel's ideas/topics for a short review were requested.

Consideration was given to:-

- the Chesterfield Canal
- joint panel review of the Council's response to the winter weather

The Scrutiny Adviser suggested that a joint review would incorporate specific contributions from each panel, according to their areas of interest/concern. These contributions would compile a comprehensive report.

Resolved:- (1) That the Panel carries out a scrutiny review of the Council's response to extreme winter weather jointly with other scrutiny panels to produce a Council wide report.

(2) That the review panel be comprised of the following Members of this Panel:-

Councillors Ellis, Gosling and Whysall together with Mr. B. Walker, Co-optee.

96. RESPONSE TO SNOW EVENTS IN NOVEMBER/DECEMBER, 2010

Consideration was given to a report, presented by Bob Stock, Streetpride Principal Network Engineer, detailing the actions taken in response to early snow falls that occurred at the end of November and into December 2010.

Particular reference was made to:-

- the amount of snow predicted compared to amount of snow that fell
- the very low temperatures and loss of effectiveness of salt below -8°C
- difficulties staff had in getting to work
- early December the service concentrated on the precautionary/priority routes i.e. public transport routes and working with South Yorkshire Police to clear the A57
- the vehicle fleet:- number of vehicles operational; number of vehicles out of action/needing maintenance or repair
- commencement of the in-season review
- 3 shift - 24/7 operation
- 30 teams deployed on hand clearance, salting and refilling salt bins across the borough and concentration on sites where there were known to be more vulnerable users
- compaction of snow into thick ice requiring deployment of JCB's with each of the salting vehicles
- use and abuse of salt bins
- salt stocks:- mid-November: during December; current
- amount of salt used
- damage to the highway network estimated to be as bad as last year
- LTP maintenance allowance
- budget provision and anticipated funding gap
- public expectations

Members raised and discussed the following:-

- the volume of snowfall in the south of the Borough resulting in several areas being cut off for up to a week e.g. Kiveton, Treeton and Hooton Levitt. The lack of any form of public transport in these areas;
- how to organise responses to areas severely hit by snow;
- ways to solve the problems associated with grit bins;
- enlisting local farmers to use their equipment to help with snow clearance;
- the need to communicate to residents advice around clearing snow safely from roads, driveways & pavements;
- the need for clarity around public liability if residents clear snow from paths;
- various communications/press issues;
- the amount of resources required to keep every school, surgery, OAP complex clear etc and possible prioritisation in future years;
- public expectations re: clearance of side roads
- difficulties in the deployment of snow ploughs due to road humps, parked and abandoned cars
- efficient use of the highways budget and different ways of traffic calming;
- better use of local knowledge and information sharing with the Police re: diversions
- delegation of activities/services outside of the Council e.g. to Parish and Town Councils;
- legality of Parish Councils hiring JCB'S and utilising them on the highway;
- where communities could help themselves more - "The Big Society" approach
- co-ordination of the current highways maintenance programme - aligning resurfacing & routine maintenance work with specific repair issues such as potholes caused by extreme weather.

The Streetpride Principal Network Officer, together with the Director of Streetpride responded to the above:-

- the difficulties in trying to keep all the roads open.
- the amount of resources required to clear around schools, GP surgeries, OAP complexes. It was confirmed that teams were sent to these locations. It was acknowledged that in future the list of identified sites for clearance may need to be prioritised.
- resources had been concentrated on keeping strategic routes open;
- farmers did help clear the A57 and this would be looked at for future years. The Emergency Planning and Public Rights of Way Teams will be contacted. Discussions were underway re: the development of a volunteer schedule, including how to manage it; ensuring vehicles were fit for purpose and legal on the highway etc.

- in any 24 hour operation, vehicles would need maintenance and repair and were likely to be off the road at some point. However, both services now operated out of the same depot.
- DfT publicity material re: people snow clearing was made available and information was issued via the Council's own press team.
- a normal grit run would use 45 tonnes of salt depending on rate of spread or whether snow/ice were expected.
- Parish Councils hiring JCB's was entirely within their powers.
- decisions of the bus operators to cease services.
- different types of surfacing materials and areas reaching the end of life date and thus needing replacement.

David Barker, Internal Communications Officer, explained that the Communications Team had:-

- issued a message to staff re: what to do in severe weather conditions
- information was provided for the radio stations re: schools closures and bus routes
- information was placed via Twitter
- press release re: clearing own pathways was issued
- value of Rother FM

Resolved:- That the contents of the report, and additional responses from officers to Members' questions, be noted, and that the issues raised be examined as part of the proposed scrutiny review.

97. OVERVIEW OF ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES BUDGET 2011/2012.

The Chair explained that this item had been withdrawn and would be considered by the Performance and Scrutiny Overview Committee.

98. MINUTES 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:-

- 12th November, 2010
- 17th December, 2010

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

99. MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TOWN CENTRES

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

- 1st November, 2010
- 29th November, 2010
- 13th December, 2010

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

100. MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT

(i) Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Environment held as follows:-

- 15th November, 2010

Reference was made to Minute No. G69 Traffic Management Act 2004 – Permits to Work in the Highway

The Streetpride Principal Network Officer explained that the TMA allowed local authorities to introduce a permit system for those undertaking work in the highway and to charge a fee. The permit allowed the undertaker to work on a certain space on the highway for a specified time. This gave the Council the ability to co-ordinate better works on the highway and to minimise disruption and congestion resulting from those works.

It was also explained that the scheme was being developed on a South Yorkshire wide basis and that there would be a one month consultation period.

Resolved:- (1) That the follow up report be also submitted to a future meeting of this Panel.

(ii) Consideration was given to the minutes of meetings of the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Environment held as follows:-

- 29th November, 2010
- 13th December, 2010

Resolved:- (2) That the contents of the minutes be noted.

(3) That Cabinet Members continue to be invited to attend Panel meetings in order to answer questions from members of the Panel regarding items minuted.

(iii) Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Environment held on 1st November, 2011

Reference was made to Minute No. G63 – Charges Associated with Temporary Road Closures for Special Events

The Streetpride Principal Network Officer explained that the cost of the street closures order and advertising was significant.

101. MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CULTURE, LIFESTYLE, SPORT AND TOURISM

Consideration was given to the minutes of meetings of the Cabinet Member for Culture, Lifestyle, Sport and Tourism held as follows:-

- 30th November, 2010
- 14th December, 2010

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

THE CHAIR AUTHORISED CONSIDERATION OF THE FOLLOWING ITEM IN ORDER TO PROVIDE AN UPDATE FOR PANEL MEMBERS:-

102. STERECYCLE

David Burton, Director of Streetpride, reported on the incident that had occurred at Sterecycle. He explained that the HSE would be conducting a full investigation. He confirmed that there was substantial damage to the plant and that it would be out of action for some time.

In the meantime the Council would find alternative locations for the disposal of black bin waste. In the short term some would go to Veolia's energy from waste plant and some to landfill.

A brief outline was given of the processes at Sterecycle, including sorting, together with the output.