

ENVIRONMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 7.30 pm on 23 September 2014

Present

Councillor William Huntington-Thresher (Chairman)
Councillor Lydia Buttinger (Vice-Chairman)
Councillors Kevin Brooks, Terence Nathan, Angela Page,
Sarah Phillips, Richard Scoates and Melanie Stevens

12 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Apologies were received from Councillor Samaris Huntington- Thresher.

There were also apologies from Councillor Colin Smith as Environment Portfolio Holder.

13 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations.

14 QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ATTENDING THE MEETING

There were no questions to the Committee.

15 MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT PDS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 1ST JULY 2014

The minutes were agreed.

16 QUESTIONS TO THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS ATTENDING THE MEETING

There were no questions to the Portfolio Holder.

17 PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF REPORTS TO THE ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO HOLDER

A) BUDGET MONITORING 2014/15

Report FSD14065

Based on expenditure and activity levels to 31st July 2014 the latest overall budget monitoring position for the Environment Portfolio 2014/15 showed an

overspend of £188k, with the controllable budget projected to overspend by £207k.

Details were provided of the projected outturn with a forecast of projected spend against each relevant division compared to the latest approved budget. Background to variations was outlined.

Report FSD14065 also highlighted expenditure and progress against Environment Portfolio projects within the Member Priority Initiatives Programme.

RESOLVED that:

(1) the latest 2014/15 budget projection for the Environment Portfolio be endorsed; and

(2) progress in implementing the Environment projects within the Member Priority Initiatives Programme be noted.

B) CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING - 1ST QUARTER 2014/15

Report FSD14063

At its meeting on 16th July 2014, the Executive agreed a revised Capital Programme for 2014/15 to 2017/18. Changes in respect of the Environment Portfolio were outlined and a revised programme for the Portfolio presented. Details of the 2013/14 Capital outturn for the Portfolio were also provided as were capital monitoring details at the end of the first quarter 2014/15.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder be recommended to note and confirm the changes agreed by Executive in July.

C) PRIVATE STREET WORKS: GOSSHILL ROAD, SECOND RESOLUTION

Report ES14058

In respect of the unadopted highway known as Gosshill Road, Chislehurst, the Portfolio Holder's agreement was sought to a Resolution of Approval being made under the Private Street Works Code. This would enable the street to be made-up and adopted as a highway maintainable at public expense.

In addition to commentary provided in Report ES14058, Members were advised that it was not intended to make Gosshill Road a through road except for cyclists. Following adoption, it was also intended to provide some parking for users of nearby Chislehurst station.

RESOLVED that in respect of the scheme approved by the Portfolio Holder on 16th July 2014, the Portfolio Holder be recommended to

approve, without modification, the specification (Plan No. 11690-101), sections, estimate, and provisional apportionment of estimated expenses.

D) TFL FUNDED WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2015/16

Report ES14072

L B Bromley has a formula allocation of £2.4m from Transport for London (TfL) for 2015/16. Ring-fenced funding will also be available to support a number of other programmes.

It is largely for boroughs to determine how the formula allocation will be spent, (provided spend reflects the Mayor's Transport Strategy) and early next month a list of schemes will be provided to TfL for 2015/16. Report ES14072 sought approval for the list.

In discussion it was confirmed that all Council provided cycle training (for children and adults) is provided free of charge. It is fully funded by TfL, including LBB staff time to provide the training. As such it would not be appropriate for the Council to charge for adult cycle training.

Attention was also drawn to a casualty "hot spot" at the junction of Green Lane and High Street Penge. A range of options to improve the junction would be presented to Ward Members followed by a report to the Portfolio Holder in the New Year. The cost of a scheme was expected be covered by TfL Local Implementation Plan (LIP) funding although officers were exploring whether it would be possible to tap into alternative funding linked to the public realm scheme for Penge.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder be recommended to agree that:

(1) the programme of formula funded schemes for 2015/16 outlined at Enclosure 1 to Report ES14072 be approved for submission to Transport for London; and

(2) the Executive Director of Environment and Community Services, in consultation with the Environment Portfolio Holder, be authorised to make post-submission changes to the programme to reflect necessary changes on priority, potential implementation delays following detailed design and consultation, or other unforeseen events.

E) DISABLED PERSON PARKING BAYS AND WHITE BAR MARKINGS

Report ES14068

Report ES14068 reviewed the Council's approach and application process for implementing Disabled Person Parking Bays and white bar markings.

A formal application process was proposed for a Disabled Person Parking Bay. The process would ensure an improved information record for each new Disabled Person Parking Bay and help ensure that use of the bays is reviewed annually. A sample application form was appended to the report.

The total cost to the Council of providing a medical assessment (by the Council's Occupational Health service) for Blue Badge holders applying for a Disabled Person Parking Bay could amount to up to £2,250 per annum. The cost of refurbishing road markings and providing appropriate signage was approximately £1,500 per annum and the estimated annual cost of installing new bays and removing redundant bays amounted to approximately £2,600. There were also potential enforcement costs.

To cover the above costs an annual permit, charged at £80 per annum, was proposed for all Disabled Person Parking Bays issued at the request of individuals. Consultation with all disability groups and other key stakeholders would be carried out in advance of the scheme becoming operational.

An increased number of requests had resulted in a large number of white bar markings being installed borough-wide. The cost of the service in both officer time and implementing the markings was rising. Records were also limited on where markings had been implemented and the reasons for them.

A new approach to white bar markings proposed a set of criteria for approving applications so enabling a consistent approach borough-wide. Report ES1406 outlined details. Any applicant requesting a white bar marking would complete an application form (appended to the report).

A £50 application fee was proposed to cover the cost of a site assessment with an additional £50 installation charge helping to cover the costs of administration, implementation and road markings. A proposed application form for white bar markings was appended to Report ES14068.

In response to Member comments and questions, a number of points were made as summarised below:

- the medical assessment stage for a Disabled Person Parking Bay could be excluded, with a resultant saving, but more applications for bays were likely to be granted and officers would be less assured of a bay being needed for genuine medical purposes;
- the medical stage also provided an independent assessment, often demonstrating strong evidence of eligibility should objections be received to an application;
- a permit at £80 per annum corresponds with the charge for a resident permit bay operating for more than a few hours;

- although no re-assessments were proposed for Disabled Person Parking Bays, Blue Badge holders were required to re-apply for a Badge every three years.

As £2,250 per annum would represent minimal savings, and a robust application process for Disabled Person Parking Bays was needed, the Vice-Chairman expressed her support for maintaining the medical assessment stage of the process. This was agreed as were the proposed fees related to Disabled Person Parking Bays and White Bar markings.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Hodder be recommended to agree that from 1 April 2015:

(1) a new application process be introduced for residents requesting a Disabled Person Parking Bay;

(2) a fee of £80 per year be charged to each resident having a Disabled Person Parking Bay installed outside of their home; and

(3) a fee of £50 be charged to each resident applying for a white bar marking outside of their property, with a further £50 charged should the application be successful and the marking installed.

F) WIDMORE ROAD A21 JUNCTION IMPROVEMENTS

Report ES14076

Report ES14076 recommended completion of the detailed design of an improvement to the Widmore Road/A21 junction. Implementation of the improvement was expected to significantly reduce traffic congestion at the junction.

Atkins consultants had been commissioned to provide options for improvements, their report including an initial design stage for the junction as well as a traffic model to investigate the impact of the design.

Three possible design options were outlined to Members with drawings provided. Option 3 was preferred by officers as the best approach to reducing congestion.

Subject to Portfolio Holder approval, the next stage would be production of a detailed design.

RESOLVED that the Environment Portfolio Holder be recommended to agree that:

(1) detailed design of the junction improvement at Widmore Road and the A21 be completed and the scheme then proceed to implementation; and

(2) the Executive Director for Environment and Community Services be given delegated authority to make any required changes at the detailed design stage, after consultation with Ward Members and the Environment Portfolio Holder.

G) ADDITIONAL HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE WORKS

Report ES14084

Following agreement of the programme of schemes to be included within the 2014/15 planned highway maintenance programme, additional highway maintenance funding of £1m was approved in February 2014 to manage the impact of winter damage. An additional £715k for highway repairs (prioritised for bus route resurfacing) was also provided through the Local Implementation Plan (LIP) process.

It was proposed to use £200k of the £1m to supplement the emergency and reactive repairs budget.

For the planned highway maintenance programme, the remaining £800k was proposed for additional road resurfacing schemes and for schemes to replace those funded by the additional £715k.

In advance of the planned highway maintenance programmes for 2015/16 and beyond being considered at the Committee's next meeting, the Chairman highlighted that a draft list of proposed schemes had been circulated, and he encouraged Members to provide officers with any comments on the schemes proposed.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder be recommended to agree that:

(1) the £1.515m works at Table 2 within Report ES14084 be included in the Council's programme of planned highway maintenance for 2014/15; and

(2) the remaining £200k of additional resources be allocated to the budget for emergency and reactive highway repairs.

18 PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF REPORTS TO THE EXECUTIVE

A) STREET LIGHTING - INVEST TO SAVE

Report ES14071

In November 2012, it was agreed that £8.507m could be drawn down from the Invest to Save Fund to allow the replacement of 7,902 lamp columns and 11,902 lanterns, including the installation of a Central Management System (CMS) to facilitate remote control of lighting levels and reduce night time inspections.

It has since been identified that fewer “at risk” steel columns require replacement, so reducing projected column replacements to 6,748 and reducing the number of lanterns needing replacement by 1,154. A remaining balance of £1.2m could then be used to replace more lanterns and increase the level of energy savings. It was proposed that the number of lantern replacements would increase to 14,377, providing additional energy savings of £46k per annum. There would also be carbon allowance savings of £5k per annum.

RESOLVED that the Executive be recommended to approve the proposed amendment to the street lighting Invest to Save project, namely to replace fewer lamp columns and instead convert more lanterns as set out at paragraphs 3.18 to 3.20 of Report ES14071.

B) PUBLIC TOILET PROVISION

Report ES14085

Report ES14085 outlined a proposal to close Penge High Street public toilet and introduce the Community Toilet Scheme (CTS) at three locations in the town.

Whilst preferring that the public toilet is kept open, Councillor Brooks, sought confirmation there would be publicity related to any closure; that staff at the proposed CTS locations would be fully briefed on arrangements; and that enough queuing space would be provided within premises. Councillor Brooks also sought assurance that the public toilet building would not be allowed to deteriorate at a time when a number of Penge traders were endeavouring to provide attractive premises in pursuit of custom. It was important the building does not fall into disrepair and become subject to graffiti, rendering it a negative asset for Penge.

It was confirmed that any closure of the public toilet would be publicised including: a proposed closure notice; a notice on the closed door of the building; updated page(s) on the Council’s website; and provision of relevant public signs to CTS facilities. There was no additional cost to L B Bromley in providing these CTS facilities; two of the locations, McDonalds and Sainsbury’s were thought to be part of the London-wide community toilet scheme, “*Open London*”. Stickers would also be displayed in windows of the premises providing CTS facilities (including baby changing facilities where provided).

Should closure of the public toilet building be agreed and the Portfolio Holder for Resources subsequently declare the property surplus to Council requirements, the property would be offered for sale. Should a purchaser not be found, it would be necessary to proceed to demolition and reinstatement of the site. Pending a sale of the property, the relevant maintenance budget for the building would be sustained. The Assistant Director, Street Scene and Green Space, intended to work with colleagues in the Strategic Property team to ensure the building is sold quickly.

The Chairman suggested that the Committee might wish to make a request to the Portfolio Holder for Resources that the building should be prevented from falling into disrepair. Members supported this.

It was suggested to Councillor Nathan that closing remaining public toilets in the borough in favour of more CTS facilities is a preferred policy direction. However, too many CTS providers in a town centre might start to become a cost burden for the Council, and it was felt that three CTS facilities in Penge would provide sufficient coverage.

RESOLVED that:

(1) the Executive be recommended to agree -

- **the closure of Penge High Street public toilet from 1 January 2015 and**

- **the introduction of the Community Toilet Scheme (CTS) in Penge town centre; and**

(2) the Portfolio Holder for Resources be requested to ensure that measures are in place to prevent the public toilet building falling into disrepair.

19 REPORT TO THE ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO HOLDER NOT REQUIRING PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY

A) ELMSTEAD LANE: FOOTWAY UPGRADE

Report ES14059

Approval was sought for a replacement hard footway in Elmstead Lane, Chislehurst, between its junctions with Grange Drive and Walden Road.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder be recommended to:

(1) approve the proposal shown on drawing 11429-01[2] to improve the walking environment along Elmstead Lane; and

(2) agree that the scheme cost be met from Section 106 funding associated with the development of the site previously known as Ravensbourne College of Art.

20 PUBLIC TRANSPORT LIAISON MEETING

Report ES14080

Report ES14080 proposed an informal Public Transport Liaison Meeting on a trial basis with members of the public in attendance.

If successful, consideration could be given to amending the Meeting's formal Terms of Reference so that one meeting each year is attended by members of the public, with the other closed for Members to discuss strategic matters directly with public transport providers.

The Chairman hoped that an informal meeting would attract residents and details would be published on the Council's website.

RESOLVED that an informal meeting of the Public Transport Liaison Meeting be organised, to trial opening the Meeting to Bromley residents.

21 INVEST TO SAVE: GREEN GARDEN WASTE COLLECTION

Report ES14073

Report ES14073 provided an update on the Green Garden Waste (GGW) collection service, introduced borough-wide in June 2012 following a successful trial using £80k from the Invest to Save fund.

The report outlined progress of the service from introduction of the trial in 2011/12 to the present position. It included details of customer numbers and costs associated with the service, including implications for the waste budget. A revised Table 1 within the report (paragraph 3.6), circulated to PDS Members prior to the meeting, showed additional disposal costs from GGW tonnage growth.

In response to an enquiry from the Vice-Chairman, it was confirmed that a direct debit payment option for the service was intended to be introduced as quickly as possible.

The report highlighted an annual charge for the service which was set at £60 in 2011. Although operating costs had since increased, the charge at £60 had not increased to reflect inflation. The Chairman suggested a rise to £65 and an increase thereafter by the rate of inflation. This was supported by the Vice-Chairman.

It was confirmed that a £5 increase to the charge should cover costs although it was difficult to predict future GGW tonnage.

RESOLVED that:

(1) progress of the Green Garden Waste collection service to date be noted;

(2) the continuing expansion of the scheme and associated financial implications be noted; and

(3) to reflect increased costs, the Portfolio Holder be requested to consider an increase in the annual charge to £65 for the Green Garden

Waste collection service, and that the charge be increased annually thereafter by the rate of inflation.

22 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME, MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS, AND CONTRACTS REGISTER

Report ES14064

The Chairman highlighted that a meeting of the Parking Working Group had been scheduled for 6th October 2014 (5.30 p.m.) with a meeting of the Waste Working Group to be convened for late October 2014.

Noting the Forward Programme, the Chairman suggested that it was possible for the performance of a partner organisation to be scrutinised at the Committee's meeting on 11th March 2015. This would be in addition to scrutiny of the street cleansing contractor at the Committee's meeting on 20th January 2014 (Street Cleaning Performance Review). In view of concerns from Councillor Brooks about motorists exceeding speed limits in the Penge area, it was agreed that an invitation be extended to the Metropolitan Police Traffic Unit for South East London to attend the March 2015 meeting.

Noting that this was the final meeting of the Committee attended by Mr Gavin Moore, Assistant Director, Parking and Customer Services, the Chairman thanked Mr Moore for his work over recent years in supporting the Committee at senior level.

RESOLVED that:

(1) the Committee's rolling 2014/15 Work Programme be agreed, subject to the Metropolitan Police Traffic Unit for South East London being invited to the Committee's meeting on 11th March 2015;

(2) progress related to previous Committee requests be noted; and

(3) a summary of contracts related to the Environment Portfolio be noted.

23 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AS AMENDED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) (VARIATION) ORDER 2006, AND THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000

24 EXEMPT MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT PDS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 1ST JULY 2014

The Part 2 Minutes were agreed.

The Meeting ended at 8.35 pm

Chairman