

## **ENVIRONMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the meeting held at 7.30 pm on 15 November 2011

### **Present:**

Councillor William Huntington-Thresher (Chairman)  
Councillor Ellie Harmer (Vice-Chairman)  
Councillors Reg Adams, Kathy Bance, Julian Grainger,  
Samaris Huntington-Thresher, Jefferys, Nick Milner,  
Ian F. Payne and Stephen Wells

### **Also Present:**

Councillor Colin Smith and Councillor Peter Fortune

#### **43 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF ALTERNATE MEMBERS**

There were no apologies and the Chairman welcomed Councillor David Jefferys to the Committee.

#### **44 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

In connection with item 7e Councillor Reg Adams declared a personal interest as he lived in one of the roads referred to in an appendix to the report.

#### **45 QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ATTENDING THE MEETING**

There were no questions to the Committee.

#### **46 MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT PDS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 4th OCTOBER 2011**

The minutes were agreed.

#### **47 QUESTIONS TO THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS ATTENDING THE MEETING**

Three questions to the Portfolio Holder from Mr Colin Willetts had been received for written reply. Details of the questions and replies are at **Appendix A.**

**48 ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO - PREVIOUS DECISIONS**

Decisions taken by the Portfolio Holder since the Committee's previous meeting were noted.

**49 PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF REPORTS TO THE ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO HOLDER**

**A) BUDGET MONITORING 2011-12**

**Report ES11130**

Based on expenditure and activity levels to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2011, the controllable budget for the Environment Portfolio was projected to show an under spend of £164k.

Details were provided of the 2011/12 projected outturn with a forecast of projected spend for each division compared to the latest approved budget. Background to the variations was also outlined.

In discussion it was explained that a deficit in income from the sale of Green Garden Waste stickers at £15k, as referred to at Appendix 1 of the report, was an accounting error and not a real deficit.

**RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder be recommended to endorse the latest 2011/12 budget projection for the Environment Portfolio.**

**B) CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING - Q2 2011/12**

**Report RES11132**

At its meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2011, the Executive would be asked to agree a revised Capital Programme for 2011/12 to 2014/15 and changes proposed to the Executive in respect of the Capital Programme for the Environment Portfolio were highlighted.

A revised programme for the Portfolio was provided as well as detailed comments on individual schemes and latest expenditure figures.

**RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder be recommended to endorse the changes recommended to the Executive on 16<sup>th</sup> November and confirm that the post-completion report on Environmental Improvements (funded by LPSA Reward Grant) be received later in the year.**

## C) CROSSINGS AND SAFETY MEASURES NEAR SCHOOLS

### Report ES11119

Savings agreed by Council in February 2011 included the withdrawal of funding for the school crossing patrol service - achieving an annual saving of £233k - and in some cases physical measures might now be desirable outside schools to facilitate safe crossing by pupils. Given the tight timescale to implement measures, authority was sought to delegate such measures to the Director of Environmental Services.

A number of comments were made by Members. Use of a zebra crossing at the location of two particular schools on busy roads was advocated even though the schools were recorded as having less than 15 unaccompanied children crossing at the sites.

A view in support of school crossing patrols suggested a wider road safety concern for road users particularly with younger children having a poor perception of road safety risks. Given a previous pan-London responsibility for school crossing patrols by the Metropolitan Police, the Member felt that TfL should be urged to support the patrols.

Another view suggested that schools consider commercial sponsors for funding. There was also evidence that children used zebra crossings and it was felt important for schools to look at travel planning – earlier a Member asked whether schools could be more creative with school travel plan funding. Another Member suggested that a controlled crossing with traffic lights and a stop button provided a similar road safety effect to a School Crossing Patrol.

The Chairman referred to the importance of road safety education for children in accessing the borough's recreation and leisure facilities and that it was not being diminished under the new arrangements. A Member referred to an extra benefit for the elderly of a fixed crossing.

Members also supported a suggestion from the Chairman that an information report be provided on cases where more than £15k had been committed to measures under the proposed delegated arrangements (*Democratic Services Note - following the meeting, officers confirmed that information could be provided on all cases where more than £5k had been spent*).

### **RESOLVED that:**

**(1) the Portfolio Holder be recommended to delegate authority to the Director of Environmental Services for approving the installation of physical measures, such as a zebra crossing, near to schools where such measures are deemed necessary, after consultation with Ward Members and the Portfolio Holder - this recommendation applying to measures costing less than £25,000 and only until 31<sup>st</sup> July 2012;and**

**(2) an information report be provided to the Committee on cases where more than £15k had been committed to measures under the proposed delegated arrangements.**

#### **D) STREET LIGHTING ANNUAL REPORT**

##### **Report ES11127**

Members considered a report which proposed a street lighting replacement programme for 2012/13; outlined a programme for future years; and additionally provided an update on issues brought forward at recent meetings of the Highway Assets Working Group.

Responding to a Member enquiry, the Highway Assets Manager confirmed that most signs removed from old lamp columns should be either refitted to replacement columns or, where the signs are old, replaced with new signs.

The Chairman enquired whether stainless steel replacement columns would offer more of a cost benefit. Members were advised that stainless steel columns are some 1½ times more expensive and a similar sum spent on stainless steel columns would provide a fewer number of replacement columns. However, the life of a stainless steel column would be in the order of 70 years compared to 50 years for galvanised steel and over the 70 year life span it was estimated that there would be a cost saving in the order of £9m.

The Chairman felt that there might be scope to look at the stainless steel option further, suggesting that the Portfolio Holder note the long term savings for the consideration of any capital spend.

A Member also highlighted that not all columns of the same original manufacturer suffered weathering at the same rate and suggested that there might be scope to replace individual columns in selected places. Concerning stainless steel columns, another Member inferring a more cautious approach, suggested that technology would change during the 70 year life span.

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

**(1) agree the schemes listed at Appendix A of Report ES11127 to form the basis of the Council's programme of street lighting replacement works for 2012/13 and, subject to budgetary provision, for the works to be progressed;**

**(2) note the outline programme for future years, as listed at Appendix B of Report ES11127;**

**(3) note the issues discussed at recent meetings of the Highway Assets Working Group; and**

**(4) note the suggestions outlined above.**

## **E) PLANNED HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME 2012-13**

### **Report ES11126**

Members considered a report highlighting the planned highway maintenance programme for 2012/13 and future years. The report also brought forward items from the Highway Assets Working Group in respect of footway level of service and treatment of crossovers.

In discussion a concern was highlighted for the quality of work carried out by a utility company in making good roads after maintenance work and the Member cautioned against such quality of work adversely impacting on completed carriageway work as part of the Planned Highway Maintenance Programme.

In commenting that some Priority 1 schemes had not come to his attention as a Ward Councillor and referring to a road not listed, a Member requested an opportunity to consult with the Highway Assets Manager for a change in some priorities. The Chairman also highlighted that Repton Road was not included in the listed roads.

Reference was also made to three roads each having speed humps where the road surface had become rutted and it was felt that a better quality of tarmac was necessary. The Chairman also referred to rutting having occurred elsewhere.

A Member suggested that better value for money could be achieved and more roads covered if necessary sections of longer roads were treated rather than the whole length of roads. Such partial treatment, he felt, should then leave funds available to treat other roads in poor condition.

It was agreed to support the recommendations subject to any additional comments from Ward Members concerning roads to be included for Planned Highway Maintenance.

### **RESOLVED that:**

**(1) subject to any additional Ward Member comments on roads to be included for Planned Highway Maintenance, the Portfolio Holder be recommended to agree that -**

- (i) the schemes listed at Appendix A of Report ES11126 form the basis of the Council's programme of highway maintenance for 2012/13 and, subject to budgetary provision, that the works be progressed;**
- (ii) the additional schemes listed at Appendix F are included in the highway maintenance programme for 2011/12;**

- (iii) the outline programmes for future years, as listed in Appendices B and C be noted;**
- (iv) the proposed TfL funded programme of works at Appendix D be noted;**

**(2) the Portfolio Holder be recommended to endorse recommendations of the Highway Assets Working Group that –**

- (i) an amended footway level of service and an amended funding bias be adopted to help reduce the backlog of planned maintenance on the Council's unclassified road network;**
- (ii) an option for residents be provided to upgrade crossovers to a blockwork finish at their expense in connection with the planned maintenance of crossovers and that all requests for new crossovers be built in blockwork.**

## **F) REVIEW OF WINTER SERVICE POLICY**

### **Report ES11125**

Members considered a report highlighting changes to the winter service policy following the extreme weather conditions encountered during the winter of 2010/11. The changes were proposed to achieve an efficient, effective and proportionate response to winter conditions.

Concerning the Snow Friends initiative it was reported that there were now more than 3,000 Snow Friends in 138 groups and the Portfolio Executive Assistant, Councillor Peter Fortune, updated Members on the initiative. Snow Friends had received bags of salt and scoops and a Snow Conference was held in June with another conference planned. The Executive Assistant was encouraged by the way that people, schools and businesses had taken the Snow Friends initiative forward.

As an extension of the Snow Friends scheme and where there were willing volunteers, the Portfolio Holder referred to consideration of salt bins being securely located on private properties. A Member supporting such an approach suggested that smaller salt bins be considered e.g. similar in size to kerbside recycling boxes. Another Member commented that some salt bins were located by the carriageway in difficult locations and it might not be possible for residents to clear a road if the bins were securely located on private premises. The Executive Assistant spoke of control being in the hands of local people and carriageway salt bins being external to the salt provided for Snow Friends.

It was explained that schools wanted to remain open during times of severe weather and were keen for support such as scoops and salt to be rolled out faster. Members were advised that there was a plentiful stock of salt and some could be available for schools. A letter had been sent to schools but

response had been slow and it was necessary to have details of schools wanting salt.

For shaded locations where snow and ice would lay e.g. hill locations, it was suggested that these locations needed to be recorded. This would benefit not just the Council. The Executive Assistant explained that a map showed the location of Snow Friends units and residents could indicate to other residents any areas that required particular attention. The Highways Network Manager also indicated that salt bins located alongside routes which might be considered dangerous in severe weather were included on a map available via the Council's website.

Responding to an enquiry about private roads, the Executive Assistant clarified that salt and scoops were delivered to Snow Friends Groups and not roads and private roads could therefore be covered in any arrangements by Snow Friends.

The Chairman suggested that Adult and Community Services be asked to explore links with the third sector for any voluntary offer in severe weather using 4x4 vehicle(s) to assist elderly or vulnerable residents particularly in remoter areas. The Chairman also referred to contracted employees at schools (e.g. caretakers) who would need to take account of employment considerations in how they contributed to measures for clearing paths/playground etc. He suggested that a one Council approach was needed on this.

Concerning the fourth recommendation at paragraph 2.1 of Report ES11125, it was agreed that the recommendation should also reflect that existing salt bins be considered for replacement as and when there is a viable alternative such as residents being able to take over the storage of salt stocks – this to avoid issues concerning the unwarranted removal of salt from existing salt bins. It was felt that the recommendation should also refer to keeping Ward Members fully informed on such proposals in their locality.

**RESOLVED that the Environment Portfolio Holder be recommended to approve the following proposed changes to the winter service policy and plan:**

- (1) establish a tertiary carriageway network for snow clearance;**
- (2) restrict carriageway snow clearance during a snow event to the primary, secondary and tertiary routes;**
- (3) restrict footway snow clearance during a snow event to the three main areas of priority (i.e. main retail centres, approaches to transport interchanges and outside schools);**
- (4) retain all existing salt bins - with no further salt bins installed – but to avoid unwarranted removal of salt from existing salt bins and in consultation with Ward Members, the bins be considered for**

**replacement as and when a viable alternative is available e.g. residents being able to securely store salt stocks.**

**G) INTRODUCTION OF TRIAL OF REVISED GREEN GARDEN WASTE COLLECTION SERVICE AND TEXTILE COLLECTIONS**

**Report ES11108**

Members considered a report seeking approval to:

- (i) introduce a trial scheme with a chargeable wheelie-bin system to supplement the current Green Garden Waste (GGW) Sticker Service; and
- (ii) finalise negotiations on options for textile collections in the borough and to appoint a contractor.

A revised page 1 and 2 of the report had been tabled to replace the published pages. The replacement pages reflected a re-ordering of Options 1 and 2 at paragraph 2.2 of the recommendations so that the ordering of the options reflected the correct ordering at paragraph 5.3 of the report.

Expressions of support were given for the GGW trial. The Head of Waste Services explained the general thinking behind areas selected for the trial namely that: (i) there are a high number of properties with gardens; (ii) the properties are a suitable distance away from satellite sites; and (iii) libraries in the areas have a high sale of stickers for the collection of garden waste sacks. Details were outlined of the ten wards proposed for the trial.

A Member thought that Option 2 with a service running over a period of nine months at a price of £55 per household was preferable as little grew between December to February. Another Member favoured option 1 with a service running over 12 months at a price of £65 per household. This option she felt would take account of used Christmas trees and she was aware that the spring growing season could sometimes start early. With Option 2 she also felt that residents might ask why they were paying for a service from December to February if there were no collections. The Chairman also favoured Option 1 but also acknowledged that there was a £10 saving to residents with Option 2. There was also a difference on break even point between the two options – fewer customers would be necessary for the service to break even with Option 2.

A vote was taken on preferences for either Option 1 or Option 2 with four Members expressing their support for Option 1 and four Members expressing support for Option 2.

Concerning textiles, it was confirmed that a contractor would provide bins at collection banks and would be expected to supply equivalent bins to those already provided. A kerbside collection of textiles was also proposed each

month where textiles would be collected with other kerbside collections of materials for recycling.

The Chairman supported notice being given to the current operators for negotiations to progress. It was recommended that charitable organisations be included amongst those approached to carry out the service so that any offers from charities could also be considered.

**RESOLVED that:**

- (1) the Environment Portfolio Holder be recommended to -**
- (i) approve the introduction of a trial of a fixed price fortnightly wheelie bin collection service for Green Garden Waste in specified geographical areas;**
  - (ii) decide which of the following options to adopt for the new service relating to the length and price of the service provided -**
    - Option 1 - 12 month service at a price of £65 per property**
    - Or**
    - Option 2 - 9 month service at a price of £55 per property;**
  - (iii) refer the proposal to the Executive as an 'Invest to Save' scheme to part fund the wheelie bin containers at a cost of £220k using £140k of the current projected underspend for the Environment Portfolio with a contribution from the Invest to Save fund, estimated to be £80k;**
  - (iv) approve the replacement of current arrangements for the provision of and collection from textile banks in the borough as set out in paragraphs 3.13 – 3.17 of Report ES11108;**
- (2) the Executive be recommended to approve the utilisation of the current projected underspend for the Environment Portfolio to part fund the wheelie bin containers to facilitate the introduction of this trial service, with the balance being met from the Invest to Save fund.**

**H) ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO PLAN 2012-13**

**Report ES11132**

Members agreed to support the recommended structure for the 2012/13 Environment Portfolio Plan.

**RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder be recommended to approve the proposed structure of the Environment Portfolio Plan 2012/13.**

**50 PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF REPORT TO THE EXECUTIVE**

**A) FORMAL CONSULTATION ON OUTLINE SERVICE PROPOSALS AND PROCUREMENT STRATEGY - STREET LIGHTING MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENTS CONTRACT**

**Report ES11111**

The Contract for the maintenance and improvements of street lighting, currently let to May Gurney, will expire on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013. As the Contract falls within the EU procurement regulations, it was necessary to consider options for the future of the service at an early stage.

Members supported the recommendation to the Executive.

**RESOLVED that the Executive be recommended to endorse the proposal that a new Contractor is appointed to undertake the maintenance and improvements of street lighting from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013 following a competitive tendering process and comparison with the London Highways Alliance Contract.**

**51 ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO PLAN 2011-12 - HALF-YEAR PROGRESS REPORT**

**Report ES11131**

Members considered progress at the half year stage against commitments made in the 2011/12 Environment Portfolio Plan.

A Member commended work associated with proposals for Anaerobic Digestion facilities and he hoped the proposals would be moved forward as quickly as possible.

**RESOLVED that progress against the 2011/12 Environment Portfolio Plan be noted.**

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

**Report ES11129**

Concerning the Committee's work programme, the Chairman advised that a report on Cator Estate Roads, scheduled for the Committee's next meeting, need only be brought to the Committee if there was an intention to acquire the roads. Councillor Wells reported that he had consulted fellow Copers Cope Ward Councillors and no advantage could be seen in the Council acquiring the roads. The Director highlighted that legal advice has indicated that the roads would potentially be a significant liability if acquired and accordingly a

written response would be sent declining transfer of the roads' ownership to the Council.

For the Committee's next meeting a presentation could be made by TfL representatives on tram links and rail options into Bromley and the Chairman suggested that the Transport Statement Working Group meet on a date subsequent to this to develop an updated LBB transport policy statement.

**RESOLVED that:**

**(1) the work programme be agreed subject to the proposed item on Cator Estate Roads being withdrawn and a presentation on tram links and rail options into Bromley being added to items for the Committee's next meeting;**

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

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

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

**54 PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF REPORTS TO THE EXECUTIVE**

**A) EXTENSION OF WASTE MANAGEMENT CONTRACT**

Report ES11128

Members considered a report concerning the Waste Management Contract prior to decision by the Executive at its meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2011.

**B) STREET ENVIRONMENT CONTRACT 2012-2017/19; STREET CLEANSING; GRAFFITI REMOVAL; PUBLIC CONVENIENCES; & HIGHWAY DRAINAGE CLEANING**

**Report ES11123**

Members considered a Part 2 report to the Executive which: (i) provided details of tenders received for the Street Environment Contract (street cleaning, graffiti removal, cleansing of public conveniences and highway drainage cleaning) and (ii) made recommendations for the award of contract(s).

## APPENDIX A

### QUESTIONS FROM MR COLIN WILLETTS TO THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR WRITTEN REPLY

1. Thank you for your reply dated 4/10/11 regarding crossing guards at Leasons Primary School, however, as an Association we'd much prefer any conclusions are impartially relayed to us via our council questions. That said, i) could the Portfolio Holder now confirm whether or not the Leasons Primary school crossing guard will remain insitu (Leasons Hill) until the completion of the Chislehurst Road bridge construction works? ii) should the Chislehurst Road bridge works overrun past November 2012 would the Council continue to fund a school crossing guard at this location? Prior to the forthcoming public meetings on 'Tough Choices', iii) can we as an Association 'count on your commitment' to stop these cuts and seek continued funding (by whatever means) for school crossing patrols in Cray Valley West?

#### Reply

i) As I've tried to previously explain -

All crossing patrols currently remain under review and alternative arrangements are being considered for each of them Borough-wide.

That said, Cllr John Ince has already drawn his own concerns about the extra volume of traffic which will be generated locally by the diversion to my attention, and his comments are currently being very carefully considered by the road safety team.

As soon as they have reached a conclusion, I know he can be counted on to relay their findings to you.

ii) Please refer to my answer above.

iii) You can count on both my own, as well as the Department's enduring efforts to work with schools to find alternative solutions to this unhappy problem. I cannot 'commit' to spending money which no longer exists.

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2. With regard to your reply 4/10/11 re crossing guards, could the Portfolio Holder tell me i) when the Borough wide review will be completed? and ii) what specific alternative arrangements (for example) are being considered for each Borough wide site?

#### Reply

i) No, I'm afraid I can't at this point in time.

ii) Examples include one off Traffic engineering solutions (Zebra crossings,

Traffic Islands, Vehicle Activated signs) any local sponsorship opportunities which might present themselves, volunteers stepping in to take the role on themselves, retention of existing lollipop people through parental contributions (either directly or via PTA fundraising events), schools adopting responsibility for the service themselves, or the Council itself accessing third party funding and/or sponsorship.

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3. Having inspected both Leasons Hill and Station Approach this morning regarding traffic diversions(Chislehurst Road bridge closure), would the Portfolio Holder consider temporary parking restrictions along the frontage of Murray House in Leasons Hill (parked vehicles) ? and due to nose to tail traffic build up coming down from the top of Station Approach to the bottom at junction with Cray Avenue (impeding traffic flow going up towards St Mary Cray Station), ii) would the Portfolio Holder consider temporary parking restrictions from the entrance up to the exit point of the Norris Skip yard? and iii) slightly extend existing waiting restriction by 6 metres near the 'in' entrance to Norris Skips?

**Reply**

The Council is already and will continue to monitor both traffic flows and parking patterns very closely for the duration of the bridge's closure.

Possible changes, including those detailed within your question(s) will be considered more closely over the course of coming days, as any necessary longer term local change(s) identify themselves as the diversion fully beds in.

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The Meeting ended at 10.20 pm

Chairman