

Time started – 6.00pm
Time finished – 8.19pm

NEIGHBOURHOODS COMMISSION
20 OCTOBER 2010

Present: Councillor Troup, Chair
Councillors Berry, Graves, Harwood, Jackson, Rawson and Redfern

In opening the meeting Councillor Troup explained that the role of Commission Chair had been transferred to him from Councillor Batey.

28/10 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Barker and Batey.

29/10 Late Items introduced by the Chair

There were no late items.

30/10 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

31/10 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2010 were confirmed as correct record and signed by the Chair subject to the following amendments:

Minute No. 22/10 - In the 6th paragraph after 'this would not include any improvements' add a new sentence 'Councillor Troup expressed concern that in practice the wear and tear on road surfaces often meant they had a significantly shorter lifespan than was assumed in projecting asset maintenance costs and this would potentially add further to the pressures on the highways budget'.

Minute No. 23/10 - In the 6th paragraph after 'to ensure users actually paid' and before 'The Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods stated' insert the new sentence 'The bus station charges were now covering the running costs'.

32/10 Call-in

There were no call-ins to report to the Commission.

33/10 Councillor Call for Action

There were no Councillor Calls for Action to report to the Commission.

34/10 Responses of the Council Cabinet to any reports of the former Commissions

There were no responses to report to the Commission.

35/10 Performance Management – Demonstration of DORIS

The Commission received a demonstration of the user friendly replacement of Performance Eye.

Members raised concerns regarding the purchase and running costs of DORIS and questioned how different it was to the Performance Eye system. It was reported that the cost to purchase the system was £60,000 with an annual cost of £12,000 per year. It was noted that there was a review and option appraisal carried out with a long consultation and tender process before the system was purchased. The Commission were informed that feedback from users had been that the system was much more user friendly.

The Commission questioned who set the targets for the performance indicators and whether they were reviewed regularly. It was reported that the indicators were national indicators set by historical trends. Each year the Council decided on its priorities, compared to its family group, and so consequently the indicators were a moveable feast. It was reported that on the DORIS system there was benchmarking analysis available for Members to view. The officer invited all Members to attend a 1:2:1 training session with them to find out further detail on the system if they so wished.

Resolved to note the presentation.

36/10 Connecting Derby

General Update

David Gartside informed the Commission that the Connecting Derby scheme was currently on track to be completed and open by February 2011. It was reported that in terms of cost the project was on target. Members noted that there was a major exhibition to be held in the Market Place at the end of October which would communicate the impact on the City Centre to residents. It was stated that after six months of operation the road would be scrutinised and should any improvements or adjustments be required they would be looked at then.

Resolved to note the update.

Potential need for a bus service to the Royal Derby Hospital

David Gartside reported to the Commission that there was a need to provide better access to the hospital by public transport. It was noted that there had been improvements with better interchange facilities at the bus station but this still meant that the public had to catch two buses for their journey, which could be quite time consuming for them.

It was reported that enquiries had been made to all the local bus operators regarding them providing an orbital bus route but unfortunately they had all responded that this would not be financially viable as journeys could take up to an hour and so consequently may require up to four buses on the road at any one time. Concern was raised by Members that they were not convinced a route would not be cost effective and that all operators should be challenged over this claim. Members were made aware that discussions were always ongoing with the operators but it was assumed that if a route was profitable they would want to gain from this.

Members were informed that officers had had discussions with operators regarding the Council purchasing vehicles for the operators to use for a period of three to four years which could help with the self financing. It was noted that these conversations were still ongoing and that there hopefully would be a clearer outcome that could be reported to Members in the coming months.

The Commission were made aware that officers were also currently discussing inter ticket arrangements for hospital visitors and this would hopefully be in place after the New Year.

Members stated that they were still concerned about the accessibility of the hospital, which was further hindered for the elderly by their Gold Card being unusable before 9.30am. The officer responded by stating that Gold Card was a National Scheme that the Local Authority had no control over. He added that there were over 20 buses per hour from the Bus Station to, or passing, the hospital which ensured that it was easily accessible.

Resolved to note the update.

37/10 Streetpride Devolved Budgets to Neighbourhood Boards

The Commission considered a report of the Strategic Director of Neighbourhoods on the Streetpride Devolved Budgets. It was noted that Members were able to comment on the proposals before Council Cabinet and officers indicated a willingness to modify the scheme to meet the Commission's wishes.

Members were positive about the principle but at the outset had a number of concerns about the process and practicalities.

The Commission accepted that using full Board meetings for Neighbourhood Spending Plan agreement and variation would impede real progress due to the meeting cycle. However it would be preferable to involve all three ward members, as happens currently with Ward Committees rather than two out of three as proposed. This would also avoid the possible public perception of there being two tiers of ward Councillors. An inclusive approach would in itself likely to promote consensus as all three would be party to the same level of information. The fall back of majority decision making would avoid any risk of delay.

Members noted that both ward Councillors and the local public needed to feel confident that local expenditure decisions would provide more services, or an extra amenity, on top of what would have been delivered anyway. Streetpride service standards and mainstream expenditure plans could provide that information, with area co-ordinators able to give ward Councillors answers and advice before Neighbourhood Spending Plans were finalised.

The Commission felt that subsequent to Neighbourhood Spending Plan sign off and near the start of the financial year ward Members and the wider Neighbourhood Board needed to be informed of what work would be done when. This would greatly assist in managing public expectations, for example, it would be far better to know in April that new signage was planned to be installed the following February, rather than the position being unclear and the public then asking in June and September why nothing had happened.

Resolved to recommend that Council Cabinet approve the proposals with the following modifications;

- 1. That three (not two) ward Councillors be included in 'signing off' and agreeing any subsequent variation to the Neighbourhood Spending Plans, but, in the absence of a consensus, two have authority to do so;**
- 2. At the request of ward Councillors the area co-ordinator will provide information about Streetpride service standards and expenditure plans to ensure the 'additionality' of devolved expenditure decisions;**
- 3. Subsequent to 'sign off' of the Neighbourhood Spending Plan the Board be informed which items will be undertaken when during the 12 month period.**

38/10 Forward Plan Items

The Commission received an update on the latest position in relation to:

- Trade Waste Contract; and
- Employee Health and Fitness Membership

Resolved to note the update.

39/10 Council Cabinet Forward Plan

The Co-ordination Officer reported the items on the Forward Plan relevant to the Commission's remit.

Members requested to receive a report on the following items for closer consideration at the next meeting:

- 24/10 Arts Grants
- 28/10 Proposed Parking Tariff Amendments
- 34/10 City of Culture 2017.

40/10 Matters referred to the Commission by Council Cabinet

There were no items referred to the Commission by Council Cabinet.

41/10 Retrospective Scrutiny

There were no items of retrospective scrutiny.

MINUTES END