

Time started – 6.00pm
Time finished – 8.05pm

**NEIGHBOURHOODS COMMISSION
20 SEPTEMBER 2010**

Present: Councillor Rawson, Vice Chair (in the Chair)
Councillors Barker, Berry, Harwood, and Troup

In attendance: Councillor Holmes and Poulter

14/10 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Batey, Graves, Jackson and Redfern.

15/10 Late Items introduced by the Chair

The Chair introduced one late item relating to the third Local Transport Plan.

16/10 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

17/10 Call-in

There were no call-ins to report to the Commission

18/10 Councillor Call for Action

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

**19/10 Responses of the Council Cabinet to any
reports of the former Commissions**

Strategic Decision on the future of Markeaton Crematorium

Members considered a response of the Council Cabinet to a report of the former Community Commission. The Cabinet had considered a report of the Strategic Director – Neighbourhoods which considered three alternative options for Markeaton Crematorium in the context of the Community Commission's recommendations, each of which would make result in savings against the allocated £1.9m, budget. Two of the proposals were as set out by the Commission, the third being an officer proposal. Cabinet chose the option one most closely matched to the Commission's preference.

The Vice Chair welcomed the decision of Cabinet to take on the majority of the Commission's recommendations.

Resolved to note the response.

21/10 Remit and Annual Work Programme of the new Commission for 2010-11

Members considered a report of meetings of the Chair and Vice Chair of the Commission which outlined the work programme following their meeting with the Strategic Director of Neighbourhoods.

Councillor Harwood raised concern with any proposals to extend the opening times of the Council's libraries. The Vice Chair stated the discussions with the Strategic Director of Neighbourhoods had opened this subject out to consider the possibility of using libraries as local hubs to offer more services to the public. The Strategic Director of Neighbourhoods stated that the Council currently has Community Centres, Libraries and museums and all had a relatively low patronage. This proposal would look at alternative approaches.

Councillor Harwood stated that he was not opposed to other services being offered in libraries where appropriate but he was opposed to a blanket increase in opening hours.

Councillor Berry agreed with exploring other options for the libraries and suggested that they might benefit from being re-named and re-branded.

The Vice Chair briefly outlined the other proposals in the report.

Resolved to approve and adopt the Commission's proposed work programme for 2010-11 as set out in the report.

22/10 Local Transport Plan – Emerging Transport Strategy

The Commission considered a report of the Strategic Director of Neighbourhoods on the forthcoming consultation on the city's third local transport plan. The consultation was in progress and officers had asked for views on which of the following four funding streams should be given priority in the 15 year plan:

- Active Travel
- Public Transport
- Network Management
- Asset Management

Early indications were that both Asset Management and Network Management had been ranked the highest. Feedback was still welcome on the consultation until the end of September 2010.

Councillor Harwood stated that the replacement of the London Road Bridge should be the number one priority as its lifespan will soon come to an end. He enquired about the possibility of making all roads in the city 30mph if the current speed trial on Mansfield Road proved successful. The Strategic Director of Neighbourhoods stated that there were wide ranging implications on the infrastructure and practicalities regarding enforcement if the entire city was declared a 30mph zone. He added that he was not aware of anywhere else that imposed a blanket 30mph zone.

Councillor Harwood stated that he often received complaints about Morley Road in his ward and asked if the 30mph restriction could be implemented on a road by road basis. The Strategic Director of Neighbourhoods stated that officers could investigate individual roads. The Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods stated that officers were looking at all the speed limits throughout the city. To begin with officers would be looking at individual road's speed limits and researching what influencing traffic flow and speed.

Councillor Barker stated that a mixture of enforcement and education was the solution to speeding motorists in the city. The Vice Chair asked if the third Local Transport Plan could provide funding for educating motorists. The Head of Spatial and Transport Planning stated that education would fall into a revenue budget however if part of this were to include speed indicator devices then these would require capital funding.

The Vice Chair asked how the lower speed limit scheme is being monitored. The Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods stated that the road would be monitored during the 12 week period checking the speeds with speed cameras and without. The Vice Chair asked for the Commission to be provided with the results of that survey.

Councillor Troup expressed concern that the Council was simply meeting the demands of motorists and not enough was going to be done to persuade them to use alternative modes of transport.

Councillor Berry asked how was the relationship between the Council and bus company operators. The Head of Spatial and Transport Planning stated that the Council tries to work closely with the bus companies but there would always be differing priorities between a public and private organisation. The Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods stated that officers constantly try to maintain a dialogue with the bus operators. The bus companies were aware that there have been many improvements to the infrastructure of the city and this balance was likely to change. The bus operators, like all private companies, made commercially driven decisions.

The Vice Chair also raised concern that there was under-investment in the road network last year and asked if any contingencies plans had been made. The Head of Spatial and Transport Planning stated that the Council could only spend within budget, backed by what the Government provides as a grant. Many projects such as the trunk roads had been cancelled or put on hold until the competition of the Comprehensive Spending Review. The Strategic

Director of Neighbourhoods stated that it would cost £6.5m annually to simply stand still in terms of maintenance of the city's roads and this would not include any improvements. The Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods stated that the Council was also looking for somewhere suitable to store sufficient stocks of salt to avoid the situation which occurred last year.

Resolved:

- A. To support the objectives of the strategy, with the focus being on the upkeep the existing road infrastructure, and to recommend that the replacement of the London Road Bridge be a major priority in the plan.**
- B. To request that the results of the speed monitoring survey at Mansfield Road be circulated to the Commission on its completion.**

23/10 Public Toilets Future Strategy

The Commission considered a tabled report of the Strategic Director for Neighbourhoods on the future strategy of the provision of public toilets in Derby. The Waste Management Policy Strategy Manager outlined to the Commission which toilets would be affected by the proposals in the city, their current usage by the public and a number of options to move forward. He invited Members to comment on their preferred option.

Councillor Harwood stated that the usage of the toilets should determine whether or not they are retained. He suggested that the Council should seriously consider closing all the toilets and making the £400,000 annual saving.

Councillor Berry said that if the toilets were closed then there were not any viable alternatives for the public to use. He asked if there was a basic requirement for public amenities and a standard imposed on them. The Waste Management Policy Strategy Manager stated that the provision of public amenities was discretionary. There were guidelines for the facilities but nothing in enshrined in law.

Councillor Barker stated that as some of the toilets were being used more than 1000 times a day that justified retaining them. Councillor Harwood stated that although the city centre sites were getting a large amount of use there were alternative amenities nearby and therefore they should be closed. Councillor Berry stated that it may be the case that there alternative amenities in the city centre but in the outlying areas there were no alternatives.

The Vice Chair stated that this was a question of public priorities. Public conveniences were high on the public's list of priorities and therefore the Council should be prepared to invest in them which would also result in a reduction of the cost.

Councillor Troup asked if a charging scheme had been considered. The Waste Management Policy Strategy Manager stated that there was a charge at the toilets in the bus station. However, take up had been low to begin with and there would also be a cost of manning the convenience to stop vandalism, theft and to ensure users actually paid. The Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods stated that charging for public conveniences was now commonplace. Initially there was damage at the bus station toilet but it had been minimal. He added that the night time economy had almost no provision and people were able to cope then. There was then a straw poll of the Members present to indicate their preference between five options in the report plus a sixth suggested by a Member. The proposal with the highest support was for the Council to invest in public toilets in Derby.

Resolved to recommend that the Council invests in public toilets in Derby.

24/10 In-year Revenue Budget Reduction

The Commission considered an oral report of the Strategic Director of Neighbourhoods on the in-year reductions to the revenue budget. He stated that there had been a £1.2m reduction in the Local Transport Plan. However there was also a £300,000 underspend from the previous year which alleviated some of the pressure. In real terms this meant that the integrated transport scheme planned for London Road Bridge would be scaled back and just be a replacement bridge instead. There was no budgetary impact on Cycle Derby. There had been a reduction in funding to the Road Safety Partnership however they did have significant reserves.

The Vice Chair asked if these were the only reductions. The Strategic Director of Neighbourhoods stated that there had also been a reduction in the Play Builder programme. This meant that some replacement schemes had to be stopped as well as closing some play areas for health and safety reasons. He added that the Council would pay for some of the replacement schemes and a report was being drafted for consideration by the Cabinet in the coming months.

The Strategic Director for Neighbourhoods informed the Commission that the Government had stopped providing its free swimming grant. The Vice Chair asked if funding could be found to replace the funding for that scheme. The Strategic Director for Neighbourhoods stated that the Leisure and Culture Department's budget could not cover the cost.

Resolved to note the presentation.

25/10 Matters referred to the Commission by the Council Cabinet

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

26/10 Retrospective Scrutiny

There were no items of retrospective scrutiny.

27/10 Council Cabinet Forward Plan

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

Resolved to request more information be provided to the Commission on the Be Active Scheme report and the Trade Waste report.

MINUTES END