

Time commenced 6.00 pm
Time finished 8.45pm

PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION 4 NOVEMBER 2008

Present: Councillors Poulter (in the chair), Lowe, Harwood, Holmes, Dhindsa, and Banwait

In attendance: Councillor Care

32/08 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Repton and Batey.

33/08 Late Items Introduced by the Chair

There were no late items.

34/08 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

35/08 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 September 2008 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

36/08 Call-In

There were no items for call-in.

37/08 Responses of the Council Cabinet to any reports of the Commission

There were none.

Items for Discussion

38/08 Pre-Budget Briefing

The Commission received a Pre-Budget Briefing from the Corporate Director of Resources. The 2008/09 to 2010/11 Budget report was approved by Council on 3 March 2008, which presented a balanced financial position for 2008/09 and 2009/10, and highlighted a financial revenue shortfall ('unidentified savings') of approximately £3million in 2010/11. The briefing contained key highlights from the Revenue Strategy report reviewed by Cabinet on 30 September 2008 which would be presented to full Council on 19 November 2008.

Members raised concerns about the costing of energy and fuel prices and questioned whether there were sufficient plans to reduce energy consumption. It was reported that the Climate Change Board were working on a range of projects and savings through energy efficiency measures as there was to be reduction in consumption by 25% by the year 2010.

The Assistant Director - Highways and Transport gave a presentation to Members of the Commission on the current budget pressures and savings in the Regeneration and Community Department which were in the Commissions portfolio. It was reported that there was an ongoing shortfall of £3.0m within the budget and a one off cost of £0.8m.

Members noted that there was currently a public consultation over parking charge changes, plus extension of on-street charges to Sunday, and questioned the Cabinet Member on other options if this were not to be approved. It was reported that the proposals was to encourage residents parking to use the north part of the City. It was noted that the parking income target had not been met over the past 3 years and that there had been an increase in residents cycling and using public transport. There was an underlying problem with the base budget on parking income. Councillor Care agreed and said she wanted to address this.

Members questioned whether there had been discussions concerning a new bus route to connect the new Super Hospital. It was reported that this had been potentially highlighted as an issue to link the south of the City but it would be dependent on whether bus companies thought that it would be commercially viable. The Commission requested that a more detailed report be brought back to the Commission inviting other agencies to join the discussion.

The Commission resolved to note the emerging budget pressures and forecasts for the 2009/10 – 2011/12 budget as highlighted in the Revenues Strategy report to Cabinet on 30 September 2008.

39/08 Home-to-School Transport: Review

The Commission received an oral update from the Assistant Director – Highways and Transport, Christine Durrant, on Home to School Transport. She explained that a full report on the outcome of the review requested by the Commission was near final completion. She orally reported the conclusions and actions that would be contained in the written report. The issue would be dealt with in two stages. Firstly there had been a short term assessment to determine the number of pupils using the service, with a view to tailor the service for those using it. Secondly the department would carry out a fuller assessment to decide whether more significant changes

needed to be implemented, which would be from February half term. It was noted that one of the routes most affected was from Normanton to Littleover Community School. It was thought that the two buses serving the route should be reduced to one, as just 13 pupils were using the service, compared to more than 130 when they could pay as they traveled. It is hoped that the bus operator would agree to run a commercial service on the route, allowing pupils to pay as they travel again. At Derby Moor Community School, the number of buses would be reduced from five to two because only 72 pupils have paid in advance to travel.

Members raised concerns that there were not enough pupils asked on how they were now travelling to school compared to last year and it was suggested that a survey be carried out. It was reported that each January a PLASK survey on home to school transport was carried out at each school, this information would be used to monitor the situation and a report back would be brought back to the Commission in January.

The Commission resolved to note the oral report received and to receive a further report to the January Commission;

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40/08 Performance Monitoring

The Commission considered a report from the Corporate Director of Corporate and Adult Services on Performance Monitoring. On 22 September the Commission considered a report on Performance Monitoring 2008-11 and resolved to receive regular updates on N1 047 and NI 178, the two national indicators relating to the Commission which are included in Derby's LAA agreement. Quarter 2 data and commentaries had recently been added to Performance Eye.

The Commission resolved to note the quarterly data and commentary on the two targets included in Derby's LAA agreement that relate to this Commission and to be provided with further information on the concerns about the accuracy of the bus punctuality data.

41/08 Work Programme

The Commission resolved to note the report on the Work Programme.

42/08 Retrospective Scrutiny

There were no items were identified.

43/08 Council Cabinet Forward Plan

There were no items identified.

44/08 Retrospective Scrutiny

There were no items were identified.

45/08 Matters referred to the Commission by Council Cabinet

There were no items.

46/08 Highways – Contractual Issues

The issue was dealt with in two parts. All the issues and documentation regarding the current 2007 contract were considered in the public part of the meeting. When attention then moved to the settlement with the previous contractor it was:

Resolved – to exclude the press and public as the report to the Council Cabinet on 2 October 2007 contained exempt information as defined in paragraphs 3 and 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and those reasons continue to apply.

The Commission first considered a report from the Corporate Director of Corporate and Adult Services on Highways – Contractual Issues. This item was included on the agenda at the request of Cllr Banwait, as he was concerned about the backlog of work under the highways maintenance contract and the extent that this is delaying the delivery of highways projects. The present contract was awarded in 2007 and the report provided background information.

Councillor Banwait addressed the Commission on his experience of the current contract being awarded whilst he was the responsible Council Cabinet Member. It was reported that the Audit and Accounts Committee had received a paper on the contract settlement of the Morrison's contract. It was noted that in the current Carillion contract there was an overspend during the first eight months arising from workforce issues.

Councillor Care, Cabinet Member for Planning and Transportation reported that the workforce issues that Carillion had experienced were because the staff had previously worked for Morrisons and had been neglected for some time and needed further support to achieve the output now expected. Christine Durrant said the productivity issues came to light at the end of the financial year. Councillor Care said that as Cabinet Member she was made aware of issues arising from the contract at a meeting on 22 May 2008 when she asked for further detail. As Cabinet Member she also asked for officers to make changes to the workforce regarding the competency issues. The full staff changes in staff were not completed until three weeks ago and along with new ways of working has since showed promise.

The Assistant Director - Highways and Transport confirmed that she believed that partnership contract could work well and make the best of the resources that we had. A number of work process trials were being undertaken and would be

assessed to see which provided the maximum value for money. Councillor Care said it would not have been appropriate to increase spending until the inefficiencies were addressed through the work trials, as money would not have been used in the most productive way. It was noted that significant steps had been taken to address the issues including five or six people being made redundant so spending was contained within the budget allocated. It was noted that to carry out the extra works needed there would be an additional £0.5m needed to reduce the backlog. The reactive and planned maintenance work could cost up to £4.5m a year but this was not a fixed sum as work was issued up to the budget allocated. The figure £4.5 m was based on the City Council's budget level and had not been increased to reflect the industry rate of inflation. It was reported that there were performance target indicator mechanisms within the contract to ensure that the work carried out was satisfactory. If a job was not satisfactorily completed it had to be redone at the contractor's own cost.

Councillor Care said clarity about the causes of the problems was known by the end of June. At the end of August or beginning of September the figure of £.5m was identified as being necessary to address the back log. She stated that three actions could together turn the contract round. They were: i) more client-side resource, ii) more expertise within the contractor's work force (by drawing on its Redcar experience) and iii) more budget to enable more works to be undertaken, including catching up on the back log.

Councillor Banwait addressed the Commission on the report that was produced for the Audit and Accounts Commission. It was noted that there was detailed legal advice given to Cabinet members ahead of the decision made to settle the disputes with the Morrison's contract.

The Assistant Director – Highways and Transport reported that the previous contract had been a contractor / client split and that the contractor got paid a fixed amount for the work done. The prices in the tender were too low for the works and, to try to recoup costs the contractor had put in various claims to the Council. The advice given to members to settle the contract was the right decision. The new contract provided more of a partnership approach, which was needed.

Resolved to request the January meeting be provided with a) a detailed and robust action plan addressing the problems, b) an overview of the current contract and c) information on the award of the contract and the officer advice given in connection with the decision process.

MINUTES END