

ITEM 4

Time commenced 6.00 pm
Time finished 7.50 pm

PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION 16 MARCH 2009

Present: Councillors Poulter (Chair),
Batey, Dhindsa, Harwood, Holmes, Lowe and Repton.

79/08 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Banwait.

80/08 Late Items Introduced by the Chair

In accordance with Section 100(B) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Chair agreed to admit a report from a Planning and Transportation Cabinet Member Meeting on 16 March 2009. The report detailed a consultation proposal on the possible reduction in discretionary home to school transport services. The item was considered of importance to the Commission in the 2009/10 budget proposals and its consideration of the report is detailed in minute 88/08 below.

81/08 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

82/08 Call-In

There were no items for call-in.

Responses of the Council Cabinet to any reports of the Commission

83/08 Duffield Road Bus Lane

The Commission considered a draft report from the Cabinet following the Commission's review of the Duffield Road Bus Lane. The draft response informed Members that the Cabinet had considered the Commission's report on suggested safety improvements and proposed which of the action points were being taken forward. The Chair noted that the majority of the Commission's suggestions had been incorporated into the Cabinet's proposal. The Commission expressed disappointment

that the possible re-location of the northbound Broadway bus stop was not being supported.

Resolved to note the Cabinet's draft response to the Commission's review.

Items for Discussion

84/08 Street Lighting PFI roll-out update

The Commission considered a report on the Street Lighting PFI by representatives from Derby City Council, Balfour Beatty and Eon Central Networks.

Nick Perry, of Balfour Beatty, informed the Commission that his company had worked closely with Allan Leverton, of Eon Central Networks, to reduce the time taken to repair street light faults. The work has proven successful and the time taken to repair faults on average in the last three month period has dropped to below ten days, which is better than the target set by the Council. Allan Leverton, of Eon Central Networks, informed the Commission that his company had been able to attend and repair faults much quicker recently because their workload is reduced and so their work can be processed more efficiently.

The Chair asked the representatives to explain the figures and the peaks in the data. Nick Perry explained that five day faults are usually partial replacements. Ten day faults are normally the result of a road traffic collision and require a complete replacement or are difficult to access and require traffic management. Usually the company have three or four ten day faults a month but if a large number are received at once then this can sap resources and extend repair times elsewhere. Nick Perry explained that the new equipment would result in less faults occurring. So when the company moved to a new area, they assess where the highest number of faults occur and target these areas first. It was hoped that this would lower the number of faults occurring across the area.

Councillor Holmes asked for clarification on the process on replacing lighting poles. He had received complaints from residents about poles placed outside people's windows and another where a pole was replaced roughly halfway into the pavement. He also asked how difficult it was to move an existing lighting pole. Nick Perry informed the Commission that there had been cases in the past where lighting columns had been located inconveniently for some residents. However, he stated that this was now not the case and that replacement or new lighting poles were sited, wherever possible, in the same location as the old pole. Sometimes poles are located away from the edge of the pavement because each street needs to maintain a certain lighting level and streets with wide pavements may require poles to be brought forward to maintain the correct lighting level. Space is always left for a wheelchair or a pushchair. Moving a lighting pole is not a simple process because moving one pole could have a knock on effect to the lighting level and may mean moving several instead.

Councillor Repton thanked the Balfour Beatty representative for providing their process flow charts but expressed concern that it is too complex for the public to

understand. Nick Perry explained that these are internal documents and are not issued to the public. Councillor Repton asked if a summary could be provided and circulated to ward Members and Neighbourhood Boards to respond to queries from the public.

The Chair stated that previously the Commission had asked Balfour Beatty to attend Neighbourhood Board meetings and asked what progress had been made. Nick Perry stated that he had contacted the Neighbourhood Board administrator to contact the Neighbourhood Managers and he had now attended quite a few board meetings. The Chair said that Balfour Beatty needed to contact the Board Chairs well in advance and inform them of the work that will commence in their ward. Nick Perry said that all Balfour Beatty's FAQs were circulated to the Chairs along with the programme of work for the area. The representative said that his company tried to deal with individual concerns where possible but requests by the Police and the Community Safety Partnership took precedence.

Resolved that:

- **The Commission thanked Lighting Derby and its partners for their hard work and requested an update in six months.**
- **The Commission would like Lighting Derby to reinforce its contact with the Neighbourhood Boards.**
- **A full list of all Lighting Derby's contact with Neighbourhood Forums and Boards be sent to the Overview and Scrutiny Officer and circulated to the Commission.**
- **Lighting Derby should contact in writing all the Neighbourhood managers and ward Councillors with any future works in their area.**
- **Lighting Derby provide a summary sheet on how to report faults to all Councillors and Neighbourhood managers.**

85/08 Public satisfaction with the planning function

The Commission considered a report on the public's satisfaction with the planning function. The Assistant Director of Regeneration and Community – Regeneration informed the Commission that the department had begun sending customer feedback forms to the agents with decision notices. The graphs presented to the Commission reflect the feedback the department has gained since April 2008.

The Head of Development Control informed the Commission that he believed the feedback was now improving because the department had implemented changes to meet their customers' comments and needs highlighted in the feedback forms. The officer stated that they had tried to simplify the planning process and had tried to maintain a dialogue with applicants. Pre-applications have been encouraged with major developers to engage with the public.

Councillor Holmes expressed concern that final applications differ a great deal from initial pre-applications. The Head of Development Control said that he could only advise on the details that had been submitted. Applications and plans could always be subject to change following consultation with the public. Any pre-applications should not be considered the finished article.

The Chair asked officers if any work had been done to increase the access to officers for objectors. The Assistant Director of Regeneration and Community – Regeneration informed the Commission that the department were looking at ways to engage and consult the Neighbourhood Boards and local pressure groups.

Resolved that the Commission commended the work of the Planning Control Department in adapting to the needs of their customers and noted the report.

Performance Monitoring

86/08 Report of the Performance Surgery held on 22 January 2009

The Commission considered a report on the performance Survey held on 22 January 2009. The Assistant Director of Regeneration and Planning – Regeneration informed the Commission that a full progress report would be coming back for consideration in July.

The Head of Development Control stated that the review had been out for staff consultation for the second time and working party made up of Planning Control Committee Members were going to be briefed on the proposals. The officer stated that the review has sought to streamline the Council's administration procedures backing up the planning process without having a detrimental impact on the service provided.

Councillor Dhindsa expressed concern that the Planning Control working party was repeating the work of a previous review carried out by the Planning and Transportation Commission. He stated that the department should focus on the recommendations of the Commission and check whether they have been implemented before resources were committed to an additional review. He expressed concern that there were not enough resources to meet the current level of demand placed on officers. The Assistant Director of Regeneration and Community – Regeneration stated that the majority of the recommendations had now been implemented and this would be reflected in the progress review that would come before the Commission in July. The Chair reported to the Commission that the circumstances in which the Planning Control department now operates have now changed. The review may not totally reflect the current climate and the review recommendations may need to be fine tuned.

Resolved that:

- **The Commission note the report.**
- **The Assistant Director of Regeneration and Community – Regeneration should liaise with the Overview and Scrutiny Officer to identify which recommendations of the Commission's previous review had been met and to report back.**
- **The second stage review, currently out to staff consultation, be circulated to the Commission Members.**

87/08 Member satisfaction survey

The Commission received a Member satisfaction survey to complete from the Overview and Scrutiny Officer. The results of the survey would allow officers to improve their service provision if any improvements were identified.

Resolved that members complete and return the survey.

Late Item

88/08 Public consultation proposals seeking views on the proposed reduction in discretionary home to school transport services

The Commission considered a report on public consultation proposals seeking views on the proposed reduction in discretionary home to school transport services which was considered at a Planning and Transportation Cabinet Member meeting earlier in the day. The Chair informed the Commission that he had attended the meeting with the Chair of the Children and Young People's Commission to relay the Commission's views. The Chair informed the Commission that he will also be attending the Cabinet meeting on 17 March to take forward their views. He stated that the consultation was now comprehensive and would contact those affected directly.

Councillor Repton expressed grave concern at this proposal and that the driving force behind it was budgetary constraints. He suggested that enlarging the number of people consulted would dilute the results and infer that discretionary home to school transport is no longer necessary. Councillor Repton stated that this proposal would have an impact both on parents' finances and on safety. He also suggested that the proposal would not only affect the safety of the children of the school but impact on the city's commuters as traffic levels would increase if the bus service was cancelled.

Councillor Harwood echoed Councillor Repton's concerns and added that in his opinion the saving to the Council would be minimal. He stated that these children had the right to attend this school because of their faith and the Council should not adopt this proposal to remove their transport.

Councillor Holmes said that this proposal would only work if the consultation was transparent and the Cabinet needs to make a decision based on sound data. Councillor Batey suggested that all parents do still need to be consulted but that the consultation needed to be broken down into its component parts to provide put each case in context.

Councillor Repton felt that the Council has a responsibility to the children attending St Benedicts and that the Cabinet should also consider alternative ways of transporting the children to school. The Chair stated that he had been told that it is now printed in the parent's agreement that the school service was discretionary.

Resolved to recommend to Cabinet that:

- **This Commission has concerns about the openness and transparency of the consultation spectrum.**
- **The consultation needs to separately consider the views of who will and will not be affected.**
- **The consultation also needs to consider economic alternative ways of getting the existing children to school.**

89/08 Retrospective Scrutiny

There were no items identified.

90/08 Matters referred to the Commission by Council Cabinet

There were no items.

MINUTES END