

Time commenced 6.00 pm  
Time finished 7.20 pm

**PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMISSION  
16 JANUARY 2006**

Present: Councillor Ahern (in the Chair)  
Councillors P Berry, Baxter, Care, Leeming, Rehman, Tittley and West

In attendance: Councillors Bolton and Repton

**57/05 Apologies for Absence**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Carr.

**58/05 Late Items Introduced by the Chair**

With the approval of the Chair, the Commission considered a late item which was a report written by Councillor Care following her visit to the Soil Association Annual Conference in January 2006. It was reported that the Conference considered that food needed to be produced more locally in order to reduce the number of miles involved in transporting it.

**Resolved to note and thank Councillor Care for the report.**

**59/05 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**60/05 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 November 2005 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**61/05 Call-In**

There were no call-ins.

**Items for Discussion**

**62/05 Performance Eye**

The Commission considered the current performance indicators that fall within the Commission's portfolio.

**Resolved to note the update.**

## **Work Plan 2005/6**

### **63/05      Retrospective Scrutiny**

There were no items.

### **64/05      Consideration of the Council's Draft Revenue Budget**

The Commission considered the Council's 2006/07 – 2008/09 draft Revenue Budget and a report from the Corporate Director, Corporate and Adult Social Services and Deputy Chief Executive that itemised those elements of the draft Revenue budget that fell within the Commission's portfolio.

The Council's draft Revenue Budget was issued to Overview and Scrutiny Commission members at a briefing on 9 January 2006. All the Commissions were given an opportunity for detailed consideration of the draft revenue budget at their business meetings during January 2006. It was suggested that where appropriate, that each of the Commissions should make recommendations on the proposals contained in the draft budget that fell within their remit.

The Performance Eye performance monitoring facility gives the Overview and Scrutiny Commissions the means of monitoring the effects and outcomes of the funding for Council services agreed through the budget process. It was suggested in the Director's report that each Commission could identify particular service areas within its remit and could, at subsequent meetings, use Performance Eye to track progress and to examine the effects on performance of the budget allocation within those areas.

Councillor Baxter raised concerns about the proposal to increase cremation charges by 7% over inflation. He considered that as previously suggested by the Commission the charges should be increased by £25 in order to build up the funds required by 2010 to purchase the equipment needed to reduce mercury emissions. Councillor Bolton responded that the Commission's previous recommendation had not been forgotten and that research was being done by other authorities to investigate ways of reducing mercury emissions.

Councillor Berry asked about the Abandoned Vehicles LPSA. Andrew Hopkin reported that the abandoned vehicles team had become more efficient and that notices were on cars within 24 hours, which were off the street in four to five days. He said that the saving within the section would not have been offered if the high level of service could not be maintained.

Councillor Berry raised concerns that car parking charges had increased 6% above inflation. He believed that an increase should be used for new bus services and any monies gained from the increase should be ring fenced. Councillor Repton responded that the increases were 10 pence per hour which was the minimum that the ticket machines could be increased by. He believed that the budget was about delivering a Council Tax that people could afford and this meant increasing charges

in order to keep Council Tax low. He considered that the increase might make people think about alternative transport but would not drive people away from the City.

Councillor Care expressed her disappointment about the small number of new Rethink Rubbish rounds. She asked what the additional cost of landfill would be because the larger scheme hadn't been rolled out. Councillor Bolton responded that the Council was dedicated to recycling and that the delay was in part due to two staff vacancies. She considered that the rounds that were left were the more challenging areas, with terraced properties that needed to be treated differently. She said there was a danger the Council would be bombarded with complaints if the areas were rushed into. Pat Ethleston, Assistant Director, Highways, Transportation and Waste Management said that costs were broadly neutral and reported that the Council would comfortably exceed DEFRA recycling targets. It was hoped that by 2009/10 a method of disposal would be found for residual waste. It was reported that there would be a fact finding visit to Nottingham later in January 2006 to see how they had dealt with similar areas. Assurances were given that despite the delay the Council would still meet its target and its DEFRA responsibilities.

Councillor Baxter asked if the closure of selected toilets had been publicised. Councillor Bolton responded that there had been a trial of selective closing at night at toilets on Nottingham Road, Peartree Road and Sinfin Lane and there had only been one complaint in three months. These sites had been chosen due to anti-social behaviour, health and safety and vandalism. It was noted that the closures were not ideal but it was hoped that the money saved would be used to maintain other toilets, although the closures were due to public concern rather than budget.

Councillor Care suggested that it would be helpful if the report on energy requested from officers by Councillor Bolton following her meeting with the Commission on 6 December 2005 could be completed in time for it to be considered as part of the current budget process.

## **Resolved**

- 1. to recommend to Council Cabinet that cremation fees are increased by £25 in addition to the 2.25% above inflation increase that is proposed in paragraph 3.5.1 of the draft Revenue Budget document.**
- 2. That the income derived from the £25 increase in cremation fees is ring-fenced and used to off-set the cost of the mercury abatement equipment that the Council is required to install at the crematorium**
- 3. to recommend that the report on the Council's use of energy, which was requested by the Council Cabinet member for Environment and Direct Services following her meeting on 6 December 2005 with the Planning and Environment Commission, is completed in time for its conclusions to be considered as part of the Council's 2006/07 Revenue Budget process.**

**65/05      Outcome of the Commission's meeting on 6  
December 2005 with the Council Cabinet Member**

The Commission considered a report that detailed notes of the outcome of the Commission's meeting with the Cabinet Member for Environment and Direct Services on 6 December 2005. The purpose of the meeting was to update the Cabinet Member on the outcomes of the reviews the Commission had conducted on the Council's use of energy and on the abatement of mercury emissions from the crematorium.

Councillor Bolton commented that the Council wished to make great strides in tackling the issue of dog fouling.

Councillor Ahern thanked Councillors, Baxter, Carr and Leeming for a good report on mercury abatement at the crematorium.

**Resolved to note the report.**

**66/05      Police and Highways Agency Responses to the  
Commission's letter concerning A514 weight  
restrictions**

The Commission considered two letters of response to the Commission's letters to the Police and Highways Agency regarding their concerns about the A514 and A6 weight restrictions.

The Commission considered the response from the Police to be very negative and thought that they had a responsibility to stop vehicles that exceeded the weight restriction being used on weight restricted roads.

Councillor Tittley considered that since the weight restriction on the A514 had been imposed the amount of traffic had significantly reduced and that action should be taken against the drivers of prohibited vehicles.

Councillor Leeming commented that the weight restriction signs on the A514 approaches had not yet been erected. He considered that the amount of traffic coming into town had decreased but had increased outside of the city centre.

Councillor Care considered that there would be an impact on the whole city if restrictions were imposed and not adhered to.

Councillor Berry considered that part of the problem was that a lot of HGV drivers were foreign and therefore might not understand the signs. Councillor Repton responded that he would ask officers to look into what adaptations to signs were possible.

**Resolved**

- 1. to write to the Police about their responsibility to police the roads and to raise concerns about the unsatisfactory response to the previous letter**

- 2. to invite the Chief Inspector of Police and an Officer from Environmental Health and Trading Standards to the Commission's next meeting, based on the response to the above letter**

**67/05 Council Cabinet Forward Plan**

There were no items.

**68/05 Responses of the Council Cabinet to any reports of the Commission**

There were no items.

**69/05 Matters Referred to the Commission by Council Cabinet**

There were no items.

MINUTES END