

Public Document Pack

Environment Scrutiny Committee

Env/1

Tuesday, 13 January 2015

ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

13 January 2015

5.30 - 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors Gawthrope (Chair), Perry (Vice-Chair), Moore, Pitt, Ratcliffe, Robertson, C. Smart and M. Smart

Executive Councillor for Environment, Waste & Public Health: Peter Roberts

Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Transport: Kevin Blencowe

Officers:

Director of Environment: Simon Payne

Head of Planning Services: Patsy Dell

Head of Refuse & Environment: Jas Lally

Head of Streets and Open Spaces: Joel Carre

Head of Specialist Services: Paul Necus

Principal Accountant: Chris Humphris

Committee Manager: James Goddard

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

15/1/Env Apologies

No apologies were received.

15/2/Env Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

15/3/Env Minutes

The minutes of 17 October 2014 meeting were approved and signed as a correct record.

15/4/Env Public Questions

No public questions were asked.

15/5/Env Environment, Waste and Health Services Portfolio Revenue and Capital Budgets 2015/16 (Estimate), 2016/17, 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20 (Forecast)

Matter for Decision

The Officer's report detailed the budget proposals relating to this Environment, Waste and Public Health Portfolio that were included in the Budget-Setting Report 2015/16 to be considered at the following meetings:

- i. 19 January 2015 Strategy & Resources.
- ii. 22 January 2015 The Executive.
- iii. 13 February 2015 Strategy & Resources.
- iv. 26 February 2015 Council.

The report also included consideration of any recommendations concerning the review of charges and project appraisals for schemes in the capital plan for this portfolio.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Environment, Waste and Public Health

Review of Charges:

- i. Approved the proposed charges for this portfolio's services and facilities, as shown in Appendix A to the Officer's report.

Revenue:

- ii. Noted the revenue budget proposals as shown in Appendix B.

Capital:

- iii. Noted the capital budget proposals as shown in Appendix C.
- iv. Agreed to delete some schemes from the Capital Plan as shown in Appendix C.
- v. Approved, where relevant, project appraisals as shown in Appendix D.
- vi. Agreed to adjust capital funding for items (iii) to (v) as appropriate.

Reason for the Decision

As set out in the Officer's report.

Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Not applicable.

Scrutiny Considerations

The Committee received a report from the Principal Accountant. He advised the Officer's report (second agenda circulation, P6, Table 2) contained a typographical error: The headings had been transposed so 'Capital Deletions' should read 'Capital Bids' and vice versa.

In response to Members' questions the Head of Refuse & Environment said the following:

- i. All fees and charges (eg scrap metal P9 of the Officer's report) fell into two categories:
 - Statutory fees eg Licensing Act.
 - Administration cost for provision of the service, which was charged at 'cost rate' ie non-profit making.
- ii. Changes to legislation in 2012 led to a review of local authority Commercial Waste Service charges across the city.
- iii. The increased charges reflected increased disposal charges for the City Council, which had taken over responsibility from the County Council.
- iv. The £80,000 total increased income (P10 of the Officer's report) could be robustly defended as the harmonisation of the Commercial Waste Service's tariff structures was a win-win for the City Council and customers.
- v. The City Council had increased co-mingled recycling. The City Council also gave customers advice on how to reduce their disposal costs. Disposal costs decreased as the City Council undertook more co-mingled recycling).
- vi. Unavoidable revenue pressure items such as the North West Cambridge Collection vehicles running costs (P11 of the Officer's report) were included in the budget report for the first time as part of North West Cambridge site waste / recycling costs.
- vii. Fluctuating oil prices had a dual impact on the City Council. Lower oil prices meant:
 - Waste truck fuel costs were lower.
 - The Council receive less revenue from sales of recyclable waste.
- viii. Officers were aware that the value of recyclable waste varied. It was not practicable to store waste when sale values were low in order to wait for them to rise as storing waste reduced its quality and therefore its value. Quality and contamination rates were considerations for officers.
- ix. The City Council was in partnership with all Cambridgeshire authorities to get the best price for recyclable waste.
- x. Black bins were in high demand locally and nationally. The Council had received various freedom of information requests regarding bin provision costs. Officers liaised with residents requesting bins, the replacement cost was determined by responses. For example, the cost of replacing a damaged bin was lower than providing a second additional one.
- xi. To encourage recycling property owners could ask for large bins to be replaced by smaller ones free of charge.

- xii. Refuse crews had been asked to advise officers of any damaged bins so they could be replaced before a property owner requested this.

In response to Members' questions the Principal Accountant said projects were formerly included on the capital plan before a project scheme document was worked up. Under the "project under development" process projects would need a business case to be written before being added to the capital plan. Projects without a business case were grouped in the "under development" heading.

The Executive Councillor for Environment, Waste and Public Health gave the Silver Street public toilets as an example of a project under development.

The Committee resolved by 5 votes to 0 with 3 abstentions to endorse the recommendations.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendations.

Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

15/6/Env Stop Human Trafficking Poster Campaign

Public Statement From Ms Crofts Representing Soroptimist International

A member of the public made the following points:

- i. Referred to the Executive summary in the Officer's report.
- ii. Thanked the Executive Councillor for Environment, Waste and Public Health, plus Councillors for their support of the Stop Human Trafficking Poster Campaign.
- iii. Soroptimist International is a worldwide non-governmental organisation to educate women and girls. One of its goals was to eliminate violence against women and girls. This included stopping the trafficking of women.
- iv. 'Stop Trafficking' posters had been provided to South Cambridgeshire and the City Councils.
- v. Material such as posters had been produced to raise awareness of issues in communities. Information on where to seek help was also provided.
- vi. Information posters were put in toilets where they could be seen by women (without being observed) by men who may be controlling them.

- vii. Posters and stickers had already been distributed by some local authorities. They had proved successful so the campaign was being rolled out to Cambridge.
- viii. More posters and stickers could be provided upon request by 1 February 2015.

Matter for Decision

The City Council received a request from the Cambridge Branch of Soroptimist International to erect its 'stop human trafficking' campaign posters in the Council's female public toilets for a fixed 6 month period, commencing 1 February 2015.

The posters are designed to help tackle the issue of human trafficking, with a particular focus on female victims, who form over 80% of all trafficked people. The posters form part of Soroptimist International's Purple Teardrop Campaign, which is a global campaign to stamp out human trafficking, especially sex trafficking.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Environment, Waste and Public Health

Approved the erection of Soroptimist International's Purple Teardrop 'stop human trafficking' campaign posters in the City Council's female public toilets for a fixed 6 month period, commencing 1 February 2015 and ending 31 July 2015.

Reason for the Decision

As set out in the Officer's report.

Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Not applicable.

Scrutiny Considerations

The Committee noted the report from the Head of Streets & Open Spaces.

The Committee made the following comments in response to the report:

- i. Welcomed the stop human trafficking poster campaign initiative,
- ii. Human trafficking was an important issue.
- iii. It would be helpful to have information from Soroptimist International and the Police on how effective the posters were, so they could be made more effective in future to extend the programme in any way possible.

- iv. Suggested putting posters in unisex and female toilets. Traffickers could be male and female.
- v. The campaign could link into Councillor Sinnott's anti-domestic abuse work.
- vi. Queried the need for three phone numbers (instead of one) on the poster, but felt this was a matter for the poster organisers rather than Cambridge City Council. Suggested including text information, as an alternative to telephone calls.
- vii. Suggested undertaking a men only campaign on a different theme in future.

In response to Members' questions Ms Crofts said the following:

- i. The Council had suggested undertaking the campaign on a six month basis. Soroptimist International would be happy if it could be extended.
- ii. This was a women only campaign. A campaign for men was a future consideration.
- iii. Three telephone numbers were listed on the Cambridge poster as per the format used in Poole (Dorset) where the initiative was trialled.
- iv. If trafficked women did not have access to a phone, they could get information from the Police or Crimestoppers.

The Committee unanimously resolved to endorse the recommendation.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendation. He added that there would be a press release to raise awareness of the initiative.

Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

15/7/Env Re-Ordering Agenda

Under paragraph 4.2.1 of the Council Procedure Rules, the Chair used his discretion to alter the order of the agenda items. However, for ease of the reader, these minutes will follow the order of the agenda.

15/8/Env Planning Policy and Transport Services Portfolio Revenue and Capital Budgets 2015/16 (Estimate), 2016/17, 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20 (Forecast)

Matter for Decision

The Officer's report detailed the budget proposals relating to the Planning Policy & Transport Portfolio that were included in the Budget-Setting Report 2015/16 to be considered at the following meetings:

- i. 19 January 2015 Strategy & Resources.
- ii. 22 January 2015 The Executive.
- iii. 13 February 2015 Strategy & Resources.
- iv. 26 February 2015 Council.

The report also included consideration of any recommendations concerning the review of charges and project appraisals for schemes in the capital plan for this portfolio.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Planning Policy & Transport

Review of Charges:

- i. Approved the proposed charges for this portfolio's services and facilities, as shown in Appendix A of the Officer's report.

Revenue:

- ii. Noted the revenue budget proposals as shown in Appendix B.

Capital:

- iii. Noted the capital budget proposals as shown in Appendix C.
- iv. Agreed to delete some schemes from the Capital Plan as shown in Appendix C.
- v. Agreed to adjust capital funding for items (iii) and (iv) as appropriate.

Reason for the Decision

As set out in the Officer's report.

Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Not applicable.

Scrutiny Considerations

The Committee received a report from the Principal Accountant.

The Committee made the following comments in response to the report:

- i. Car parking costs were high profile press stories.
- ii. Car parks required (substantial) capital and maintenance funding to keep them in good order. Sufficient capital should be made available in the Capital Plan for this.

In response to Members' questions the Director of Environment and the Head of Specialist Services said the following:

- i. A group was being set up to jointly discuss County Council, City Council and Park&Ride parking charges to influence users to pick the most appropriate facility for the length of their stay. The intention was to better co-ordinate/integrate prices.
- ii. Car parks were of a certain age and needed substantial investment to run them. This ensured they were secure, maintained to a good standard, with up to date equipment.
- iii. Major schemes were coming forward such as the Park Street Car Park refurbishment. This refurbishment would need a lot of capital investment, and may lead to a loss of revenue to the Council whilst it was not available for use.
- iv. A detailed options appraisal for the future of Park Street Car Park would be presented to councillors in summer 2015 (following on from details put to Members in October 2014).
- v. Project planning was undertaken for all projects. Supporting documents identified resources required, these operating details were not generally included in the strategic papers reported to scrutiny committees.

The Committee resolved by 5 votes to 0 with 3 abstentions to endorse the recommendations.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendations. He added that one of the disappointments of the Joint Area Committee was a lack of coordination around setting parking charges. This would be followed up in future as it used to occur October/November each year.

Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

15/9/Env Building Control Shared Service Business Case Investigation

Matter for Decision

A shared building control service has the potential to be a more sustainable and resilient business model for future service delivery and cost effectiveness.

The City Council has been asked to explore the benefits of joining the shared Building Control Service already committed to by Huntingdonshire and South Cambridgeshire District Councils. The Officer's report sought approval to undertake that work.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Transport

Agreed that the viability and benefits of developing a shared Building Control Service should be explored, and the business case and conclusions brought back to the scrutiny committee at the earliest opportunity for consideration.

Reason for the Decision

As set out in the Officer's report.

Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Not applicable.

Scrutiny Considerations

The Committee received a report from the Head of Planning Services.

The Committee made the following comments in response to the report:

- i. The location of the shared Building Control Service was an important consideration.
- ii. Welcomed the principle of exploring the business case, it needed to be practicable.
- iii. Considerations for the service business case: Resilience, cost and specialist knowledge.

In response to Members' questions the Head of Planning Services said the following:

- i. The Building Control Shared Service included administration of Building Regulations and a statutory function of public protection.
- ii. Fees for work did not include travel time, so this would affect the choice of location for the service. The service was expected to be located near to its customers.
- iii. An advantage of the shared service would be the ability to market it to generate revenue. In order to be competitive, Inspectors would need to be customer facing and not hindered by layers of bureaucracy.

The Director of Environment said the shared service could be based in more than one location. Shared management and service support was being explored to ensure resilience.

The Committee unanimously resolved to endorse the recommendation.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendation.

Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

The meeting ended at 7.00 pm

CHAIR