

ENVIRONMENTAL AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE

15th November 2008

PRESENT:-

Conservative Group

Councillor Bladen (Chairman), Councillor Ford (Vice-Chairman) and Councillors Bale, Mrs. Hood, Lemmon, Watson, Mrs. Wheeler (substitute for Councillor Timms) and Wheeler (substitute for Councillor Mrs. Patten).

Labour Group

Councillors Mrs. Lane, Richards, Southerd, Taylor and Tilley.

In Attendance

Councillors Atkin (Conservative Group).

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the Meeting were received from Councillors Mrs. Patten and Timms (Conservative Group).

EDS/28. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 4th October 2007 were taken as read, approved as true a record and signed by the Chairman.

EDS/29. **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

Councillor Bladen opened the Meeting by extending the Committee's congratulations to Officers who had recently achieved examination success. It was agreed that a letter of congratulations be sent to N. Toon, I. Taylor, K. Parkes and T. Turner who were all in the Planning Services Department.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule No. 11.3, Councillor Watson had given notice of the following question:

"This Committee resolved on 23rd August 2007 that the Finance and Management Committee approve the sale of land to Derbyshire County Council to allow the creation of a new multi-user route to the Long Horse Bridge. It was understood that this Council objected to Derbyshire County Council's compulsory purchase order. Could it be confirmed how and why the decision was made? Furthermore, as this was a highly important matter to the parish, as a Ward Councillor why was Councillor Watson not informed of the objection?"

The Chairman thanked Councillor Watson for his question and advised him that he would arrange for this matter to be investigated and a report would be submitted to the appropriate Committee in due course.

MATTERS DELEGATED TO COMMITTEE**EDS/30. WILLINGTON STATION PASSENGER RAIL SERVICES**

A report was submitted to inform Members of changes to the timetable for rail services from December 2008 proposed by Arriva, the new franchise operator.

The Department for Transport had selected Arriva to operate the new cross-country rail franchise to 2016. Arriva was proposing changes to various aspects of the existing service, which had been published for consultation. Members were advised that this report concentrated upon proposed changes to the timetable affecting services at Willington Station.

On weekdays the number of services running in each direction from Willington would be reduced from ten per day to four in the direction of Birmingham and nine each day to four in the direction of Derby and Nottingham. The frequency of weekend services would also be significantly diminished. The proposals were inconsistent with the Council's Corporate Plan and themes of the Community Strategy.

It was understood that Arriva intended to maximise passenger numbers by minimising journey times between major population centres. Arriva considered that faster journeys would make the service more attractive and allow more services to run per day. Following examination of passenger numbers at Willington and some other stations serving smaller settlements, it had been proposed that services stopping at these stations should be curtailed to facilitate the achievements of these wider objectives.

It was reported that Arriva's emphasis on passenger numbers failed to take into account the social and economic role played by railway services in smaller centres such as Willington, where it was important to be able to travel to major centres, in order to access employment and higher order services. Not all travellers had access to a private car. It was also reported that the proposals were contrary to any potential future improvements to the railway station infrastructure at Willington. They were inconsistent with the potential establishment of a Derby South Parkway Station close to the former Willington Power Station, an idea that was put forward in the Multi-Modul Study into North-South Movements on the M1 Corridor, published by the Department for Transport Local Government and Regions in 2002. The Draft East Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy, published in 2006 made provision in Policy 50 for the promotion of the development of new park and ride facilities in appropriate locations to reduce traffic congestion on routes into the Region's Principal Urban Areas and along strategic transport corridors.

The proposed changes would make rail travel to and from Willington far less convenient than at present and would therefore be likely to deter usage.

Conversely, an increase in the number of services per day would result in greater convenience and would be likely to lead to growth in usage. Other measures that could lead to an increase in passengers at Willington Station were the introduction of new bus routes and improvements to the frequency of existing ones, the co-ordination of bus and rail timetables and the introduction of through-ticket services. Access to rail services by cyclists could be improved by installing secure cycle lockers at the station.

Councillor Ford was horrified by these proposals. He believed Arriva had missed an opportunity by not encouraging travellers to use the service. He added that many people were dependent on this service and that Derbyshire County Council was also investigating this item.

Councillor Taylor commented that the District Council was consistent in its approach for requirements of rail services in South Derbyshire. It was unacceptable for a new franchisee to cut services in this area. Several other Members including Councillors Lemmon, Mrs. Wheeler and Richards also gave their support to the recommendations.

RESOLVED:-

That the District Council:

- (1) Strongly objects to Arriva's proposal to severely restrict the frequency of passenger rail services at Willington Station from December 2008.***
- (2) Requests that service frequencies at Willington be increased, rather than reduced.***
- (3) Requests that Arriva collaborate with South East Derbyshire Accessibility Partnership to develop measures to encourage growth in passenger numbers at Willington Station.***

EDS/31. **LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK – ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT**

A report was submitted to consider and authorise the submission of the Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report for 2006/07 to the Secretary of State and to consider the need for a revision to the Local Development Scheme (LDS).

It was reported that the Local Development Framework (LDF) system set up by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, introduced a new requirement for the submission of an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) by 31st December each year. The duty to submit an AMR was also a Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI).

The AMR had two main purposes:

- 1) To review progress in the preparation of LDF documents against the milestones set out in the LDS.
- 2) To assess the extent to which development plan policies were being successfully implemented through the use of a number of national and local indicators.

The AMR was, in practice, a management tool to inform the need for the review of LDF policies, or revisions to the timetable. There was a requirement to report on the delivery of new housing, through the inclusion of a 'Housing Trajectory', setting out past completions and anticipated future supply. Employment trends were another area where the AMR usefully reported performance in the District. Copies of this document had been made available to all Members. The final document would appear on the Council's website.

Headline findings of the AMR for 2006/07 were summarised as follows:

1) Progress on LDF Documents – The Local Development Scheme (LDS)

The LDS in force for the majority of the monitoring period, came into effect in July 2005 and indicated that key milestones would be achieved on the Woodville – Swadlincote Town Centre Area Action Plan, the Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan Documents. Due to some significant problems being encountered earlier on in the monitoring year, it was reported that some slippage had occurred in taking forward these documents and this was noted (informally) in last year's AMR.

Towards the end of the monitoring period (March 2007), the District Council brought into effect an updated LDS to reflect these circumstances. The revised LDS did not include any milestones within the 2006/07 financial year and therefore no slippage occurred within that period. Following March 2007, it became clear that with regard to the Woodville – Swadlincote Area Action Plan, there remained a need for a considerable amount of further background evidence before a soundly based preferred option document could be offered for public consultation. In addition, delays had been experienced throughout summer of 2007 due to the physical difficulties in undertaking geo-technical investigation work. A further revision to the LDS would be required in due course.

2) Extent to which development plan policies were being successfully implemented

In the absence of an LDF, the District Council had continued to rely on some policies set out in the Adopted South Derbyshire Local Plan to inform its development control decisions. The range of information collected over the monitoring period suggested that relevant aspects of the Plan were being implemented to good effect where possible. However, there remained a clear need to put in place the LDF to accord with national and regional planning policies. Housing and employment land matters were then examined in further detail.

Councillor Taylor registered his disappointment at the delay on the work due for the Woodville Area Action Plan. He hoped this would get back 'on track' as soon possible.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) That Members note the contents of the LDF Annual Monitoring Report.***
- (2) That the AMR be submitted to the Government Office for the East Midlands before the deadline of 31st December 2007.***
- (3) That a revised Local Development Scheme be prepared and brought before Members in due course, reflecting the need for a revision to the timetable for the preparation of the Woodville – Swadlincote Area Action Plan.***

EDS/32. **PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT (APRIL – SEPTEMBER 2007)**

A report was submitted detailing achievements to date and current performance levels for the 6 months ending 30th September 2007 in relation to this Committee's contribution to the:-

- Corporate Plan.
- Improvement Plan.
- Community Strategy Action Plan.
- National Best Value Performance Indicator.
- Service Level Targets.

This report provided an opportunity for Members to note achievements and performance levels to date, and also review those areas that were either not 'on track' or at risk of failure.

The report detailed key achievements in the Corporate Plan within the following themes:-

- Theme 1 - Safer and Healthier Communities
- Theme 2 - You at the Centre.
- Theme 3 - Higher Quality Services.
- Theme 4 - Prosperity for All.
- Theme 5 - Rural South Derbyshire.
- Theme 6 - Stronger in the Region.

In addition, details were provided of all the performance targets relevant to this Committee, for the following service areas:-

- Environmental Services.
- Planning Services.
- Policy and Economic Regeneration.

Details about actual performance against targets, set in relation to this Committee's responsibilities within the Council's Performance Framework and within individual service areas were provided in a series of tables within the report.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) That the Committee notes the key achievements and the continuously improving performance within its areas of responsibility.***
- (2) That the Committee notes where performance is not on track and agrees the proposed remedial measures in those cases.***

EDS/33. **STREET CLEANSING PERFORMANCE 2005/06 AND 2006/07 – BVPI 199**

A report was submitted for Members information on the revisions required to BVPI 199 returns for 2005/06 and 2006/07.

It was confirmed that BVPI 199 attempted to measure how clean and tidy streets and public spaces were. This indicator was split into four separate performance measures:-

- 199a - Measured the level of detritus and litter. The grading was an average of the scores for litter and detritus.
- 199b - Measured the level of graffiti.
- 199c - Measured the level of fly posting.
- 199d - Measured the effectiveness of the management of fly tipping. This indicator was measured and reported by DEFRA (not the Council)

Details were provided of the inspection requirements and the gradings applied as follows:-

- Grade A – clean.
- Grade B – predominantly clean.
- Grade C – dirty.
- Grade D – very dirty.

In addition, there were three intermediate grades (B+, B/C and C-), to score standards that fell between the main grades. The indicator score was the percentage of inspections that fell below Grade B.

It was reported that upon submitting 2006/07 year-end data, staff at Defra had observed a problem with the recording system that led to inaccurate results both last year and 2005/06. The effects on the BV199 results were reported in a table.

The indicator 199a was a measure of litter and detritus. The vast majority of failures of this standard were in relation to detritus on rural roads. The report detailed issues in relation to detritus which had affected the grading results.

With regard to future improvements, due to the revised calibration of the historic BV199 scores, the targets for future achievements would also need to be revised. Environmental Campaigns (ENCAMS), formerly known as the Tidy Britain Group had been appointed by Defra to carry out independent surveys and the results were reported. Discussions had taken place with Officers on future proposals to address the issues in the District and their advice was also reported.

The action plan included an urgent review of the street cleaning regime. Officers were to write to Derbyshire County Council and seek a programme of road improvements including increased frequency of digging back verges and the provision of hard edging where possible in appropriate rural areas. The drive towards higher levels of enforcement and greater publicity surrounding the work was to continue and was being developed into a campaign to encourage pride in the cleanliness and appearance of the area, in order to engage public support on litter prevention.

In conclusion, circumstances beyond the Council's control had led to the reporting of the inaccurate BVPI 199 returns in 2005/06 and 2006/07. The amended returns showed a trend of improvement in performance in 2006/07 compared with 2005/06.

The District Council had revised its street cleansing programme during the past two years and frequencies of litter picking, channel sweeping and weed control had been increased. Furthermore, the work of the Safer

Neighbourhood Wardens had helped to increase the public consciousness of littering enforcement and 30 fixed penalties had been served so far this year.

Councillor Southerd believed this issue had been over-complicated by introducing the three intermediate grades. Additional treatment to kerbs by the County Council made a great difference, and an example of the kerb near Bretby Crematorium was given.

Several Members expressed concern over the statistics for 2007/08. The Direct Services Manager responded that these figures were for the first four months of the year and were distorted by the examinations of some rural roads. He added that it was very difficult to maintain performance levels due to the subjective nature of the inspections.

Councillor Richards questioned the statement that litter picking had increased within the urban core. The Direct Services Manager responded that the litter picking had been increased in the urban core. However, it was important to engage the community. The Director of Community Services added that action had been taken following the Newhall Area Meeting and a report would be submitted to the Committee shortly on the work of the Neighbourhood Wardens.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) That Members note the revisions required on the Council's BVPI 199 returns for 2005/06 and 2006/07.***
- (2) That Members comments were invited in regards to the current performance of the street cleansing service in particular, the suggestion of a Community Engagement Campaign.***

EDS/34. **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 (AS AMENDED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT [ACCESS TO INFORMATION] ACT 1985)**

RESOLVED:-

That, in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the Meeting as it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that there would be disclosed exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of the Schedule 12A of the Act indicated in brackets after each item.

PLANNING SERVICES RE-ENGINEERING – SERVICE STRUCTURE REVIEW (Paragraph 1)

The Committee recommended to Finance and Management Committee, the new structure for the Development Control and Building Control Units of the Planning Service.

J. BLADEN

CHAIRMAN

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