

## **STREETSMART AND HIGHWAYS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**WEDNESDAY, 18 NOVEMBER 2015**

PRESENT:- Councillors Kevin Parry (Chair), Junab Ali, Alan Bishop, Paul Dixon, Colin Lovell, Nick Martin, Derique Montaut, Timothy Swinyard, Joe Tray and David Wood.

Also in attendance were Councillors Brian Ford, Cabinet Member for Streetsmart and Dale Heenan, Cabinet Member for Sustainability and Transport.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Eric Shaw (Vice-Chair) and Vera Tomlinson.

### **12. Declarations of Interest**

The Chair reminded members of the need to declare any known interests in any matter to be considered by the Committee. No interests were declared.

### **13. Public Question Time**

The following questions were asked in accordance with Standing Order 28:

#### Questioner

Mr Roy Worman, Haydon View Community Association

#### Questions

Mr Worman asked a set of questions regarding: the problems currently being experienced at the waste recycling centre; the working hours and collection routes of refuse collectors; and the consultation on the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy.

#### Response

The Chair thanked Mr Worman for his questions and comments.

Councillor Brian Ford, Cabinet Member for Streetsmart, responded at the meeting with regards to the questions concerning his areas of responsibility. Councillor Dale Heenan, Cabinet Member for Sustainability and Transport, also responded at the meeting with regards to the questions concerning his areas of responsibility, and advised that a written response would be provided on the queries around the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy consultation.

### **14. Minutes**

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2015 be accepted as a correct record.

## 15.

### Street Lighting

The Committee received a report setting out the current provision of the street lighting service and options currently being considered to reduce energy consumption and manage street lighting assets.

Councillor Dale Heenan, Cabinet Member for Sustainability and Transport, introduced the report and noted that funding is usually borrowed to pay for replacement costs. Replacing the current lamps with LEDs is too cost prohibitive so thought needs to be given on what the priorities are for this service as the Council is currently spending around £1m per year on the electric bill for the columns and energy prices keep on increasing. He also highlighted the three outline business cases that officers are currently proposing to develop for consideration in early 2016, as set out in paragraph 3.17 of the report.

After the presentation of the report and Appendix 1, members asked questions and made observations on the following issues:

- The problems with street lights which remain on during daylight hours and how they are reported and fixed.
- The need for a cost-effective maintenance programme which is monitored to ensure an effective use of resources.
- The potential impact to any maintenance regime with a switch to LED lights.
- The design life of the street lighting infrastructure currently in situ in Swindon, and associated maintenance costs in relation to the longevity of the column.
- The statutory requirements and responsibility for street lighting services.
- The coding used by Southern Electric to calculate the electricity consumption and subsequent bill they produce.
- The potential for council assets to be used for electricity production which could be sold or used for street lighting.
- The ordering of priority on replacement or maintenance of columns.
- Future developments in technology in this area and their potential impact.
- The lessons learnt from the unsuccessful bid for LED street lighting conversion and concrete column replacement.
- The criteria used to determine electrical inspections and testing as set out in Appendix 1.
- The manufacturer guarantees that come with the different columns or lanterns used.

Resolved (unanimously): (1) To request that Cabinet look at the options to reduce energy use by up to 40% on street lighting.

(2) To request that the Cabinet Member for Sustainability and Transport brings an update report to a future meeting of this Committee regarding the range of options available to help achieve this target.

## 16.

### Planned Maintenance for Signage

The Committee received a report setting out the current position with regard to the maintenance of signs on the public highway.

Philip Martlew, Service Manager for Transport Planning and Traffic Management, introduced the report and highlighted that there are approximately 13,500 highway

signs across Swindon and it is a heavily regulated area. National legislation sets out the location, design, size and format of highway signs, and they can be placed on various posts, lamp columns, walls or other structures. Those signs with electronic components are inspected every twelve months with other signs being checked during the normal programme highway inspections. The Committee noted that concerns have been raised that some signs could present a better appearance than they do currently, and the Head of Streetsmart has been tasked with tackling the challenges of cleaning signs. When signs are updated they have to comply with international standards, and it was noted that a comprehensive asset management database with sign locations plotted on a mapping system would be a valuable resource for the Council.

Following the presentation of the report members asked questions and made observations on the following issues:

- The lack of adherence to byelaws covering billboards across the town and clutters of signage.
- The planned replacement programme for dealing with deteriorated signs.
- The plans to address foliage which covers signage and the possibilities of removing some of these signs.
- The costs associated with new signs being erected.
- The potential for the removal of unnecessary speed signs in certain areas and the constraints within traffic orders.
- The required look of new street signs erected by housing developers, and the process for the adoption of signage by the Council.
- The costs associated with the zonal updating of signs, and the changes that have taken place in all of the areas covered under the schemes.

Resolved – To note the contents of the report.

## **17. Local Bus Strategy Review**

The Committee received a report setting out the invitation from Council to undertake a review of Council bus subsidies and recommend a sustainable 'social need' bus policy, as agreed by the Council at its meeting on 24 September 2015 in response to a petition concerning the cessation of the Service 20 bus service operated commercially by Thamesdown Transport.

Councillor Dale Heenan, Cabinet Member for Sustainability and Transport, introduced the report and highlighted that there is a small amount of funding available to assist users when a bus service is cancelled but there is no existing criteria to assess when and how the Council should step in and how that funding should be allocated. He confirmed that this Committee is being invited to consider if a social needs policy should be defined to help determine those criteria, and if it should also undertake a review of Council bus subsidies.

Following the presentation of the report and the existing Local Bus Strategy for Swindon attached at Appendix 1, members asked questions and made observations on the following issues:

- The need to avoid over-simplification on any criteria set, especially when considering the differing needs of urban and rural populations, and ensuring

that more than just £ amounts are considered.

- The figures on bus usage and concessionary travel, and how recipients of free bus passes are counted.
- The relationship between Swindon Borough Council and Thamesdown Transport, and the viability of the Council operating its own bus services.
- Ensuring that the most vulnerable in society are protected as well as meeting the wider needs of the community.
- The viability of dedicated bus lanes and the future need for them.

Resolved – (1) To add a review to determine how to define social need for future subsidy allocations to the Committee's Work Programme for 2016-2017.

## **18. Work Programme 2015-2016**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Law and Democratic Services regarding the development of its work programme for 2015-2016.

Resolved – That, subject to the additions to the programme as set out in these minutes, the Committee's update work programme be noted.