

REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT POLICY AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 4 November 2014

<u>Present:</u>	Councillor	M Sullivan (Chair)	
	Councillors	KJ Williams S Williams J Crabtree M Daniel R Gregson A Leech	S Niblock J Stapleton G Ellis J Hale A Hodson
<u>Deputies:</u>	Councillors	J Salter I Williams D Elderton	
<u>Cabinet Member:</u>	Councillor	B Mooney S Whittingham A Jones	G Davies C Meaden
<u>In attendance:</u>	Councillor	P Gilchrist	

25 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/PARTY WHIP

Members were asked to consider whether they had any disclosable pecuniary interests and/or any other relevant interest in connection with any item(s) on this agenda and, if so, to declare them and state the nature of the interest.

Members were reminded that they should also declare, pursuant to paragraph 18 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules, whether they were subject to a party whip in connection with any item(s) to be considered and, if so, to declare it and state the nature of the whipping arrangement.

No such declarations were made

26 MINUTES

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 22 September 2014 be approved

27 FUTURE COUNCIL CONSULTATION FINDINGS

The Council's Marketing and Engagement Manager gave a presentation on the Future Council Consultation Findings. The Chief Executive, on September 08 2014 had published a series of budget proposals for public consultation as the Council sought to make savings of £18 million in 2015/2016.

It was explained how the consultation resulted in 7874 individual questionnaires being returned, together with a series of letters, emails and petitions. This was a higher response level than any previous Wirral Council budget option consultation.

A range of saving options relating to Regeneration and Environment were presented to the Committee and a statistical breakdown of how consultees had responded was provided to Members. It was acknowledged that Members had selected the six budget options that had proved to be of most importance.

Options identified by Members following a scoping meeting were outlined to the Committee in more detail. These included:

- Preventative Maintenance (Parks and Highways)
- School Crossing Patrols
- Car Parking – Countryside Parks
- Car Parking – Fort Perch Rock
- Public Conveniences
- Roadside Grit Bins

A Member enquired about the timing of the construction and publication of all budget options. It was identified that, the closing date for the Consultation was 31st October, yet it was clear that some data had been prepared in advance. It was also reported that a petition of over 4000 signatures had been received, yet had not been included in the findings of the consultation

It was explained to Members that Officers analyse data as and when it is received. This had been common practice since 2010. With regards to the petition, an Officer explained that data reported to Cabinet is based on consultation responses and not individual petitions. The Member was assured that details of the petition in question will be referred to Cabinet for consideration in a separate entity.

A Member acknowledged that a high percentage of people had disagreed with the proposal to introduce car park charges at Fort Perch Rock, New Brighton. It was stated how this issue is of significant local concern. It was then

requested that a geographical breakdown of residential location for participants who had 'strongly disagreed' with this option.

A Member identified that Wallasey had a low response rate and enquired if there was any extra effort on Officers part to encourage participation.

In response to this question, Members heard that Birkenhead had been specifically targeted as this area has traditionally had the lowest turn out across the Borough. It was explained that the Youth and Play Service had been involved in the campaign to encourage the public to participate in the consultation.

With regards to the public convenience budget option, a Member identified that there is strong feeling against the ratification of this.

The Chair thanked Councillors and Officers for the significant work they had undertaken.

28 **FUTURE COUNCIL BUDGET OPTIONS SCRUTINY REVIEW- REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY PANEL**

The Committee considered a report of the Members of the Scrutiny Review Panel. Members were requested to consider the contents of the report alongside the outcome of the Future Council Public Consultation and were asked to refer any comments or recommendations to Cabinet. An appendix to the report contained the scoping document.

The Chair of the Scrutiny Panel was Councillor Mike Sullivan. Scrutiny Panel Members were: Councillor John Hale (for scoping meeting only), Councillor Dave Mitchell (for scoping meeting and session 1 covering school crossing patrols and public conveniences), Councillor Alan Brighthouse (for session 2 covering car parking, preventative maintenance and roadside grit bins). Lead officers for the service areas were invited to each of the sessions to allow Members to question each of the proposals, including the impacts and mitigation.

At the scoping meeting for this review, six budget options out of the eleven that fell under the remit of the committee were prioritised for further scrutiny, including:

1. Preventative Maintenance (Parks and Highways)
2. School Crossing Patrols
3. Car Parking- Countryside Parks
4. Car Parking – Fort Perch Rock
5. Public Conveniences
6. Roadside Grit Bins.

The above options were selected in recognition of the level of savings proposed, the public interest they would generate and initial consideration of their impact if implemented. The remaining five budget options not examined in detail as part of this review were:

1. Commemorations, Registrations and Memorials
2. Charging for Allotments, Bowling Greens and Football Pitches
3. Cold Calling Zones
4. Pest Control
5. Litter and Dog Fouling Enforcement.

The Chair invited the Committee to ask any questions, make any comments or suggest any further recommendations to Cabinet. Members noted that the value of the budget options was in excess of the savings required.

It was agreed that in light of the officers' comments upon the following Regeneration and Environment budget options, the individual views expressed by Members should be referred to the Cabinet for consideration.

Public Conveniences

Members raised some concerns regarding the strong feeling against the ratification of this option with regards to: the impact on local business and inconvenience for members of the public, specifically in coastal areas where there are no alternative provisions available.

Members enquired about alternative arrangements and the possibility of external providers servicing the public conveniences as a means to mitigate the impact of this option. It was reported that some discussions had been had, but a full investigation had not been undertaken at this stage.

It was then proposed, on a motion by Councillor Ellis and seconded by Councillor Hale:

“That the Regeneration and Environment Policy and Performance Committee ask Cabinet to delay the decision on the closing of 10 public conveniences until Officers have reported upon what alternative arrangements can be identified for each of the 10 locations.”

Councillor Leech then moved an amendment, seconded by Councillor Hodson

“That where alternative providers have been identified the Committee will proceed and endorse the recommendations made by the Review Panel .Where other options have not been sought, Councillors will still require a report on alternative options.”

Resolved (14:0) : That the Regeneration and Environment Policy and Performance Committee ask Cabinet to delay the decision on the closing of 10 public conveniences until Officers have reported upon what alternative arrangements can be made in each of the 10 locations. Where alternative providers have been identified the Committee will proceed and endorse the recommendations made by the Review Panel. Where other options have not been sought, Councillors will still require a report on alternative options.

School Crossing Patrols

No comments were made.

Car Parking Country Parks

A Member enquired as to whether a displacement traffic study had been undertaken to assess impact in the wider area. Members heard that at this time no such study had been undertaken.

On a motion by Councillor Carubia and seconded by Councillor Hodson it was proposed that

“The Regeneration and Environment Policy and Performance Committee recommend to Cabinet that the adoption of the Car Parking Country Parks option be deferred until a traffic displacement study around the affected areas has been completed.”

The motion was put and lost (6:8)

Car Parking – Fort Perch Rock

Concerns were raised by members regarding the impact on the local area if this option were to be agreed by Cabinet. Particular concerns were regarding: residents parking, potential flooding to the area and cost of maintenance.

On a motion by Councillor Jerry Williams and seconded by Councillor Gregson it was proposed that:

“The Regeneration and Environment Policy and Performance Committee recommend to Cabinet that the budget option to introduce car parking charges at Fort Perch Rock Car Park, New Brighton is not adopted.”

Resolved (12:2) That:

The Regeneration and Environment Policy and Performance Committee recommend to Cabinet that the budget option to introduce car parking charges at Fort Perch Rock Car Park, New Brighton is not adopted.”

Preventative Maintenance (Parks and Highways)

No comments were made.

Roadside Grit Bins

No comments were made.

Resolved –

- (1) That the Regeneration and Environment Policy and Performance Committee ask Cabinet to delay the decision on the closing of 10 public conveniences until Officers have reported upon what alternative arrangements can be made in each of the 10 locations. Where alternative providers have been identified the Committee will proceed and endorse the recommendations made by the Review Panel. Where other options have not been sought, Councillors will still require a report on alternative options.**
- (2) The Regeneration and Environment Policy and Performance Committee recommend to Cabinet that the budget option to introduce car parking charges at Fort Perch Rock Car Park, New Brighton is not adopted.**
- (3) That the Scrutiny Review be referred to the Cabinet for consideration of the recommendations alongside the views expressed by Members to each of the Budget Options.**

29 HIGHWAYS REPRESENTATION PANEL - MINUTES

Councillor Steve Williams, Chair of the Highways and Traffic Representation Panel presented the minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2014. The Panel had considered a proposal to revoke a traffic regulation order on Field Road Car Park, New Brighton.

Members heard that after consideration of all representations, orally and in writing, the Panel unanimously agreed to refuse Officers recommendations to revoke the traffic regulation order on Field Road car park.

Resolved –

That the Regeneration and Environment Policy and Performance Committee endorse the recommendation made by the Traffic and Highways Representation Panel to refuse the proposal to revoke the traffic regulation order on Field Road Car Park, New Brighton.

30 ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS APPROVED BY THE CHAIR

The Chair informed Members that the Liverpool City Region Scrutiny Panel had met on 29th October 2014. During this meeting the Chair and Vice Chair were appointed.

During this meeting the work plan was agreed upon, consisting of: EU Funding, Skills and learning/ Apprenticeships/, Housing and Affordable Transportation.

Members heard that four formal meetings would take place and it is envisaged that Task and Finish Groups would be established. Members of this Committee would continue to report back to the Regeneration and Environment Policy and Performance Committee.
