

EAST (OUTER) AREA COMMITTEE

TUESDAY, 23RD MARCH, 2010

PRESENT: Councillor K Parker in the Chair

Councillors M Dobson, P Grahame,
W Hyde, J Lewis, M Lyons, A McKenna,
T Murray, D Schofield and K Wakefield

73 Chair's Welcome

The Chair welcomed everybody to the meeting and introduced Shaid Mahmood who would be taking up the currently vacant Area Manager's post, although with a new title (yet to be confirmed), of Locality Pathfinder Manager.

74 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

RESOLVED – That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following parts of the agenda designated as containing exempt information on the grounds that it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the press and public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information so designated as follows:

The Leeds City Credit Union Branch Appendix A referred to in Minute No. 86 under the terms of Access to Information Procedure Rule 10.4 (3) (information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)) and on the grounds that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

75 Late Items

There were no late items but the correct Appendix 1 to Agenda Item 12 (Minutes of the Children Leeds Partnership meeting 28th January 2010) was made available to the Committee.

76 Declarations of Interest

In respect of Agenda Item 13 'Leeds City Credit Union Branch Network' (Minute No. 86 refers), Councillors Lyons, Murray and Grahame declared personal interests as account holders with the Leeds City Credit Union.

In respect of Agenda Item 12 'Actions, Achievements and Update Report' (Minute No. 85 refers), Councillor Murray declared a personal interest as the Area Committee's representative on the Jobs, Employment and Training Partnership and the Children Leeds - East Leadership Team.

(There was also a declaration of personal interest later in the meeting – see Minute No. 84.)

77 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Armitage and Gruen.

78 Open Forum

The Chair referred to the provision in the Area Committee Procedure Rules for an 'Open Forum' period at each ordinary meeting of an Area Committee, during which members of the public could ask questions or make representations on any matter within the terms of reference of the Area Committee. As there were no members of the public present, no issues were raised.

79 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 9th February 2010 be confirmed as a correct record.

80 Matters Arising

Minute No. 67 – Children Services – Area Committee Performance Report
Ken Morton, Locality Enabler, Children Services Unit, briefly updated Members on the data reporting arrangements and advised that the key information being studied now was around turnover.

81 Dates, Times and Venues of Area Committee Meetings 2010/11

The Chief Democratic Services Officer submitted a report requesting Members give consideration to agreeing the dates, times and venues of their meetings for the 2010/11 municipal year, which commenced in May 2010.

The Chair requested that the Committee approve the dates as set out in para. 3.1 of the report and discuss whether the Committee should continue to hold all of its meetings in the Civic Hall or meet at Ward-based venues.

Members considered the location of their Area Committee meetings and whether it would be more appropriate to hold the meetings out in the Wards and at times which would perhaps make the meetings more accessible to members of the public. It was agreed that the Area Management Team would look at suitable potential Ward-based venues.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the following dates be approved for meetings of the East (Outer) Area Committee in the 2010/11 municipal year:
6th July 2010, 7th September 2010, 19th October 2010, 7th December 2010, 8th February 2011 and 22nd March 2011.

- (b) That the Area Management Team investigate suitable potential Ward-based venues and times for future meetings and notify Members of the outcome.

82 Thorpe Park Progress Report

The Chief Planning Officer submitted a report setting out progress relating to the delivery of the green park, construction of the newt ponds on the green park area and proposals for the future development of Thorpe Park, including the revised Master Plan and construction of the Manston Lane Link Road.

The Chair welcomed to the meeting, Phil Crabtree, Chief Planning Officer, to present the report and to respond to Members' queries and comments.

The Chief Planning Officer updated Members on various aspects of the report, stressing that the relationship with the new owners had to be treated very delicately:

- The green park - Members were advised that the new owners, Scarborough International Ltd, were contesting whether the trigger figure of 600,000 sq ft was now occupied. Leeds City Council had carried out extensive calculations and estimated that this figure had now been passed.
- The newt ponds - agreement had now been reached with the developers but a new survey would need to be carried out to determine whether a new colony of newts had become established in the new holes in the last few months.
- Delivery of the Manston Lane Link Road, the Council was acting as facilitator and there was now a dialogue between the various parties.

In brief summary, Members raised general concerns regarding original agreements that had not been kept to and the need to press for these to be resolved as soon as possible. The following specific issues were also raised:

- The need for swift action on the delivery of the green park and the link road.
- Public concern about access to the playing fields through residential streets.
- That lessons should be learnt with regard to the assessment of the occupied square footage of the site.

The Chief Planning Officer responded that keeping a running total of the occupancy rates would have made admirable sense. However, with regard to the original location of the playing fields, this had had to be renegotiated due to the discovery of archaeological items of significance at the original site.

The Chief Planning Officer stated that he would keep Members up to date with developments and write to local residents with regard to the current situation with the newt ponds.

RESOLVED – That the contents of the report be noted.

(Note: Councillor A McKenna joined the meeting at 4.30pm during the consideration of this item.)

83 Streetscene Services Update Report

The Head of Environmental Services submitted a report which updated the Area Committee on the proposals for improvements within Streetscene Services. The report advised that the proposals had been agreed with the Trade Unions and workforce and were the result of the negotiation associated with the industrial action between September and November 2009. The report outlined the negotiated improvements and the programme to implement the proposals.

The Chair welcomed Stephen Smith, Head of Environmental Services, to the meeting to present the report and respond to Members' queries and comments.

Members discussed the report and requested that they be provided with more specific detail about the service, in particular the specific days that areas were street cleansed. Members also raised, in brief summary, the following issues:

- Saturday collections – The Head of Environmental Services advised that it had been a short term arrangement to collect some extra bins on Saturdays in order to use spare capacity. He also advised that the new build route had been discontinued, with new properties being incorporated into existing routes.
- Street cleansing – Members were advised that between September 2009 and February 2010, due to the industrial action followed by severe weather, little or no street cleaning had been carried out across parts of the city. However, the department was now endeavouring to bring standards up to the level they were previously.
- Recycling – Members were advised that an analysis of black bin contents was carried out every six months and this study was used to determine what category of waste it would be best to divert from landfill. Garden and food waste had been identified. A food waste collection was being piloted in Rothwell for a year, along with a fortnightly collection of black bins.
- The seven day street cleansing service and concerns that this would be difficult at weekends when cars were parked outside homes.

Members also expressed concern regarding complaints received from residents that bulky items were not being collected. They questioned whether there had been a change in the policy to now involve voluntary recycling organisations and that elderly residents in particular, would find this confusing. Members also stated that they had raised concerns with senior managers which had not been resolved satisfactorily and were concerned with their capabilities of being able to deal with these complaints.

The Head of Environmental Services advised that the bulky collection service had not changed, and was currently running 3½ weeks in advance on an appointment basis. The Council had however for a number of years encouraged residents to take their bulky items to furniture stores run by social

enterprise organisations. In the future it was hoped that the Council would enter into a more formal arrangement with these organisations, but at present these organisations did not have the capacity for an increase in volume. Members' concerns regarding elderly people would be raised within the department and if there had been a management failure to deal with complaints, the Head of Environmental Services advised that this also would be dealt with.

RESOLVED – That the contents of the report be noted.

84 Well Being Budget (Revenue) 2009/10

The South East Area Manager submitted a report advising that the Well Being budget for 2010/11 was £220,727 and recommending that the budget be divided evenly between the four Wards once the committed expenditure had been accounted for. The report also referred to one project that needed to be considered from the Well Being Budget 2009/10.

Martin Hackett, Area Management Officer, presented the report. He highlighted that if Members accepted the allocation of the budget as outlined in the report, it would mean that each Ward would have £8,000 remaining to spend on services to young people, £8,000 on community engagement and £8,000 for each tasking team. It was suggested that Members might prefer to cut back on funding for environmental projects and choose not to fund the 'community payback' scheme in 2010/11. This would create a saving of £15,000 that could be allocated against other projects during the course of the year.

The Area Management Officer referred Members to Appendix 2 of the report which detailed all the work completed by the 'community payback' scheme during 2009/10 and advised that the 10,200 hours of work carried out equated to £80,300, if based on the national minimum wage.

Members discussed this proposal but decided that the 'community payback' scheme was working well, and as it represented good value for money, that the Area Committee should continue to fund this scheme.

With regard to the allocation of the rest of the budget, concern was raised by a Member with regard to the future security of the gardening scheme, as it was managed by Swarcliffe Good Neighbours, a voluntary organisation which was itself vulnerable to changes in its funding.

The Area Management Officer then advised Members with regard to the request for funding from the Bronze Tanning Studio on Manston Approach for security shutters to the premises. He reminded Members that a decision had been deferred from the previous meeting in order to find out whether the owner would contribute towards the project costs. Members were also reminded that the Environment and Neighbourhoods Finance Section had advised not to support this project due to the reasons as set out in the report and Members were provided with a note with comments from Environment

and Neighbourhoods Finance which officers summarised and which stated the following:

'In respect of the eligibility the guidance is contained in Andy Hodson's report "Constitutional Considerations relating to Area Committees", which was a report received at all Area Committees and which sets out how the executive functions of Area Committees may be exercised. One of the appendices of this report refers to the management and purpose of the Wellbeing budget and describes it as such:

"Decisions taken in relation to the utilisation of Well-Being budgets within the framework of the Council's Constitution and having regard to the Community Strategy in accordance with Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000. Specifically Area Committees will seek to:

Promote and improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of the Committee's area, including enhancing service delivery outcomes within their area."

Therefore this application needs to be judged as to whether it is consistent with this requirement and if it is then it can be submitted to the Area Committee for support.'

Keith Lander, Acting Area Manager, re-emphasised that approving this funding would set a dangerous precedent and potentially benefit an individual. He read out previous guidance that had been used for applicants and the Area Committee, and re-iterated that the Well-being funds were largely for the benefit of voluntary organisations, the wider community and to a lesser extent for shared space with businesses, but not for the benefit of one individual or business. In relation to business support, the Acting Area Manager also referred to how Council monies had been used within the Town & District Centre Regeneration Initiative.

Members were advised that the owner was prepared to fund 50% of the cost of the shutters at £1,950. Members then discussed their reasons in favour and against supporting this application and decided that it would be best to seek further legal advice before taking a final decision on whether to support this application.

In the meanwhile, the Acting Area Manager advised that he would explore if alternative security measures could be taken from within tasking to support this parade of shops.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the contents of the report and appendices be noted.
- (b) That the division of the budget for 2010/11 be agreed as stated in the report, including funding of the 'community payback' probation scheme at £15,000.
- (c) That a decision on the request from the Bronze Tanning Studio on Manston Approach for the Area Committee to provide 50% of the

funding for security shutters be deferred in order for further legal advice to be sought.

(NB: Councillor W Hyde declared a personal interest during the consideration of this item as Chair of Cross Gates and District Good Neighbours Scheme.)

85 Actions, Achievements and Update Report

The Acting South East Area Manager submitted a report which provided Members with details of actions and achievements of the Area Management Team relating to priorities and work of the Area Committee since the last meeting in February 2010. The report also provided an update on issues relating to the work of the Area Management Team.

Keith Lander, Acting Area Manager, presented the report. Graham Wilson, Head of Environmental Action and Parking and Paul Spandler, Acting Service Manager, Environmental Services, were also in attendance to respond to Members' queries on Community Environment Support Officers (CESOs).

The Head of Environmental Action and Parking advised Members that CESOs would be managed through Environmental Services and that himself and the Acting Service Manager had direct links to the CESOs. He advised that CESOs would attend the community forums and there would be a named individual associated with individual localities.

The Area Management Officer advised the Committee that Aire Valley Homes had agreed to contribute funding towards 0.5 of a CESO post in Swarcliffe.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the report and appendices be noted.
- (b) That the decision agreed in principle at the East (Outer) Area Committee meeting on 8th December 2009 to award £82,914 for a 3 year post of Community Environment Support Officer for Swarcliffe from Swarcliffe PFI credits be ratified.
- (c) That the decision agreed in the Well Being report (23rd March 2010) to provide an additional Community Environment Support Officer in Outer East be noted and that as Area Committee funding is year on year, that an 'in principle' agreement to fund the post for 3 years be also noted.
- (d) That the deployment of Community Environment Support Officers in Outer East be agreed as follows:
 - 1 post to cover Halton Moor & Osmondthorpe;
 - .25 of a post to cover the remainder of Temple Newsam (with flexibility built into the Halton Moor post to help out in the rest of Temple Newsam if required);
 - .75 of a post to cover Cross Gates & Whinmoor;
 - .75 of a post to cover Garforth & Swillington;
 - .75 of a post to cover Kippax & Methley;
 - 1 post for Swarcliffe (funded from PFI credits – geographically restricted).

86 Leeds City Credit Union Branch Network

The Chief Customer Services Officer and Director of City Development submitted a joint report providing Members with details of the services provided by Leeds City Credit Union (LCCU) to enable the Area Committee to engage in an informed debate about the future of Credit Union branches within their area.

The appendix to the report was designated as exempt under Access to Information Procedure Rule 10.4(3).

The Chair welcomed to the meeting Paul Broughton, Chief Customer Services Officer, Planning, Policy and Improvement, to present the report and respond to Members' queries and comments. Mr Broughton was accompanied by Chris Smyth, Chief Executive of Leeds Credit Union.

The Chief Customer Services Officer presented the report and advised that it was the Halton Moor branch in Temple Newsam Ward which was in the Outer East area.

Members discussed the importance and essential service provided by the Credit Union, in particular its role in protecting vulnerable people against loan sharks and doorstep lenders. In view of this, and Members' wishes to support the branch network, it was agreed that £5,000 be offered from the East (Outer) Area Committee's Wellbeing Budget to support the Halton Moor branch, subject to funds also being secured from other sources.

RESOLVED -

- (a) That the ongoing work being undertaken by the Council in relation to Leeds City Credit Union be supported and noted.
- (b) That £5,000 of funding be approved from the East (Outer) Area Committee's Wellbeing Budget to support the Halton Moor branch, subject to funds also being secured from other sources.

(Note: Councillor Schofield left the meeting at 6.00pm during the consideration of this item.)

The meeting concluded at 6.15pm.