

ENVIRONMENTAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

15 SEPTEMBER 2015

Present: County Councillors Aubrey, Clark, Chris Davis, Lomax, Hill-John, Mitchell and Darren Williams

24 : APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRPERSON

Councillor Paul Mitchell was appointed as Chairperson for the meeting.

25 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received. Members were asked to note the resignations of Councillors Gordon and Marshall from the Committee.

26 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

27 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on 14 July and 29 August 2015 were approved by the Committee as a correct record and were signed by the Chairperson.

28 : DRAFT PARKING STRATEGY

The Committee received a report on the Draft Parking Strategy 2015 prior to the strategy being received by the Cabinet on 17 September 2015. Members were also asked to consider the draft Cabinet response to the recommendations of the Environmental Scrutiny Committee report titled 'Problem and Nuisance Parking in Cardiff (November 2013). The scrutiny report was appended to the report.

Members were advised that the former Integrated Parking Strategy 2008 was no longer considered to reflect parking in the city. There was also a view that there is a need for an updated single document that presents Cardiff's parking strategy in a unified form which supports the aspirations of Cardiff's Local Development Plan. The new strategy would form the basis for decisions and ensure a consistent approach and clarity to decision making. It was anticipated that the new parking strategy will build on the key actions and recommendations from the Scrutiny Committee report.

The supply, location and cost of parking was said to have a major influence on travel behaviour. Provision of cheap and accessible parking at or near major travel destinations can stimulate demand for car travel and generate more traffic on the highway network. Greater volumes can then lead to congestion which results in delays and less efficient public transport. This is why effective management of parking can make an important contribution to the Council's efforts to increase efforts to travel by sustainable modes. It was therefore important that the Council's policy and decision-making was transparent and consistent.

The Council's 'Draft Parking Strategy' aimed to encourage people to adopt more sustainable means of transport. Long-term City Centre parking by commuters was to

be discouraged and realigned to prioritise short-term parking for shoppers and visitors – blue badge holders would be given priority. The report set out a summary of the contents of the draft strategy and an outline of the new strategic direction of the document, namely, an area based approach to parking management; the use of innovation and technology and transforming enforcement.

Members were advised that consultation on the new 'Draft Parking Strategy' has commenced and would include consultation with Members, public consultation and Environmental Scrutiny.

Members received details of the terms of reference for the Committee's task and finish inquiry entitled 'Problem and Nuisance Parking in Cardiff'. The task and finish report made 17 recommendations to the Cabinet. Of these, 9 were accepted, 7 were partially accepted and 1 was rejected. A copy of the Cabinet response to the report was appended.

Councillor Ramesh Patel, Cabinet Member for Transport, Planning and Sustainability was invited to make a statement. Councillor Patel thanked the Committee for the opportunity to address this item. Members were advised that the existing strategy was in need of updating. The Cabinet was seeking to put the draft strategy out to consultation. Councillor Patel considered that since the existing strategy was agreed in 2008 there had been an increase in the number of cars in the city, which has led to increased congestion. Therefore, a review of the existing strategy was overdue.

The Committee received a presentation on the Draft Parking Strategy from Paul Carter, Operational Manager, Transportation and Matt Price, Section Leader, Transport Vision, Policy and Strategy. The presentation set out how the Draft Parking Strategy would contribute to the authority's Liveable City Vision. Members received details of the scope of the strategy, its structure and the challenges and opportunities facing the authority.

The Chairperson thanked the officers for their presentation. Members were invited to make comments, raised question or seek clarification on the information received. Those discussions are summarised as follows:

- Members asked for further clarification of the 'ward based approach'. The Cabinet Member stated that, in terms of residential parking schemes, in streets which met the criteria for 50% residents parking and where residential parking schemes have been established, then the draft parking strategy will propose that Ward Members can decide whether or not to adopt 75% residents parking – Ward Members will take ownership and decide what sort of scheme best suits their residents.

Experience has demonstrated that where a street adopts a residents parking scheme, problem parking moves on to adjacent streets. An area based approach would help to address this. Adopting an area based approach would also have less impact on available resources.

Members asked whether there was an initiative to move towards 75% residential parking generally. The Cabinet Member advised that under the revised parking strategy the onus would be on Ward Members to suggest areas within their wards where they believe 75% residential parking is appropriate.

Responding to a question raised on whether parking permits would allow residents to park in more than one street, the Cabinet Member stated that if this were permitted it would be a move toward Controlled Parking Zones. Councillor Patel felt that whilst there were some disadvantages to this, he would consider the suggestion.

- Members requested the Cabinet Member to note that residents did not understand why parking surveys were undertaken during the hours of 1000 and 1800 hours, when there was more pressure on the available parking during the evenings. Officers stated that surveys were resource intensive. The strategy would aim to allocate more parking to residents in order to encourage commuters to adopt a modal shift towards more sustainable transport.
- Members asked whether the proposal to allow shoppers to adopt 'short stay' parking in residents parking areas had been successful elsewhere. Officers stated that the draft policy would attempt to protect residents and accommodate businesses. The Cabinet Member welcomed the feedback and invited Members to respond during the consultation phase.
- Responding to a question, officers indicated that presently only half the surveys undertaken reach the criteria for 75% residential parking. As part of the review of the strategy has been agreed to relax the criteria, so that 75% residential parking can be accommodated in streets where there is sufficient support from residents and local members.
- The Cabinet Member was asked to comment on business rates being applied to car parks. The Cabinet Member stated that business rates did not come within his portfolio.
- Members noted that footfall in district shopping areas was falling. Officers stated that the fall in footfall was a UK-wide pattern and suggested this was a result of an increase in the preference for online shopping. Attempts were being made to make the city centre and districts more accessible by sustainable transport. For example, footfall in Canton was stimulated by reducing the number of long-stay parking space and increasing the number of short-stay parking spaces. Feedback from local businesses and residents was positive. It was recognised that parking policy also needs to support local businesses, which is why Recommendation 17 of the Task and Finish Group report was rejected.
- Officers were asked to clarify whether parking enforcement brought in a net income or net loss for the authority. Members were advised that parking enforcement in the city provides in a small net income which is reinvested in transport infrastructure.
- Members noted the introduction of more short-stay parking in the City Centre. Members asked what more could be done to assist those commuters who need to bring their cars into the city. Officers said that the authority was aiming to get more people to use public transport. Offers such as the 'early bird' scheme at Pentwyn Park and Ride provided cheap long stay parking and helped to reduce congestion in the city centre. However, the need for some long-stay parking in

the city centre was also recognised.

- Officers were asked to update Members on any progress made with regard to a new park and ride site on the A470. Officers stated that RCT have indicated that they would wish to provide such a facility. Cardiff would support any application made to the Welsh Government for funding. Furthermore, there was a possibility that a future planning application would be made for a park and ride facility at Junction 33.
- Members asked what steps were being taken to address 'urban parking hotspots' such as Cardiff Metropolitan University campuses, the University Hospital of Wales and around local railway stations. Officers advised that collaborative efforts were being made with the bodies referred with a view to formulating travel plans and providing sustainable transport alternatives. This would form part of the Transport Strategy and investment in infrastructure would be required.

The Cabinet Members indicated that the 75% residential parking proposal referred to previously would play its part in encouraging modal shift towards sustainable transport solutions. People would need to think twice about using the car.

At this point in the meeting Councillor Hill-John declared a personal interest under the Members Code of Conduct. Councillor Hill-John did not withdraw from the meeting and continued to take part in the debate.

- Members were concerned at the effect the authority's parking strategy would have on local businesses in areas where there was little parking available. Members asked what more could be done to support such businesses. The Cabinet Member emphasised the need to balance the needs of local business with the views of local residents. It may be possible to introduce limited waiting times which would allow a degree of flexibility. The feedback from the consultation exercise on this particular point would need to be carefully considered.
- Officer stated that consultation on the draft Parking Strategy would be undertaken between 1 October and 1 November 2015. Officers suggested that it may be useful to establish focus groups of Members as part of the consultation process.
- Members asked whether the impact of online shopping has been factored into the strategy. Officers advised that there has been no analysis of the levels of online shopping and its associated impact on footfall.
- Members asked whether it was possible that a scheme which rewarded customers for using sustainable transport could be considered. Officers welcomed the suggestion.
- Members asked whether it was possible to promote the use of the car park at Sophia Gardens, as this was often under-used. Officers stated that new technologies would now allow commuters to use smart 'apps' to locate available parking spaces.

Officer also stated that parking sensors, based on GPS can also be used to monitor cars parked illegally, such as car parked in disabled parking bays.

- The Committee discussed the recent increase in parking charges. Officers advised that the cost of all day parking in the City Centre was still cheaper than in many equivalent cities. Furthermore, there was a lack of any negative feedback following the introduction of the parking fees increase. Most available parking spaces were occupied by 9.30am. The Cabinet Member considered that the cost would also reasonable when compared to the prices charged in private car parks. Members suggested that the comparison graph on Page 26 of the draft Parking Strategy document could be made clearer.
- The Committee asked for clarification as to how the draft Parking Strategy would link to the LDP and planning guidance. Officers advised that Supplementary Planning Guidance would be reviewed in tandem with the delivery of the LDP. The guidance would be reviewed within the context of the draft strategy and would be subject to full consultation and engagement.
- Officers confirmed that there were no plans to introduce a workplace parking levy, although such a scheme was being piloted in Nottingham.

AGREED - That the Chairperson writes on behalf of the Committee to the Cabinet Member highlighting the issues raised during the Way Forward discussion (see attached).

29 : CITY OPERATIONS - QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE

The Committee has a role in reviewing the performance of Council services which fall within the terms of reference of the Committee. The Committee received a report on the City Operations Directorate Performance Report for Quarter 1 2015/16. The report examined a wide range of performance areas and provided a wide range of performance information which will enable the Committee to benchmark against Council performance as a whole and with other services areas.

A key number of observations were identified from the report, including:

- For 2015/16 the City Operations Directorate has a budget of £52,546,000 and savings target of £12,058,000. At the end of Quarter 1 of 2015/16 the Directorate had a projected budget outturn of £53,413,000 and a savings projection of £10,378,000. This means that at the end of Quarter 1 the City Operations Directorate has a projected overspend of £867,000 and a projected savings shortfall of £1,680,000.
- That achieving a balanced budget is a core Directorate priority. An in-year mitigation strategy and action plan will be in place during July 2015 to identify the actions necessary to achieve this outcome.
- During Quarter 1 City Operations Directorate staff took an average of 3 full-time equivalent (FTE) sick days. When this figure was projected across the year it produced a forecast of 12.7 FTE sickness absence days. This was below the 13 FTE target set by the Council for the City Operations Directorate.

- Overall staff costs came in at 27.42% of target for Quarter 1. At 10.79% the City Operations Directorate has the second highest agency spend as a percentage of the Quarter 1 staff budget. At 3.33% the service also has the second highest percentage of overtime spend for the same period.
- During Quarter 1 the City Operations Directorate had an 88% Personal Performance & Development Review (PPDR) completion rate. This is below the Council average of 90%.
- The City Operations Directorate has 42 'Corporate Plan Commitment Actions'. 37 (88%) of these are rated as 'Green' and 5 (12%) of these are rated as 'Amber'.
- That the ADM project, consultation, and associated Cabinet report was due to be considered by Cabinet in July 2015. This was the case and the report was considered at the 16 July Cabinet meeting.
- That the Directorate aims to deliver a new Parking Strategy for Cardiff by the end of the summer 2015. They are due to take a paper on Cardiff's new Parking Strategy in September 2015.
- That the Directorate is looking to establish a new strategy for highways and transport asset maintenance & renewal.
- The LED lighting contract has been delayed by three months as the specification has been developed with lower than expected kelvin light levels.
- The £600,000 savings identified for the Neighbourhood Services (Council wide) roll out have been proportioned against the respective teams and a restructure and sign off will take place shortly in order for this to proceed.
- One of the Waste Strategy savings assumptions is that post sort will cease and so an alternative option to assist securing the recycling performance is found.
- The City Operations Directorate was due to put forward a mitigation plan during month four.
- There have been delays in Refuse Collection and Street Cleansing for the provision of data to enable benchmarking of service performance.
- Preparatory work has been undertaken to create a communication plan for interim arrangements around the closure of the bus station during the redevelopment phase. This work has been delivered and the bus station is now closed.

The report also included a table of the main performance indicators used in the directorate; a number of challenges identified during the period; and the actions being taken to address the identified challenges.

Members were advised that the purpose of the Change Challenge Forum was to test, challenges, and provide strategy support and advice on development of the

Organisational Development Programme. The Performance of the City Operations Directorate falls within the potential scope of the 'Challenge Forum' process.

The Committee was reminded that the Welsh Audit Office had released the Corporate Assessment on 1 September 2014. The Assessment concluded that 'performance management has failed to consistently secure improvement in the past' and that 'performance management arrangements in the past had not consistently driven improvement and performance and performance is weak in two of the Council's three priority areas'.

The Committee was requested to consider the City Operations Directorate Performance and feed their observations to the Cabinet for consideration at its meeting of 17 September 2015.

The Chairperson invited Members of the Committee to comment, raise questions or seek clarification on the issues raised in the report. Those discussions are summarised as follows:

- Members requested an update on the bus station redevelopment. The Cabinet Member was asked whether it was still intended that costings for the project be presented to the October meeting of the Cabinet, whether pre-decision scrutiny of the Cabinet report would be undertaken and if so, when. Officers advised that the project was being led by the developers. Proposals, including costings, were anticipated in November.
- Officers stated that further Cabinet decisions and further planning applications were required. A programme was being worked on to this end.
- Referring to the Service Delivery Plan, Members asked for an update on the Welsh Government proposals for an increase in the planning fees. Officers anticipated that Welsh Government would issue guidance on the increase of planning fees in September/October. There may also be a requirement for the authority to issue refunds of planning fees for applications that are non-determined after 13 weeks.
- The Committee was advised that there would be no reduction in the consultation undertaken with local Members or that of the Planning Committee.
- Members asked whether the small number of KPIs measuring planning performance were sufficient. Officers stated that the KPIs were adequate, rigorous indicators.
- Officers were asked to explain the £867k variance figure set out on P315 of the report and how this variance had arisen. Members were advised that the variance had arisen as in order to meet recycling targets it had been necessary to re-introduce 'post sorting'. There was no budget allocation for this.
- The Cabinet Member indicated that post sorting of waste would cease once recycle (fly ash) from the energy from waste facility begins to count towards the authority's recycling target.

- Officers indicated that in terms of the £867k budget deficit, a review of the service area budget was being undertaken. A mitigation plan would be implemented to distribute savings across the service area.
- Members stated that at the Committee meeting in May a request was made to the Cabinet Member for a breakdown of the flytipping/waste presentation figures, following a change in the criteria used to classify each. The Cabinet Member indicated that a response would be released to the Principal Scrutiny Officer shortly.
- Members noted that Wales local data figures indicated that Cardiff had the lowest results for land at high or unacceptable levels of cleanliness. Members asked for an explanation these results. The Cabinet Member accepted that these results were unacceptable. There were demands on Cardiff that other authorities in Wales don't have – such as a large student population. The Cabinet Member considered that Cardiff should only be compared to other cities. Cardiff's comparison with other 'core cities' is more favourable.
- Members also noted that Cardiff has the second lowest results in Wales for fly-tipping. Officer considered that Cardiff was suffering as the city in terms of transportation links. It was suggested that individuals who were known to for fly-tipping come from outside the city to commit fly-tipping here. Fly-tipping incidents were constant but reporting mechanisms had improved. Response times were improving and the tonnages collected had reduced by 23%, with 50% fewer incidences than in 2012.

Officers were able to prosecute for fly-tipping but the process was costly and the fines were not paid to the authority.

AGREED - That the Chairperson writes on behalf of the Committee to the Cabinet Member highlighting the issues raised during the Way Forward discussion (see attached).

30 : DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee was asked to consider the draft Work Programme for 2015/16. The Principal Scrutiny Officer recounted how the draft Work Programme has been constructed. Members discussed the Work Programme and options for items for forthcoming meetings of the Committee.

AGREED – That the draft Work Programme be approved.

31 : CORRESPONDENCE

The Committee received copies of correspondence sent and received in relation to matters previously scrutinised by this Committee.

AGREED – That the correspondence report and attached documentation be noted.

32 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Members were advised that the next Environment Scrutiny Committee is scheduled for 13 October 2015.

The meeting terminated at 8.00 pm