

NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM AGENDA



Monday 10th November 2008

at 4.00pm

**in the Council Chamber,
Civic Centre, Hartlepool**

MEMBERS: NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM:

Councillors Akers-Belcher, Barker, R W Cook, Coward, Cranney, Fleming, McKenna, Worthy and Wright

Resident Representatives: John Cambridge, Mary Green and Brenda Loynes

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS

3. MINUTES

3.1 To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 27th October 2008 (*to follow*)

4. RESPONSES FROM THE COUNCIL, THE EXECUTIVE OR COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL TO FINAL REPORTS OF THIS FORUM

No items.

5. CONSIDERATION OF REQUEST FOR SCRUTINY REVIEWS REFERRED VIA SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

No items.

6. CONSIDERATION OF PROGRESS REPORTS/BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK DOCUMENTS

6.1 Neighbourhood Services Department: Budget and Policy Framework Initial Consultation Proposals 2009/10 – *Scrutiny Support Officer*

7. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

No items

8. ISSUES IDENTIFIED FROM FORWARD PLAN

No items

9. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS ARE URGENT

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

Date of next meeting 24 November 2008 at 4.00 pm in the Council Chamber

NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

MINUTES

27 October 2008

The meeting commenced at 4.00 pm in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

Present:

Councillor: Stephen Akers-Belcher (In the Chair)

Councillors: Rob Cook, Kevin Cranney, Tim Fleming and Christopher McKenna

Resident Representatives:

John Cambridge and Brenda Loynes

Officers:

Dave Stubbs, Director of Neighbourhood Services

Alistair Smith, Head of Technical Services

Paul Mitchinson, Highways Manager

Paul Hamilton, Insurance and Risk Management Manager

Laura Starrs, Scrutiny Support Officer

Angela Hunter, Principal Democratic Services Officer

38. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Caroline Barker, Gladys Worthy and Edna Wright and resident representative Mary Green.

39. Declarations of interest by Members

None.

40. Minutes of the meeting held on 29 September 2008.

Confirmed – subject to the following amendment:

Minute 34 – Last sentence be amended to read - It was suggested that the consultation process in areas where the installation of speed humps was proposed be examined.

41. Responses from the Council, the Executive or Committees of the Council to Final Reports of this Forum

None.

42. Consideration of request for scrutiny reviews referred via Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee

None.

43. Consideration of progress reports/budget and policy framework documents

None.

44. Scrutiny Investigation into the Condition of the Highways in Hartlepool – Feedback from Site Visit to Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council (*Scrutiny Support Officer*)

As part of the evidence gathering process for the undertaking of the investigation into the Condition of the Highways in Hartlepool, a site visit was recently attended by members of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum to Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council. The Chair indicated that the visit had been very informative with some very good examples of best practice. Key to this best practice was the partnership working undertaken with the utilities in the area examining annual work programmes on a regular basis.

Members were informed that the findings from the site visit would be incorporated into the final report from this investigation.

Decision

The feedback provided from the site visit was noted and would be used to inform the final report.

45. Scrutiny Investigation into the Condition of the Highways in Hartlepool – Feedback from Support Groups (*Scrutiny Support Officer*)

As part of the evidence gathering process for the undertaking of the investigation into the Condition of the Highways in Hartlepool, a number of support groups were consulted and their feedback and the main issues raised

included:

- a) Uneven paving stones causing injury/pavements very high;
- b) Very few drop kerbs;
- c) Too many speed bumps;
- d) Pot holes;
- e) Parked cars preventing wheelchair access to pavements;
- f) Positioning of drop kerbs/tactile pavements;
- g) Standardisation of practices/policies; and
- h) Consultation with support groups.

In addition to the above, the Headland Conservation Group had indicated that to preserve the character of certain areas of particular conservation interest, paving stones were the preferred material for footpaths.

Decision

The feedback from the support groups be noted and would be used to inform the final report.

46. Condition of the Highways in Hartlepool – Evidence from the Neighbourhood Services Department *(Scrutiny Support Officer/Director of Neighbourhood Services)*

As part of the ongoing investigation into the Condition of Highways in Hartlepool, officers from the Neighbourhood Services Department and the Insurance Risk Management Manager were in attendance to provide further evidence. A number of issues which members of the Forum had suggested should be addressed were as follows:

- a) ***The insurance fund, ie breakdown of contribution -v- pay out.*** The Director of Neighbourhood Services drew Members' attention to additional information which had been circulated prior to the meeting. This included a complex table indicating a breakdown of contribution -v- pay out and provided an overview of the trends within highways claims. It was noted that the main cause of highways claims was flagged paving with 731 claims received between 1998-2008 costing £1.3m. Reference was made to the number of potholes across the town and the Director of Neighbourhood Services responded that Hartlepool's performance for repairing potholes across the town was in the top quartile nationally of Best Value Performance Indicators. It was noted that the pavements in the Villiers Street to Victoria Road area of York Road were in a poor condition. The Director of Neighbourhood Services acknowledged that there were some issues with the paving across that particular section of York Road and that this was being examined. Clarification was sought on the £500-£600k contribution made to the insurance fund and where the interest earned on this fund was invested. The Director of Neighbourhood Services indicated that any interest earned from this fund was invested into the general fund of the Council.
- b) ***The actual length of highways assets -v- budget provision for the***

last 10 years to present day. A table was provided within the report which indicated that annual spend per annum next to the length of highway asset whilst demonstrating the effects of inflation on the value of work undertaken.

- c) **The cost/savings of work in house/external.** It was noted that the reality of private sector pricing varied significantly depending on the size of the scheme (economies of scale) and the size of the existing order book at the time of tender. Included within the report were several quotes per m² for carriageway patching including an example of the in-house rate.
- d) **Level of complaints from Contact Centre and how many complaints signed off.** The report indicated the level of enquiries received from members of the public for 2007/08 and were identified across North, Central and South Forum areas. Members were asked to note that almost all cases reported were complete.
- e) **North, Central and South Neighbourhood Managers to outline issues/complaints in their areas.** It was noted that the issues/complaints received by the Neighbourhood Managers fell into two main categories – general issues regarding the service delivered that members of the public were dissatisfied with and issues specific to an area where problems have occurred and remain unresolved. The Director of Neighbourhood Services responded to a number of specific issues raised.
- f) **Criteria/process for inspections after the utility companies have completed work.** Members were asked to note that the Council was entitled to inspect 30% of utility works across three specific categories of works which were detailed in the report. Clarification was sought on the charges imposed on the utilities for over-running on works. The Director of Neighbourhood Services indicated that last year the Council received £26k income from utilities where work had over-ran, this income contributed to the highway maintenance budget. Further detailed information was requested on the level of income received over the last 12 months. The Director of Neighbourhood Services added that the Council had a good working relationship with the utilities and met regularly to discuss their respective work plans.
- g) **What guarantees are offered on works carried out by contractors.** The guarantee periods were prescribed and were detailed within the report.
- h) **Safety schemes – impact financially/Government funding/can monies be targeted elsewhere and safety.** Members were asked to note that the funding provided for the Local Transport Plan (LTP) delivery could be used in any way the Council deemed appropriate to meet the targets set out within the Plan. However, any redirection of LTP funding would need to be approved by Government Office North East (GONE). A number of safety schemes were included within the LTP and they were detailed in the report.
- i) **The specific costs for the use of different materials for roads and pavements calculated by using the same length of road/pavement, along with the life span of the material.** For comparable purposes, the cost was provided in terms of square metres as opposed to length of

road and included the thickness of the carriageway, cost per square metre and approximate lifespan. These figures were also provided comparing DBM and flagged footways. The Director of Neighbourhood Services summarised that the comparative costs were not greatly different.

The Director of Neighbourhood Services was thanked for his presentation and for answering Members' questions.

Decision

- (i) That the presentation and discussion that followed would be used to inform the final report of the investigation.
- (ii) That details be provided to Members on the level of income received from utilities through over-running schemes across the last 12 months.

47. Issues Identified from Forward Plan

None.

48. Any Other Items which the Chairman Considers are Urgent

The Chair informed Members that he had recently attended a conference at Sutton Coldfield which looked at the highways industry. The conference proved very informative and focussed on partnership working.

49. Next Meeting

Members were reminded that an Informal Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum had been arranged for 4 November 2008 to allow consideration to be given to the proposed recommendations to be included within the final report of the investigation into the Condition of Highways in Hartlepool. It was noted that feedback from the 50+ Forum and the MP was still awaited but would be available at the meeting of the Forum on 24 November 2008 where the draft Final report would be considered.

Members were asked to note that the meeting on 10 November 2008 would be the commencement of the budget consultation process for the 2009/10 budget proposals.

The meeting concluded at 4.45pm

CHAIRMAN

NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

10 November 2008



Report of: Scrutiny Support Officer

Subject: NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES DEPARTMENT:
BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK INITIAL
CONSULTATION PROPOSALS 2009/10

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide the opportunity for the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum to consider the Neighbourhood Services departmental pressures, terminating grants, priorities and proposed efficiencies as part of the Budget and Policy Framework initial consultation proposals for 2009/10.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 At a meeting of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee (SCC) held on 31 October 2008, consideration was given to the Executive's Initial Budget and Policy Framework consultation proposals for 2009/10 to 2011/12.
- 2.2 At this meeting it was agreed that the initial consultation proposals be considered on a departmental basis by the appropriate Scrutiny Forum. Any comments / observations would then be fed back to the meeting of the SCC to be held on 28 November 2008 to enable a formal response to be presented to the Cabinet on 15 December 2008.
- 2.3 As such attached as **Appendices A to D** are the Neighbourhood Services departmental pressures, terminating grants, priorities and proposed efficiencies as part of the Budget and Policy Framework initial consultation proposals for 2009/10 as follows:-

Appendix A - Schedule of Budget Pressures 2009/2010;

Appendix B - Schedule of Terminating Grants 2008/2009;

Appendix C - Schedule of Budget Priorities 2009/10; and

Appendix D – Schedule of Budget Efficiencies 2009/2010.

- 2.4 To assist Members of this Scrutiny Forum in the consideration of the Neighbourhood Services departmental initial proposals, arrangements have been made for the Director of Neighbourhood Services to be in attendance and an invitation to this meeting has also been extended to the relevant Portfolio Holder (attendance subject to availability).

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum:-

- (a) considers the Neighbourhood Services departmental pressures, terminating grants, priorities and proposed efficiencies as part of the Budget and Policy Framework initial consultation proposals for 2009/10; and
- (b) formulates any comments and observations to be presented by the Chair of this Scrutiny Forum to the meeting of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee to be held on 28 November 2008 to enable a formal response to be presented to the Cabinet on 15 December 2008.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

Appendix A

[illegible]

Neighbourhood Services - Terminating Grants

Appendix B

[illegible]

Neighbourhood Services - Priorities

[illegible]

NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES - PROPOSED EFFICIENCIES

Portfolio	Dept/ Div	Budget heading/ Cost Centre	Corp Strategy theme	Description	Type of budget proposal	Efficiency Classification	Budget			Cost of efficiency saving £000	Risk impact	Risk probability	Risk score	Risk status	Rate the Diversity impact	Diversity strand(s)	Treat as contingency item	Staffing Impact	Other Comments
							09/10 £000	10/11 £000	11/12 £000										
NC	PP	Pride in Hartlepool	5. Env	External Sponsorship for Pride in Hartlepool	Efficiency		5	0	0	n	1. Low	1. Unlikely	-1	Green	Neutral	All	No	0	
NC	NSD F&BD	Admin	9. OrgD	Revised reception arrangements at Church Street Offices releasing 0.5 FTE	Efficiency		10	10	10	0	1. Low	1. Unlikely	1	Green	Neutral	ALI	No	1	
APHS	PP	Consumer Services	3. H&C	Savings in licensing operations based on income predictions / operational needs.	Efficiency		20	0	0	0	2. Medium	2. Possible	4	amber	Neutral	All	no	0	There may be a risk if there are changes in these needs.
APHS	PP	Cems and Crems (36743)	3. H&C	Additional income by increasing burial and cremation charges by 10%.	Efficiency		44	29	13	0	2. Medium	2. Possible	4	amber	Neutral	ALL	No	no	
Fin		FM ex Property Services	5. Env	Restructure building maintenance and management section	Efficiency		35	0	0	0	2. Medium	2. Possible	4	amber	Neutral	All	No	1	
Fin	NSD PS	Asset and Property Management	5. Env	Reconfigure property management service with retirement of staff member	Efficiency		40	0	0	0	2. Medium	2. Possible	4	amber	Neutral	all	no	1	
NC	NSD TS	Road Safety	5. Env	Advertising and marketing within road safety section	Efficiency		5	0	0	0	2. Medium	2. Possible	4	Amber	Neutral	all	No	0	e.g. marketing of driver training scheme
nc	NSD NM	Env	5. Env	Rationalisation of supervision of weekend working	Efficiency		10	2	0	0	2. Medium	2. Possible	4	amber	Neutral	all	no	0	A review of weekend operations to be carried out to identify areas of efficiency and duplication

NC Portfolio	Budget heading/ Cost Centre	Corp Strategy theme	Description	Type of budget proposal	Efficiency Classification	09/10 £000	10/11 £000	11/12 £000	Cost of efficiency saving £000	Risk impact	Risk probability .	Risk score	Risk status	Rate the Diversity impact	Diversity strand(s)	Treat as contingency item	Staffing Impact	Other Comments
NC	NSD NM	Waste Disposal	5. Env	Reduction of end market costs for the recycling of plastic and cardboard	Efficiency	20	0	0	0	1. Low	1. Unlikely	-1	green	Neutral	all	no	0	
NC	NSD NM	FM	5. Env	Restructure of Facilities Management Services	Efficiency	30	0	0	0	1. Low	1. Unlikely	1	Green	Neutral	all	no	1	
nc	NSD NM	Grounds	5. Env	Reconfigure schools grounds maintenance service releasing 0.5 FTE	Efficiency	10	0	0	0	1. Low	1. Unlikely	1	Green	Neutral	all	No	1	
NC	NSD NM	Env Enforcement	5. Env	Fine income generation through the introduction of dog control orders	Efficiency	10	2	2	0	1. Low	1. Unlikely	1	Green	Neutral	all	no	0	
nc	NSD NM	Neighbourhood Management	5. Env	Restructure savings within Neighbourhood Management	Efficiency	80	0	0	0	2. Medium	2. Possible	4	amber	Neutral	all	no	0	
nc	NSD All	overall budgets	9. OrgD	Cash freeze a range of budget headings at 2008/09 level.	Efficiency	25	0	0	0	1. Low	1. Unlikely	1	Green	Neutral	all	No	0	
nc	NSD All	overall budgets	9. OrgD	Restructure within each Division to reconfigure service operation, management and income generation	Efficiency	177	0	0	0	2. Medium	2. Possible	4	amber	Neutral	all	no	7	
						521	43	25										