

ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday 23rd January, 2012 at 6.00pm
in Committee Room 2, The Council House, Dudley

PRESENT:-

Councillor Mrs. Shakespeare (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs. Turner (Vice-Chairman)
Councillors A Finch, Hill, James, Mrs Jordan, Ms Partridge, Mrs Rogers,
Waltho and Mrs Westwood.

Officers

Director of Corporate Resources (As Lead Officer to the Committee),
Assistant Director Planning and Environmental Health, Head of Street and
Green Care, Asset Manager and Group Engineer – Traffic and Transportation
(All Directorate of the Urban Environment); Assistant Director of Housing,
(Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services) and Miss K Fellows
(Directorate of Corporate Resources).

Also in Attendance.

Councillor Islam, Labour Group Spokesperson for Environment and Culture.

17. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No member made a Declaration of Interest in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct.

18. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 7th November, 2011, be approved as a correct record and signed.

19. **PUBLIC FORUM**

No matters were raised under this agenda item.

20. **CONSIDERATION OF PETITIONS (IF ANY) REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE BY THE PETITION'S OFFICER**

No Petitions had been referred to the Committee.

21. NETWORK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2012 – 2015 AND COMPLIANCE WITH THE TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT ACT 2004.

A report of the Directorate of the Urban Environment was submitted on the Network Management Strategy including legislative requirements imposed on local traffic authorities by the introduction of the Traffic Management Act 2004. It also outlined how the Council would respond to the legislation to ensure the expeditious movement of traffic on the road network and achieve compliance with the Act. The Network Strategy Plan incorporating the Speed Management Strategy was circulated separately to Members.

In presenting the report submitted, the Asset Manager gave a power point presentation advising that the scope and purpose of the strategy was to tackle congestion, comply with legislation and identify current and future causes of congestion. The Speed Management Strategy was referred to together with the strategies and plans in place to support the Network Management Strategy.

The Regional Context and Shared Initiatives referred to at paragraph 14 of the report submitted were outlined to Members and the checklist for compliance with requirements of the Network Management Duty were also referred to.

The Speed Management Strategy was outlined together with the national speed limits and those set locally by the Council.

It was stated that the Network Management Plan contained the requirement to appoint a Traffic Manager and the Asset Manager reported that Peter Vangeersdaele, the Group Engineer, Traffic and Road Safety had been appointed as the Traffic Manager for the Council.

The appendices to the Network Management Plan which included the Network Management Duty, the Principal supporting documents, the Traffic Management Order 2006, the existing Network Hierarchies, performance indicators and definitions and abbreviations were referred to.

In concluding the presentation the Asset Manager referred to the future aims of the Council in relation to the network management approach to the transport and highways service delivery outlining the priorities of the council as referred to at paragraph 28 of the report submitted.

The current position with the Network Management Plan was referred to together with the operation of a Traffic Control room at Mary Stevens Park.

Arising from the presentation of the report submitted Members asked questions and the Group Engineer, Traffic and Road Safety responded as follows:-

- That the High Oak area of the borough was a difficult area to control as far as congestion was concerned due to the history of the area and thus it was proving difficult to solve the problem of congestion.
- That there were huge challenges linked to healthy lifestyles and improvement of ability for the public to travel other than by motor vehicle and that the council were working with Centro, encouraging cycling and promoting train travel to the residents in the Borough of Dudley. Electric cars were also referred to together with other types of commercial vehicles. It was reported that it was hoped that the four town centres would have electric car charging points in the near future.
- It was stated that the Network Management Plan was a live loose-leaf document which was regularly updated as legislation changed.
- In relation to specific problems in respect of traffic and congestion that Officers would be happy to meet Members at specific sites in order to investigate the problems.
- That the formal decision making process in relation to the Strategy would be by way of a decision sheet to be signed by the Cabinet Member for Transportation should the amendments be agreed.
- There were plans to extend the Parry People route between the old railway line between Stourbridge and Brierley Hill, however the scope for utilising the old railway line remained limited and it was believed that other services such as buses and trains were the way forward.
- In relation to speed, there were differing view points regarding speed limits when comparing efficiency and personal safety and that speed limits were constantly reviewed.
- In relation to speed cameras West Midlands Safety Camera Partnerships agreed that some cameras were working efficiently and some were not.
- That speed cameras would not be a high priority for the Police to resource in the future.

- That the West Midlands Councils worked closely with the four Black Country Boroughs with information sharing being the most essential part in order to keep everyone in the loop and continue with cross boundary working.

The Asset Manager confirmed that he would provide Members with a five page précis of the Network Management Strategy and Plan incorporating the Speed Management Strategy.

Members voiced their appreciation for the work that had been conducted with external partners in order to avoid traffic congestion referring specifically to work conducted with utility companies.

Councillor A Finch enquired as to whether there were any plans to use the old railway freight line in Dudley.

The Head of Street and Green Care referred to the cross boundary working that had been conducted with Sandwell Council in relation to work conducted on Burnt Tree Island, Dudley indicating that the council would continue to investigate utilising shared services across neighbouring authorities.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the information contained in the report submitted, and Appendix to the report, separately circulated, and as reported on at the meeting, on the Network Management Strategy 2012 – 2015 and Compliance with the Traffic Management Act 2004, be noted.
- (2) That the Asset Manager provide Members with a précis of the Network Management Strategy and Plan incorporating the Speed Management Strategy.
- (3) That the Group Engineer, Traffic and Road Safety advise Councillor A Finch of the position in relation to the old railway in Dudley being utilised for transport purposes.

The meeting ended at 6.40pm

CHAIRMAN