
MEETING	EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES AND ADVISORY PANEL
DATE	17 OCTOBER 2007
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS BOWGETT (CHAIR), HOLVEY, POTTER, TAYLOR, WALLER (EXECUTIVE MEMBER), WATT, B WATSON AND AYRE (AS SUBSTITUTE FOR ORRELL)
APOLOGIES	COUNCILLOR ORRELL

29. Declarations of Interest

Members were invited to declare at this point in the meeting any personal or prejudicial interests they might have in the business on the agenda.

Cllr Potter declared a personal, non prejudicial interest in agenda item 9 (Development of Community Engagement, Problem Solving and Feedback for Community Safety), as she sat on the Safer York Partnership (SYP) Board in her capacity as a Council representative on the Policy Authority.

30. Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the last meeting of the Executive Member and Advisory Panel, held on 6 September 2007, be approved and signed by the Chair and Executive Member as a correct record.

31. Public Participation / Ward Member Comments

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme. However, Cllr Scott had asked to address the meeting as a ward councillor for the Clifton Ward, with reference to agenda items 9 and 11.

On agenda item 9 (Development of Community Engagement, Problem Solving and Feedback for Community Safety – Minute 36 refers), Cllr Scott commented that feedback on community engagement work had not been sought from ward members and he would like to provide that feedback now. He noted that Joint Action Groups (JAGs) had improved after the launch of neighbourhood policing, and when priorities had been split to take account of different areas of the ward. He expressed concern that, if ward committees started to set police priorities, there was a risk that the process could be 'hijacked' by particular issues.

On agenda item 11 (Update on Refuse Collection in Alley Gated Areas – Minute 38 refers), he noted that there were still some 'teething' problems with the alley gates in Clifton – gaps between gate posts and walls, locks not working, and parking issues affecting refuse collection. Referring to

the waste presentation issues mentioned in the report, he pointed out that residents had been so keen to have the alley gates installed that they may have agreed to changes that later caused problems, such as having to carry leaking black bags through the house. There was a need to ensure that alley gating did not adversely affect delivery of the refuse collection service.

32. Update on Street Cleaning within the City Walls

Members considered a report which provided an update on street cleaning within the City Walls, following the City-wide review of the street cleansing service.

Due to the unique character of the central area, Members had agreed that it be reviewed separately from the rest of the service. A series of trials had now been carried out in order to identify the changes needed to match the improved standards achieved elsewhere in the City. Trialling of the use of a small mechanical sweeper had been completed, with favourable results. Further trials relating to the times of use would continue over autumn and winter, the results to be reported to Members on completion.

Other planned or ongoing trials included; changes to the early morning street washing process, introduction of a barrow with vacuum attachment to collect small items of litter and a review of cleansing of the market area. In addition, a barrowman had been introduced to key city centre residential areas and trials of a new bin system, incorporating recycling facilities and top mounted ashtrays, would take place subject to planning approval. Slight changes to the zone covered by the City Centre SEO had improved the monitoring of public toilets and graffiti.

At the meeting, Officers circulated a schedule of street cleaning works being carried out in the city centre and noted that a prototype of the new recycling bin had been placed in St Helen's Square that morning. Members discussed the possibility of extending the bin system across the City; the Executive Member noted that this would risk drawing funds from existing recycling schemes and the bins' cost-effectiveness must first be established.

Advice of the Advisory Panel

That the Executive Member be advised to:

- (ii) Note the content of the report and the progress being made on the various trials.
- (iii) Request further reports as the trials are concluded.

Decision of the Executive Member

RESOLVED: That the advice of the Advisory Panel, as set out above, be accepted and endorsed.

REASON: To provide an improved Street Cleaning service in the City.

33. Yorkshire in Bloom

Members considered a report which informed them of the success of York's entry in the Yorkshire in Bloom competition 2007 and sought their support for next year's entry.

The York in Bloom committee had decided in March this year to enter the 2007 competition – York's first entry since winning the contest in 1998. Since then the judging criteria had changed significantly and there were now two judging periods, in April and July. In view of the short timescale, a strategic approach had been taken, with the Council's Trading Standards Manager adopting the role of co-ordinator. The outcome had been an award of Silver Gilt, and excellent feedback from the judges. At a subsequent meeting of the York in Bloom committee, it had been agreed that York should re-enter next year, concentrating on the areas of improvement identified by the judges.

Advice of the Advisory Panel

That the Executive Member be advised to:

- (i) Note the contents of the report and congratulate all those involved in a successful entry.
- (ii) Support the City of York's entry into the 2008 competition.

Decision of the Executive Member

RESOLVED: That the advice of the Advisory Panel, as set out above, be accepted and endorsed.

REASON: To support the York in Bloom committee's entry into the 2007 competition, which linked closely with the Council's York Pride initiative, and to give support to the 2008 entry.

34. Neighbourhood Services Directorate Plan

Members considered a report which sought their approval for a draft Neighbourhood Services Directorate Plan for the period 2007-2011.

The draft Plan, attached as Annex 1 to the report, aimed to provide a clear set of priorities for Neighbourhood Services, each backed up by a small number of key actions and measures. It would be revised and updated annually. The twelve priorities were a mix of service and organisational development issues and included the three corporate priorities on which the directorate took the lead; namely, Waste Management, Street Environment and tackling violent, aggressive and nuisance behaviour.

It was recommended that the Executive Member agree the draft Plan (Option 1), in order to provide a firmer foundation on which to undertake service planning. Should it not be agreed (Option 2), Officers would work to address Members' concerns and bring forward a revised draft plan in March 2008.

Advice of the Advisory Panel

That the Executive Member be advised to:

- (i) Accept Option 1 and agree the draft Plan.
- (ii) Agree to receive an updated version of the Plan, following the outcome of the budget process, at the EMAP meeting in March 2008.

Decision of the Executive Member

RESOLVED: That the advice of the Advisory Panel, as set out above, be accepted and endorsed.

REASON: To put in place an important element in improving the directorate's performance management and monitoring arrangements.

35. Air Quality Update

Members considered a report which provided an update on air quality issues, including the outcome of the recent Air Quality Support Grant (AQSG) applications made to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

Officers had submitted three AQSG bids to DEFRA in March. Due to a national shortfall in the amount of grant available, York's allocation fell short of the amount required to progress all of the air quality projects planned for 2007/08. Proposed expenditure of the actual funding granted in each of the bid areas was therefore as follows:

Air quality monitoring (£30k allocation) – upgrade of the existing site at Holgate – Project 1 – and replacement of the existing NO_x analyser.

Air quality modelling (£30k allocation) – proceed with the purchase of the UPS, renew the software licences and technical support contracts for 5 years and seek DEFRA's permission to re-allocate some of the resulting £18k surplus to monitoring activities.

Air quality action planning (£9.5k allocation) – invest about £6k into the JorAir project, £750 in work to raise awareness of smoke control and bonfire issues and use the remainder to support the launch of a new air quality and planning guidance note.

Members also had the option to reject some or all of the grants and revise the projects accordingly. However, this was not recommended. No other source of funding existed for the projects outlined in the report.

Paragraphs 19 to 36 of the report provided a general update on air quality issues, including the national Air Quality Strategy, the recommendations of the Rogers Review, which had identified air quality as one of five national priorities for local regulatory services, and the Council's second Air Quality Progress Report, submitted to DEFRA in April 2007. Progress on the Low Emission Zone (LEZ) Feasibility Study requested by the Executive Member was set out in paragraphs 37 to 41.

It was noted that, although York's allocation fell far short of the sum requested, it was still the second highest air quality grant awarded for

2007/08. In relation to the LEZ feasibility study, Members commented that the aim should be to exclude high emission vehicles altogether rather than introducing a charging system.

Advice of the Advisory Panel

That the Executive Member be advised to accept air quality grants from DEFRA totalling £69,000 and allow the air quality projects outlined in the report to proceed.

Decision of the Executive Member

RESOLVED: That the advice of the Advisory Panel, as set out above, be accepted and endorsed.

REASON: The DEFRA grant represents the most appropriate way of funding the continuation of Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) in the City. LAQM is a statutory undertaking that contributes towards the Council's corporate priorities on improving the health of residents and encouraging the use of public, and other environmentally friendly, modes of transport.

36. Noise Complaints Update

Members received a report which responded to their request for an update on the out of hours noise enforcement service.

It was reported that, since the introduction of the Noise Patrol in April 2006, the total number of noise complaints received by the Environmental Protection Unit (EPU) had increased by 75%, and continued to grow. The appointment of an additional (temporary) environmental protection officer to 31 March 1998 had enabled the EPU to manage the additional work. Noise Patrol had also helped EPU to work more effectively in partnership with other agencies and to check compliance with licensing and planning conditions. Since April 2006, officers on Noise Patrol had made over 800 visits to premises out of hours. 114 noise abatement notices had been served during 2006/07, compared to 16 in 2005/06. The cost of the service would be met from the existing budget and LPSA2 grant allocation until 31 March 2008.

In response to queries from Members, Officers reported that a total of 1,382 noise complaints had been received, of which 73% related to domestic premises. The Executive Member thanked Officers for their hard work in providing a valued service to residents and noted that he had written to the Minister seeking the continuation of grant funding.

Advice of the Advisory Panel

That the Executive Member be advised to:

- (i) Note the report, and that the service would only continue after 31 March 2008 if funding were made available.

- (ii) Recommend that funding for the service be included as a growth bid in next year's budget.

Decision of the Executive Member

RESOLVED: That the advice of the Advisory Panel, as set out above, be accepted and endorsed.

REASONS: (i) For information on the steps being taken to deal with noise nuisance.
(ii) To ensure continuation of the service.

37. Development of Community Engagement, Problem Solving and Feedback for Community Safety

Members received a report which presented a proposed new model for Safer Neighbourhoods, recently approved by the Safer York Partnership (SYP).

The document approved by SYP, attached as Annex 1 to the report, detailed the consultation and problem solving methods which would be used to deliver the new model. This would include the use of ward committee meetings to identify policing priorities, and ward team meetings to oversee performance against these priorities.

Members commented on the need for clarity in disseminating information about the new model, to ensure that it was interpreted consistently across the wards, whilst still allowing for flexibility in dealing with specific ward issues. In response to concerns raised about the setting of police priorities, it was stressed that ward committees would not be the only forum for consultation and that proposed priorities would be checked against SYP data to ensure they were appropriate, and feedback provided to communities.

Advice of the Advisory Panel

That the Executive Member be advised to:

- (i) Note the content of the report.
- (ii) Instruct Officers to circulate a briefing note on the new model to all elected Members.

Decision of the Executive Member

RESOLVED: That the advice of the Advisory Panel, as set out above, be accepted and endorsed.

REASON: For information, and to ensure that all Members are aware of the new models for delivering Safer Neighbourhoods.

38. National Service Planning Requirements for Environmental Health and Trading Standards Services

Members considered a report which sought their approval for the 2007/08 service plans for food law enforcement, health & safety law enforcement and animal health enforcement, produced in response to national requirements. Copies of the plans were annexed to the report.

The purpose of each plan was to detail how the Council was addressing national enforcement priorities and working towards delivery of local authority corporate objectives and priorities. All of the plans linked to the Best Value Performance Indicator for environmental health and trading standards (BV 166). Government guidance required that they be submitted to the appropriate Member forum for approval. The Council was also required to submit an annual monitoring report on each plan. The 2007/08 food and health & safety plans included performance variances with targets set in the 2006/07 plans, as required by the national bodies.

Advice of the Advisory Panel

That the Executive Member be advised to agree the plans and recommend that they be referred to the Executive for approval.

Decision of the Executive Member

RESOLVED: That the advice of the Advisory Panel, as set out above, be accepted and endorsed.

REASON: So that the Council can discharge its statutory obligations in regard to service planning for environmental health and trading standards services.

39. Update on Refuse Collection in Alley Gated Areas

Members received a report which provided an update on progress with 'alley-gating' and advised of its impact upon refuse collections, street cleansing and enforcement activities.

Since approval of the Gating Order Policy, Procedure and Practice Document in March 2007, gates had been installed in 31 alleys in the City of York area and the Council had submitted a Notice of Intention to make a further 28 Gating Orders. Details were attached as Annexes 2 and 3 to the report and the Policy document was attached as Annex 1. In some areas of the City, gating had achieved an 87% reduction in burglaries.

Under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act, gated alleys retained their highway status and thus remained the responsibility of the Council in respect of cleansing and waste collection arrangements. To date, there had been few reports of problems with these issues from residents of alley-gated areas, who had agreed to service changes when voting for the gates to be installed. Each area had received a 'deep clean' prior to installation of the gates. Further cleaning would be undertaken at residents' request. However, it was important to ensure that residents

were clear on their new waste arrangements and did not continue to leave refuse in the back lanes for collection. Monitoring of waste presentation was still ongoing in the Clifton area, where some residents were continuing to place waste sacks in the back lanes. To date, 434 advice letters had been sent, but the Council had not yet used its powers of enforcement under Section 46 of the Environmental Protection Act.

Members commented favourably on the crime reduction brought about by alley gating, but noted that there had been a mixed reception in the wards to resulting changes to waste collection arrangements. It was agreed that the Policy should be looked at again in the light of experience to date.

Advice of the Advisory Panel

That the Executive Member be advised to:

- (i) Note the contents of the report and the progress made by Neighbourhood Pride and Waste Services to minimise litter and refuse problems in alley-gated areas.
- (ii) Ask Officers to review the Gating Order Policy agreed on 26 March 2007 and report the results back to Members.

Decision of the Executive Member

RESOLVED: That the advice of the Advisory Panel, as set out above, be accepted and endorsed.

REASON: For information, and to ensure that the issues raised by residents following the implementation of alley gating are addressed.

40. Forward Plan

Members reviewed the latest version of the 2007/08 forward plan for the Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services and Advisory Panel.

Members agreed a number of changes to the forward plan, which have been incorporated in the updated plan attached as Annex 1 to these minutes.

CLLR WALLER
EXECUTIVE MEMBER

CLLR BOWGETT
CHAIR OF ADVISORY PANEL

The meeting started at 5.00 pm and finished at 7.30 pm.

Neighbourhood Services EMAP Forward Plan

Cycle 4: 6 December 2007

Title of Report and Brief Explanation		Author
1	Finance & Performance Monitor	SK
2	Carbon Management Programme	MD
3	Scores on Doors – Food Premises	CR
4	York Pride Update	MD
5	Neighbourhood & Community Safety Legal Actions Quarterly Update	CR
6	Service Plans	All
7	Update on Prosecutions, including cold calling control zones.	CR
8	Home Improvement Packs (HIPs)	CR

Cycle 5: 21 January 2008

1	Budget	
2	Service Planning	
3	Update on Neighbourhood Action Planning	AH
4	ENCAMS / Dealing with Graffiti	

Cycle 6: 19 March 2008

1	Neighbourhood & Community Safety Legal Actions Quarterly Update	CR
2	Vehicle Fleet Update	
3	Community Centre Service Level Agreement	
4	Local Improvement Schemes Grants Process	
5	<i>Review of Public Toilets</i>	

[Amended at the meeting on 6/12/07]

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