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MEETING	EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES AND ADVISORY PANEL
DATE	19 JANUARY 2009
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS BOWGETT (CHAIR), AYRE (VICE-CHAIR), CRISP, HOLVEY, KING, REID (EXECUTIVE MEMBER), TAYLOR AND WATT

#### **50. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **51. MINUTES**

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 4 December 2008 be approved and signed by the Chair and Executive Member as a correct record.

#### **52. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation scheme.

#### **53. PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY - REQUEST TO ADOPT ALLEYWAY BETWEEN SCARCROFT HILL AND MILL MOUNT**

Members considered a report, which asked them to consider a request to adopt a section of the alleyway between Scarcroft Hill and Mill Mount as a public highway, maintainable at public expense.

The Assistant Director (Maintenance Services) introduced the report and explained that the route had been incorporated into the 2008-09 Safe Routes to School Programme. It was stated that the cost of repairing the alleyway would be funded from the existing Highways Infrastructure Budget, with the cost of full repair estimated at £10,000.

Members then raised various concerns and questions to which Officers responded. It was understood that Ward councillors were positive to the proposal, but that they had not responded officially. Members, who had visited the alleyway, agreed that parts were in urgent need of repair.

One Member had raised concern over the removal of the heritage paving/sets and felt that they should be replaced and repaired and would

not support any recommendation for taking up the heritage paving. However, officers explained that funding was only available for the pulling up of the paving and the laying of tarmac, not for the cost of the replacement of the heritage paving, which would be much higher and that there was no additional money in the Highways budget for this.

It was noted that where tarmac had been laid in other alleyways, that residents had been happy with this, but that residents had been less happy when there had been a patchwork of repairs. Most Members were in agreement that it was sad to lose any of the City's heritage, but that Members needed to be realistic in terms of what could be afforded in terms of repair to the alleyway. It was agreed that any consideration with regard to how the repairs to the alleyway would to be undertaken should be brought back to the Panel together with details of any additional costs.

#### Advice of the Advisory Panel

That the Executive Member be advised:

- (i) That the report to request the adoption of the alleyway as a public highway, maintainable at public expense, be noted;
- (ii) That the immediate addition of the path to the List of Streets Maintainable at the Public Expense be authorised.

#### Decision of the Executive Member

RESOLVED: That the Advice of the Advisory Panel be accepted and endorsed.

REASON: To enable the alleyway to be maintained to a standard commensurate with its use.

## **54. ILLEGAL MONEY LENDING TEAM AUTHORISATION**

Members considered a report, which advised them of the work of Birmingham City Council's specialist 'Illegal Money Lending Team', and their work in tackling illegal lending and other associated crimes. The report sought Member approval to authorise the team to investigate the activities of illegal money-lenders and bring legal proceedings against them in the City of York.

The Head of Environmental Health and Trading Standards outlined the main details of the report and stated that there were a number of money lenders operating, who preyed on people with low incomes and who charged extortionate rates of interest. The Officer explained that York had been approached by Birmingham City Council, which had a specialist team and a very sophisticated process for tackling illegal money lending. Prosecutions would be undertaken by Birmingham and there would be no liability for costs to City of York Council, as this was Treasury funded until 2011, subject to review of government spending.

It was noted by Members that illegal money lending was a serious problem and one that was often below the radar; that those who borrowed could often least afford to do so and many were single mothers. It was noted by some Members that there was also concern about the extortionate rates of interest charged by legal money lenders and in addition through some higher purchase agreement arrangements. Officers explained that these higher rates charged by legal money-lenders could be looked at through the courts, but that often an individual had defaulted on previous loan repayments, hence the higher rates.

It was noted by Members that it was very important to focus advertising correctly to reach the right people. Officers confirmed that there would be a York and North Yorkshire launch of the service in February/March 2009 with the promotion of a helpline, which would be funded by Birmingham City Council. Officers confirmed that marketing of the service would be sectorised and that Consumer Credit Unions would be contacted. It was also noted that a two-way flow of information from the public in York to Birmingham and vice versa, would help to provide information about Credit Unions available locally, and that help and support, as well as information, would be made available.

Panel Members welcomed the initiative and the scheme was seen as sound and commendable.

#### Advice of the Advisory Panel

- (i) That Option 1 be approved and it be agreed that the discharge of the Council's functions of the enforcement of Part III of the Consumer Credit Act 1974 also be carried out in the City of York by Birmingham City Council (Pursuant to Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972, Regulation 7 of the Local Authority (Arrangements for Discharge of Functions) (England) Regulations 2000 and Section 13 (7) of the Local Government Act 2000).
- (ii) That the adoption of the "Protocol for Illegal Money Lending Team Investigations" be agreed and it be agreed that authority be delegated to the Head of Environmental Health and Trading Standards to enter into the agreement on behalf of City of York Council.

#### Decision of the Executive Member

RESOLVED: That the advice of the Advisory Panel be accepted and endorsed.

- REASONS:
- (i) To obtain a clear understanding of the scale and impact of illegal money lending as well as learning lessons on the best way to enforce.
  - (ii) To create a climate where victims can come forward – confident that prosecutions will be

undertaken, and convictions obtained, without fear of reprisals.

**55. REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET ESTIMATES FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES 2009/10**

Members considered a report, which presented the 2009/10 Revenue and Capital Budget Estimates for Neighbourhood Services.

The Finance Manager, Neighbourhood Services asked Members to note the main aspects of the report. The Officer also asked Members to note some small changes to figures in the report. In Table 1, under Point 6 of the report, the Total column for Service Pressure proposals which should have read 445, and the Total Column in the Proposed Budget 2009/10 which should have read 14,478.

In response to a question from a Member about the amount of waste and the landfill tax, Officers responded that calculations and assumptions had been made to 2010 and that the question of a reduction in waste had been factored in. On the question of page 46, Annex 2, NSW\_S13 and the use of agency staff, Officers confirmed that these would not be used where staff could be provided through the Council's recruitment pool. It was noted, however, that the cost of using agency staff was not considerably higher than the use of the Council's pool. Officers reported that there had been an increase in bereavement charges above inflation.

Members of the Labour Group reserved their position for Budget Council.

Advice of the Advisory Panel

That the Executive Member be advised:

That the revenue and capital budget estimates be noted and that any concerns and comments also be noted.

Decision of the Executive Member

RESOLVED: That the advice of the Advisory Panel be accepted and endorsed.

REASON: To update the Executive Member on the Revenue and Capital Budget Estimates for 2009/10.

## **56. REVENUE BUDGET 2009/10 - NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICE FEES AND CHARGES**

Members considered a report, which advised them of the proposed fees and charges for Neighbourhood Services for the financial year 2009/10.

The Neighbourhood Services Finance Manager explained to Members that there had in fact been no increase in Pest Control fees and that the figures on page 66 of the Agenda Under Pest Control, Increase over 08/09 should read zero.

Members asked about any increase in licensing and gambling fees and Officers explained that most fees were statutory and within bands, which Members had approved. Officers confirmed that lap-dancing clubs now fell under the heading of Sex Establishments and that a briefing note on this change would be circulated to Members.

Members of the Labour Group reserved their position for Budget Council.

### Advice of the Advisory Panel

That the Executive Member be advised:

That the fees and charges proposals be noted together with any comments.

### Decision of the Executive Member

RESOLVED: That the advice of the Advisory Panel be accepted and endorsed.

REASON: To update the Executive Member on the proposed fees and charges for Neighbourhood services for 2009/10.

## **57. FORWARD PLAN**

The Director of Neighbourhood Services reported that the following items would be brought before the next meeting of the Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services and Advisory Panel on 18 March 2009.

- Performance and Budget Monitoring
- Petition from Strensall and Towthorpe Parish Council
- Directorate Plan and the Service Plan
- Financial Monitor

### Advice of the Advisory Panel

That the Executive Member be advised to note the update on the Forward Plan.

Decision of the Executive Member

RESOLVED: That the advice of the Advisory Panel be accepted and endorsed.

REASON: To inform Members of forthcoming issues.

**58. CHAIR AND EXECUTIVE MEMBER'S COMMENT**

Members were informed that Terry Collins, the Director of Neighbourhood Services, was leaving City of York Council on 30 January 2009 to take up a post with the new Durham Unitary Authority. The Chair, the Executive Member and the Panel Members expressed their thanks and appreciation for his contributions during his time at City of York Council and wished him well for the future.

COUNCILLOR A REID,  
EXECUTIVE MEMBER

COUNCILLOR D BOWGETT,  
CHAIR

[The meeting started at 5.00 pm and finished at 5.50 pm].