
| | |
|---------------|--|
| MEETING | CORPORATE AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (CALLING IN) |
| DATE | 15 OCTOBER 2012 |
| PRESENT | COUNCILLORS WISEMAN (CHAIR), BARNES, KING, MCILVEEN, POTTER, STEWART, SEMLYEN (AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR CLLR HORTON) AND CUTHBERTSON (AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR CLLR RUNCIMAN) |
| IN ATTENDANCE | COUNCILLORS AYRE AND REID |
| APOLOGIES | COUNCILLORS HORTON, RUNCIMAN AND WARTERS |

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

Councillors Potter and Semlyen declared personal non prejudicial interests in respect of the Called In Item: Winter Maintenance Arrangements for 2012/13 as Snow Wardens.

6. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

It was reported that there had been one registration to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

Sue Galloway made representations on behalf of Foxwood Residents Association. She raised concerns that 50% or 23 salt bins would not be filled in the Foxwood area this year, compared to all those in the Heslington Ward. It was questioned whether Housing Associations and other bodies had been consulted regarding salt bins situated on their land. Reference was made to extensive consultations undertaken for a previous scrutiny review on winter maintenance as opposed to the current decision taken without any. Concerns were also raised

in respect of double taxation and it was pointed out that the winter maintenance savings could be found elsewhere.

7. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the last meeting of the Corporate and Scrutiny Management Committee (Calling In) held on 13 August 2012 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

8. CALLED-IN ITEM: WINTER MAINTENANCE ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2012/13

Members received a report which asked them to consider the decision made by the Cabinet Member for Environmental Services, at his private Decision Session held on 25 September 2012, in relation to the Winter Maintenance Arrangements for 2012/13. Further information on the options and results of consultation undertaken in respect of the two options put forward for consideration were detailed in the report.

Details of the Cabinet Members decision were attached as Annex A to the report, with the original report to the Cabinet Member attached as Annex B. The decision had been called in by Cllrs Aspden, Ayre and Reid on the following grounds:

- *The plans would see overall salt bin provision in York fall from around 369 full bins to around 199. In a bad winter this cut will have a significant and detrimental impact.*
- *The report states that a thorough review of salt bin locations will be undertaken for the winter of 2013/14. It therefore seems irrational to withdraw the bin provision before this review has taken place and without thoroughly consulting residents or local councillors. The mistakes made over the removal of 1-in-4 of York's dog and litter bins seem to be being repeated.*
- *Residents will not know which salt bins are full and which salt bins are empty until they need to use them.*

- *Leaving the bins out empty is likely to lead to a further deterioration in their condition and make it harder to bring them back into use next winter. Already, due to Labour's decision to leave out the bins over the summer, a number of bins are in a poor condition with some having been vandalised. Leaving 170 out empty and unused will not help this.*
- *No information on the locations of the salt bins was provided in the report – are the remaining (full) bins evenly distributed?*
- *We disagree that “there is no longer finance available to maintain 170 salt bins”. The finance has been withdrawn and we believe the relatively small sum of money involved could be found from elsewhere in the council budget. We are happy to provide further information on this point.*
- *The future of the Snow Wardens scheme is unclear from this report. We would seek some clarification on this before the report is approved.*

Members were asked to decide whether to confirm the decision (Option a) or to refer it back to the Cabinet Member for re-consideration (Option b) as set out in the report.

Councillor Reid addressed the meeting on behalf of the Calling-In members expressing grave concerns at the proposed loss of this basic service. She felt that the cuts were ill conceived. Concerns were raised that if the empty bins were left in situ they would suffer damage during extreme weather conditions. When bad weather occurred it would also be time consuming filling bins and probably too late to address problem areas. She also questioned the discrepancy in the number of bins, particularly with regard to who had already undertaken a review of the number of salt bins and whether consultations had been carried out with Housing Associations and other groups who provided funding. She urged the Cabinet Member to reconsider his decision and undertake consultation with members and residents.

Councillor Ayre also addressed the meeting on behalf of the Calling-In members focusing on the issue of equalities. Reference was made to the reduction in the number of salt bins and to the affect this would have on vulnerable residents. He pointed out that one third of his ward residents were over 60 years of age with 9 out of the 10 bins in his ward not being filled, the one remaining bin being outside the school. The Local Authority was, he pointed out, covered by the Public Sector Equality Duty and he questioned whether this had been considered and the mitigating factors listed. Details of the Equality Impact Assessment carried out had been requested from officers but had so far been unavailable, however consideration of this was essential prior to any decision being taken.

The Cabinet Member for Environmental Services responded to the points raised, confirming that 170 salt bins had previously been filled from ward funding however, following the reduction in ward budgets, a decision had been taken to fill only the 199 core highway bins for the current year. He confirmed that during the previous year only half the bins had required refilling. The Winter Maintenance Group (WVG) would however respond to any need requests, particularly where this involved the elderly. It was confirmed that a full review of the policy with a transparent consistent approach and consultation would be undertaken prior to any changes for the winter season 2013/14. Reference was also made to the authority being within the top quartile in the county for winter road maintenance. Confirmation was received that the decision made did allow flexibility to ensure that officers could respond to any requests relating to equality issues from contingency funding.

Members went on to comment on the points raised and questioned the Cabinet Member on a range of related issues, upon which the Cabinet Member responded. These issues related broadly to the refilling of bins, the impact of the arrangements on the elderly, risk assessments, supplies for side road clearance and consultation processes to be applied in the future.

Officers then clarified a number of points raised and confirmed that all salt bin locations were shown on the York map on the authority's website identifying whether these bins were funded by highways or through ward funds currently. Members

specifically requested that these details be circulated to all Members directly.

Last year had been the first year of operation for Snow Wardens who were issued at the beginning of the season with a maximum of 4 recycling bins of grit, with refills on request throughout the winter, dependent on supplies and resources. Officers confirmed that no changes would be made to the existing gritting arrangements and that mini tractor units would continue to treat footpaths. A dry run would also be undertaken prior to inclement weather to ensure that all paths allowed free access.

It was then:

RESOLVED: That Option (a) identified in the report be approved and that the decision of the Cabinet Member for Environmental Services be confirmed.

REASON: In accordance with the requirements of the Council's Constitution.

Cllr S Wiseman, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.00 pm and finished at 6.20 pm].