
MEETING	CORPORATE AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (CALLING IN)
DATE	15 APRIL 2013
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS WISEMAN (CHAIR), BARNES, HORTON, KING, MCILVEEN, POTTER, RUNCIMAN (VICE-CHAIR), STEWART AND WARTERS
IN ATTENDANC	COUNCILLORS REID AND HEALEY

20. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were invited to declare, at this point in the meeting, any personal interests, not included on the Register of Interests, or any prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interests they may have in respect of business on the agenda. No further interests were declared.

21. 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, spoke as Vice Chair of the Foxwood Residents Association, referring to the reporting of faults on a number of street lights in the Foxwood Area over a number of weeks. It was noted that the faults had not been rectified or the reports acknowledged until they had been escalated to Stage 2 of the complaints procedure. Concerns were also raised at the absence of any costings, or a timetable for the proposed work and to the use of residents to report future faults. Reassurances were sought that the proposed service would be no worse than that currently in operation and at no greater cost. Contingency arrangements were also requested until the new system was up and running. The Cabinet Member was asked to confirm that Residents Associations and Parish Councils would be informed of the new arrangements and that the city centre would not receive preferential treatment under the new arrangements at the expense of the rural areas.

22. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 17 December 2012 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair, subject to the following:

- i) The addition of Cllr Ayre as in attendance at the meeting.
- ii) The addition of '*That Officers examine the current practice of marking Members as absent from meetings when they have to appoint a substitute through their having a prejudicial interest in matters on the agenda*'.

23. CALLED IN ITEM: STREET LIGHTING MAINTENANCE PROCUREMENT

Members received a report which asked them to consider the decisions made by the Cabinet Member for Environmental Services on 21 March 2013, in relation to the procurement of a new street lighting maintenance contract. The report to the meeting outlined the options available for the procurement of a new contract, following the expiration of the existing street lighting term maintenance contract which expired on 31 March 2013.

Details of the Cabinet Members decision was attached at Annex A to the report, with the original report to the Cabinet Member attached at Annex B. The decision had been called in by Cllrs Reid, Runciman and Orrell on the following grounds:

- i) It is a serious concern that the Council will stop routine checking (scouting) for faulty street lighting.
- ii) The report does not refer to the experience the City had 15 years ago when it stopped scouting and found that, while some neighbourhoods were very good at reporting faults, in other areas lights were often not reported and therefore not working for weeks or months.

- iii) A lack of public consultation to determine whether the capacity exists for resident reporting to work this time.
- iv) No proper analysis of the quality of the service provided by the existing contractor or the service levels expected to be achieved by the Council.
- v) No business case for bringing the service in-house or examination of the capacity and expertise the Council has.
- vi) No apparent measures in place in the event skilled staff can not be TUPE'd across and the Council needs to recruit and train staff.

Members were asked 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 concern at the proposal to cease routine scouting for faulty street lights and the effect of this on local communities. Particularly in relation to fear of crime and the need for a consistent approach across the city. If the decision should be upheld they requested a strengthening of the feed back system. Reference was made to the lack of detail in the report in respect of analysis of the options, staffing levels and hire/purchase arrangements for the necessary equipment. Expansion of the business area had been mentioned, in the report, however no information had been provided to support this. Members were asked to reinstate night scouting as there did not appear to be an adequate business case to support the proposal.

The Cabinet Member for Environmental Services responded to the points raised, pointing out that the decisions he had taken were completely independent of each other. A number of authorities had stopped night scouting with no resulting increase in crime levels. The high level of mobile phone ownership and usage would assist in the reporting of issues through the use of mobile devices. He confirmed that he would follow up the references made, earlier in the meeting, to response times and feedback mechanisms.

Members went on to discuss the points raised and other issues in some detail. It was questioned how the new reporting arrangements would be advertised, details of monthly costings and health and safety issues

In response to questions, Officers confirmed that reportings had never been split between public reporting and scouting. The new arrangements would give the authority more control over lighting maintenance work and ensure quicker response times. Existing performance indicators would be retained and it was noted that every street light would have a notice displayed with details of the new reporting arrangements.

Reference was made to the business case underlying the options put forward which the Cabinet Member had considered when making his decision. This had contained financial commercially sensitive information relating to employees pay and details of plant, labour, leasing, fuel and materials.

The Cabinet Member confirmed that he would ask Officers to examine the use of Your Voice and the website to publicise the new arrangements and confirm the details with Parish Council's and Residents Associations.

Following further discussion Officers confirmed that, following reporting of an issue, no feedback would be given to the reporter unless a problem arose and the light could not be fixed within the usual 2 day period. Members reiterated the need to continue to make savings and efficiencies in all these areas.

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

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

Cllr S Wiseman, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 6.20 pm].