
MEETING	DECISION SESSION – EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
DATE	21 JULY 2009
PRESENT	COUNCILLOR REID (EXECUTIVE MEMBER)
IN ATTENDANCE	COUNCILLORS KING, HYMAN & SUE GALLOWAY

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Executive Member was invited to declare at this point in the meeting any personal or prejudicial interests that she might have in the business on the agenda. No interests were declared.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services and Advisory Panel held on Wednesday 18 March 2009 be approved and signed as a correct record.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION / OTHER SPEAKERS

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

With the permission of the Executive Member it was agreed that Councillors King, Hyman and Sue Galloway, who had requested to speak on agenda item 6 (Update on the City of York Public Toilet Review) could speak during consideration of agenda item 6.

4. RESERVE LIST OF HIGHWAYS SCHEMES

The Executive Member considered a report that identified additional highways schemes, some of which could be undertaken in this financial year 2009/10, funded from within the service area. The Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services was asked to approve the proposed list in Annex 1 of the report.

The Highway Asset Manager, Highway Maintenance Services, Neighbourhood Services, introduced the report and highlighted that efficiencies had been created with the merger of elements of City Strategy with the Civil Engineering Department in Neighbourhood Services. From the accrued savings, plus the pay back money from the Moor Lane Roundabout, this could then be used to fund additional resurfacing and reconstruction schemes.

The officer confirmed that the list had been drawn up in the usual way and that although there were no guarantees, the department was ready to go ahead once there was a clearer indication of the funding available towards the end of the financial year.

The Executive Member commented that she was happy to approve the list of schemes in Option 1 and noted that the list had been completed using the normal criteria.

RESOLVED: That the Executive Member:

- Approve the split in funding between footways and roads.
- Approve the provisional reserve list of possible schemes listed in Annex 1 of this report.

Reason: To ensure the Highway Maintenance budget is expended in the most cost effective way based on the Council's assessed priorities and approved policies. It will not be evident until the latter end of the financial year as to how much money will be available to allocate to the reserve schemes, it is not anticipated that all of the schemes will be undertaken. The list is much larger than any anticipated budget availability; this is to ensure some flexibility in the number of schemes to be completed with the finances available.

5. HIGHWAYS VEHICLE PROCUREMENT

The Executive Member considered a report, which provided details of the procurement for the replacement of 4 hook lift gritting vehicles and 1 bulk tipping vehicle. The report asked the Executive Member to approve the outcome of the evaluation process so that a purchase order could be made and the vehicles ordered.

The Assistant Director, Environmental Services, Neighbourhood Services, presented the report and highlighted the need to replace vehicles for winter maintenance. It was noted that the previous contract with the Defence Support Group (DSG) had come to an end and that, after seeking advice from Procurement, tenders had been sought through the Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation (YPO) Framework. The tenders were evaluated using the Most Economically Advantageous Tender (MEAT) analysis.

In response to a question from the Executive Member, the officer confirmed that a review of the whole transportation unit would be brought to the Executive Member at a future meeting.

RESOLVED: That the Executive Member:

- i. Notes the procurement process outlined in the report and approves the outcome of the evaluation process.
- ii. Gives approval for a purchase order to be made so the successful tenderers can be notified and orders placed.

Reason: To allow the orders to be placed and the vehicles to go into manufacture.

6. UPDATE ON THE CITY OF YORK PUBLIC TOILET REVIEW

The Executive Member considered a report, which informed her as to the progress on the complete review of public toilet provision for York and the proposed next steps. The report was an update on the position reported on 15 October 2008 and considered the Council's charging policy, future repairs and maintenance needs, the Changing Places Strategy and the Community Toilet Scheme.

The Executive Member asked for the officer update before hearing from the three Councillors who had requested to speak on this agenda item.

The Assistant Director, Environmental Services, Neighbourhood Services presented the report and stated that the review had begun mid-2008 and that the criteria worked within had included:

1. General conditions survey of in-house facilities, the majority being fairly new build with minor improvements.
2. The annual level of usage with reference to paragraph 9 of the report.
3. A potential public toilet scheme with reference to paragraphs 11 and 12 of the report.

It was noted by the Assistant Director that a Community Toilet Scheme was being supported with a move to a national signage system. Options for urinals and mobile units had been explored in detail but had not been felt appropriate for York. With regard to charging regimes it had been felt important to be consistent with the Equalities Act.

The Assistant Director spoke of the main Changing Place facility at Silver Street and other Changing Place facilities including Acomb Explore, Walmgate and that a further facility at Burton Stone Lane would be opened shortly. It was stated that there were plans also to incorporate one at the Central Library, two at Oaklands and changing facilities at the Monks Cross and the Designer Outlet shopping complexes. It was also stated that the Council had worked with three independent organisations to assess facilities, including ENCAMS (Tidy Britain Group), a private sector group, and York Access Group, who had all submitted reports and their comments had been incorporated in the review. The officer confirmed that an electronic copy of the report would be made available on the Internet and that a hard copy was available to read with the Assistant Director.

Councillor King, who had registered to speak on this agenda item, was then invited to speak by the Executive Member. Councillor King declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in this agenda item, as an Honorary Member of the York Access Group. He commented that he was concerned about disabled access to toilets and health and safety issues, and felt that these had not been addressed in the report. His particular concerns were

where needles used by drug users had been found together with blood on the walls and toilet furniture. He showed a photograph to the Executive Member and officers with regard to this. Councillor King highlighted that health and safety issues were not only concerns for people with disabilities, but also for cleaning staff. He also noted that York was a tourist destination city and that these toilets were used by coach operators bringing visitors to York, and that these operators had expressed concerns about the state of the Union Terrace toilets. Councillor King also expressed his concerns about toilets designated for those with disabilities, stating that it was easy for other people to gain access to those toilets while disabled people were using the facilities. He also stated that he felt the alarm pull chord system should be linked to an emergency response facility.

Councillor Hyman, who had registered to speak on this agenda item, welcomed the report as the Older People's Champion in York. He stated that the Community Toilet Scheme was very relevant to older residents in York, but was concerned that there were no indications in the report as to when the changes would be made and requested that the changes should be pushed ahead with target dates for implementation. With regard to Paragraph 11 of the report and the 40% of businesses that had responded to the review, Councillor Hyman wanted to know how many businesses had responded in total. The speaker stated that if 50 businesses were on board, that this would be a sign of success. With regard to signage, the speaker stated that it was important not to make the lives of residents and visitors more difficult. The speaker noted that there were no costs detailed in the report. He stressed the importance of standards and the need to encourage businesses to take part in the toilet scheme and made reference to Sutton Council which paid £300 a year to businesses that participated in the scheme and of another council that gave a one-off £500 grant to get the scheme up and running. He also asked the Executive Member to consider including York Older People's Assembly as a consultee in the review.

Councillor Sue Galloway, who had also registered to speak on this agenda item, welcomed the report. She noted some omissions, including the mention of the toilets at York Theatre Royal and said that she would like to see this facility and other facilities in council owned buildings included. The speaker expressed surprise at some of the usage levels. She asked that the police be asked for input on the review, particularly with regard to anti-social behaviour issues. She noted that it was not just people with disabilities who got into difficulties in toilets. Councillor Galloway also noted that a recent meeting of the Care Quality Commission had praised York for the number of changing places, but had wanted to see more places available. With regard to signage, the speaker felt that there was no need for York to use different signage.

The Assistant Director of Neighbourhood Services then responded to points raised by the speakers and the Executive Member.

- It was stated that the Radar Key was part of a National Scheme and therefore could not be changed, but that officers would talk to the Radar Key organisation re the concerns raised.

- It was noted that people with disabilities who used toilet facilities often had a carer outside the toilet and that the majority of people now had mobile phones.
- The concerns raised with regard to the toilet facilities at Union Terrace were noted and it was stated that a specialist team collected the needles and drug paraphernalia. It was also stated that to deter drug users toilet facilities had in the past been temporarily double locked for periods of time, but that this then put the facilities out of use. It was noted that issues of policing also needed to be looked at to address this problem.
- With regard to the Emergency Pull Chord, options with regard to links with a security system response system as well as concerns raised re misuse would be looked at and brought back to the Executive Member.
- Community Toilet Scheme. The commitment of the Executive Member was noted and the officer asked for clear guidance with regard to signage.
- Payment proposal. This would be looked at and any costs and other opportunities rather than cash would be brought back to the Executive Member for consideration.
- With regard to Council owned properties with toilet facilities and the Theatre Royal, that officers would talk to the theatre with regard to them joining the scheme.
- Lights in toilets. It was noted that coloured lighting in toilets had been removed, as this had been too dismal.

The Executive Member then welcomed the report but noted concerns with regard to progress on the review. She stated that the signage scheme needed to be the national scheme and that signposting needed to be implemented quickly. The Executive Member also noted the need for officers to investigate the issues raised with regard to the Radar Key scheme, unauthorised access to disabled toilets and the emergency chord/light buzzer. The Executive Member welcomed the paragraphs of the report concerning Changing Places and of talking to Housing and Adult Social Services with regard to the Radar Key. The Executive Member also noted the importance of getting the public sector involved in the toilet scheme.

Decision of the Executive Member

RESOLVED:

1. That the Executive Member notes the limitations in the use of both the hydraulic urinals and the mobile units and agrees the recommendation that work on these solutions be suspended.
 - Reason: To allow resources to be focused of the Community Toilet Scheme.
2. That the Executive Member agrees to the recommendation that a dedicated page on the Council's website be established for the public to report problems with specific facilities.

- Reason: To allow complaints to be monitored by site and use the data in support of decisions on any refurbishment programme.
3. The Executive Member notes the work needed on signage and believes that the national community toilet signage be adopted, and that a further report on this be brought back to the Executive Member in November 2009¹.
 - Reason: To ensure all parties have agreed with the types and locations of signs and how this supports the Community Toilet Scheme.
 4. The Executive Member agrees to further work being carried out to recruit businesses to the Community Toilet Scheme within any limitations identified with regard to signage and that details of the options be brought back to the Executive Member in November 2009².
 - Reason: To be able to approach businesses in the City following the agreement on the types and locations of signage.
 5. The Executive Member agrees to the continuation of the current charging arrangements at the Coppergate facility and agrees to the recommendation that the charging at this facility is suspended with the attendant being replaced by scheduled cleans, and that this be monitored.
 - Reason: To ensure the council meets its obligations under discrimination legislation.
 6. That the Executive Member considers the current arrangements for the charging for children and the age at which a free service is offered and agrees with the recommendation that all children under 12 and accompanied are free.
 - Reason: To establish a policy on the charging of children at facilities in the City.
 7. That ways should be considered to improve facilities in house and adding them to the capital programme, and that a further report on a partnership working with the private sector be prepared to make capital available immediately. This will require a charge to be made at all the facilities except disabled following redevelopment.
 - Reason: To improve the facilities on offer in the City.
 8. That consultation with the Older People's Assembly be undertaken with regard to this review³.
 - Reason: To ensure that the views of older people in York are taken into consideration in this review.
 9. That concerns about the use of the Radar Keys by people with disabilities be investigated with the Radar Key organisation, and that options with regard to the response to the Pull Chord emergency facility be investigated with a report back on both to the Executive Member in November 2009⁴.
 - Reason: To improve toilet facilities for people with disabilities.

Action Required

1. Report back on the adoption of the national toilet signage scheme to the Executive Member November 2009. KS
2. Report back on progress on the recruitment of businesses to the Community Toilet Scheme to the Executive Member in November 2009. KS
3. Consult with York Older People's Assembly with regard to the toilet review. KS
4. Investigate concerns with the Radar Key organisation and use of pull chord emergency facility and report back to the Executive Member November 2009. KS

Councillor Reid, Executive Member

[The meeting started at 4.00 pm and finished at 4.50 pm].