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Meeting	Corporate and Scrutiny Management Committee (Calling In)
Date	21 October 2013
Present	Councillors Galvin (Chair), Jeffries, McIlveen, Potter, Runciman (Vice-Chair), Steward, Riches (Sub for Cllr King), Barnes (Sub for Cllr Horton) and Burton (Sub for Cllr Fraser)
In attendance	Councillors Doughty, Levene, Reid and Richardson
Apologies	Councillors Fraser, Horton and King

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#### **18. Declarations of Interest**

At this point in the meeting, Members were asked to declare any personal interests not included on the register of interests, any prejudicial interests or any disclosable pecuniary interest which they might have in respect of the business on the agenda. No additional interests were declared.

#### **19. Public Participation/Other Speakers**

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme; however one Member of Council had requested to speak in respect of the winter maintenance review.

Councillor Doughty confirmed that following representations one concession had been made in his ward in relation to the winter maintenance programme, adjacent to the primary school. Concerns were raised however that no consultation had been undertaken with Strensall Parish Council. More general city wide concerns were expressed regarding the restrictive online survey which gave residents little choice. It was felt that basic, essential services were being cut affecting vulnerable residents and he asked that the decisions were referred back to the Cabinet Member for further consideration.

## 20. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 16 September 2013 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

## 21. Called In Item: Winter Maintenance Review For The 2013/14 Season

Members received a report which asked them to consider the decisions made by the Cabinet Member for Environmental Services at his meeting held on 9 October 2013, in relation to amendments to the winter maintenance services for the 2013/14 season. It was reported that this option had been chosen to address the majority of gritting route concerns following an analysis of the consultation data and in response to resident's feedback.

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

- The consultation on the proposed changes was inadequate. It was only available online so excluded residents who do not or cannot use the internet, there was limited choice, leading questions, and no room for "any other comments". Throughout the process there has been a consistent lack of proper engagement with residents on the proposed cuts.
- The key issues identified by residents, based on the comments from the consultation, were the concerns over cycle routes, elderly and vulnerable residents, and schools and shops. However, there is a lack of evidence that resources have been targeted to address these issues.
- The report confirms that the Council will be treating a lower percentage of the road network than our APSE family group and around two-thirds of salt bins will be lost.
- The consultation and approved report lacked information and were difficult to understand for

residents, residents groups or opposition councillors. They should have included:

1. List of current salt bins and a simple yes/no as to whether they will continue.
  2. List of primary gritting routes and a simple yes/no as to whether they will continue.
  3. List of secondary routes and a simple yes/no as to whether they will continue.
- It is difficult to understand how this can be a comprehensive winter maintenance report when salt bin provision by other organisations such as Parish Councils and Residents Associations or even by other parts of City of York Council (such as Housing and Parking) were not included.
  - The report talks about an “adopted criteria” for salt bins, but does not explain precisely what this criteria is, who approved it, or when it was approved.
  - We do not believe that even this criteria has been applied consistently – the report ignores the fundamental difference between gritting roads for traffic and providing self-help bins for pedestrians. Gritting a road does not help pedestrians and justifying the removal of another 8 bins because they are now on a PGR (Primary Gritting Route) is nonsense. Either a location meets the criteria or it doesn't.
  - Cllr Levene was quoted in the paper as saying that bins would be provided where there are schools, elderly people's homes and gradients. However, many of the bins being removed meet this criteria. Just taking the west of York this includes:
    - On inclines - Barkston Avenue, Chapelfields Road/Marston Avenue, Ridgeway, St Stephen's Mews, Grove Terrace/Front Street at the junction of Tadcaster Rd and Pulleyn Drive at the junction of Grantham Drive and Howe Hill Close.
    - At schools - loss of salt bin at Dringhouses School, loss of salt bin at

crossing patrol area on Askham Lane for Westfield Primary School, loss of salt bin at Carr School

- Furthermore, cuts will hit Elderly Persons accommodation near Abbeyfields House off Royal Chase, Vyner House and Gale Farm Court.
- Salt bins will be lost at key community facilities such as Acomb Explore and bus routes such as Woodlands/Straylands Grove in Heworth Without and the Middlethorpe Estate off Tadcaster Rd will be taken off Primary Gritting Routes.
- The CIA (Communities Impact Assessment) is unsatisfactory as it doesn't fully consider what the impact will be on vulnerable residents and doesn't take into account that large groups of residents were excluded from the consultation as it was online only.
- No proper cost analysis of the Snow Warden scheme is included despite the role this system will play in future winter maintenance provision. A breakdown of the cost of providing this scheme (equipment, training, etc) should have been included and then compared to the cost of providing salt bins.

Councillor Reid addressed the meeting on behalf of the Calling In Members. She expanded on the ten reasons given for the call in referring to the petition presented to Council on 10 October 2013. The petition had been signed by a number of residents opposed to the proposed cuts to the winter maintenance services whose signatories from across the city had now risen to 600. Reference was made to her Groups lengthy submissions to the Cabinet Member following which no changes had been made to the proposals. Concerns were also expressed at the criteria put forward for the provision of bins which did not appear to have been consistently applied.

Subsequently the decision had been called in by Cllrs Richardson, Doughty and Barton for the following reasons:

1. On the grounds that the consultation was by online access only, this excluded residents not online from taking part in what was a City Wide Consultation.
2. The proportion of roads gritted in Haxby and Wigginton under the plan (bus routes) do not provide protection to the 2958 pensioners who are vulnerable to injuries from slipping on ice. Residents need clear roads to access the bus services and to access the schools in the area. One of the four primary schools in the area, Wigginton Primary School, is by passed by the PGR.
3. The ward salt bins were provided on the grounds that a need was evident and the service was warranted. The practice of leaving bins empty is causing confusion with residents and infers Councillors and Officers have made incorrect decisions in the placing of salt bins.

Councillor Richardson spoke on behalf of the second group of calling in members making reference to the questionnaire which had only being available online, difficulties in accessing the survey and in viewing the accompanying maps. Reference was also made to the low response rates and the effects of the cuts on elderly residents.

Councillor Levene, as Cabinet Member for Environmental Services went through in detail the individual reasons given for the call in, pointing out that hard copies of the consultation document had been available on request. It was confirmed that publicity had been undertaken through press releases and contact with Parish Council's, Residents Associations and community groups with the consultation extended from 4 to 5 weeks. It was pointed out that school bus and less frequent bus routes had been reinstated for gritting and that the criteria for assessment of grit bin locations had also been agreed at his Decision Session. It was confirmed that Mill Lane adjacent to Wigginton Primary School would also now be gritted.

In answer to questions Officers provided details of the number of snow wardens confirming that recruitment was ongoing and that there were around 6 'adopted bins' provided around the city at a cost of £50 per bin. A copy of the technical/operational document, used to score criteria for provision of grit bins was circulated at the meeting. Officers confirmed that a copy of this would be provided for Members following the meeting together

with further information on the cost of the snow warden's scheme. <sup>1</sup>.

Members were then asked to decide whether to confirm the decision made by the Cabinet Member (Option A) or to refer it back to the Cabinet Member for re-consideration (Option B).

After a full debate, Cllr Potter moved and Cllr Riches seconded that Option A be confirmed and the Cabinet Members decision be confirmed.

Cllr Runciman then moved and Cllr Jeffries seconded that Option B be approved and the matter referred back to the Cabinet Member with a request that he reviews his decision to ensure that:

1. All deleted salt bins at schools, elderly persons homes, sheltered housing, community hubs (libraries and shops) and for pedestrian routes on a gradient are restored.
2. A review of remaining deleted bins is undertaken disregarding the gritting position on the nearby highway, taking into account the financing of the snow warden scheme, and corporate priorities for public safety and a thorough Communities Impact Assessment. That the outcome of this review is shared with Parish Council's, and Residents Associations to allow the prioritisation of local funding to consider those salt bins which might be deleted from the network.
3. Gritting routes are restored on all bus routes to ensure that they are able to keep running in the winter, and that communities do not have the threat of disconnection from public transport.
4. Cabinet reviews the equalities issues of conducting on-line only consultations in holiday periods.

On being put to the vote five Members voted for Option A to confirm the decision and four voted against for Option B and it was

Resolved: That Option A be approved and that the decision of the Cabinet Member be confirmed.

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

Action Required

1. Provide salt bin scoring document together with details of Snow Warden costs for Committee Members.

AB

Cllr J Galvin, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.00 pm and finished at 6.10 pm].

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