

ENVIRONMENTAL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD: 7 JULY 2011

Start: 7.30pm

Finish: 9.30pm

PRESENT:

Councillors: Mrs Blake (Chairman)

Councillors:	Ainscough	Hodson
	Mrs Atherley	McKay
	Baybutt	Mee
	Cheetham	Ms Melling
	Cropper	Mrs Pollock
	Delaney	Pye
	Gartside	Savage
	Hennessy	Mrs Stephenson

Officers: Assistant Director Regeneration and Estates (Mrs J Traverse)
Operational Support Manager, Street Scene Services (Mr P Samosa)
Assistant Street Scene Manager (Mr I Silverwood)
Environmental Protection and Community Safety Manager (Mr A Hill)
Planning Officer (Mr D Carr)
Principal Overview and Scrutiny Officer (Mrs C A Jackson)

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

2. MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4, Members noted the termination of membership of Councillor Pratt and the appointment of Councillor Cropper for this meeting only, thereby giving effect to the wishes of the Political Group.

3. URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of urgent business.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

5. DECLARATIONS OF PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of a Party Whip.

6. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Environmental Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 24 February 2011 be received as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

7. PRESENTATION - LITTER ACROSS THE BOROUGH

Members received a presentation from the Council's Assistant Street Manager in relation to a possible topic for review by the Committee on 'Litter Across the Borough'.

The presentation 'Litter Management' was supported by an handout, as contained on pages 23 to 25 of the Book of Reports, which gave an overview of the work undertaken by the Council in relation to the management and control of litter and other extraneous items such as fly-tipping, discarded on Council-owned land.

In his presentation the Assistant Street Manager explained that whilst litter management falls largely to the Street Cleansing Service other front line services also contribute to its removal to assist in the improvement of the environment. He also explained that the Street Scene Division provides an education programme to the local schools and other interested groups on request.

He then went on to explain the background to the street cleansing service provided and gave details of the types of discarded material collected from the streets and open spaces in West Lancashire, the processes involved in its removal and supplied statistics on fly tipping and other incidents related to the indiscriminate disposal of household and commercial waste.

Also detailed were the litter issues which are dealt with by the Council and the more recent working being undertaken which had addressed the dissatisfaction most often reported, including a more joined up approach to grass verge maintenance in partnership with Lancashire County Council.

Members asked questions and raised comments in relation to the following:

- The responsibilities of the Council, commercial and private Landowners in relation to discarded litter on their property.
- The sites and facilities at the mini-recycling units now operating in some of areas of the Borough.
- The measures in place to deter the disposal of commercial waste at household recycling centres.
- The problems associated with fly-tipping.
- The problems associated with controlling virulent weeds (for example Japanese Knotweed).
- The work of the "lenthsmen" within communities.
- Engagement with the wider community to encourage responsible behaviour in relation to the discardment and disposal of litter.
- Associated education initiatives.

The Operations Support Manager (Street Scene) and Assistant Street Scene Manager responded to the questions and comments raised and concluded the presentation by giving an explanation of the comprehensive monitoring and response that is being undertaken to maintain and improve the high standard of cleanliness and respond to the public's expectations in relation to the dealing with litter problems.

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It was also reported that working alongside and in support of the work of the Street Scene Division is the Council's Environmental Protection Enforcement Team.

Members then received a presentation from the Council's Environment and Community Safety Manager. He gave an overview of the enforcement side of the litter management operation, explaining that there are two strands to that operation one related to picking-up litter and the second to fly-tipping.

He then described the processes involved from the deployment of the Street Scene Officers and the work they undertake through to evidencing complaints to assist bringing individuals to account. He also spoke about the Fixed Penalty notices that can be issued and the additional support, in relation to enforcement, that is also provided by the community support officers. He then went on to explain some of the education initiatives that are provided and the recent involvement with voluntary "clean-ups" as part of Community Service Orders.

Members asked questions and raised comments in relation to the following:

- The schedule and number of patrols undertaken by Street Scene Officers and others in different parts of the Borough.
- Prosecutions related to litter thrown from vehicles and fly-tipping.
- Evidencing indiscriminate litter disposal.
- Associated education initiatives.

The Environment and Community Safety Manager responded to questions and explained the processes and problems associated with evidence gathering in order to bring successful prosecutions related to the wilful discarding of litter. He explained the work of the two Street Scene Officers including the work they, and others, undertake in the schools. He also cited details from the most recent survey undertaken with the People's Panel on the approach taken by the Council in relation to the environment issues raised which had shown that 96% of those surveyed were happy with the approach. He concluded his presentation with an explanation of the methods used, and the particular difficulties encountered in order to obtain evidence and bring about successful prosecutions in relation to vehicle and fly-tipping litter offences.

On behalf of the Committee the Chairman thanked the Officers for the informative presentations.

RESOLVED: That the presentations be noted.

(The Operation Support Manager (Street Scene), Assistant Street Scene Manager and Environment and Community Services Manager left the meeting following conclusion of this item.)

8. PRESENTATION - CYCLING IN WEST LANCASHIRE

Members received a presentation from one of the Council's Planning Officers, Mr Dominic Carr, in relation to a possible topic for review by the Committee on 'Cycling in West Lancashire'.

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The presentation 'Cycling in West Lancashire' was supported by an handout, as contained on pages 27 to 30 of the Book of Reports.

In the presentation the Planning Officer gave an update on what West Lancashire is doing to encourage cycling, exemplified through reference to its policies, studies, leaflets, promotions and work with neighbouring authorities. He also made reference to the policy areas relating to cycling within the Core Strategy Preferred Options, the West Lancashire Cycling Strategy and other cycling projects and referred to the successful bid to the Local Sustainable Transport Fund.

He gave an explanation of cycling routes already established in the Borough and the opportunities for cycling including the links with neighbouring Southport.

Mr Carr also made reference to the role of Lancashire County Council (LCC) and their responsibilities as the transport authority.

Members asked questions and raised comments in relation to the following:

- LCC's role, as the transport authority, in its promotion of cycling in the County.
- Use of Section 106 monies to promote cycling.
- Establishment of a Cycling Park.
- Edge Hill University's approach to cycling in and around its Ormskirk campus, including safe cycling routes between the town and campus.
- Approach to off-road cycling.
- The various representative bodies, including reference to the role of the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership (LEP), Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and its Thematic Group on Sustainable Transport.
- Accessing funding related to sustainable transport.
- The education initiatives available to encourage 'safe cycling'.
- The use of redundant railway tracks, trails, canal towpaths as cycling paths and other useable links between towns and villages.
- Cycling Benefits including its links to health and well-being and other initiatives including 'Cycling to Work'.
- Cycling links to industrial estates (work places) with nearby residential areas.
- The Cycling network, including promotion by visible signage of routes.
- The Recycling of bicycle initiative.

The Planning Officer responded to the questions and comments raised and concluded his presentation by referencing the opportunities referred to in the discussion in relation to cycling in the borough including:

- Encouraging Edge Hill University to promote cycling and related town centre issues.
- Section 106 Schemes, including a possible Cycle to Work/Education Scheme, cycling routes and the West Lancashire Community Recycling Service.
- Improvement of Cycling in Skelmersdale including links into the cycling network, improved signage and links to its employment areas.
- Possible Linear Parks.

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On behalf of the Committee the Chairman thanked the Planning Officer for the informative presentation.

RESOLVED: That the presentation be noted.

(The Planning Officer left the meeting following conclusion of this item).

9. REVIEW OF TOPICS 2011/12 AND CONFIRMATION OF WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to the report of the Director of Transformation as contained on pages 7 to 21 of the Book of Reports which contained details of the outcome of the scoring exercise undertaken by the Assistant Director Regeneration and Estates in consultation with the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Labour Group Spokesperson of the Committee on 16 June 2011.

The Chairman explained the process undertaken and referred to the results of the scoring exercise as detailed at Appendix A.

Following the presentations of the two topics that had scored the highest namely Litter Across the Borough and Cycling in West Lancashire, Members considered the proposal contained in the report, that either one or both of these topics be selected as review topics for 2011/12.

The view of the Committee was that following the very informative presentation in relation to Litter Across the Borough as detailed at Minute 7, that nothing further could be gained from undertaking an in-depth review on this subject during 2011/12.

In relation to the second topic that had scored the highest, namely Cycling in West Lancashire, it was felt that a review on this topic should be undertaken during 2011/12.

It was also the view of the Committee that it would be beneficial to undertake a visit to the West Lancashire Community Recycling Service as referred to in the presentation detailed at Minute 8. Further that an invitation should be extended to Mr Alasdair Simpson of Lancashire County Council's Environment Directorate to attend the next meeting of the Committee so that its Members can hear about initiatives available and work that is being undertaken, in the County in relation to sustainable travel, particularly those related to cycling.

- RESOLVED:
- A That the summary of the results of the scoring exercise (Appendix A) be noted and endorsed.
 - B That the presentations on the two topics that scored the highest (Litter Across the Borough and Cycling in West Lancashire) be received.
 - C That 'Cycling in West Lancashire' be the review topic for 2011/12 and be included on the Council's web-site and a Project Plan be prepared for submission to the next meeting of the Committee.

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- D That arrangements be put in place for an invitation to be extended to Mr Alasdair Simpson, Lancashire County Council Environment Directorate to attend the next meeting of the Committee.

- E That arrangements be put in place for a representative group from the Committee to visit the West Lancashire Community Recycling Service during the course of the review.

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Chairman