

Time commenced – 6.00pm
Time finished – 7.13pm

Communities Scrutiny Review Board

17 September 2018

Present: Councillor Naitta (Chair)
Councillors Afzal, Cooper, Nawaz, Peatfield

In Attendance: David Kinsey – Head of Highways and Grounds Maintenance
Steven Mason – Democratic Services Officer

09/18 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillors A Holmes, Hudson and Sandhu.

10/18 Late items introduced by the Chair

There were none.

11/18 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

12/18 Minutes of the meeting held on 20 August 2018

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 August 2018 were agreed as a correct record.

13/18 Highway Infrastructure Asset Management

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director of Communities and Place on Highway Infrastructure Asset Management. The report was presented by the Head of Highways and Grounds Maintenance.

It was reported that on 12 September 2018, Council Cabinet approved the adoption of a new Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Framework, Policy and Strategy.

Members noted that in October 2016, the UK Roads Liaison Group launched the new Well Managed Highway Infrastructure Code of Practice: October 2016. It was also noted that, commissioned by the Department for Transport (DfT), the Code promoted the adoption of an integrated asset management approach, providing appropriate levels of service and considering the needs of all road users. It was reported that local authorities had two years to implement the code, with the revised Policy and Strategy and a new Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Framework being pivotal to the Council's approach.

It was reported that the DfT Incentive Fund required authorities to have an up to date and approved asset management policy and strategy and that this should link with the Council's vision and objectives and provide all highway asset owners a clear 'line of sight' for implementing maintenance and improvements to the highway network and associated infrastructure.

It was noted that these documents also enabled the authority to maintain the optimum Band 3 status on the Incentive Fund self-assessment process, which secured the Council's funding allocation for maintenance improvements and demonstrated a maturity and continual improvement in asset management processes.

It was reported that not having the appropriate documents and practices in place would potentially cost the authority £186k per annum and the Council would lose its Band 3 status, which was the optimum position to secure its full funding allocation for maintenance improvements. It was also reported that this in turn would place pressure on other Council budgets to provide funding to address critically deteriorating highway assets and would also reduce the Council's chances of successful bids for funding if it could not demonstrate an asset management approach which had been adopted at a corporate level.

Members noted that the highway infrastructure assets in Derby were by far the Council's biggest asset and were valued at almost £2.8 billion. Members asked whether enough money was being spent to maintain and improve the highway network. It was reported that like any physical asset, the highway network required maintenance to manage deterioration and the Council must demonstrate that it had provided adequate provision for its upkeep and safety as could be reasonably expected.

It was reported that the highway network was subject to an annual inspection and every road was given a category of 1-5. Members requested that Information be circulated in relation to the 1 – 5 categories of roads and the numbers in each category.

Members asked how much it would cost to get all roads up to a reasonable standard. It was reported that it would cost £20 million and that it would take three years to complete the work. It was also reported that additional funding would then be required to keep it at that standard.

Members asked if the Council could maintain Band 3 status with current levels of investment. It was reported that the Council had to demonstrate that it was using investment in the most effective manner.

Members discussed emergency repair work. It was reported that the application of sound asset management principles took a long term view of how assets were managed and ensured that the limited available funds were spent on activities that prolonged the life, rather than expensive reactive repairs. It was also reported that this approach would deliver better value for money and maximise efficiency.

Members discussed the damage caused to the road network by bad weather. It

was reported that early intervention was critical to carry out such work as sealing cracks to prevent potholes.

Members discussed the A52 Wyvern Transport Improvements Scheme and the subsequent performance issues and some Members reiterated their calls for an internal investigation to be undertaken.

Members agreed that the relevant Cabinet Member should make representations to the Secretary of State to seek the £20 million additional funding required to bring the road network up to an acceptable level and that the response be reported back to the Communities Scrutiny Board.

Resolved:

- 1. to support the continuation of applying good asset management principles in accordance with implementing the new Well Managed Highway Infrastructure Code of Practice. This continued adoption of asset management will be the backbone to maintaining all highway infrastructure assets; and**
- 2. to request that the relevant Cabinet Member makes representations to the Secretary of State to seek the £20 million additional funding required to bring the road network up to an acceptable level and that the response be reported back to the Communities Scrutiny Board.**

14/18 Tree Management

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director Communities and Place on Tree Management. The report was presented by the Head of Highways and Grounds Maintenance.

It was noted that the report gave Members the opportunity to consider the Council's Tree Management Policy, attached at Appendix 2 of the report.

Members noted that in 2017/18, Council Cabinet approved some additional funding for the Arboriculture service and that this was required following several years of underfunding of the service. Members also noted that the underfunding had resulted in a build-up of case work, an extremely reduced ability to carry out routine inspections, difficulties allocating work to be completed and overspends to the budget.

Members noted that the Tree Management Policy, written in 2012, would shortly be revised and that at which time a Tree Management Strategy would also be prepared.

Members highlighted that leaf litter was a major concern to residents in their Wards. It was reported that the clearing of leaves was the responsibility of Street Cleansing but that this matter would be included in the review.

It was reported that the Council was struggling to recruit to the additional Arborist

team and that this was due in part to higher salaries being on offer in the private sector.

Members discussed light blocking and noted that the Council would not normally carry out work on trees to increase light and reduce shading. Members discussed the wider impact on residents, such as damp being caused in residential properties and antisocial behaviour. It was reported that the wording in the policy would be revised to reflect the wider impacts that light blocking could have.

It was agreed that the Communities Scrutiny Board should be involved in the review of the Tree Policy and the preparation of a Tree Management Strategy. Members were to be informed about how best they could input into this.

Members requested regular updates on the review of the Tree Policy and also requested that a future update should include a comparison of the salaries of Council arborists and their equivalents in the private sector.

Resolved:

- 1. to note the contents of the Tree Management Policy;**
- 2. to note what the additional funding will allow the service to deliver;**
- 3. to request that the Communities Scrutiny Board be involved in the review of the Tree Policy and the preparation of a Tree Management Strategy;**
- 4. to request regular updates on the review of the Tree Policy and preparation of a Tree Management Strategy; and**
- 5. to request that a future update on the Tree Policy should include a comparison of the salaries of Council arborists and their equivalents in the private sector.**

15/18 Work Programme for the 2018/19 Municipal Year

The Board received a report of the Chief Executive on Work Programme for the 2018/19 Municipal Year.

The report provided Members of the Board with the opportunity to consider and discuss its work programme for the 2018/19 municipal year.

Members agreed that the deferred items on Riverside Library and Libraries and the CML Process be put on the agenda for the meeting due to be held on 26 November 2018. It was also agreed that the item on Derby's Leisure, Culture and Tourism Strategy be moved from the November meeting to the meeting due to be held on 11 February 2018.

Members agreed that an item on City Centre Deep Clean be added to the agenda for the November meeting. Members also agreed that an item on Work Programme for the 2018/19 municipal year be added to all scheduled meetings of the Board.

Resolved to agree the amendments to the work programme for the 2018/19

municipal year as outlined at the meeting.

MINUTES END