

Environment Overview & Scrutiny Panel

Thursday, 10 November 2005

Present: Councillor McGowan (Chair) and Councillors D Dickinson, T Gray, Heaton, Miss Iddon, Livesey and M Lowe

05.ENV.33 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Counce and R Lees.

05.ENV.34 DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS

No Member declared an interest in relation to matters under consideration at the meeting.

05.ENV.35 MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the meeting of the Environmental Overview and Scrutiny Panel held on 6 October 2005 be confirmed as a correct record.

05.ENV.36 BUSINESS PLAN AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING FOR 2005/06 - FIRST QUARTER UPDATE

The Panel received the first quarter update of the Business Plans for the former Planning Services that had been deferred from the last meeting of the Panel.

The Panel **AGREED** to note the Business Plan for the period 1 April to 31 July 2005.

05.ENV.37 BUSINESS PLAN AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORTS - SECOND QUARTER UPDATES

The Panel received the second quarter updates of the Business Plans for the under mentioned services and functions falling within the remit and area of responsibility of the Panel.

Environmental Services
Public Space Services

The Panel received from the Head of Environmental Services the significant improvement in the Best Value indicator BV199a relating to street dirtiness (litter and detritus) resulted from inspections carried out by the Neighbourhood Wardens. The report covered the period of the enhanced recycling implementation phase two and the two months following. Recycling performance was above target and reflected seasonal variations due to garden waste collections showing the composted waste figure.

A higher than anticipated demand for additional containers for kerbside recycling in particular the collection of glass and paper had shown a significant increase in tonnages collected.

The Panel raised issues relating to flooding incidents caused by leaf fall.

The Panel noted that there had been an increase of incidents of fly-tipping in the area with an improvement in the Environmental Services performance for removal within 2 working days.

The Panel also received the Business Plan for Public Space Services with reference made to a pending consultation report on the management of the Council's cemeteries and the construction of the extension to the Cemetery.

The Panel **AGREED** 1) That the Business Plan update for the period 1 July to 30 September 2005 be noted.

2) That the Head of Public Space Services submit to the Panels meeting on 5 January 2006 a report on the background to the management of the Council's cemeteries service, prior to the submission of the Consultant's report referred to at the meeting.

05.ENV.38 ACCESSIBILITY OF CYCLING AS A LEISURE PURSUIT

The Panel received the findings and recommendations that had come out of the Panel's inquiry entitled "Accessibility of Cycling as a Leisure Pursuit".

RESOLVED – That the report and under mentioned recommendations be approved and forwarded to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration.

Aims/Objective

a) To highlight the areas of development and improvement

1. That those landowners who have shared user routes improve the environmental conditions by improving sight lines and visibility.
2. That the Council looks into the feasibility of creating short circular routes suitable only for families driving out to the country to take their children for a five mile ride as exists in National Parks and some Access Areas.
3. That the Council looks into the feasibility of creating a mountain bike trail in Rivington which would be a year round activity and would be good for the local economy.
4. That the Council looks into the feasibility of creating a purpose build off-road leisure track for youngsters and children in Yarrow Valley Park (Youths and youngsters with support to take over the design and maintenance of this facility which would enhance the vision that the Council is considering sports for all and encouraging children/youths to have a "Healthy Lifestyle".
5. That the Council looks into the feasibility of creating a safe cycle route along the Yarrow Valley and River Goit between White Coppice and Anglezarke.
6. That the Council examines ways to improve the publicity of existing routes.

Aims/Objectives

a) To reduce the confrontation between the various activities

7. That the Council facilitates the education of users by a Code of Conduct to focus on the rights and responsibilities of all user groups in order to reduce ambiguities concerning issues such as rights of way, passing etiquette, the increased use of bells, control of dogs and the recommended speeds that should be adjusted for safety and courtesy.
8. That those landowners who have shared use routes should have information panels to the access points detailing the Code of Conduct and a contact point to where comments, complaints and conflicts can be reported.
9. That the Council looks into the feasibility of funding cycling and proficiency schemes within the Borough. (NB already a LCC function via Education in Schools).

c) Aims/Objectives

To identify the current areas and can they be extended

10. That the responsible authority be requested to improve both off-road and the Sustrans route 55 through Chorley as well as developing the route through Chorley to join up the route from Preston to Wigan.
11. That the responsible authority be requested to complete the Sustrans route 55 as far as Adlington, to provide the connecting route via route 91 to the Rivington areas, as well as forming the primary route where other on/off road cycling schemes can join to form a hub in the future.
12. That the Council examines ways of better provision to encourage children to cycle to school; this would ease local traffic congestion. For example the off-road cycling scheme along Foxholes Road (near Tesco's supermarket), but stops abruptly at the roundabout where it matters. This scheme should be extended along Balshaw Lane; the road is wide enough, if the grass verge was used on both sides of the road. This needs some commitment, it has been done in many towns elsewhere.
13. Where an off-road scheme finishes the cyclist is left to rejoin the highway, by a halt sign, as in the design on the A6 at Cuerden and A581 at Euxton. A good design has been used in Blackburn.

05.ENV.39 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2005/06

The Panel received the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme and discussed the items relating to the Environment Panel.

Referring to the Panel's previous inquiry into flooding, flood prevention and contingency plans, Members asked what effect the termination of the Lancashire Highways Partnership would have on the contingency plans and standard of response in times of flooding.

RESOLVED – 1) That the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme be noted.

2) That the Head of Public Space Services submit a report to the Panels meeting on 5 January 2006 on the effects the termination of the Highways Partnership would have on the call-out and response to reported incidents of flooding.

Chair