

**THE "CALL IN" PERIOD FOR THIS SET OF MINUTES ENDS AT 12 NOON ON WEDNESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2010. MINUTE NO. 95 IS NOT SUBJECT TO "CALL-IN".**

**CABINET MEMBER - ENVIRONMENTAL**

**MEETING HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, SOUTHPORT  
ON WEDNESDAY 10 FEBRUARY 2010**

PRESENT: Councillor Tattersall

**92. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P. Hardy, Ibbs and D. Jones.

**93. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were received.

**94. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13 JANUARY 2010**

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet Member held on 13 January 2010 be confirmed as a correct record.

**95. REGIONAL COASTAL MONITORING PROGRAMME**

The Cabinet Member considered the report of the Head of Regeneration and Technical Services seeking approval to submit a grant application to the Environment Agency (EA) for the Regional Coastal Monitoring Programme and for Sefton to be the lead Authority for this project.

The report indicated that a comprehensive Regional Coastal Monitoring Strategy was developed for the area from Llandudno to the Solway Firth and was submitted to DEFRA for grant approval in 2005; that this subsequently received a one year grant approval for 2007/8 amounting to £230,000 and a three year approval for the period from 2008 to 2011 amounting to approximately £1.9m; that as the current lead Authority for the North West Region, Sefton was involved with the development of the coordinated application for Regional Monitoring for the period from 2011 to 2016; and that it was proposed that Sefton remained as the lead authority for the North West Region for the next five years of the programme should the application for grant aid be successful.

The report concluded that the grant application for the North West Region would be in the region of £3 million for the five year programme compared with a total cost of £27 million for all the English Regions; and that all expenditure relating to the Regional Monitoring Programme would be grant

aided at a rate of 100% and as such would have no direct implications on the Council budget.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet be requested to

- (1) approve the submission of the grant application for regional monitoring; and
- (2) approve that Sefton be the lead Authority for the project in the North West.

**96. REFUSE COLLECTION AND RECYCLING - CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR 2009/2010 CATCH-UP REPORT**

The Cabinet Member considered the report of the Environmental Protection Director advising of the outcome of the Christmas and new year refuse and recycling catch-up arrangements for the period 2009/10; and indicating that a decision on this matter was required in order to inform future decision making.

The report indicated that over the last 2 years a combination of calendars, stickers and leaflets/letters had been used to inform residents and businesses of the revised collections during the festive period; that for the Christmas period 2009/2010 it was agreed that a 'sticker' system should be used to communicate the revised collection days message to residents/businesses that had a bin collection service; and that letters, as used in the past, were distributed to properties that received the sack collection service.

The report detailed the revised collection arrangements for wheeled bins, colour banded sacks and dry recycling service/bring sites; and in particular how the weather disrupted the services during the period 5 to 19 January 2010.

The report concluded that to keep customers informed during the period of adverse weather, an update of the 'state of play' across the refuse collection and recycling services was provided to the contact centre on a twice-daily basis and the Council website was updated at least daily. Regular updates were also supplied to members in the Wards affected by the weather; and that many staff showed exceptional dedication to providing the service, going beyond what was expected, ensuring that collections were made wherever possible in extremely challenging conditions. Consequently despite all of the difficulties experienced normal grey/green collections re-commenced as planned from Tuesday 19 January 2010.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the issues that affected the refuse and recycling catch-up arrangements during the Christmas and new year 2009/10 period be noted; and

- (2) liaison be undertaken between the Cleansing and Highways Services to ensure the effective deployment of resources as part of the Winter Service Programme and thereafter a report be submitted to the Cabinet Member - Environmental.

## **97. CLEANSING SECTION - SERVICE PRESSURES**

The Cabinet Member considered the report of the Environmental Protection Director providing a summary of current issues that were likely to affect future performance of the Cleansing Service; and indicating that a decision on this matter was required to consider the issues identified and to acknowledge the impact such issues may have on future targets and objectives.

The report indicated that following a request by the Cabinet Member a presentation was made to Cabinet on 3 November 2005 outlining the status of the Cleansing Service. The presentation identified successes, areas requiring development and outlined proposals for any potential "growth" that might be considered within future budget setting processes; and that since then, the Cleansing Service had continued to operate on a fixed base budget (other than for annual pay awards and some inflation allocation) but had secured external funding to augment core service provision via the Working Neighbourhoods Fund, Housing Market Renewal Initiative, Step-Clever and the Waste Resources Action Programme.

The report identified specific elements of Cleansing Services, where agreed targets were not being achieved or where there was a significant risk of under-achievement, together with corrective measures that had been established or were being considered to address the situation, in relation to the following:

- street cleansing services - graffiti removal
- street cleansing services - Chapel Street, Southport
- street cleansing services - Southport Town Hall frontage/garden
- street cleansing services - cycle track
- street cleansing services - pilot/splitter islands
- waste collection services - refuse collection
- waste collection services - bulky collections

The report concluded that the Cleansing Service had worked hard over recent years to improve refuse collection, recycling and street cleansing services in an attempt to achieve local and national targets and produce a cleaner, safer, green Sefton. The combination of budgetary savings, reductions in external funding and new/increased demands as outlined in the report would make it increasingly difficult to sustain performance at current levels. Whilst every opportunity would be explored to identify and implement changes to current services and existing resource deployment in order to sustain or improve current performance, it was possible that

performance across the various service elements may suffer and agreed LAA targets not be achieved.

RESOLVED:

That the report on the potential impact of pressures on future performance and the measures that are being considered by Cleansing Services to address them within existing resources, be noted.

#### **98. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT "WALKABOUTS"**

The Cabinet Member considered the report of the Environmental Protection Director on the use of 'Walkabouts' by his Community Engagement Team to engage and encourage community participation; and indicating that a decision on this matter was required to raise awareness of 'Walkabouts' and their role in improving local environmental conditions and public involvement in service delivery.

The report indicated that an environmental Walkabout involved a planned inspection, "walking around" of an area looking for key environmental issues such as fly-tipping, litter, graffiti and dog fouling. It also encompassed wider areas of concern that those involved in the Walkabout wished to raise such as anti-social behaviour.

Anybody could participate in a Walkabout and a wide range of people did, including local residents; community representatives; Registered Social Landlords (RSL's); Councillors; Merseyside Fire Service; Merseyside Police; Cleansing; and Environmental Enforcement Officers. Other relevant Departments and individuals (e.g. Highways, Street Lighting, Network Rail, PCSO's etc.) were invited where a specific issue within their area of responsibility was known about.

The report concluded that once a Walkabout had been completed, the matters identified were referred to relevant partners; and that Walkabouts had proven to provide an effective means of community engagement, participation and partnership; and provided immediate and often sustainable solutions to local environmental issues and contributed to key performance indicators.

RESOLVED:

That the report on Community Engagement Walkabouts be noted and the continued use of Walkabouts as an effective means of facilitating community engagement, participation and public input into decision making and service delivery be approved.

**99. A BETTER DEAL FOR CONSUMERS : DELIVERING REAL HELP NOW AND CHANGE FOR THE FUTURE**

The Cabinet Member considered the report of the Environmental Protection Director advising of the White Paper “A Better Deal For Consumers: Delivering Real Help Now and Change for the Future” (the White Paper) published by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills in July 2009; and indicating that a decision on this matter was required to advise of the possible resource implications for the Trading Standards Section.

The report indicated that the White Paper set out the Government’s new, more active and strategic approach to financial and consumer markets by focusing on the following four key themes each of which were detailed in the report:

- Real help now for vulnerable consumers;
- A new approach to consumer credit;
- Empowering consumers through better enforcement and regulation; and
- Modernising consumer law.

The report concluded that the Trading Standards Section welcomed the White Paper and believed the measures contained in it would help boost consumer confidence; and looked forward to playing a key role in the consultation process. However it was important to be aware at an early stage of the potential resource implications for Sefton.

As an example of particular interest to those local authorities who oversaw the ports was the proposal to support product safety testing of imported goods at major ports. Whilst increasing the priority to be given to product safety enforcement was welcomed, how such enforcement was carried out needed to be particularly thought through. If the burden of testing all the goods coming through the container port was to fall on Sefton, the Trading Standards Service would be unable to cope with the imposed workload without significant additional resources, not only for testing but for the administration of such a testing regime.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report on the new White Paper “A Better Deal for Consumers: Delivering Real Help Now and Change for the Future” be noted; and
- (2) further reports be submitted as the consultation process progressed.

**100. A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO TEST PURCHASING AGE RESTRICTED PRODUCTS**

The Cabinet Member considered the report of the Environmental Protection Director advising of "A Practical Guide to Test Purchasing - A Practical Guide For Those Organisations Involved In The Conduct of Test Purchasing Operations Involving Young People And The Sale Of Age Restricted Products" (the Guide) published by LACORS in September 2009; and indicating that a decision on this matter was required as the control of age restricted sales had positive benefits for Community Safety and the health of young people; and that there was growing pressure from external organisations for the Council to increase the quantity of work in this important area.

The report indicated that local authorities had responsibility for the enforcement of legislation relating to the sale of age-restricted products such as tobacco, alcohol, knives and fireworks and that the participation of young people in test purchasing operations formed a valuable part of the local authority strategy designed to assess and maintain compliance with the legislation that dealt with age restricted products.

The report also detailed the main changes in the Guide; and the implications for the Trading Standards Section.

The report concluded that test purchasing exercises were resource intensive and responding to the increased level of underage alcohol sales in particular would place increased pressure of the limited resources available to the Trading Standards Service meaning the Trading Standards Manager had to prioritise test purchasing activities at the expense of other statutory duties.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report on a practical guide to test purchasing age restricted products be noted; and
- (2) the continued use of test purchasing operations involving young people to enforce the legislation relating to age restricted products be approved.

**101. REVENUE AND CAPITAL EXPENDITURE MONITORING TO 31 DECEMBER 2009**

The Cabinet Member considered the joint report of the Environmental Protection Director and the Acting Finance and Information Services Director, informing of the quarterly forecast position based on information as at 31 December 2009, in relation to the Portfolio's Revenue Budget and Capital Programme.

The report indicated the details of the Portfolio's budgets that were monitored and reported on the risk-assessed basis as set out in Annex A of the report as follows:

- Payroll Costs
- Commercial Waste External Income
- Dry Recyclable Collection Costs
- Merseyside Waste Disposal Authority Recycling Credits
- Sales of Materials

The Portfolio's current Capital Programme was set out in Annex B of the report.

The report concluded by inviting comments about the overall performance of the Portfolio's revenue budget to the Cabinet for consideration.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the progress on the Environmental Portfolio's revenue budgets that are subject to risk-based monitoring be noted; and
- (2) the progress made on the schemes within the Portfolio's elements of the Council's Capital Programme be noted.