

SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

Cabinet in the Community

Meeting held 25 February 2015 at Abbeydale Sports Club, Abbeydale Road South

PRESENT: Councillors Andrew Sangar (Chair, South West Local Area Partnership), Isobel Bowler, Ben Curran, Jackie Drayton, Jayne Dunn, Harry Harpham, Mazher Iqbal and Mary Lea

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1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

1.1 Councillor Andrew Sangar, Chair of the South West Local Area Partnership, welcomed members of the public to the meeting and introduced the Cabinet Members, who gave a brief overview of their areas of responsibility.

2. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Question 1 Jo Meaney submitted a question prior to the meeting, requesting comments on the poor quality of the blue box used for recycling, specifically the top to the box, which she considered was made of poor quality material, which perished quickly, or blew off easily, resulting in the contents of the box being blown across the street. A member of the public questioned why Veolia don't carry spare tops for the boxes, when out collecting, and either replace those they considered to be in poor condition or provide new ones to those residents who requested them, as this would save on delivery costs.

Answer 1 Councillor Jayne Dunn, Cabinet Member for Environment, Recycling and Streetscene, accepted that the quality of the material used for the tops of the boxes was not the best and that, due to the significant financial pressures facing the Council, there were no immediate plans to change the box for a bin, or look at using better-quality material for the tops. However, anyone wishing to request a new top, could request one, free of charge, and delivered to their homes, by calling 2734567 (Option 1). The suggestion regarding Veolia carrying spare tops to the boxes would be referred to the Company for consideration.

Question 2 Jo Meaney submitted a further question prior to the meeting, on the issue of traffic speeds on Long Line, requesting traffic-calming measures, such as creating three narrow passing points, as part of the proposed resurfacing works, which would not only slow down traffic speeds, but also make it safer for people walking or cycling up and down the road.

Answer 2 Councillor Jayne Dunn stated that the Council's Street Ahead programme of road maintenance would see the vast majority of roads and footpaths in the City brought up to an improved standard. However, the programme in itself only replaced and repaired what was already there, so any

modification and alterations would have to be funded separately by the Council. The Council was looking to co-ordinate all new highway works with the zoned maintenance work as part of the programme, which would mean that all new requests for highway improvements would be assessed and prioritised to align with Amey's programme unless unusual or urgent circumstances indicated the need for immediate action. The request would be added to the City-wide list of requests for highway improvements. However, although Long Line was due for Streets Ahead maintenance later this year, those requests which were able to be included next year had already been assessed and prioritised and, unfortunately, this did not include Long Line. Therefore, regrettably, the requested changes would not be able to be made at this time. In addition, the Council constantly monitored accident statistics to ensure that the most hazardous locations were prioritised for road safety funding.

Question 3 A member of the public questioned when the 20 mph limit was to be implemented on Church Lane, Dore.

Answer 3 It was believed that, although a request had been made for the introduction of the limit, based on the assessment criteria, the 20 mph zone was not to be implemented as part of the latest programme of works. Following concerns raised in connection with lack of enforcement of traffic speed limits, Councillor Harry Harpham, Cabinet Member for Homes and Neighbourhoods, indicated that the majority of motorists stuck to the indicated speed limits, and were likely to slow down when they noticed 20 mph signs.

Question 4 Paul Hyde questioned whether improvements could be made to the No. 98 bus service, and queried whether the Council had an influence over First South Yorkshire, in connection with any potential improvements.

Answer 4 Councillor Harry Harpham stated that as First South Yorkshire operated as a commercial business, the Council could only make requests of the Company in terms of changes and improvements to its operations.

Question 5 A member of the public questioned whether a Section 106 agreement had been signed with the developers in respect of the Mercia site, Furniss Avenue, and if it was the case, how such monies would be spent.

Answer 5 Councillor Harry Harpham stated that the Council was doing all it could to encourage developers to build affordable housing in the City, due to the shortage of such housing. However, it was not always commercially profitable for developers. There were no details in terms of Section 106 monies in respect of this particular site, so investigations would be made and a response provided to the questioner.

Question 6 Frank Morrison referred to the economic pressures facing the Council and questioned which cuts had been the most difficult for each of the Cabinet Members to make.

- Answer 6**
- (a) Councillor Harry Harpham – Bedroom Tax
 - (b) Councillor Isobel Bowler – The most difficult, in terms of its profile and effect on the local community, was the decision to close Stocksbridge Leisure Centre. Other difficult cuts, which were less high profile, included reductions to Activity Sheffield's budget
 - (c) Councillor Jayne Dunn – Grit bins/volunteer Snow Wardens
 - (d) Councillor Ben Curran – Staff cuts and being forced to increase Council Tax
 - (e) Councillor Jackie Drayton – Staff cuts and cuts to the Youth Service
 - (f) Councillor Mazher Iqbal – Staff cuts, re-organisation of the Library Service and cuts to the Advice Service
 - (g) Councillor Mary Lea – Adult Care/Home Care Workers

Question 7 David Heward submitted a question prior to the meeting, querying whether there were programmes to deal with problems currently being experienced in the High Storrs/Greystones area, including the cleaning of roads and pavements, the clearing of blocked drains and repairs to a number of damaged grass verges, on a regular basis. A member of the public questioned why residents were not able to contact their nominated Streets Ahead Steward to report any problems regarding Streets Ahead works in their area.

Answer 7 Councillor Jayne Dunn stated that members of the public were urged to report any highway issues to the Council, via 2734567, so that they could be addressed as soon as possible. As well as reacting to calls from the public, there were programmes of regular maintenance, including road sweeping and drain cleaning. With regard to the Streets Ahead Stewards, Councillor Dunn stated that, whilst the Stewards were still active, it was not their role to be a point of public contact. As part of the current reporting process, herself and other Members were kept fully aware of all the issues under the programme, which enabled them to monitor Amey's performance and, consequently take any action against the Company, including financial penalties, in some cases.

Question 8 A member of the public (a non-residential carer) submitted a question prior to the meeting, querying whether, in the light of the proposed changes to Direct Payments, the Cabinet agreed with taking away a person with disabilities' ability to have a clean house, washed clothes and washed pots and therefore, the health benefits of a clean home environment.

Answer 8 Councillor Mary Lea, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, stated that when the Council assessed or re-assessed a person or a carer's needs for adult care and support, it considered their ability to complete domestic tasks. In relation to carers, the Council considered what the impact of their role was on their ability to carry out domestic tasks and where a person or

carer was eligible for support with domestic tasks, the Council would meet that need. This need would be met either by arranging that support or making a direct payment to enable that need to be met, with the amount of support provided being based on the individual circumstances of each case.

Question 9 A member of the public (again a carer of a person with disabilities) submitted a further question prior to the meeting, querying whether the Cabinet considered, as fair, the Disability Adaptions Unit's policy of only paying for/installing one access ramp to an adapted property, thereby denying people the ability to sit out in their back gardens.

Answer 9 Councillor Mary Lea stated that access to the garden was not covered by Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) legislation originally and, following a review of this legislation in 2008, Councils were asked to consider access to gardens, although there was no new funding to pay for this. The guidance provided examples of what would constitute a garden area, and this included a small patio or front garden area and following this, the Equipment and Adaptations Service reviewed its policy and now considers access to a garden area as part of their assessment of residents in the City. In practice, this may mean that the Council would ensure that a ramp to the front access might also allow access on to a path to a garden area. There were properties where a second ramp may be desirable, for instance to provide access to a back garden area. Officers would assess if this was reasonable and practical. Although rare, second ramps have been provided, especially in cases where there was a child or parent with disabilities, in order to support access to family life. There would obviously be some properties where it was not technically possible to provide a ramp, including to gain access to a garden. This interpretation was applied across all tenures, including Council properties, even though they were not covered by DFG legislation. Whilst the Council considered access to a garden area as described above, access within the garden had always been considered the responsibility of the tenant or homeowner. The Equipment and Adaptations Service do not provide additional adaptions for fire escape and many properties in Sheffield only had one access and, if this was ramped, it would provide reasonable access/egress to the property. In terms of a person's right to challenge any decisions, if they were not satisfied, they could request the Council to review its decision as part of the 'Look Again' process. In addition to this, the needs of people registered with the Service were reviewed on an annual basis.

Question 10 Alison Thorpe submitted a question prior to the meeting, referring to the lack of a suitable footpath adjacent to Fulwood Lane, from Porter Clough car park towards Ringinglow Village, a distance of approximately one third of a mile, and which formed part of Sheffield's Round Walk. This stretch of footpath was very narrow and was much used by pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders, and Ms Thorpe queried whether the Council could make improvements to this stretch of footpath.

Answer 10 Councillor Isobel Bowler, Cabinet Member for Culture, Sport and Leisure, stated that, whilst the request for a new/improved footpath would be added to the list of similar requests for consideration, it was not likely, particularly in the current financial position and, the fact that there was little pedestrian traffic on this particular stretch of footpath, that the expense of carrying out such improvements could be justified at this time.

Question 11 Alison Thorpe submitted a further question prior to the meeting, querying what steps the Council would be taking to ensure the new 7.5 tonne vehicle weight limit was adhered to on the roads connecting the A57 with the A625.

Answer 11 Councillor Harry Harpham stated that enforcement of the HGV restriction, currently being introduced in the Mayfield Valley, was the responsibility of the Police. The Council had no resources to monitor the situation, but if it was informed abuse was taking place, which included details of when and where and if possible, the operator of the vehicles, then the Council could pass this information on to the Police. It would then be up to the Police to make a decision in terms of deploying their own resources to undertake any required enforcement. If any vehicles could be identified, the Council could contact the companies directly and inform them that their details would be passed on to the Police and the Traffic Commissioner if they continued to abuse the regulations, which could act as a deterrent to further abuse.