

GROUNDS MAINTENANCE TASK GROUP  
NOTES OF A MEETING HELD IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM, THE COUNCIL HOUSE,  
BURCOT LANE, BROMSGROVE, ON TUESDAY, 30TH NOVEMBER 2004, AT 5.30 P.M.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors Mrs. J. M. Boswell, Miss D. H. Campbell and Mrs. C. J. Spencer.

Ms. L. Waller – Corporate Director (Services)  
Mr. S. Bedford – Acting Head of Depot Services

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs. J. D. Luck, P. M. McDonald and D. McGrath.

2. **GENERAL**

As a matter of record, the Group were reminded of the circumstances leading up to this meeting whereby it had been agreed that there would be a review of the findings from the previous task and finish exercise completed in January 2004 after twelve months. It was further reported that, following the recent referral of a couple of related Notices of Motion from the Council to the Health and Leisure Scrutiny Committee, it had since been recommended that the former Grounds Maintenance Task Group be re-constituted, with a slightly broader remit, to consider such issues.

In discussing a way forward in this regard, Members were advised that since that decision was taken the Council had now produced a Draft Recovery Plan (drafted in accordance with the terms laid out under its Voluntary Engagement arrangements), which (inter-alia) acknowledged that the Depot had had deep seated and significant management, financial, staffing and service problems over a number of years, and which had been formally identified in past reviews, i.e., Best Value Review 1999 (conducted by Capita), the Audit Commission Inspection 2000, and the Council's own Best Value review completed in March 2004. As part of the Draft Recovery Plan the Audit Commission would be conducting a 40-day inspection covering the refuse and recycling services, waste management and street cleansing functions. For its part, the Council would be undertaking a thorough business and financial review which would result in comprehensive budget systems and an operational Business Plan for the Depot being in place for the financial year 2005/06. However, it was also acknowledged that there was an urgent need to review the Trade Waste, Grounds Maintenance and Street Cleansing Services.

In this regard, reference was made to Performance and Services Improvement (PSI) Categories 2, 3 and 4 of the Draft Recovery Plan – to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Refuse and Recycling Services, the Trade Waste Service, and the Grounds Maintenance and Street Cleansing Services respectively (see attached sheets) – and, accordingly, it was **AGREED**

- (i) that, subject to a representative of this Group being co-opted to serve on the Management Working Group established to consider these issues, this Group be disbanded on the basis that there would be an unnecessary duplication of both work and time for Officers and Members alike;
- (ii) that the following points be forwarded to the Management Working Group for their consideration:
  - Roundabouts – Improve appearance/maintenance (Community Service?)
  - Grass Cuttings – collection
  - Roadside Nettles/Weeds – alternative planting?
- (iii) that regular progress reports from the Management Working Group be submitted to the Health and Leisure Scrutiny Committee prior to final proposals being submitted for approval by the Executive Cabinet.

The Meeting closed at 6.30 p.m.

Recovery Plan Theme:

Performance and Services Improvement

Reference: PSI - 2

Responsible Officer:

Corporate Director - Services

Proposed action:

To improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the refuse and re-cycling services

Stakeholders:

Residents, staff, local business, parish Councillors and elected Members

Inter-connections and benefits to other areas of work	Methodology	Target	Lead Officer/s	Resources	Improvement Measure	Risks
<p><b>Recovery Plan actions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modernisation &amp; Cultural change</li> <li>• Corporate Management</li> <li>• Political Priorities</li> </ul> <p><b>Other Gov't issues: e-Government targets 05</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local PSA targets 05</li> <li>• National Priority outcomes 05</li> <li>• Creating Sustainable Communities</li> </ul> <p><b>Other B.D.C. strategies / plans</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance Management</li> <li>• Corporate Plan</li> <li>• Community Plan</li> <li>• Community Safety Strategy</li> </ul>	<p>Establish Working group Commence review of refuse services, round structure, contracts, plant, working practices, PR, complaints management</p>	Sep 04	Portfolio Holder CD - S Head of Depot	<p>An application to the capacity fund will be made for additional accountancy expertise, for the fees for NVQ training for the financial officer within the clerical team and for training in project management and customer care.</p> <p>Officer and member time</p>	Budgetary control	Capacity Bid not successful
	<p>Establish business processes and budget control</p>	Nov - March 05	Head of Finance		Business plan and budget for 05/06	Lack of budget information
	<p>Assign and train a Financial Assistant from the existing clerical team</p>	Oct 04	Head of Finance		Less complaints to the depot, elected Members and to parish Councillors	Lack of co-operation from staff and crews due to low staff morale
	<p>Project Management training for management team</p>	Oct 04	Head of Finance		Positive press coverage	Resistance to re-cycling from residents
	<p>Customer care training for admin team and call centre staff</p>	Oct 04	Head of Finance		Pride in modernised service	Time spent fire-fighting
	<p>Procurement training for senior managers</p>	Oct 04	Head of Finance		25% household waste re-cycled by 05/06	
<p>Prepare with WCC long term Waste Management Strategy</p>	Sept - Dec 04	Head of Finance				
<p>Hold monthly meetings with ground crews and address their concerns - continue on quarterly basis</p>	On-going	Head of Finance				

Recovery Plan Theme:

Performance and Services Improvement

Reference: PSI - 3

Responsible Officer:

Corporate Director - Services

Proposed action:

To improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Trade Waste Service.

Stakeholders:

Residents, staff, local businesses, parish Councillors and elected Members

Inter-connections and benefits to other areas of work	Methodology	Target	Lead Officer/s	Resources	Improvement Measure	Risks
<p><b>Recovery Plan actions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modernisation &amp; Cultural change</li> <li>• Corporate Management</li> <li>• Political Priorities</li> </ul> <p><b>Other Gov't issues:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• e-Government targets 05</li> <li>• Local PSA targets 05</li> <li>• National Priority outcomes 05</li> <li>• Creating Sustainable Communities</li> </ul> <p><b>Other B.D.C. strategies / plans</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance Management</li> <li>• Corporate Plan</li> <li>• Community Plan</li> <li>• Community Safety Strategy</li> </ul>	<p>Commence review of trade waste services, round structure, contracts, plant, working practices, PR, complaints management</p> <p>Establish business processes and budget control</p> <p>Develop proposal to meet unmet need and to possibly expand the business</p> <p>Hold monthly meetings with ground crews and address their concerns – continue on quarterly basis</p>	<p>Jan 05</p> <p>Feb - March 05</p> <p>April 05</p> <p>Jan - April 05</p> <p>On-going</p>	<p>Portfolio Holder CD – S Head of Depot</p> <p>Working group</p> <p>CFM</p>	<p>An application to the capacity building fund will be made for additional accountancy expertise, see PSI - 5</p> <p>Officer and member time</p>	<p>Budgetary control</p> <p>Business plan for 05/06</p> <p>Less complaints to the depot, elected Members and to parish Councillors</p> <p>Improvement in press coverage</p>	<p>Capacity Fund Bid not successful</p> <p>Lack of budget information</p> <p>Lack of co-operation from staff and crews due to low staff morale</p> <p>Lack of co-operation from WCC and BDHT</p> <p>Time spent fire-fighting</p>

Recovery Plan Theme:

Performance and Services Improvement

Reference: PSI - 4

Responsible Officer:

Corporate Director - Services

Proposed action:

To improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the grounds maintenance and street cleansing services

Stakeholders:

Residents, staff, local businesses, parish Councillors and elected Members

Inter-connections and benefits to other areas of work	Methodology	Target	Lead Officer/s	Resources	Improvement Measure	Risks
<p><b>Recovery Plan actions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modernisation &amp; Cultural change</li> <li>• Corporate Management</li> <li>• Political Priorities</li> </ul> <p><b>Other Gov't Issues:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• e-Government targets 05</li> <li>• Local PSA targets 05</li> <li>• National Priority outcomes 05</li> <li>• Creating Sustainable Communities</li> </ul> <p><b>Other B.D.C. strategies / plans</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance Management</li> <li>• Corporate Plan</li> <li>• Community Plan</li> <li>• Community Safety Strategy</li> </ul>	<p>Commence review of ground maintenance and street cleansing services partnerships/contracts, plant, working practices, PR, complaints management</p>	<p>Feb 05</p>	<p>Portfolio Holder CD – S Head of Depot</p>	<p>An application to the Capacity Building Fund will be made for additional accountancy expertise, see PSI - 5</p> <p>Officer and member time</p>	<p>Budgetary control</p> <p>Business plan for 05/06</p>	<p>Capacity Fund Bid not successful</p>
	<p>Develop proposals to improve partnership working with WCC, BDHT and other partners.</p>	<p>March/April 05</p>	<p>Working group</p>		<p>Less complaints to the depot, elected Members and to parish Councillors</p>	<p>Lack of budget information</p>
	<p>Develop proposal to improve the service provided to the public and parish Councils and in particular the management of complaints that cut across BDC, WCC and BDHT</p>	<p>May/June 05</p>	<p>CFM</p>		<p>Improvement in press coverage</p>	<p>Lack of co-operation from staff and crews due to low staff morale</p>
<p>Hold monthly meetings with ground crews and address their concerns – continue on quarterly basis</p>	<p>Sept – Dec 04 (monthly) On-going</p>				<p>Time spent fire-fighting</p>	