

**REGENERATION AND TECHNICAL  
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
Monday 24<sup>th</sup> February 2010**

**PRESENT** – *Councillor McGarvey (in the Chair); Councillors Browne, Tapp, Kay, Mike Johnson, Mulla K. Foster and Maxfield.*

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:**

Cllr Cottam	- Executive Member Regeneration
Adam Scott	- Strategic Director for Regeneration
Peter Hunt	- Director for Regeneration
Tom Stannard	- Lead Officer
John Addison	- Scrutiny Officer

**RESOLUTIONS**

**32 Welcome and Apologies**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies were received by Councillor Surve.

**33 Minutes of the Meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2009**

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the meeting held on the 7<sup>th</sup> December 2009 be received and signed.

**34 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made.

**35 Work of the Executive**

The Executive Member for Regeneration was invited to give the Committee a brief overview and update on performance data for his Portfolio, and to highlight any future decisions that he may be taking between this Committee and the Committee's next meeting to be held in March 2010.

Members were also provided with a budget position statement for the Regeneration portfolio, which included progress on the efficiency reviews and the overall budget position for the department from the last financial year.

The Committee considered the performance data for the Regeneration Portfolio, the forward plan relating to the portfolio and the current position in relation to the budget.

The Executive Member reported to the Committee that his department's budget efficiencies were on target for the year as well as providing the Committee with a break down of each efficiency target.

Members held a discussion with the Executive Member around the Tithebarn project that the Council had objections against. Members were informed that the Tithebarn project was currently being revised but the Council still had reservations about the project and would reconsider its position once it saw the revised projects. It was noted that the Council had appointed a number of barristers to represent the Council's objections to the Tithebarn Project.

**RESOLVED:**

That the report be noted.

**36 Response to Sever Adverse Weather**

The Director for Regeneration and Environment provided Members with a report that outlined how the Council had coped with the recent bad weather and what future lessons the Council could learn from it.

It was noted that the report provided a factual position about the Council's winter maintenance policy and gave an account of the problems encountered from the middle of December through to January 2010.

Members were informed that in a period widely acknowledged to have been the worse weather conditions for around 30 years the Council had been successful in maintaining the primary road network throughout this prolonged winter period. It was reported that the primary network was always treated and that the Council had also responded to police requests for any grit and all safety issues to be dealt with within reasonable timescales.

Members were informed that the winter maintenance budget was approximately £240,000 per annum with the Council's starting grit salt stock in November 2009 being 2700 tonnes, the highest starting grit stock the Council had stored, as 2200 tonnes is the previous norm. It was reported that this was 200 tonnes over the designated capacity of the grit salt barn.

The report covered a number of areas that included gritting routes. The Council gritted 35% of the road network which was reported to be higher

than the required amount. It was reported that the Council had made a few mistakes during the bad weather, but as the bad weather was nationwide it would have made little difference to gritting levels as there was a national shortage of grit salt.

The report further outlined salt ordering, effects of lack of salt, routes the Council gritted and why, footpath gritting and a summary of the events during December 2009 and January 2010.

Members held a detailed discussion with the Executive Member and Officers on how the Council had coped delivering its services during the bad weather and concerns Members had received from residents about the gritting of roads.

It was reported that if temperatures dropped below minus ten, the effects of gritting roads was not effective, like wise once a road had been gritted, it was necessary that they be driven on in order to churn the grit into the roads.

In response to a question about how much per gritting a route cost the Council, the Executive Member informed the Committee that he did not have the exact figures, but it cost the Council £240,000 per annum to grit the roads.

The Committee held a discussion with the Executive Member around Salt Bins and hand gritting of roads and pavements in the Borough. Members were told that Salt Bins were filled whenever possible but as the poor weather continued, the priority was roads.

It was reported that some areas of the Borough where hand gritted during the period of bad weather, if the gritting machines where unable to get to certain areas. Members felt that Officers should look into the Council's policy of Salt Bins, the number of Bins in the borough and how often they should be filled.

Members then held a detailed discussion around how the Council order salt, the process it used and what the Council did to try and obtain more salt. Members were reminded that at the start of the bad weather the Council's grit reserves were almost full and due to a partnership scheme with other authorities if the Council had stocked piled more salt it would have been required to share its salt.

It was reported that as the bad weather continued to affect the whole country, salt was being prioritised on a needs bases. It was further reported that the Council had benefited from its share agreement with other Authority's as the Council had browed 100 tons of Salt from Lancashire County Council.

Members agreed that during the bad weather, the Committee wished to express its thanks to the Councils staff for its hard work and dedication during a difficult period.

**RESOLVED:**

That the report be noted.

**37 Progress on the re-development of the Markets**

The Executive Member provided the Committee with a brief verbal overview and update on the redevelopment of Blackburn Market. Members then held a discussion with the Executive Members and Officers on the current position of the Market.

Members were informed that at the next Executive Board there would be an update on the Markets development that would cover in depth its future direction. It was noted that after the Executive Board an update would be provided for the Committee.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Executive Member be thanked for his update.

**38 Committee Visits**

The Chair provided Members with an update on the ongoing work by the Committee.

Members held a round table discussion on recent visits and information gathering from the business advice centres and Blackburn and Darwen Markets.

**RESOLVED:**

That the update be noted.

Signed.....  
Chair of the meeting at which the Minutes were signed

Date.....