

## **STREETS AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2014 at 7:10pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Katherine Street, Croydon.**

### **EXTRACT FROM MINUTES – PART A**

**Present:** Councillor Sean Fitzsimons (Chair)  
Councillors Karen Jewitt, Michael Neal, Stephen Mann, Paul Scott and Donald Speakman

Also in attendance: Councillors Kathy Bee, Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment and Robert Canning, Deputy Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment.

#### **A34/14 FOLLOW-UP ON SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS: STREET LIGHTING PFI CONTRACT (agenda item 7)**

Those present for this item:

- Councillor Kathy Bee, Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment
- Councillor Robert Canning, Deputy Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment
- Anthony Brooks, Director of Environment
- Steve Iles, Head of Highways and Parking Services

It was agreed to amend paragraph 1 of the Executive Summary of the draft Committee report (attached as an appendix to AR07) which referred to the street lighting replacement programme which took place in 2005-06. This earlier street lighting programme was well planned, delivered on time and to budget and it was agreed that this should be reflected in the report.

Councillor Sean Fitzsimons stated that a number of concerns expressed at the meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2014 about light pollution and light spillage into bedroom windows had been largely resolved as a result of the walkabout (4<sup>th</sup> November 2014). He added that once installed the new street lights were excellent and a huge improvement on the old system. However he stated that there were issues with the delivery of the Core Investment Programme and the ongoing performance of Skanska and UK Power Networks.

With regard to the contract monitoring process the Chair confirmed that the Committee was looking for the contractors to deliver what they had signed up to and for the Joint Street Lighting Committee to ensure that its scrutiny of the delivery of the contract was transparent and better than anodyne. He added that he believed that the Committee had reservations about the decision to allow the contractors to bring forward work from years 4 and 5 (parts of East

and West Coulsdon) as it was perceived that a trail of unfinished work was being left behind as trickier installations were not being completed.

Members made a number of comments during this update item including that:

- There was a perception that Skanska was failing to deliver the contract effectively
- That the work programme for the Core Investment Programme had been developed to reduce street crime and anti-social behaviour, better road safety and an improved night time economy and environment in priority order and that to bring wards forward flew in the face of this
- That risk and responsibility for street lighting services had been transferred to Skanska, it did not seem to have accepted either and that more pressure needed to be applied
- Wards where the work was well underway had roads which were complete, roads where new columns were installed but not lit and roads that had seen no work at all and that Skanska needed to complete this work as a matter of priority
- There was now a better understanding about why stumps were left behind, in some instances for a long time, but that the notices on the stumps were not clear enough
- A member of the Committee reported that his residents had positive experiences to report, that Skanska had taken on board comments about where columns should be positioned, they were approachable and listened to what residents had to say

The Committee heard from the Director of Environment and the Head of Highways and Parking Services that:

- Officers were working hard to put Skanska in a position to deliver the Core Investment Programme and that they believed that the outcome would be excellent street lighting provision in the Borough
- Risk has been successfully transferred to the contractor
- Contract monitoring has been amongst the best carried out by the council, the contractor has been called to account a number of times and significant payments have been withheld as a result
- Work has not stopped in areas where work has been partially completed and the contractor was investing in additional resources to catch up on delivery of the Core Investment Programme
- A huge amount of work was being done to redesign lighting schemes to avoid shutdowns to the UK Power Network as this speeded up the process and reduced disruption to residents
- High level discussions with Skanska and UK Power Networks continued to take place in order to reduce delays to the delivery of the Core Investment Programme and there have been improvements
- The Core Improvement Programme is likely to be delivered 6-months late based on current forecasts
- UK Power Networks could be pressured to push ahead with stump removals but taking stumps out too soon increases the risk of longer shutdowns

- The communications strategy is being reviewed, monthly updates are being sent to ward Councillors and there is work underway to move the forward work programme to a better, more visible site on the website
- A draft variable lighting policy is under development to cover “dimming and trimming” with the aim of setting out where and when street lights can be dimmed or turned off in the future to save energy. The policy is needed as street lights are important in the prevention of crime and for managing fear of crime and it may be appropriate to turn lights up in the town centre, for example.

**RESOLVED – To:**

- Refer its amended report to the Cabinet and the Croydon and Lewisham Joint Street Lighting Committee for consideration and a response to its conclusions and recommendations
- Express its concern that the Core Investment Programme work programme, which had been prioritised across wards in the borough to help deliver better road safety, an improved night time environment and economy and to help reduce street crime and anti-social behaviour, had been amended to bring forward ‘easy-to-complete’ wards while work in high priority wards had not been completed
- Ask officers to maintain pressure on the contractor to complete street lighting implementation in wards where work was already underway as soon as possible
- Note that the council is effectively monitoring the contract and that Skanska Laing is being penalised financially on an on-going basis for delays in delivering the Core Investment Programme
- Express its concerns about the detrimental effect the delays in delivering the Core Investment Programme is having on residents and that this can be directly attributed to Skanska Laing and UK Power Networks
- Seek an apology to the residents of Croydon from Skanska Laing for the delays and disruption they have caused in the delivery of the Core Investment Programme
- Refer the Street Lighting PFI Contract back to scrutiny for a further update and report on progress in 2015/16 with a particular emphasis on seeking information about on-going delays, wards completed, stump removal, joint working between Skanska Laing and UK Power Networks in delivering the street lighting replacement programme and the predicted over-run of the Core Investment Programme
- Note however, that overall the new street lighting, once installed and working, provides an improved and beneficial service to the residents of Croydon.