

Cabinet 27/4/17 - Comments from Overview & Scrutiny Panels

Part I

Corporate Services

Financial Update

The Corporate Services O&S Panel considered the Cabinet report and fully endorsed the recommendations. The Panel noted that the payment of costs awarded against the Council for the detrimental Legoland planning appeal had been budgeted for in the accounts.

Pool and Mayoral Cars and the Introduction of Electric Vehicle Points

The Corporate Services O&S Panel considered the Cabinet report and fully endorsed some of the recommendations subject to the following:

- Ward Members should be consulted regarding any placement of electric vehicle points.
- The centre of Windsor and other parts of the Royal Borough where parking is at a premium should not be considered as locations for electronic vehicle points.
- Approved the termination of the existing pool car fleet. The Panel raised concern that officers were still using their private cars instead of using the pool cars.
- Consideration should be given to placing the electronic vehicle points in RBWM car parks as a trial. The panel suggested that we should put one electric point in each town in one of the car parks and by the town hall.
- The options for a new mayoral car should come back to the Panel prior to any procurement. The Panel would like to see three options and the Cabinet paper recommendation should not give delegated authority to purchase a new car until the options have been to Panel. The panel also suggested the officers should approach Land Rover diplomatic service for a vehicle.
- Any new mayoral car should be a long wheelbase that gives legroom in the back of the car and have enough headroom that would offer dignity for the mayor.
- Recommendation 'C. Procure a new electric Mayoral car during 2018/19' should be change to 'Procure an appropriate Mayoral car in consultation with the Corporate Services O&S Panel.'

Trading Activities Update

The Corporate Services O&S Panel considered the Cabinet report and fully endorsed the recommendations. The Chairman had concerns over transparency and potential conflict of senior officers, especially relating to planning, and those of the trading activity company.

Children's Services

Financial Update

The Children's Services O&S Panel considered the Cabinet report and fully endorsed the recommendations relating to their remit.

Intensive Family Support Progress Report

The Children's Services O&S Panel considered the Cabinet report and fully endorsed the recommendations. The Panel felt that future reports should include visual mapping showing hotspots in the borough and how the service works via a spider diagram. Future reports would benefit by showing how the service linked to other services and agencies and the long term benefits to families.

Contract Award – Operation of 4 Marlow Road, Maidenhead

The Children's Services O&S Panel considered the Cabinet report and fully endorsed the recommendations.

Highways & Transport

Public Bus Services in the Royal Borough

The Panel endorsed the recommendations to Cabinet.

Pool and Mayoral Cars and the Introduction of Electric Vehicle Points

Members of the Panel agreed the recommendations with the following additions and amendments:

Recommendation i) c. should state that more investigation was required before procuring a new electric Mayoral car during 2017/18

The panel requested Cabinet take into account the costs of the leasing agreement against the costs of the maintenance of the current Mayoral car.

The Panel wished to highlight they felt the timing of looking at procuring an electric vehicle was premature as the technology was still relatively new and still emerging.

Sustainability Panel

Pool and Mayoral Cars and the Introduction of Electric Vehicle Points

The Sustainability Panel Chairman (Councillor Mills) commented as follows on behalf of the Panel:

As Chair of the Sustainability Panel, I was pleased to see this report released for comments before going to Cabinet. I am happy that we are looking to replace our fleet of pool cars with electric vehicles. I believe strongly that a mistake was made when we leased the petrol driven minis. We missed an opportunity to lease/purchase electric or hybrid vehicles. This was a golden opportunity to show our residents that we are a forward thinking Council and that sustainability matters to us.

As I was not party to any consultations/discussions regarding the contract that was settled on, I cannot really comment on whether or not the decision made at the time was the correct one in terms of contract details and costs, but I was, nevertheless, disappointed with the outcome.

It was interesting to see the usage details of the pool cars, and we need to take this knowledge into discussions when agreeing any new contract. We need to consider carefully how many pool cars we really do need as we have to get this right this time. There will be a lot of public and press scrutiny of any new agreement.

The procurement or lease of an electric vehicle for use by the Mayor would be a very public statement of our intention to put sustainability matters high on our agenda, and would set a good example to our residents.

I feel that the changeover to electric vehicles will be well received by the majority of residents. However, we will undoubtedly face challenges from some quarters as to why we did not do this in January 2016, and why we are proposing to do it when there is still time to run on the contract. We need to have our explanation ready and be certain of costs involved.

Regarding on-street charging points:

The siting of these charging points will be crucial to the success of this venture. We had a lively discussion on this during our last Sustainability Panel meeting as the potential loss of any on-street parking in residential streets could bring us some very negative publicity when parking issues are already under the spotlight.

As Chair of the Sustainability Panel, I would like to request that the progress report in six months time should be made available to, or brought to the Sustainability Panel for discussion/comments before it goes to Cabinet. Lastly, I would draw your attention to the article on the link below which is worthy of a read.

<http://www.msn.com/en-gb/cars/news/charging-six-electric-cars-at-once-could-cause-local-power-outages/ar-BBA4iGO?li=AA9SkIr&ocid=spartandhp#image=1>

Councillor Love who is a substitute on the Sustainability Panel commented as follows:

Presume we have to give so many months notice if we wish to terminate the three year contract, because otherwise I would have thought the logical sequence would be to take the six months to look into the costs of switching to electric pool cars first, before terminating the present contract with penalties.

Surprised that the actual usage (6,300 miles) was so low against anticipated usage (10,000 miles) being over a third out at 37%, and would like to know why.

Believe that when using a personal car, the traditional HMRC Approved Mileage Allowance Payments rate is 45p per mile, and therefore 13 cars doing 6,300 miles at 45 p/mile = £36,855. If the cars had done their anticipated 10,000 miles each, the cost would rise to £58,500 which is the same as the £60,000 contract. Is this just a coincidence because going by the above figures, the difference between £36,855 and £58,500 = £21,645 whereas the report say that “the impact financially of not achieving the 10,000 miles is £16,900 per annum.”

Para 2.11 of the report says:

“Reaction to providing dedicated spaces in residential streets where demand for parking exceeds supply has been mixed to date, as it removes valuable on-street parking from general use. This will be taken into account during the assessment of demand and locations. However, implementing electric charging points would incentivise and promote the take-up of electric vehicles which assists with broader air quality improvements.”

Know that Belmont Ward is no different to other wards bordering the town centres in Maidenhead and Windsor, and would therefore comment that I am requesting more and more residents parking zones to overcome commuters and business people parking their cars for the full day in the local roads. The report does say that “it removes valuable on-street parking from general use”, and we would have to be extremely careful where these charging points were placed to avoid local anger.

Completely agree with procuring a new electric Mayoral car during 2018/19.