

POLICY COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, 3 MARCH 2016

PRESENT: Councillors George Bathurst (Chairman), David Burbage, Stuart Carroll, Carwyn Cox, Dr Lilly Evans, Ross McWilliams, Jack Rankin and Wesley Richards

Also in attendance: Cllr C Rayner

Officers: Harjit Hunjan, David Scott, Simon Fletcher, Christopher Targowski, Naomi Markham and David Cook.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received by Councillors Stretton and Jones; Councillor Beer attended as a substitute for Councillor Jones.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received.

MINUTES

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: that the minutes of the meeting held on 19th January 2016 be approved as a true and accurate record, subject to the following amendment:

Rent to Buy: page 10, paragraph 4, to add that the Committee were assured that a participant would have the option to buy the shared ownership outright.

RECYCLING TASK AND FINISH GROUP UPDATE

The Committee considered the report that provided an update on the work of the Recycling Task and Finish Group and requested that the Policy Committee endorsed the proposed Waste Work Programme for 2016/17.

The Committee were informed that the Recycling Task and Finish Group was established in October 2015 and asked to look at ways of improving recycling rates. Textile recycling had been identified by the group as a potential area of opportunity as current recycling rates were only 4.8% of residential waste collected. An options report had been approved by this Committee and was due to be presented to Cabinet in March 2016.

There was also a campaign to increase food waste recycling between September to November 2015 with 30,000 properties being visited by door to door canvassers. In addition all street level properties received a delivery of food waste liners with an information leaflet on how to use the food waste collections. All rubbish bins also had a "No food waste" sticker applied under the lid to act as a nudge to remind residents. This had resulted in a 44% increase in food recycling.

The Task and Finish Group also reviewed the recycling facilities in the Royal Borough. Work was carried out to refurbish all mixed recycling bins located at all sites. There was also a review of payments made to Slough for Windsor residents using their recycling centres this resulted in a survey identifying a much smaller percentage of residents using the Slough site that would save the Royal Borough £50k per annum from 2016/17.

Table one of the report showed the proposed projects that officers were proposing to explore during 2016/17. The Task and Finish Group would continue to meet quarterly to review progress against the work programme and set performance indicators and ensure projects were on track.

(Cllr Dr Evans joined the meeting)

The Chairman reported that he had asked for this update to come to the Committee to see if there were any new ideas that could help the authority to meet its recycling targets.

Cllr Burbage informed that the Royal Borough was the first authority to introduce incentivization for recycling and as this had been a success the Task and Finish should look at ways of improving on this. He raised concern that the automatic number plate recognition camera at the civic site was not working at his last visit and questioned if the food waste bags would continue to be distributed.

The Panel were informed that Green Redeem were in the process of renegotiating a two year contract and they will be looking at increasing recycling and better rewards. With regards to the NPR camera officers were investigating the cost of replacing the system.

(Cllr Richards joined the meeting)

With regards to the food waste bags the recent campaign was funded from a government grant and officers were analysing the results to see if they paid for themselves.

Cllr Dr Evans asked if compost bins were available and if there were plans regarding disposable nappies. The Panel were informed that there was a scheme regarding compost bins and officers were monitoring an initiative in London regarding disposable nappy recycling.

Resolved unanimously: that the Committee endorse the proposed 2016/17 Waste Work Programme as set out at Table 1 and report back to Cabinet in June / July 2016.

APPRENTICESHIPS OR ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIPS SCHEME

The Committee considered the reported that provided further detail on the options discussed and agreed to progress at a previous Committee meeting, they were:

- Option 6 – a model for signposting residents to the range of existing financial support available.
- Option 5 – to use the Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership (TVLEP) to establish the demand for skills and where the skills shortages were within the borough.

The Panel were informed that 'Our Community Enterprise' (OCE) were approached to identify a potential model which would signpost people to the most appropriate funding opportunity.

OCE had informed that they could provide a directory of funding support through subscription-only grant funding databases such as the Directory of Social Change whose website details and updates 2,500 grant opportunities and charges annual subscription cost, for up to 10 user licences, of £860. It would be proposed to have access in public areas such as libraries where staff could be trained to help the public.

Previously the Committee had highlighted the need to identify local skills gaps which would help to direct support based on the needs of the local economy. The report informed that the Local Enterprise Partnership had been approached and had identified six priority sectors for the long term sustainable economic growth in Berkshire; these were:

- Digital technologies

- Financial, professional and business services
- Life sciences and healthcare
- Construction and the built environment
- Logistics
- Energy and environment

They had also highlighted skills challenges in education, hospitality and care.

Cllr Cox questioned if the signposting service could be in place by September to have the most impact on those requiring the service after leaving education. The Panel were informed that there was already support for 16 year olds; however it may be useful for 16 to 24 year olds.

Cllr Burbage mentioned that the report highlighted an issue with customer handling skills and felt that employees should be able to train with existing employees. He questioned if there was some help the Council could provide in conjunction with the private sector to bring customer handling skills together. David Scott mentioned that we could look at existing employers in the area, such as Legoland, and look at best practice.

(Cllr McWilliams joined the meeting)

Cllr Burbage mentioned that staff in the contact centre received training and questioned if other front line staff received training. The Panel were informed that there were pockets of excellence and that this would be a key strand in the transformation agenda.

Cllr Cox mentioned that with Cross Rail and our proximity to London there would be opportunities opening up and thus we should keep this under review.

Cllr Dr Evans mentioned the demand in healthcare and was informed that this was something picked up by public health.

It was approved to add an additional recommendation to the report that the Committee Chairman and Cllr McWilliams investigate more options.

Resolved unanimously: That the Policy Committee:

- i. Approved in principle, a signposting service to assist residents in identifying appropriate funding opportunities, both locally and nationally, for their education, vocational or training needs.**
- ii. An update report to be presented to the Policy Committee, detailing a full specification for a signposting service, in July 2016.**
- iii. Noted the comments in respect of the local Skills demand/shortages detailed at point 2.9 of this report.**
- iv. The Committee Chairman and Cllr McWilliams investigate further options.**

CONGESTION CHARGING SCHEMES

The Chairman reported that he may have a potential conflict of interest due to his work with Windsor Link Railway. He left the meeting and did not take part in deliberations.

(Cllr Burbage in the Chair)

The Cllr Rayner, Lead Member for Highways and Transport, introduced the report regarding the possibility of investigating whether a congestion charging scheme, where advantage card holders are exempt, could be introduced in the Royal Borough. This report looked at where congestion charging had been successfully adopted in Durham and London and also highlights two examples where congestion charging had been considered but not adopted,

Edinburgh and Manchester. He reported that there were over 6 million visitors to the Royal Borough and people who used our roads as shortcuts to bypass the motorways.

Cllr Cox mentioned that the Durham scheme had a very specific set of circumstances and asked if we were suggesting a scheme for the whole borough or specific areas only.

Cllr Rayner mentioned that the question was do go ahead and further explore the viability of a scheme. The report was to get initial views before undertaking 18 months of work for it to be rejected by Cabinet. The Committee may feel that was not the right approach but it did highlight that there were problems with congestion on our roads.

Cllr Rankin acknowledged that Windsor had a problem with congestion but felt this was not the solution and that there may be ways to better utilise out of town parking.

Cllr Richards felt that we needed to be clear what we were trying to fix as there were many facets to congestion problems. He did not want this type of scheme to be seen as a stealth tax and not remedying issues.

Cllr McWilliams reiterated that in London the scheme was seen as a stealth tax when introduced and that what we needed was long term infrastructure investment. The scheme may also have a negative impact on tourism.

Cllr Dr Evans mentioned that with the development projects in Maidenhead there would be increased congestion and pollution and thus the Council needed to think about the issues before the problem starts.

Cllr Carroll asked if we had modelled future congestion issues and was informed that we had not and that as we planned to build over 700 dwellings per year it was expected that car usage would increase.

Cllr Burbage mentioned that the residents survey had highlighted increased dissatisfaction with congestion and also informed that the Borough Local Plan would contain a transport strategy. He also mentioned the possibility of a toll road to the M4 west of Windsor but Cllr Cox mentioned that the toll road on the M6 had become economically unfeasible.

Resolved unanimously: That the Committee approved that there should be no further investigation into congestion charge schemes for RBWM.

POLICY COMMITTEE FORWARD PLAN

(Cllr Bathurst in the Chair)

The Committee considered their forward plan and were informed that it would be updated with Heads of Service.

The committee confirmed the following allocations:

- Crowd Funding – Cllr Rankin
- Pocket Parks – Cllr Rankin
- Transparency and Data Sharing – Cllr Bathurst
- Review of Policy Committee Recommendations Presented at Cabinet – Cllr Bathurst
- Tracking Loneliness – Cllr Carroll and it was to be checked if this item stayed on the list.
- Free School Meals Attainment Gap – Cllr Burbage and David Scott to bring report from School Improvement Forum.
- Incentivisation Update – Chairman and Cllr Rankin
- Parking Cashless and Variable Rates – Chair and Cllr McWilliams

- Advantage Card – Chair, Cllr Rankin and Cllr McWilliams.

The Chairman asked if there were any other suggested items for the work programme and Cllr Beer recommended considering a sign in the Town Hall reception informing of events / meetings and looking at a Park and Ride for Windsor. With regards to the sign the Chairman said he would discuss this with Cllr Beer.

Cllr C Rayner mentioned that with regards to a Park and Ride for Windsor he was awaiting for neighbourhood plans and holding discussions with the LEP regarding funding.

The meeting, which began at 7.00 pm, finished at 8.35 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....