

POLICY COMMITTEE

MONDAY, 18 APRIL 2016

PRESENT: Councillors George Bathurst (Chairman), David Burbage, Stuart Carroll, Carwyn Cox, Dr Lilly Evans, Lynne Jones and Jack Rankin

Also in attendance:

Officers: Simon Fletcher, David Scott, Michael Llewelyn, Christopher Targowski, Wendy Binmore and Harjit Hunjan

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Claire Stretton, Ross McWilliams and Wesley Richards.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

MINUTES

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the minutes of the meeting of the Sub Committee held on 3 March 2016 be approved.

POCKET PARKS

Michael Llewellyn, Cabinet Policy Assistant introduced the report and Members noted the following main points:

- The Cabinet Policy Assistant requested Members to approve in principle a pocket parks area.
- Pocket parks had been actively promoted in London.
- The Borough would like to use unused spaces and bring them back to use.
- The Borough would work alongside community groups and liaise over how to spend money.
- If approved in principle, the scheme would go live during 2016.

Councillor Rankin commented that it would help get Member and community engagement and would give a purpose to unused land. Cllr Cox stated that pocket parks could be linked to Crowdfunding; that would enable residents to invest in their local areas. He felt the scheme was a good idea. The Cabinet Policy Assistant had come up with 10 possible sites where pocket parks could be set up. The Council would also approach landowners where necessary. The Cabinet Policy Assistant confirmed that land owned by parish councils had been looked at and he would work to get parish councils involved. The Chairman suggested linking pocket parks into devolution of services to parish councils. Cllr E. Wilson stated the pocket parks idea was something to be supported. The City of London had some good examples of pocket parks and they were successful because they had a specific idea in mind. He added the borough needed to be careful that it did not situate pocket parks too near to larger parks. Members noted that local community groups would be approached to help maintain and look after the pocket parks once they had been set up.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the Policy Committee:

1. **Approved in principle the establishment of a pocket park scheme in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.**
2. **Requested officers to investigate appropriate funding for a pocket park scheme to be implemented during 2016-17 with a report to be brought to Cabinet in October 2016.**
3. **Invited further suggestions for pocket park sites from Members.**

CIVIC CROWDFUNDING

Harjit Hunjan, Community and Business Partnerships Manager introduced the report and Members noted the following main points:

- Civic Crowdfunding would help to raise more funds for civic projects.
- There were approximately 500 crowdfunding platforms which all offered some form of quality assurances.
- A more detailed report was to be brought back to the Policy Committee in September 2016 which would show progress made.
- Most platforms charged between five and 10% or nominal handling charges.
- There were additional costs for marketing to be identified.
- The Community and Business Partnerships Manager had spoken to Space Hive and Crowdfunder.
- Crowdfunding was an increasingly popular way of raising a large amount of money.
- It enabled the local community to engage with local projects.
- Crowdfunding helped to give credibility to ideas.
- People donated small amounts of money which quickly mounted up.
- Because it was an online platform, it was easy to incorporate it with social media.
- Space Hive was a civic funder site and they worked with 25 other Local Authorities.
- Devon and Cornwall had successfully raised large amounts of money through Crowdfunder.
- For the Borough to produce its own Crowdfunding site, it would cost approximately £25,000

The Community and Business Partnerships Manager confirmed that the success of Crowdfunding depended on the type of platform used. the Mayor of London had a Space Hive site which had been very successful. The Chairman commented that Crowdfunding was a good idea as it was an alternative way for community groups to raise money instead of coming straight to the Council for funding. Cllr Jones raised some concerns and stated that expectations would need to be managed. The Community and Business Partnerships Manager confirmed that the scheme did not have to be restricted to business dense areas of the Borough and that other local needs could be met through Crowdfunding. In some cases, the Council could match funds raised by residents.

The Community and Business Partnerships Manager stated that Crowdfunder ran workshops on how to raise awareness and market the scheme; there were also self-help guides. Cllr Cox commented that it was good to know that Crowdfunder could accommodate smaller projects as well as larger projects. He added that residents that directly benefitted might be happier to invest to help get a local need met.

Cllr Burbage commented that the Council needed to be aware of rules on stock sharing. He liked the idea of Crowdfunding Hives, making use of existing platforms and that it had been successful in other parts of the country. The Borough had done a lot through Participatory Budgeting which had helped local groups in a similar way; he felt it was a great idea that the Borough should pursue.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the Policy Committee:

1. **Considered the various crowdfunding platforms as detailed in Appendix A and B;**

2. **Approved the exploratory work with Spacehive, or another crowdfunding website as appropriate, in respect of establishing an online funding platform for delivering civic projects in the Royal Borough;**
3. **Delegated responsibility for developing and promoting a funding platform to the Community and Business Partnerships Manager in consultation with the Principal Member for Culture and Communities and the Deputy Lead Member for Customer Service Performance; and**
4. **Requested a report on progress to go to Cabinet in September 2016.**

TRANSPARENCY AND OPEN DATA

Christopher Targowski, Cabinet Policy Manager introduced the report and Members noted the following main points:

- The report was aimed at getting transparency back into people's minds.
- The Royal Borough had been a vanguard authority regarding the amount of information it published.
- The Borough was the first Local Authority to publish expenses of £500 or more and it now publishes expenses of £100 or more for residents.
- The Council was very good at publishing data and there was a lot more that could be done due to new technology.
- The Council needed to make sure that the data it published was relevant and required.
- Southeast strategic leaders looked at different ways the data could be presented.
- Bristol City had encouraged their residents to use data and had got other organisations to suggest other ways published data could be used.
- The Cabinet Policy Manager wanted to bring a report back in July 2016 which would confirm what the Borough could use the data for and link with other Councils to see how they were presenting their data and using it.

Councillor Burbage stated he agreed that the Council should continue to publish the vast amount of data it did but there was a balance to be struck between there being too much information available and it being impenetrable and not having enough information available. He added he was in favour of publishing as much information as is useful and as required; Cllr Burbage wanted to provide access to all information and as the Council upgraded its systems, there would be more available for people to see what was going on in the borough. Cllr Cox commented that it was about publishing data but in a useful way. The easier the Borough could make it for residents, the better. Councillor Dr Lily Evans suggested the next steps should be to look at it from the perspective of residents to see how they accessed the Council's information, what residents' top priorities were and what apps were available to present information. Cllr E. Wilson stated that one thing residents did want easy access to information regarding the performance of the Borough's schools and pupil premium information. The Cabinet Policy Manager confirmed a paper would be brought to the Committee in June on maximising the pupil premium in schools.

The Chairman stated making contracts public was an idea to pilot to see if the Council could get better or worse value for money; it may work well or may not work at all but, it would be worth piloting it to find out.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the Policy Committee:

1. **Noted the report and provided feedback on transparency and data in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.**
2. **Agreed that the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead's Transparency Policy reflected the current wishes of the Council (Appendix A).**
3. **Confirmed their agreement to review the data the Royal Borough currently published and to bring forward options.**
4. **Confirmed their agreement to continue to work with other organisations to help present and use data more effectively.**

5. Confirmed their agreement to consider best practice in transparency and bring forward options.
6. Agreed that a report is brought back to the Policy committee in July 2016 to provide an update on recommendations 3, 4 and 5.

POLICY COMMITTEE UPDATES

Christopher Targowski, Cabinet Policy Manager provided Members with a brief update on the ongoing work of the Policy Committee. The update included the following key points:

- Officers were exploring the suitability of a dynamic purchasing system for use within the Borough's residential care market. A report was due to be brought back to Cabinet in October 2016 to see if the system had worked.
- Residential care was still being looked at but Policy Officers had decided to take a smaller approach.
- The opportunity to generate income from the sale of textiles to the recycling and reuse markets was still being looked into and would be reported on in October 2016.
- Officers were exploring the concept of extending access to Council services to 24/7 coverage. A separate report would be brought back to the Policy Committee at a later date.

Simon Fletcher, Strategic Director of Operations stated there were new services becoming available online. Once residents set up an account, the Council will be able to engage with customers. He added the Council was now in the latter stages of purchasing a telephone system which will enable voice to text to be linked to back office systems. The Chairman confirmed that an Advantage Card app was on its way for residents soon too.

POLICY COMMITTEE FORWARD PLAN

The Chairman requested to add an item on a bypass through Ascot to be added to the Policy Committee forward plan; Members agreed it could be added.

Members noted the details of the Policy Committee forward plan.

The meeting, which began at 7.00 pm, finished at 8.10 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....