

HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
PANEL

MONDAY, 4 FEBRUARY 2019

PRESENT: Councillors Eileen Quick (Vice-Chairman), Wisdom Da Costa, Maureen Hunt, Julian Sharpe, Shamsul Shelim and Edward Wilson

Officers: Wendy Binmore , Andy Jeffs and Ben Smith.

APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Councillor Quick be appointment Chairman and Councillor E. Wilson be appointed Vice-Chairman.

APOLOGIES

None.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

WORK PROGRAMME

Members noted that a trial roundabout system had been implemented at the junction of Hatch Lane and Dedworth Road and a report was due to go to Cabinet in May 2019. Councillor E. Wilson stated the Highways, Transport & Environment Overview & Scrutiny Panel was there to discuss strategy and policy issues and that the report should contain a broader subject than just that particular trial, but perhaps should include trials across the Borough in general. Ben Smith, Head of Commissioning – Communities stated he could incorporate the Hatch Lane junction and the strategic nature of other junctions in the report. Councillor Sharpe suggested adding double yellow lines policies to the report explaining how and when the Council implemented them on roads, the issue needed to be looked at as the Council were in danger of being inconsistent on how they were applied. Councillor Hunt stated double yellow lines were added following concerns raised by residents and War Members. Councillor Shelim stated some areas of Windsor Town Centre should be part of a red route to stop parking altogether as emergency vehicles were unable to get through the smaller streets due to cars parking on both sides of the road. The Head of Commissioning – Communities said the Council would need to apply for dispensation to implement a red route as Windsor Town Centre was outside London.

Members agreed to add the following items to the Work Programme for the next meeting:

- Street Lighting – Implementation review and location and coverage of lights to improve security of residents.

Members agreed to add the following items to the Work Programme for a meeting after May:

- Bus routes and availability – a briefing note to be brought to the next Panel meeting looking at frequencies and services relevant to residents needs with a view to creating a Task and Finish Group thereafter (for July 2019).
- Council Waste and Recycling – looking at how the Council deals with all waste from the beginning to the end of the process (for a meeting after May 2019).

- Junction Improvements across the Borough (for May 2019, or the next meeting closest to May 2019).

BUDGET REPORT 2019/20

Andy Jeffs, Executive Director – Communities, stated there would be an increase to Base Council Tax to £961.30 which was up by £27.91 on the previous year; and the Borough's Council Tax remained the lowest Council Tax outside of London. He added the Adult Social Care Levy was £74.74p

The proposed budget for 2019/20 included reduced parking income of £1.3m mainly for Resident Advantage Card discounts; weekly bin collections and recycling contracts of £1m; environmental health, enforcement, CCTV, Community Wardens and tree inspections of £0.8m; bus route subsidies £0.2m

New gross capital investment of £25.7m included £12.7m in highways funded partly by government grants of £2.8m and including:

- £850k Elizabeth Bridge Windsor refurbishment
- £300k Vicus Way and Tinkers Lane improvements
- £240k Boulton's Lock Car Park extension
- £180k Dedworth road improvements
- £100k Cookham Bridge refurbishment
- £11m other road, bridge and pavement improvements; including £1.4m on Maidenhead Missing Links, £1.9m on resurfacing, £3m on Maidenhead interchange and car park and £2.1m on Maidenhead local plan site works.

the Head of Commissioning – Communities stated the only changes to the appendices were to the residents fees and charges for parking. Some Advantage Card tariffs had not been applied to some Advantage Card holders and that had been rectified. Therefore, the new appendix showed the extra discounts had been applied.

Councillor Hunt thanked officers for their work, she said there was a huge amount of detail in the report. Councillor Hunt queried the maintenance of the pumping stations as she thought they fell under the remit of the Environment Agency. The Head of Commissioning – Communities confirmed that depended on what the pumping stations were pumping. The EA looked after the river pumping stations and the Borough looked after the stations that pumped surface water.

Councillor Hunt asked how many Rights of Way maps were requested or circulated. The Head of Commissioning – Communities confirmed the Borough provided very few as there was not a lot of demand for them. they could be viewed online free of charge so the charges for producing hard copies was just an inflationary increase.

Councillor Hunt stated she knew of a scheme in her ward that was taking place on the highways but, it was not listed in the report. The Head of Commissioning – Communities confirmed with capital programmes, there were a number of generic items, there was a capital line in the report aimed at reducing traffic flows with a traffic management plan. Some capital bids had come forward as individual bids and others were generic. The scheme Councillor Hunt mentioned would make up part of the generic capital scheme to be approved by Cabinet. Councillor Hunt mentioned there were other schemes not mentioned in the report. One was for a school and all the other school schemes had been listed apart from the one in her ward. The Chairman suggested the Head of Commissioning – Communities send Councillor Hunt the details of all the schemes so she could see the school in her ward was also included. Councillor Hunt stated Officers had been very good at keeping her informed but, she would like the details sent to her.

Councillor E. Wilson said the problem was transparency and residents not knowing what was going on in their areas. The Panel needed to look at the budget setting process and how the

lines of the budget were set out. it was a good point about transparency so when someone picked up the budget document, they could see exactly how the budget was being set. Councillor Hunt confirmed to the Chairman that she wanted all the items in the budget listed individually or, to have them all included together in a lump sum and then listed individually elsewhere as an appendix. The Chairman also asked for a column which showed the overall spend.

Councillor Da Costa stated pages 83-105 of the agenda pack showed inflation raised at 3% on commercial items but, parking charges were increased by 19% which seemed very high. The increase in parking charges could contribute to the death of the high street. He added that home to school transport costs had been raised by 5% and requested more information on that before the budget was set. Councillor Da Costa went on to say that developers that damaged roads should be charged to discourage them from doing so. The Head of Commissioning – Communities confirmed fines were administered by the Street Works Team; the tariffs were set nationally and the Council was already at the maximum it could charge developers. Councillor Da Costa said it would be helpful to see that in the report. The Head of Commissioning – Communities said there was a budget for the Permit Team and that would be included and consolidated into one or two lines within the budget. The Head of Commissioning – Communities stated the Council recovered costs from vandalism or from accidents using CCTV and where there was evidence, Officers followed that up.

With regards to the 19% parking charge increases, a benchmarking exercise had taken place over the last two years with other towns and that showed the Borough was charging a lot less than other towns for parking. Therefore, the charges were raised but still remained lower than comparative towns. The Chairman stated residents were very aware that using Advantage Cards got them a discount and that showed in the report by the loss of income from residents parking. The Borough was charging a lot less than other towns for visitors to park. Councillor Hunt asked if replacing car park entry systems and payment equipment meant car parks would become pay on exit instead of pay and display. The Head of Commissioning – Communities confirmed all machines were being replaced with pay and display machines and there was no pay on exit option, the Borough's operating model was for pay and display only. Councillor Hunt asked if the Borough took more money on pay and display parking or, would there be more income using a pay on exit model? She felt people would stay and spend more if the Borough used a pay on exit model. The Head of Commissioning – Communities said he did not know which model took more income. Councillor Shelim stated pay on exit machines were installed at River Street Car Park but they caused huge queues and so were replaced with pay and display. Councillor Hunt said she did not know why the whole of the rest of the Borough had to forfeit pay on exit just because of one issue in Windsor. With the regeneration of Maidenhead going on, the last thing people wanted was pay and display. The Chairman suggested Councillor Hunt make her views known to the Lead Member.

Councillor E. Wilson said he had two observations. The first was the Council was in a relatively strong position with healthy reserves of £11m and the second observation was that the Council was spending £12.7m on highways. That was a big number for a small Council and it was a lot to implement. He asked if officers were reassured they could call on the big buffer of reserves if required. The Executive Director – Communities confirmed £5.8m was the recommended reserve so the Borough's was more than double. The Council's budget was very robust so unless there are a lot of unforeseen circumstances, there would be no need to call on reserves. The Head of Commissioning – Communities confirmed delivery of projects would be done through external partners which gave the Council capacity to deploy resources to get the works done.

The Chairman said it was an enormous budget with a large network of roads so a large budget was needed. The Council had been forward thinking on how to enhance delivery while reducing costs where it could.

Councillor Hunt stated compared to neighbouring authorities, the Borough's roads were brilliant. She added the Council had a huge budget and when it first started with Project

Centre and Volkers, the budget was a set amount. She asked if that amount had increased. The Head of Commissioning – Communities confirmed that there had been an increase. The repetitive work made up the core work part of the contract and that remained the same but, additional projects were added above the contract.

Councillor E. Wilson asked if the bus subsidies of £200k were additional costs. The Executive Director – Communities confirmed it was an additional sum agreed by Cabinet from in year savings. The actual cost was £153k but it had been rounded up to £200k to ensure the budget was there to carry forward. Councillor E. Wilson commented the way reports were written could be difficult to understand. He asked for the line in the report for bus subsidies to be reworded so it was clearer. The Chairman stated the subsidy was an additional subsidy but, it was not clear what the original subsidy was. Councillor E. Wilson commented some local authorities had stopped subsidising bus routes. The Head of Commissioning- Communities said there was a Department for Transport report on subsidising bus networks that was available to view. The Borough had not reduced the subsidy for buses but, subsidies could be included in the item due to come back to Panel on buses in the Borough that had been added to the Work Programme. Councillor Hunt did not see why the Council should subsidise bus fares for residents to go outside of the Borough to spend money.

Councillor Hunt stated with regards to street care, she was very impressed to see the verges in the Borough cut back and maintained. The Executive Director – Communities confirmed there was no additional spend on maintaining the verges as that formed part of the contract with Volkers. Councillor E. Wilson commented the Council had fantastic contractors but asked if the Council had the right number of staff to commission services. The Head of Commissioning – Communities confirmed yes, the commissioning team had been selected as they had the right skills to manage the commissioning. If there were individual projects, the commissioning team would contract an additional project manager where necessary to carry out the project. It was a relatively new way of doing things and there were learning points so the service would be under regular review through Cabinet annually.

Councillor Sharpe stated he welcomed the continuation of weekly bin collections. He added the Borough had a good recycling scheme in the Borough but, could the Panel look at the future direction of recycling in a Task and Finish Group; it could look at turning plastic into plastic chips to be used to make and repair roads. The Chairman stated it would be interesting to know where the Council was recycling. The Head of Commissioning – Communities stated it as a really interesting area in terms of what the Council collected and what the Council did with that waste. There was a whole piece that Naomi Markham, Waste Strategy Manager was looking at including reverse vending machines as well as the plastic free motion passed at Council recently.

Councillor Da Costa said in terms of scrutiny, there was not a lot of detail in the report, it would be great to have a more detailed report that broke down the figures for each section to note and recommend for approval.

The Chairman thanked officers for their work and for producing a budget which means the Council could continue to deliver front line services without making cuts. Councillor Da Costa confirmed he would abstain from the vote on the recommendations as he wanted to see more information on some of the details in the report.

- ❖ **Action** - The Head of Commissioning – Communities to circulate details of the Permit Team issuing fines to developers to Panel Members.

RESOLVED: That the Panel endorsed the recommendations to Cabinet.

(Councillor Da Costa abstained from the vote as he felt he needed more detail from the report before endorsing the recommendations).

The meeting, which began at 6.30 pm, finished at 7.50 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....