

COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL

MONDAY, 15 FEBRUARY 2021

PRESENT: Councillors John Bowden (Chairman), Greg Jones (Vice-Chairman), Gurpreet Bhangra, Helen Price, Catherine Del Campo and Parish Councillor Margaret Lenton

Also in attendance: Councillors Baldwin, Cannon, Coppinger, C Da Costa, Davey, Davies, Rayner, Singh, Stimson and Taylor

Officers: Shilpa Manek, David Scott, Simon Dale, Chris Joyce, Naomi Markham and Neil Walter

WELCOME FROM THE CHAIRMAN

The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting and read out the virtual meeting note.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Parish Councillor Pat MacDonald.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Baldwin declared a personal interest that he was a volunteer and Patron of Foodshare Maidenhead in case he asked any questions in relation to that organisation at the meeting. Councillor Baldwin was not a voting member of the Panel.

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Chairman stated that he had not declared a personal interest at the last meeting and wanted it added to the minutes. Councillor Bowden declared that he was an appointed trustee by the borough for The Old Court. There was no financial interest. The Old Court was in Councillor Bowden's ward.

Councillor Bhangra declared a similar concern that he had not declared a personal interest that he had made a donation to Norden Farm and it was in his ward. Councillor Bhangra also declared that he was a member of the Grenfell Park user group. These items were discussed as part of the budget report at the last meeting.

Councillor Bowden requested an amendment to the previous minutes on page 17 in relation to page 80, Outdoor facilities, cemeteries and churchyards. Councillor Bowden requested it be changed to "With land being in short supply, should there not be a greater price differential between cremation, which I assume takes up much less land, than burial plots, again is it a statutory service."

The Clerk would check the recording of the meeting and make the amendments if that was factually correct.

The Panel were happy with this action.

ACTION: Clerk to listen to recording and make amendments if appropriate.

SERCO OPERATIONS UPDATE

Katy Bassett, Regional Director (South), Environmental Services, Serco UK & Europe, gave a presentation to the Panel. Katy Basset informed the Panel that Roy Fulton had been appointed as the RBWM contract manager.

Mr John Webb, resident, asked for information about some administrative questions, these would be addressed and resolved offline.

Councillor Bhangra thanked Katie Bassett and asked if SERCO were confident that they would be able to deliver the two weekly collection without any misses as the last change in August 2020 had caused many problems for many months, which had now improved. Councillor Bhangra supported the two-weekly collection. He asked what had been learnt from the last set of issues and was there anything in place to prevent them happening again. Finally, Councillor Bhangra asked if an equality impact assessment had been carried out. Katie Bassett responded that sometimes the most learning could be achieved in the most challenging periods and SERCO had learnt a great deal in the last six to eight months. There were a number of things when SERCO went live with the target operating model in August 2020 that would now be done differently. The main thing was the fluctuation of tonnage that the borough and many other councils across the UK had encountered as a direct consequence of Covid 19. The fluctuations in the borough were acute since the service had been set up in an incredible efficient manner with the twin pack nature of vehicles. SERCO now had twelve months of the fluctuating tonnage data so that underpinned a lot of assumptions. The second point was that the previous change had been carried out in an exceptional timeframe due to other factors. The confidence was currently high as SERCO were now providing more crew over a six day period and meeting all demands and it had also given SERCO a really good platform for starting to plan for the change and think more about the enduring solution for several months. It had been a significant change in service.

With regard to the risk mitigation, there had been a number of changes especially working more closely with the borough. Staff engagement had markedly improved over the last six months. Additional raining before the go-live date had been planned and the team were working closely with drivers and supervisors and taking their views. The go-live date was set in June as there were no bank holidays so there would be no additional changes to the service. The complaints log had given SERCO a really good understanding of the borough. A response to the equality Impact assessment question would be taken away and a response would be sent to Councillor Bhangra.

ACTION: SERCO to provide EQIA information to Councillor Bhangra.

Simon Dale, Interim Head of Highways, added that the plan was to overcome a very complex change in the simplest of terms considering the three C's; Communications which was critical to this, explaining the change that was going to effect the service as early as possible, Community, they needed to embrace the change and it was so important to find ways to engage people with everything that was taking place. The biggest challenge here was in what ways could this be done. An important resource for getting the message out to the community was through the councillors. It was also important to get the crew informed to make the change occur as smoothly as possible. Simon Dale informed the Panel that there would be some disruption and it was envisaged that this would be over the three months when the change occurred.

Councillor Del Campo asked if the black waste collections had been modelled for fortnightly collection. Simon Dale informed the Panel that the teams were all working towards the report being agreed at Council, as it was, but if there were any changes they would be taken on board.

Councillor Del Campo asked about recycling food waste and what sensible measure could be put into place to try and not waste food at all but anything that was wasted, was recycled. Katie Bassett informed the Panel that a composition analysis could be done and when this

was completed for the black bins, over 40% of refuse was contaminated with food waste. This was quite typical. A new initiative was currently being worked on with another council where a citizen-centric design was being developed. This would look at the area and the population of people and come up with solutions and incentive schemes and adoption strategies for people in that area. SERCO had been having discussions with the council to provide this service in the borough.

Councillor G Jones thanked SERCO for the presentation and the improved service. Councillor G Jones commented that it was interesting to see how much recycling improved when general waste collection was reduced. Councillor G Jones asked about the government target for food waste, what was the actual number? Katie Bassett informed the Panel that the actual target for food waste was that by 2025, local authorities were expected to have recycling rates that were 55% on an enduring basis and that by 2035, they were 65%. Katie Bassett explained that recycling was a combination of glass and dry mix recycling including paper, card, plastics and also food waste and green waste.

Councillor Price informed the Panel that there was a special need in Windsor because of Legoland. When the seventh day was introduced and it was a Saturday, it had been pointed out that when Legoland actually opened, there would be a clash with traffic going towards Legoland and all the lorries. It had been suggested that the routes would be changed. Councillor Price asked if this had been included in the plan. Simon Dale informed the Panel that with the reorganisation of the rounds in the summer, that would be considered. But also the team were keeping an eye during the lifting of lockdown and the potential of Legoland reopening in case temporary measures needed to take place. This may include additional crew and vehicles to cover the properties that were collected from on Saturday's.

Councillor Price continued and asked about the Government waste resource strategy, she asked if we currently had the resources to achieve this and would the plan be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel? Naomi Markham, Waste Strategy Manager, informed the Panel that the council was working within the governments waste and resource strategy and there were national targets. There had been a number of consultations over the last few years to assist to move forward during 2020 but that did not happen because of Covid-19. There would be movement now going forward and the borough would comment on consultations going forward. This could be brought back to the Panel in the future.

Councillor Price informed the Panel that there was an EQIA, number 35 on the website.

Councillor Davey commented that with respect to food waste, you could collect all the food waste in a plastic bag and then put that in the food bin. This was a cleaner way to recycle food.

Councillor Coppinger thanked SERCO and all Officers for all the improvements.

Councillor Stimson commented that the type of bag used to collect food waste did not matter.

The Chairman thanked SERCO and officers.

DISTRICT ENFORCEMENT UPDATE

Simon Dale introduced Warren Hodgson, Director, District Enforcement, who would be giving the presentation and answering any questions. Colin Buchanan, Head of Operations and Daniel Edwards, would also be present at the meeting to answer questions.

Mr John Webb, resident, asked what was the breakdown of the types of litter that had been collected? Warren Hodgson responded that he did not have the breakdown to hand but could inform the Panel that fixed penalty notices were issued for multiple amounts of litter that was found that had been dropped across the UK and the borough was cigarette litter. Warren

Hodgson reported that 77% of litter dropped was cigarette litter, which was the lowest in the UK.

Mr John Webb asked why was there no table presented where quarter by quarter of litter collected could be compared? Simon Dale responded that it had only been a quarter so far and the pilot was in the second quarter now. Going through the pilot, the tables would be compiled.

Mr John Webb asked if it was known, how much volume in cubic meters of litter had been removed by the enforcement actions. Simon Dale advised that this was not known.

Mr John Webb asked if the activity of dog fouling was still part of the remit of DE and would it remain for the remainder of the pilot. Neil Walter, Parking Principal, informed the Panel that another team were in the process of putting together a Public Safety Protection Order for dog fouling. This would remain part of the DE's remit but until the PSPO was finalised, DE could not enforce for dog fouling. Mr Webb asked for an explanation of why it was necessary to propose different rules of enforcement for dog fouling and unruly dogs in the recent consultation on protected spaces, when a different approach for enforcement for enforcement of dog fouling. This created a discriminatory element in favour of dog owners as they would get a warning before proceeding to enforcement. Neil Walter informed the Panel that he could not answer as he was not responsible for the PSPO. However, he was happy to take away and get a response to Mr Webb.

ACTION: Neil Walter to get response for Mr Webb

Mr Watts, public speaker, asked why do the DE target cigarette butts in the town centre? Warren Hodgson informed the Panel that the officers did not target cigarette butts but they did patrol areas. Mr Watts was advised that individual cases could not be discussed.

Mr Watts continued and asked that if it was the case that there were a lot of cigarette butts littered, why were there not more bins in place? Simon Dale informed the Panel that they could look into bin provision within the town centres.

ACTION: The provision of bins to be looked into in the town centres

Mr Watts suggested that maybe it was more about educating rather than fining.

Councillor Del Campo thanked Warren Hodgson. Councillor Del Campo raised one concern that she had about education, with relation to small businesses and regulation 35 which demanded for information being issued to businesses who might actually be just struggling with the administration burden at this time and having to produce two years' worth of waste transfer notes within seven days, especially when some businesses were struggling to survive. Could a more helpful and supportive approach be taken with the businesses. Warren Hodgson commented that as a private company, they worked in line with the local authority rules so would do as the local authority wanted. Neil Walter added that they had asked DE to visit all businesses to ascertain what volume were actually adhering to the current rules in relation to their business waste. The vast majority were okay and were doing as required under current legislation. There were a number of businesses that were not and a number that thought the type of operation they were doing with their waste was acceptable. This was down to education which was why notices were given out to people. However, once the notice was given, if they were not able to provide evidence, it was relatively clear that they did not have the current contract in place to remove their waste, which is when a FPN would be issued. Currently, the information for 2020 was being requested. This was confirmed by Daniel Edwards, DE Operations Manager.

Councillor Del Campo continued and referring to a newspaper article from December, where an officer had no mask on, Councillor Del Campo asked if all officers now wore masks? Daniel

Edwards responded that each officer has been told to wear a face covering in and outside a premise.

Councillor Del Campo suggested that monthly reporting of FPN data be provided to all members, so they were aware of what was happening in their ward. Warren Hodgson and Neil Walter were happy to provide this information to members who wanted it. Any members wanting this information could contact Neil Walter.

Finally, Councillor Del Campo commented that residents were asking why the fines were going to a private company and not to the borough to be used to fund litter related activities such as the community wardens. Councillor Del Campo suggested that a full review be carried out after the year.

Councillor G Jones commented on the main litter that he noticed being cigarette butts. Councillor G Jones asked if DE used covert cameras for fly tipping in hot spots areas. Warren Hodgson reported that currently no cameras were used. Officers investigated all complaints reported and any observations by the officers when patrolling. The officers would investigate and follow up on crucial evidence found at the site through a pace interview with the individuals. DE had looked into covert cameras but there were many policies that needed to be put in place to be able to do this. This could be investigated further if DE were awarded the contract after this year.

Councillor Price requested that as a panel she would like to receive the monthly data in order to see what the trends were, in order to scrutinise at panel. Councillor Price asked about more detail into the education program and how it was being carried out. Daniel Edwards commented that previously local authorities had arranged litter picking days with local communities. Funding had been provided for posters and leaflets. Already 500 stubby pouches had been handed out and another 500 were ready to hand out. This would continue throughout the pilot. Also a campaign across the UK was going to be launched to educate schools with a thirty minute presentation to year 11.

Councillor Price asked for clarification on why the dog fouling could not be covered at the start of the contract. Neil Walter explained to the Panel that at the beginning of the contract, a set of advertised FPN's was on the website that the borough was already able to enforce and that included dog fouling. A Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) for dog fouling was being put together which would bring in the community wardens and lots of other people into play, not just DE. This was the reason it was stopped. The consultation for the PSPO was due to end in February 2021 and hopefully this would be fully enforceable shortly after that date and then DE and community wardens could get back to doing education and enforcement.

Councillor Price asked where DE found an area which had a high level of litter, would they report to the officers that would be clearing the litter up? Neil Walter reported that the vast majority of reports were reported to the council directly, normally with photos. Ward Councillors also directly reported many cases. This would be reported via a generic mailbox in Highways. This information would be sent to Neil Walter and DE, who would investigate and then the contractors would be notified to fully clear the area.

Councillor Price asked if it was on track to have local staff. Warren Hodgson reported that DE had found that it was very difficult for local staff to issue FPNs in the same area that they lived in. DE started a contract; local staff were employed. They would then leave. This had been pointed out at the start of the contract.

Councillor Price commented that when the contract was being considered for renewal, the Panel could have an input at that stage before a decision was made.

ACTION: Could this be included on the June Agenda

Councillor C Da Costa asked for clarification on whether the borough were operating under the wrong legislation for dog fouling that was currently being amended. Also, clarification was required on whether people were followed in order to catch them littering? Warren Hodgson responded that officers did not follow people, they patrolled areas and if they saw anyone dropping litter, they would put their camera on and approach them and issue an FPN. People would only be followed if they refused to give their details. Neil Walter responded to the dog fouling clarification and commented that dog fouling could be enforced either through a FPN or a PSPO. The council were using the FPN route but now wanted to change to the PSPO route where more than dog fouling was covered.

Councillor Davey thanked DE for increasing the emphasis on fly tipping. Councillor Davey confirmed that there was a procedure to follow when issuing FPN's, if the procedure was not followed then the member of public could challenge the FPN. Warren Hodgson confirmed that this was correct and it would be investigated.

Councillor Singh commented that he had received a number of complaints from residents, was there a review on the number of bins provided for dog fouling. Simon Dale informed the Panel that there was no requirement for providing specific dog waste bins, only combined standard litter bins. Councillors could suggest a review to be undertaken. Councillor Singh asked if DE had considered using the online schooling to educate school kids? And finally, when this contract started, the borough were saying it was zero cost but there had been a huge amount of reputational damage in the national and local media. Councillor Singh asked how much it was costing the borough in officer time to deal with the complaints and challenges that were coming into RBWM. Neil Walter informed the Panel that any complaints that came into the borough were dealt with by him as part of his daily work, Neil Walter then liaised with DE to gain evidence and written statements and footage. There had been 19 formal complaints since the contract started. Three had gone to stage 2. The officer time was part of the daily role.

Councillor Singh asked what training was taken by officers to improve service? Warren Hodgson reported that DE was the only company that had a UK wide training team offering online training courses and a link to an on the ground training officer. Officers had monthly online training.

Councillor Del Campo pointed out that she was not aware that dog waste could be put in a normal waste bin. She felt that residents would not be aware of this too. Could this be advertised more through the Communications team to inform residents via the residents newsletter. Also could something be put in the members newsletter to inform Members that they could ask for a bin review in their ward.

ACTION: Simon Dale to follow on both Comms points

Councillor Cannon thanked DE Officers and council Officers for all their hard work.

Councillor Taylor asked for clarification and reassurance that Officers were explaining to shop owners what they were asking for in a way that people understood, especially if English was not their first language, with respect to waste disposal data. Daniel Edwards explained that he had been on the ground with officers. Officers did not leave the encounter until the person fully understood what the paperwork issued was and what needed to be produced. DE were happy to look into any particular cases.

WINDSOR MUSEUM & TOURIST OFFICE

Chris Joyce, Head of Infrastructure, Sustainability and Economic Growth, introduced the self-explanatory report. This was one of the items currently going through the budget process and the main purpose was not to debate the issues around the budget but to ask questions and feed in suggestions around the development of the joint service within the Guildhall and the opportunity for people to indicate what they see as the priorities of the service moving forward.

Councillor Price asked about Friends of the museum and if they had been invited to be involved, they were not mentioned anywhere. Chris Joyce commented that they had been involved and had fed into the survey. They were part of the project team.

Councillor Rayner commented that all the volunteers had been and would be involved too.

Councillor Price asked what feedback had been received from the MOT and the survey. Chris Joyce informed the Panel that the survey had only just been completed so feedback was being looked at. The MOT feedback could be shared with the Panel.

ACTION: Chris Joyce to share feedback with Panel

Councillor Price asked what the project was hoping to achieve. Chris Joyce responded that the main thing was to achieve a more effective use of the resource that was there. In addition to the savings, there were potential opportunities that could be delivered by co-location of the service.

Councillor Price asked who had been consulted about the move of the tourist information service, what organisations had been involved? Chris Joyce informed the Panel that there was a Visit Windsor Board, this included the largest organisations or the most important organisations in terms of tourism, the big attractions and the smaller local businesses and the visit Windsor partnership. These had all been engaged with throughout the process of redesigning the service.

ACTION: Provide who had been consulted and their views

Councillor Rayner thanked the team and looked forward to coming back strong after Covid.

PLASTIC FREE STRATEGY

Chris Joyce introduced the report. In December 2018, a motion was passed at Full Council that as part of the process, this was incorporated into the environment climate strategy. Chris Joyce thanked Paul Hinton and Jess Reid who had played a really important part in pulling together and driving forward the strategy which was endorsed by Cabinet in December at the same time as the adoption of the climate strategy.

Councillor Del Campo thanked Plastic free Windsor for their work with the strategy.

Councillor Del Campo commented that there was no specific budget in the proposed budget but the process should begin to look at low cost ways to start implementing aspects of the strategy. A good start would be to set up refill stations at the town hall in Maidenhead and at the Guildhall in Windsor. Councillor Del Campo suggested that Cabinet was asked for an implementation timetable and ask Cabinet to prioritise ideas such as the refill stations, which were both low cost and easy to implement. Chris Joyce reassured the Panel that as part of the delivery planning that was being done for the overall environmental climate strategy, all actions from the plastic free strategy were being included and built into the five year delivery plan for the environmental climate strategy. Chris Joyce informed the Panel that he would be discussing with Paul Hinton on what actions to prioritise.

Councillor Price asked Paul Hinton to inform the Panel about the recent award that they had received as it was something to celebrate.

Councillor Davey saluted Paul Hinton for being persistent and not taking no for an answer.

Paul Hinton thanked everyone for their kind comments. Paul Hinton continued to inform the Panel that they were an extension of the marine conservation charity, surfers against sewage. About three years ago, they set up a plastic free community campaign whereby communities

up and down the country could engage in achieving five introductory objectives to become a plastic free community. There were 700 communities working towards the same award and just over 100 communities who had achieved it. On 21 December, Paul Hinton was informed that he had joined that group of communities and of the hundred, Windsor was in the top twenty in terms of size of community. Windsor was one of the largest communities to have got the award. The awards demonstrated that the Windsor campaign was sustainable and as a result the objectives pass from the charity to a steering committee. Councillors Stimson, Rayner and Lynne Jones were on the steering committee setting the direction and pace for the campaign. The award also recognised that this was a community campaign involving Windsor schools, businesses, community organisations and the council.

Councillor Stimson thanked Paul Hinton as an integral part of the development of the environmental climate change strategy and for being a solid supporter all the way through.

Councillor Del Campo asked that the comments of this discussion went to Cabinet. Chris Joyce informed the Panel that the report had already been endorsed by Cabinet and Chris Joyce would continue to update the Panel with regular reports on the delivery.

The Chairman asked if the strategy was boroughwide and Chris Joyce confirmed that it was a plastic free strategy for the borough.

Councillor Rayner was very proud that Plastic Free Windsor had received the award and to have been a part of it.

Councillor Davey asked that since the council had adopted the strategy, what had individual councillors signed up to? Was there a model that could be followed by councillors? This was left with Paul Hinton to think about.

Councillor Davies informed the Panel that Plastic Free Windsor did have an action plan that could be sent to the Panel.

ACTION: Action plan to be sent to the Panel by Councillor Davies.

DRAFT ANNUAL SCRUTINY REPORT

The clerk gave a brief introduction about the annual scrutiny report and laid out the way to go forward. Panel members had only looked at section 7, improvements going forward. The clerk suggested that Panel Members emailed any comments to the clerk and then the clerk could draft a report.

ACTION: Panel Members to email Clerk by Friday 28 February with comments.

COVID UPDATE

David Scott, Head of Communities, gave a verbal update on Covid 19.

Councillor Price asked about the impact on the communities and the areas with which the panel was concerned about. There had very clearly been impacts of all sorts across the borough. David Scott informed the panel that the issues were ongoing and further work was underway to assess the support available and also new initiatives were being looked into to try and get a full understanding of where else support could be given through the transformation work which included some of the community engagement work. Councillor Price wanted to know about the community groups that had been harder hit. It would help to see those community groups at a future meeting.

ACTION: David Scott to investigate community groups that had been hardest hit and bring information to a future meeting.

WORK PROGRAMME

The clerk went through the work programme. Councillor Price requested an update on SportsAble and was advised that an update was due to be given in Part II. The clerk reminded the Panel that they could add items to the work programme at any time.

David Scott informed the Panel that Q2 Performance Report had been clarified by Thames Valley Police. Would the Panel like that information in March or April? The Chairman suggested presenting the figures at the April meeting.

The clerk informed the Panel that more timely Performance Reports would be presented to the panel.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC

The meeting, which began at 6.15 pm, finished at 10.00 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....