

COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL

TUESDAY, 15 JUNE 2021

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

Also in attendance: Councillor Clive Baskerville, Councillor Jon Davey, Councillor Samantha Rayner, Councillor Donna Stimson, Councillor David Cannon, Councillor John Baldwin, Councillor Christine Bateson, Councillor Gurch Singh, Councillor Amy Tisi and Councillor Simon Werner

Officers: Shilpa Manek, David Scott, Andrew Durrant, Daniel Brookman, Simon Dale, Jesal Dhokia, Louise Freeth, Angela Huisman, Adele Taylor, Neil Walter and Lyn Hinchinson

ELECTION OF THE CHAIRMAN & VICE CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED: that the Chairman for the 2021/2022 Municipal year be Councillor John Bowden.

RESOLVED: that the Vice Chairman for the 2021/2022 Municipal year be Councillor Greg Jones.

WELCOME FROM THE CHAIRMAN

The new Chairman welcomed all to the meeting and the virtual meeting notes were read out.

Councillor Price asked why the meeting was not being held face to face. The Clerk informed the Panel that the Overview and Scrutiny Panels were not decision making meetings. These Panels made recommendations to Cabinet.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Parish Councillor Margaret Lenton and Pat MacDonald.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Bhangra declared a personal interest in item 7. The Boyn Grove library was in his ward and he had actively campaigned to save the library. He was attending the meeting with an open mind.

Councillor Price declared a personal interest in item 7. The Dedworth library was in her ward and she had actively campaigned to save the library. Councillor Price was attending the meeting with an open mind.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 13 APRIL 2021

Councillor Price highlighted that she would like it noted that both her and Councillor Del Campo did not agree with the Chairman's Introduction in the Annual Scrutiny Report that was being presented to Full Council.

Actions from the minutes:

Action 1: EQIA update from Councillor Bhangra – update received from Naomi Markham –
Action: forward to Panel

Action 2: Completed

Action 3: Add Maidenhead Heritage Centre to Work Programme - **ACTION**

Action 4: Strategic Priorities – In process

Action 5: Add Community Safety Partnership and Waste Management Strategy to Work Programme – **ACTION**

Action 6: Find additional meeting date in May 2021 – This was not possible

The Panel were happy with the outcomes of the Actions.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the minutes of the meeting on 13 April 2021 were a true and accurate record.

EMBEDDING COMMUNITY RESPONSE REPORT

Jesal Dhokia, Transformation Project Manager, gave a presentation to the Panel, and showed them the Community Engagement website.

Councillor G Jones commented that it was a great presentation. Councillor Jones asked if work could include the Older People's Community Forum and asked what else could be done to involve other people. Jesal Dhokia advised the Panel that she was already working closely with them.

Councillor Del Campo asked for more information on the independent Chairman's and how they were elected. Jesal Dhokia informed the Panel that the independent Chair's had been approached, they were from the steering group and were on a rotation basis.

Councillor Stimson commented that the older people would be able to pass on more sustainable skills to the younger generation. It was a great process that surprise commented that not enough people knew of this project.

Councillor Price commented that not enough people knew of the project, especially those not on social media. More communications were needed to be done. Councillor Price suggested that libraries could also be used to advertise the project. Jesal Dhokia commented that she was working closely with the Comms. team and messages were now being sent out weekly. A poster had also been sent out now.

Councillor Price commented that many of the project meetings had been held in the daytime, working people could not attend these meetings. There were many barriers, big lessons have been learnt from Clewer and Dedworth project.

Counsellor Davey commented that there was no ongoing communication about the projects. Jesal Dhokia commented that the Clewer and Dedworth Project was continuing and the Maidenhead project was being brought up to a similar level. Both projects were still running.

Mr Hill, public speaker, addressed the Panel and commented that it was a fascinating presentation, and an excellent project. The formality of the project was great. Mr Hill felt that the focus could be moving to a bigger Maidenhead-wide project and promoting more on the RBWM calendar. It was an idea to look for investment from external sources and have on the website in plain English. Jesal Dhokia commented that all wards had been considered but

Clewer and Dedworth ward had a higher need during COVI. Abri were working closely with us and supporting us in this area.

It was suggested that it would be great to work with Maidenhead Town Forum to get ideas.

Councillor Bhangra commented that this was a great project.

LIBRARY TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY

Louise Freeth, Head of Revenues, Benefits, Library and Resident Services, informed the Panel that the original proposals had been revised and that all four libraries that were due to close would now remain open, some with reduced hours. The mobile library would be retired as it was no longer fit for purpose. There were plenty of volunteers and the team continued to work with partners and stakeholders.

Mr Hill, public speaker, commented that it was great news that Boyn Hill library was not closing and he thanked Councillors Bhangra and Carroll for all of the campaigning. Mr Hill asked the following questions:

- If groups were to hire out Boyn Hill library hall, would the money go to the library to keep open for longer hours.
- Was Boyn Hill ranked to the bottom for deprivation?
- Why had there been any reference to CIL AND S106 monies?
- Would Boyn Hill library be prioritised for monies?
- If volunteers came forward, could the library remain open more than 13 hours?

Louise Freeth informed the Panel that a one off, adhoc hire was not sustainable. A regular income would be considered, this needed to be regular and sustainable with a steady income stream. Other libraries had benefitted from their Parish Council or from trusts not Boyn Hill library.

Adele Taylor, Director of Resources, informed the Panel that the CIL AND S106 monies were linked and funded to particular areas. This had been explored and investigated, revenue had been supported instead of capital.

ACTION: Adele Taylor to investigate and explore further.

Angela Huisman informed the Panel that volunteers were there in a supporting role, assistant officers. The opening hours could not be extended with just having volunteers.

Councillor Rayner commented that Dedworth library had income that came in and was a minimal cost to the council, whereas Boyn Hill did not have much income coming in. this could be reviewed again in the future years and she was hopeful that this was what would happen.

Councillor Del Campo commented that it was an excellent report that had been backed up by an excellent consultation. Councillor Del Campo thanked the library team for all their hard work. Councillor Del Campo commented that Councillors Tisi, Price and Davey had dedicated themselves to solving the problems and developing Dedworth Library into a real community hub and had delivered around 300 leaflets in West Windsor. Councillor Del Campo was very pleased that the proposals to close the libraries had been changed.

Councillor Del Campo asked whether there would be any more closures expected in the next round of budget cuts? Councillor Rayner thanked Councillor Del Campo for the kind words about the library team. Everyone was delighted that no libraries were closing. The team had managed to produce a model of a library that was sustainable, and the team would continue to do the good work.

Councillor Del Campo asked who would be able to access the pop up libraries and the select and deliver service and how would these services work? Angela Huisman responded that the

select and deliver service was going to be available for housebound people as a start. This service would be available in areas that were away from libraries, where residents could not walk to a library. There were fifty volunteers and two full time staff managing the coordination, training and running that the program so that it would be professionally run. The right books would get to the right people at the right time. The books would be delivered by the volunteers. Councillor Del Campo felt that the Communications was very important to reassure people that the services were still available even though the mobile library had been lost. Councillor Del Campo was happy to help.

Councillor Del Campo commented that she had received very good feedback from a resident with disabilities as they had felt included in the consultation. Councillor Del Campo felt that people providing essential services should be paid for the work they do, otherwise there was a danger was that the work would be taken off people that needed an income.

Councillor Rayner thanked Councillor Del Campo for her kind comments about the consultation. The volunteers had replaced the mobile library, not any paid staff. Angela Huisman added that to deliver professional statutory library services, well trained staff were needed but they would be supported by volunteers. The savings in staff were from the reduction of opening hours across the service and the extra income that was coming from the parish councils and from some trusts that were helping with staffing. Also some efficiencies had come from having more digital services.

Councillor Davey thanked the library team. Councillor Davey was concerned that the pressure was now on Parish Councils as they would have to increase their pre-sets to fund the libraries. Councillor Davey felt that this was very wrong. Councillor Davey commented that it would be good to see the statistics of who participated in the consultation as they had worked a lot with residents to keep them informed.

Councillor Bhangra thanked Louise Freeth for the extensive report and the team for all their hard work. Councillor Bhangra was pleased that Boyn Grove library had been saved with reduced hours but it was important to increase the hours. How could this be done?

Councillor Price commented that the professionalism of the consultation would be used as an exemplar for other consultations and also commented that the library staff had been very helpful. Councillor Price commented that Dedworth area had no parish council so there was no preset to fall back on. The only money that could be used was CIL monies. Councillor Price was please that this was going to be looked into.

Councillor Price went through what Dedworth library had done and suggested that all libraries looked at their catchment area and their needs depending on what their profile was and then to come up with a sustainable plan for the future.

Councillor Price questioned the process that had taken place. The Communities O & S panel had made recommendations to Cabinet which had not been considered. The consultation took place and after a full circle, Cabinet agreed what the Panel had already suggested. Was their something incorrect that the Panel had done to get their recommendations considered by Cabinet?

Councillor Singh asked about security and volunteers having access to disabled and elderly residents and asked what checks were completed. Angela Huisman commented that all volunteers were safeguarding trained every year and all DBS checked to enhanced level and were all managed.

UPDATE ON DISTRICT ENFORCEMENT PILOT

Simon Dale gave a presentation to the Panel.

Simon Dale informed the panel that he had tried to explain in the covering report that this was an opportunity to utilise the work of Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel in informing the future going forward. The focus of the presentation was to update on the statistics as far as the pilot contract was concerned but equally focus on the future of the arrangements of the DE as this had been of particular interest to Members and residents. Simon Dale commented that the scrutiny of the Panel would assist in a strategy plan emerging which was to people's satisfaction. The presentation gave an overview of what the pilot was set up to achieve when the pilot was launched and there had been a relatively low activity compared to other councils in terms of environmental crime enforcement, which the borough wanted to increase activity in. The whole point of the pilot was to change people's behaviour and stop them from dropping litter and fly-tipping. The presentation showed the types of offences and what percentages they were. There was a split across the wards slide. The presentation also showed the time patrolled in each ward. There was also a slide showing gender and age of those that had been issued fixed penalty notices.

Simon Dale informed the Panel that the pilot would be coming to an end at the beginning of October 2021 and they wanted to bring it in line with enforcing activities that expired. The NSL contract for parking enforcement expired in November 2022. So far, 14 months between the end of October 2021 and November 2022, another 14 months, between the end of October 2021 and November 2022, taking into consideration member suggestions, it was proposed that to put out a specification that asked three companies under procurement rules to give prices for delivering the service for a 14 month interim period that would take the council to December 2022 when a full specification with member input, in areas of operation. The full specification would include parking enforcement, environmental crime enforcement, and aspects of highway enforcement in one contract. This would amalgamate three separate contracts with a lower price to provide additional revenue to the Council on top of what was already collected through parking enforcement. The presentation considered nine options and gave comments by each of them.

Mr. Webb thanked Simon Dale for the presentation, and asked what safeguards would be in place to ensure that private contractors used by RBWM for enforcement would enforce as per their priorities defined by residents, rather than the priorities with a profit nature and how would RBWM establish the priorities of residents for enforcement? Simon Dale responded to Mr. Webb's question that the borough were embarking on a process that included the members and resident priorities. The borough would take all considerations and with respect to the profit element, this would feature with a private operator but shouldn't be the major issue if a good service was offered. The journey would end with a fit for purpose service that balanced the residents needs with that of the overall council's position.

Cllr G Jones asked if complaints and appeals were the same thing? Simon Dale confirmed they were the same. Cllr Jones commented that it was a low rate of complaints with so many tickets being issued. Cllr Jones asked the difference between parking enforcement and highway enforcement. Simon Dale explained that parking enforcement fell under the Traffic Management Act and highways enforcement fell under the Highways Act. Cllr Jones added one final point that it would be good that whoever was awarded the contract had the ability to operate covert cameras in the lanes that were repeatedly targeted by fly tippers.

Cllr Price asked if any other local authorities had gone down the route of combining and if so, could any lessons be learnt? Also, it was said that the new contract should

provide additional revenue, should that read 'must' provide additional revenue for the council would like to see evidence where this has been done. Simon Dale agreed with the change of word from should to must. With respect to the combination of services that the council recognised, there were many local authorities that had combined environmental crime and parking but Simon Dale could not think of any that had combined all three. This would be researched.

Councillor Bhangra asked Simon Dale who was it that decided where the DE Officers were placed, as in his ward, the FPN were very low. Neil Walter responded that the enforcement officers were all over the borough. The main FPN's were given in the town centres. Neil Walter commented that ward councillors had been asked for problem areas in their ward's, but none had been sent. Neil Walter commented that he would like to do targeted enforcement so that the problem areas were covered.

Councillor Davey commented that Simon Dale and Neil Walter had done an excellent job. They were always at hand to provide information. The project had been going for nine months and residents had commented, and officers had listened and come up with logical solutions.

Councillor Baldwin asked a couple of questions and commented on option 1 of the supplement document which read insufficient time in considering this option. It had been twelve months so how could it be insufficient? And Councillor Baldwin commented that no substantial piece of work had been done. What had happened to the discussions that had taken place twelve months ago. Councillor Baldwin commented that this had been a concessionary contract that had been awarded through the non-tender permissions and no discussions had taken place. Councillor Baldwin asked if the Panel could see all the contributions, advice and wisdom that had been received from elected members. Simon Dale responded that it had been insufficient time to have anything in place for 5 October 2021 was because the council had taken the time to learn from the pilot, there was no experience of running the service in the council and the cost of establishing that was unknown at this stage and there was only 3-4 months to do that. Staff would have to be employed and systems would have to be in place. The priority was to have an interim in place that had transparency. The elected member comments would all be on You Tube if Councillor Baldwin wanted to hear them. Officers had listened to everyone that had something to say.

Councillor Price asked that with the highways, one of the largest problems was people parking on the pavements and them not being able to be used by people walking. Was this a police matter? Was this to change? Simon Dale commented that some legislation was in place at present to make it an offence, nationally in parking on the footway. The council had responded to the consultation and both MPs were in favour of some sort of blanket ban on footpath parking.

Councillor Singh commented that St Marys wad was the most targeted area. Councillor Singh could not see any measures of any improvement in terms of littering around the borough in the report. Residents had been concerned about the reputation and customer confidence with the contract. Councillor Singh wanted to part of any consultation that took place. Simon Dale commented that councils used to measure how clean their wards were but this was not done anymore. External groups could be invited to do this. There had been very few repeat offenders, so it was a detriment.

Councillor Davey commented that the legal point was how were the borough improving littering. Neil Walter said that it could not be physically measured but the

contractors were collecting high amounts of litter. This was adding cost to the borough. Campaigns could be done and community groups could assist in monitoring.

Q4/END OF YEAR PERFORMANCE REPORT

David Scott presented the report. David Scott reminded the Panel that the introduction of the council's interim strategy in July 2020 meant that the performance reports for the last year were refocused to respond to the revised strategy as fully as possible and Appendix A showed the three revised priorities that the interim strategy set out. At a headline figure, the summary at the end of Q4 of last year with respect to the seven performance indicators were that one measure was meeting exceeding targets, one was short of the target but within the expected tolerances, four were off target and one was agreed to be a non-targeted indicator by virtue of the impact of covid.

Councillor Del Campo asked about the environment and climate strategy and the £1.2 million pounds of grants had been received and that this was excellent news. What tangible results had been received from this money?

Councillor Stimson gave a breakdown of the monies, some had been spent on heat mapping, LED lights in school and feasibility studies on carbon footprints and for residential energy efficiency.

Councillor Price asked about fly-tipping and what residents should do when they witness, could this be highlighted to residents.

ACTION: Add what to do if fly-tipping is witnessed by residents in Residents Newsletter.

WORK PROGRAMME

The Clerk informed the Panel that more needed to be done in the work programme agenda item. The Clerk suggested that the Panel look at the cabinet Forward Plan on a regular basis and bring thought and suggestions to meeting. The Clerk had added Community Safety Partnership, Waste Management Strategy and Maidenhead Heritage Centre to the work programme.

Councillor Bowden suggested added the Tivoli Contract to the work programme and the Panel, all agreed that this was an excellent idea.

Councillor Price suggested putting SERCO on work programme but in the to be programmed table as the date for returning to fortnightly collection had not be announced yet. Simon Dale suggested a briefing note on this to begin. The Panel agreed.

ACTION: Briefing Note to be produced for Panel

Councillor Price suggested added Climate strategy to work programme.

ACTION: Briefing Note to be produced for Panel

ACTION: Add feature in members update on a regular basis.

Councillor Price suggested discussing the actions from the Annual Scrutiny Report. The Clerk suggested discussing at a pre meeting and bring to Panel, twice a year.

ACTON: Place on work programme, twice a year

Councillor Price asked for more detail on items on Cabinet Forward Plan

ACTION: Clerk to discuss with Head of Democratic Services

David Scott suggested that since the Chief Constable was at the meeting in October, the community safety partnership item could be presented at a meeting after that.

Panel Members suggested an additional meeting in September.

ACTION: Clerk to find date in diaries.

The meeting, which began at 6.15 pm, finished at 9.35 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....