

## CORPORATE SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

TUESDAY, 18 APRIL 2017

PRESENT: Councillors C Rayner (Chairman), Lenton, McWilliams, Jones, Quick and L Evans.

Also in attendance: Cllr Rankin

Officers: Alison Alexander, Andy Jeffs, Russell O'Keefe, Rob Stubbs and David Cook.

### APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received by Cllr Burbage and Cllr Bowden. Cllr Lenton attended as a substitute.

### DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Lenton declared a personal interest in item 4, Pool and Mayoral Cars and the Introduction of Electronic Vehicle Points as he was the Deputy Mayor. As this was not a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest he stayed and considered the item.

### MINUTES

The Part I minutes of the meeting held on 15 March 2017 were approved as a true and correct record. It was agreed to send the Panel an update on how the authority tracked volunteers.

### POOL AND MAYORAL CARS AND THE INTRODUCTION OF ELECTRIC VEHICLE POINTS

Cllr Jones asked why the agenda reports had been circulated to the Panel as To Follow reports. The Managing Director informed that this was because the date set for the O&S Panel did not give sufficient time on the Cabinet report cycle to make amendments post consultation with Lead Members to enable them to be included when the O&S Panel agenda was published.

The Panel considered the Cabinet report on the pool cars leased by the Royal Borough, the Mayoral car and Electric Vehicle Charging points.

The Chairman asked why the Mayoral car had been included in this report and was informed that it was part of the RBWM fleet.

The Panel were informed that that the council previously had electric cars for its pool fleet, but the decision had been made to replace these with a new fleet. However, the new scheme required a much higher mileage level than was being achieved. It was therefore proposed to terminate the existing contract at the end of the second year when costs would be minimal. A report would be submitted to Cabinet in six months setting out proposals for a replacement scheme using electric/hybrid vehicles. The Employment Panel would also review the council's existing mileage policy and officers would be encouraged to use the pool fleet rather than using their own vehicles and submitting mileage claim forms.

In relation to the Mayoral car the Pane were informed that it was first registered in 2007 and purchased by RBWM in 2011, it was proposed to replace this vehicle with a cleaner hybrid car.

The Panel were informed that there were few electric vehicle charging points in the borough. There was a demand for points to be installed and a grant was available for the project and the proposed supplier, Pod Point, already worked with a number of local authorities. It was proposed to install 10 points at no cost to the authority as match funding was available.

Cllr Dr L Evans asked why such low voltage charging points were being proposed as they would take too long to charge other authorities such as Basingstoke and Dean had 'rapid' 33kw-42kw charging points in public car parks. Cllr Evans also mentioned that there was no usage data on the mayoral car so it was difficult to assess if an electric vehicle was appropriate.

The Panel were informed that the charging points used would be investigated as part of the procurement process. With regards to the mayoral car it currently did about 10,000 miles per annum and its usage would be examined before a final decision would be made. The authority may look at a hybrid vehicle giving lower CO2 emissions.

The Chairman mentioned that a long wheel base vehicle with good leg room and head room should be considered for the mayors car as it was important that they arrived at events with dignity.

Cllr Quick agreed that the mayor should be able to get out of the car in dignity especially when in full regalia.

Cllr Lenton mentioned that it was also important to have sufficient boot space as the mayor or vice mayor often went to multiple events in one day and may require a change of clothes. Security was also important especially when the mayors chain was being used.

Cllr Lenton also mentioned that it would be good if the replacement car was made in the UK.

The Chairman mentioned that when he was the mayor he was aware that Land Rover had a diplomatic service and this may be an option.

Cllr McWilliams mentioned that the mayors car should not be more luxurious than the PM's car especially as the PM was an MP for the borough.

With regards to electric vehicle charging points the Chairman mentioned that in Kingston the only parking that could be found was the charging points as they were not used. Cllr Rankin mentioned that ward Members would be consulted on location before they were installed.

Cllr Quick mentioned that they could be placed in RBWM car parks.

Cllr Jones asked if they would be placed in central Windsor and central Maidenhead or across the borough.

Cllr Lenton questioned the life span of the charging points.

The Panel were informed that the expected life span was 7 years, that the borough currently had a couple in RBWM car parks that were frequently used and that installation would be across the borough.

Cllr McWilliams asked how officers were to be encouraged to use the pool cars and was informed that there were a number of initiatives such as having a number of locations the cars can be accessed, changing the policy so staff can take the vehicles home after evening meetings / visits and managers working with teams about the need to use the pool cars. Claiming for mileage should no longer be the norm but only used in exceptional purposes.

**Resolved unanimously: that the Corporate Services O&S Panel considered the Cabinet report and fully endorsed some of the recommendations subject to the following:**

- **Ward Members should be consulted regarding any placement of electric vehicle points.**
- **The centre of Windsor and other parts of the Royal Borough where parking is at a premium should not be considered as locations for electronic vehicle points.**
- **Approved the termination of the existing pool car fleet. The Panel raised concern that officers were still using their private cars instead of using the pool cars.**
- **Consideration should be given to placing the electronic vehicle points in RBWM car parks as a trial. The panel suggested that we should put one electric point in each town in one of the car parks and by the town hall.**
- **The options for a new mayoral car should come back to the Panel prior to any procurement. The Panel would like to see three options and the Cabinet paper recommendation should not give delegated authority to purchase a new car until the options have been to Panel. The panel also suggested the officers should approach Land Rover diplomatic service for a vehicle.**
- **Any new mayoral car should be a long wheelbase that gives legroom in the back of the car and have enough headroom that would offer dignity for the mayor.**
- **Recommendation 'C. Procure a new electric Mayoral car during 2018/19' should be change to 'Procure an appropriate Mayoral car in consultation with the Corporate Services O&S Panel.'**

## FINANCIAL UPDATE

The Panel considered the latest Cabinet financial update report.

The Panel were informed that the council was in a positive financial position. The Adult, Children's and Health directorate projected an underspend of £25,000 on a budget of over £57m. The Corporate and Community Services directorate projected an underspend of £64,000. The Operations and Customer Services projected an underspend of £337,000. As a consequence, this left the overall reserves at several hundred thousand pounds above the target budgeted to achieve by 31 March 2017.

The Panel were informed that there was a requirement for a top-up payment under the Mutual Municipal Insurance arrangements inherited from the former Berkshire County Council. This would be reviewed on an annual basis.

Cllr McWilliams asked why there was a 40% slippage on capital projects and what the deadlines for capital payments were in table 4. The Panel were informed that the reason for the slippage was because projects often covered a number of years with payment schedules over years. This also applied to table 4 where payments were made at different times. For future reports it was planned to add major capital projects whose payment schedules spanned a number of years.

Cllr Quick mentioned that additional funding had been given to relieve home to school transport pressures and asked if this would be added to next years budget build. The Panel were informed that the budget was increased for this year and that home to school transport remained under review.

Cllr Dr L Evans asked when the debt identified in the cash flow chart would be reduced. The Panel were informed that this would be subject to future decisions regarding the regeneration programme. Members will have to decide how best to use our assets.

**Resolved unanimously: that the Corporate Services O&S Panel considered the Cabinet report and fully endorsed the recommendations. The Panel noted that the payment of costs awarded against the Council for the detrimental Legoland planning appeal had been budgeted for in the accounts.**

## RBWM TRADING ACTIVITIES UPDATE

The Panel considered the Cabinet update report on the activities, priorities and progress of the Council's trading companies.

The Panel were informed that the report showed In June 2016 it had been agreed to use Section 106 funding to undertake property refurbishment and property purchases for affordable Key Worker housing. In December 2016 the initial business plan was approved to deliver 138 properties over five years. The objectives were to provide good quality affordable housing for key workers and to contribute to the general fund in the form of dividends. It had been envisaged that six sites would be completed in 2016 and 2017; to date three sites were fully completed and were awaiting approval of the Secretary of State for transfer. The Brocket site had been delayed pending the findings of the Task and Finish Group established to look at other uses other than housing and two sites adjacent to Ray Mill Road had been delayed pending technical flood work being completed.

Cllr Rankin informed the Panel that for transparency the chairman of the RBWM property company would be producing quarterly update reports.

Cllr Dr L Evans asked how confident we were in achieving our housing targets and was informed that this would depend on future decisions regarding the regeneration programme as decisions would have to be made on if we sell land for development, take units or a mixture of both.

The Chairman asked if there could be a future conflict between the Planning Department and the RBWM Trading Company when it came to planning decisions. The Panel were informed that the trading company would take its own independent legal advice and that planning departments often went against authority applications.

Cllr McWilliams questioned the justification for subsidising rents and was informed that S106 affordable housing contributions would be used to make the 20% subsidy for affordable homes that would also mean 80% of the rent coming back to the authority as well as supporting key workers.

**Resolved unanimously: that the Corporate Services O&S Panel considered the Cabinet report and fully endorsed the recommendations. The Chairman had concerns over transparency and potential conflict of senior officers, especially relating to planning, and those of the trading activity company.**

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

**RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting whilst discussion takes place on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1-7 of part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.**

The meeting, which began at 8.00 pm, finished at 9.25 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....