

HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
PANEL

THURSDAY, 21 JUNE 2018

PRESENT: Councillors Hari Sharma (Chairman), Eileen Quick (Vice-Chairman),
Maureen Hunt and Shamsul Shelim

Also in attendance: Councillor David Evans

Officers: Wendy Binmore and Russell O'Keefe

ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN

Councillor Hari Sharma and Councillor Eileen Quick were elected Chairman and Vice-Chairman respectively, for the ensuing municipal year.

RESOLVED: That Councillor Hari Sharma be elected Chairman and Councillor Eileen Quick be elected Vice-Chairman, for the ensuing municipal year.

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Wisdom Da Costa, Paul Lion and Julian Sharpe.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

MINUTES

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 May 2018 be approved with the following additional text:

Regarding the Cycling Action Plan, Councillor Hunt had mentioned bike racks being installed in two schools in Hurley and the Walthams but she was concerned regarding cyclists getting back and forth with few people cycling because of the difficulties of cycling in that area.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT

Russell O'Keefe, Executive Director, presented the report to Panel and Members noted the following key points:

- The report set out the performance of the Council for 2017/18.
- The report set out how the Council has been doing against 25 key performance measures.
- The report was due to go to both Cabinet and Full Council.
- The covering report stated the key projects such as AfC, Optalis, the joint venture with Countryside, the Maidenhead Golf Club site, School Expansion Project etc.
- The annual reports were designed to be in a much more accessible format for Members, residents and businesses.

The Chairman stated he remembered the document being presented to Full Council in 2017 and the objective of the report was to improve the Council's services overall whilst looking to reduce costs with residents still receiving good services. The report also helped to eliminate any lack of transparency. The Chairman was pleased with the report and the improved performance on last year.

The Chairman stated in table one of page 18 of the agenda pack, the strategic priorities showed two green indicators and one amber. There was also one red indicator in the customer service category. The Executive Director stated page 30 of the appendix showed each measure. The red indicator was for all two year olds being offered a review but the take up was only 57% however, reviews were not mandatory. The service launched the programme to promote services and the focus was on health and wellbeing.

The Executive Director confirmed that the amber in customer services was for calls answered in 60 seconds, and there was a range of work ongoing to improve the customer service experience which would improve that measure.

Councillor Quick stated the report looks like the Council is beating itself up on a target that had not been met even though the measure for 2 year olds to attend a health review was optional. The Executive Director responded there was a range of promotions of the service being implemented and he would feed comments back to the team. The service was offered to all parents, but it was up to them to take up the offer.

Councillor Quick asked if there was a specific issue with customer service calls being answered within 60 seconds; the KPI was sat at 66.2%. the Executive Director stated there was a range of factors and things had improved. The Council provided a very extended service as a Council, the Royal Borough was the only Council to offer a seven day a week service. Other customer service contact centres were only open 4.5 days per week whereas, the Royal Borough provided a far reaching service. So, there were peaks of phone calls received during the week but, also a new telephone system had been installed which should improve things, but, it would take a while for those improvements to flow through.

The Chairman stated looking through the document, the Council had met a lot of its targets. Affordable homes had a green indicator and there was excellence in customer services. He queried what the methodology was for understanding resident's needs. The Executive Director stated there were a number of ways for residents to engage through consultations, meetings and face to face appointments with officers. Targets were challenging and one of the amber KPIs was for processing housing benefit claims. However, the report did not show the whole picture because the Borough was third overall in the whole country for processing housing benefit claims. The Council processed claims within 20 days so although the Borough was very good compared to the rest of the country, the KPI was amber due to the challenging targets set.

Councillor Hunt stated the Borough was very good at handling claims, she had helped residents with council tax claims and they had been dealt with very quickly. Her concern was when residents call up the customer service centre. When a resident called a Councillor, they were answered by the person they were trying to reach. But when they called the switchboard, it was not always a pleasant experience, and when they finally got through, they then have to be transferred. She felt the initial issue was that first contact being difficult for residents. The Chairman said the Council was doing excellent work and he felt a little more communication with residents would help. He added the Council needed to give residents examples of the work being carried out to improve things, and that could be added in bullet point format to the report next to the KPIs. The Chairman also suggested more press releases of the improvements being made should be issued.

Councillor Shelim stated there should be two areas added to improve the customer service experience, the first was when residents called the switchboard, they should be able to choose which department they get put through to straight away. The other was to add national

comparative statistics to the report so residents could see how well the Council was doing as the targets set were very tough. The Executive Director confirmed the targets were discussed at the Senior Management Team meeting to add the national statistics as other Local Authorities would love to have statistics like the Royal Borough's.

Councillor Hunt said there were a lot of consultations carried out and a lot of those were done online. However, a lot of residents did not use the Council website so it was a missed opportunity to engage with residents and get their views which would not be counted during consultations. She added that Around the Royal Borough publication was distributed to all residents but deadlines did not often meet up with consultations. Consultations should be geared up to work with the Around the Royal Borough publications deadline and distribution. Councillor Shelim suggested installing display screens in the Towns so that all the information could be displayed which would help engage local residents.

The Chairman stated the Borough was providing 38% affordable homes in just one scheme and reducing rates for some businesses so, evidence of that could be provided to residents to show how the Council had met its targets. The report could also show how the Borough was working towards its targets. He added he wanted to show that the Council was doing better than the national average plus, evidence of what had been done since last year.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Members endorsed the recommendations and requested that national comparable statistics be added to the report showing that the Borough is doing well nationally in comparison to other Local Authorities, and also for the report to show evidence of what work had been done since 2017 in bullet point format.

VICUS WAY CAR PARK

Councillor D. Evans introduced the report to Members and stated that with their support, the Council would be able to provide a new car park in Maidenhead by 202. He added the car park was a central piece in a jigsaw to deliver more parking in the Town Centre of Maidenhead as promised.

The site was occupied by businesses which vacated at the end of 2017 so it was now part of the plan for parking in Maidenhead. Last year, a paper came to Panel asking for a budget of £12m to provide mainly temporary car parking in Maidenhead. The proposals within the report were better as it would mean a reduction in temporary parking and the £8m that was originally earmarked for temporary parking could now be put towards permanent parking with some additional funding being received from the LEP. The funding would not only pay for permanent parking but, would also see 60 temporary spaces being made at Clyde House while the permanent car park was being built.

Councillor D. Evans stated he expected work to begin in the last quarter of 2018 and for the car park to be completed by January 2020. A planning application would be submitted for Broadway car park which would follow the completion of Vicus Way car park. Broadway car park and Vicus Way car park would give the Borough substantially more parking in the centre of Maidenhead. Councillor D. Evans said he had ensured at no point would there be a reduction in parking during the redevelopment of Maidenhead and the proposals in the report made sure that happened.

The Chairman stated he was involved in the discussions on temporary parking in the Town. The Panel was critical of those proposals so the new proposals were welcomed, it was a much better solution. Councillor D. Evans responded the original proposals contained a lot of temporary parking as the site had not been available at Vicus Way. Officers had worked very hard to obtain the site.

The Chairman stated having parking for a wider transport strategy was a good plan. Greater accessibility would generate income for businesses so it was a great investment for the

Borough. The Borough had a transport strategy and he felt the Borough had a good balance between public transport and cars. He did however, query the size of the parking spaces as to why they were quite large. The Executive Director responded the spaces contractors had opted for were generous as they were more attractive for people to use. In response to questions as to why ANPR cameras were not being used, the Executive Director stated the market advice was that they were not a sensible route to go down.

Councillor Quick stated there had been mention of a busy car park in Windsor being expanded. Councillor D. Evans stated that was still going ahead at the River Street car park. Councillor Hunt commented the proposals were really great and she was pleased at not having the huge expenditure on temporary parking. She added that the Vicus Way car park was not a Town Centre location, it was quite a way out of the Town Centre and there would be parents with buggies that would have to walk quite a way to get into town. Therefore, it should be listed as a Town car park but not a Town Centre car park. The Executive Director stated the Council saw the car park as fulfilling the needs of businesses and commuters. He added he would take Councillor Hunt's comments on board and would look at the phrasing.

Councillor D. Evans confirmed the Broadway car park was not being demolished until after the Vicus Way car park had opened. People would need to be moved out of the Hindes Meadow car park and would need to use either Vicus Way or some temporary parking at the Landing site where parents and disabled people could be given priority to park. An event had been held to engage with local residents and businesses about the plans for parking and overall, people were very supportive of the proposals.

Councillor Hunt queried if the project contingency was the full contingency for the whole project. The Executive Director stated there were no highways works risks for the project. There were lots of amber risks because the application had not gone through the planning process yet. He added that the budget was 75% market tested so it was a very robust budget. The £250k contingency budget covered everything but, if there were some highways works required, they would come from a different budget. In terms of unforeseen underground conditions, the site had been cleared to make a temporary car park already, therefore, it was unlikely anything unforeseen would be found. The Chairman stated he had found the risk register very helpful and he was very impressed with the work that had been carried out by officers with great transparency. Councillor D. Evans stated a governance arrangements structure chart had also been included in the report and he commended the Executive Director and officers for including the governance structure to ensure robust checks and balances were in place as the risk register was a moving document. Councillor Quick stated it might be helpful to add a legend to decipher the acronyms within the report. The Executive Director confirmed he would look at that.

Members endorsed the recommendations and requested the following amendment: that the report amend the phrasing that the car park is a town car park and not a town centre car park.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Members endorsed the recommendations and requested the following amendment: that the report amend the phrasing that the car park is a Town car park and not a Town Centre car park.

WORK PROGRAMME

Members of the Panel noted the details of the Work Programme.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

To consider the following resolution:-

“That under Section 100 (A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public can be excluded from the remainder of the meeting whilst discussion takes place on item 9 on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 – 7 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the act”.

The meeting, which began at 5.00pm, finished at 6.30pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....