

COMMUNITIES AND PLACE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, 22 NOVEMBER 2017

PRESENT:- Councillors Dale Heenan (Chair), Mary Friend, Dale Heenan (Chair), Nick Martin and Kevin Parry.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors John Ballman, Teresa Page, James Robbins, Vera Tomlinson and Peter Watts.

14. Declarations of Interest

The Chair reminded Members of the need to declare any known interests in any matters to be considered at the meeting. No declarations were made.

15. Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 5th September 2017, be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

16. Public Question Time

No Public Questions were asked.

17. Presentation - Volunteering

The Director of Public Health made a presentation to the Committee on the current volunteering activity within Swindon Borough Council and other stakeholders and exploring the challenges and opportunities to increase levels of volunteering across the Borough through raising awareness and working with the voluntary sector.

Following the presentation the Cabinet Member for Communities and Place and the Director of Public Health responded to members' questions and observations on the issues raised including:

- The promotion of volunteering opportunities through the Council's website.
- The use of volunteers by Council departments and teams.
- Future work to broaden the volunteer base within the Borough.
- The role of Sanford House in providing a hub" for volunteers in the town centre.
- On-going work to standardise the recruitment and use of volunteers through the creation of a toolkit available on the Council's website.
- Raising the awareness of funding opportunities available to community and volunteer groups, including through the Wiltshire Community Foundation.
- Work to improve the support and communication networks available to voluntary organisations and individuals.
- Swindon Borough Council's policy of allowing staff to volunteer for up to 15 hours per annum using work time.
- The promotion of a pledge system to allow staff time off to support local charities similar to that run by Sheffield City Council during its year of Promises and Pledges.

- The recruitment and use of volunteers' street champions as health ambassadors and to support vulnerable people by, for instance, helping to cook meals.
- The current status of Swindon Circles which supported elderly people wishing to remain living in their homes and which was operated by the Council.
- Work to make the Volunteering element of Council's website more streamlined and user friendly.

Resolved – (1) That the presentation be noted.

(2) That the Cabinet Member for Communities and Place and the Director of Public Health be thanked for attending the meeting and for their full and open responses to member's questions and observations on the matters raised in the presentation.

18. Presentation - Litter Campaign

The Head of StreetSmart, Communities and Housing made a presentation to the Committee on upcoming campaign to reduce litter and fly-tipping across the Borough and how these issues would be tackled to improve the environment. He also advised Members on the current use of deterrents such as Fixed Penalty Notices and prosecutions as well as the educational programmes aimed at reducing littering through changing behaviours.

Following the presentation the Cabinet Member for Communities and Place, and the Head of StreetSmart, Communities and Housing responded to members' questions and observations on the issues raised including:

- The current economic and environmental cost of fly-tipping within the Borough.
- Work to reduce fly-tipping through, enforcement, education and behavioural change.
- The forthcoming "Changing Behaviours – Anti-Fly Tipping Campaign" which would run until March 2018.
- The extensive range of activities undertaken by officers in the period November 2016 to July 2017 to reduce fly-tipping through education and activities planned for the future.
- Enviro Crime activity since January 2017, including investigations undertaken, prosecutions and fixed penalties on those found responsible.
- The definitions used by the Council to differentiate between littering and fly-tipping.
- The measures available to the Council to use against those found responsible for fly-tipping including the use of Fixed Penalty Notices and Prosecutions.
- Incentives available to people participating in green days.

Resolved – That the Head of StreetSmart, Communities and Housing be thanked for attending the meeting and for his useful and interesting presentation.

19. Presentation - Recycling Campaign

The Head of StreetSmart, Communities and Housing made a presentation to the Committee on the current status of recycling including a breakdown of the types of materials that were recyclable within the Borough and the reasons that some materials, such as black plastic currently could not be recycled and the current uses

within the Borough for recycled materials.

Following the presentation the Cabinet Member for Communities and Place and the Head of StreetSmart, Communities and Housing responded to members' questions and observations on the issues raised including:

- The current position in respect refuse collection, recycling, green waste collection, and kerb side recycling within the Borough.
- The collection methodology for the various waste collections and recycling.
- Work to increase recycling rates within the Borough and the environmental and economic benefits to the Council arising therefrom.
- Work to improve waste presentation by households and to target specific areas within the Borough for recycling campaigns.
- The proposed introduction of smaller household wheel bins to further encourage recycling (by reducing the amount of household waste that could be put into bins for collection) and whether this might lead to additional fly-tipping.
- The use of staff volunteers to clean up the waterside depot and use of volunteers by the StreetSmart team (including over 100 in country parks within the Borough).
- Proposed measures to recycle the anticipated increase in the materials arising from the Christmas period.
- The reduction in recycling rates across the Borough due to factors such as fewer newspapers glass being collected and service efficiencies being off-set by new houses being built.
- The increased recycling of plastic materials (excluding black plastic) and the minimal effect this had on recycling rates which were based on tonnage.
- The benefits to the waste collection service of household composting.
- The potential use of Section 46 Powers (under the Environmental Protection Act 1990) against residents misuse or overload waste bins or misuse the recycling collections.
- The Committee's future input in developing the Council's future Waste Strategy.
- The potential future recycling of food waste and the potential infrastructure needed to facilitate such work.
- The uses for recycled materials such as fuel pellets or in the production of road surfaces.
- The drawback of piloting new uses for recycled material due to the cost involved in developing new technology and recycling processes and the benefits of incorporating tested uses as soon as possible after their development and trial. Also the possible use of rewards for households with high recycling and low waste disposal.

Resolved – (1) That the Council's Waste Strategy 2018 be submitted to this Committee for consideration.

(2) That, further to (1) above, consideration of the Council's draft Waste Strategy 2018 should include the opportunity for members to comment on (a) options for the promotion of recycling, (b) the enforcement powers and penalties available to this Council to impose a requirement on households to recycle waste, and (c) the benefits and disadvantages of recycling different types of household.

(3) That a report on innovative uses for recycled materials be brought to a future meeting of the Committee after these have proven to be economically viable and to

have environmental benefits.

(4) That the Cabinet Member for Communities and Places be advised that this Committee would support Swindon's participation in any fully-funded pilot plastic deposit or like scheme.

(5) That the Head of StreetSmart, Communities and Housing thanked for attending the meeting and for his useful and interesting presentation.

20. Work Programme 2017/18

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Law and Democratic Services setting out the Committee's proposed Work Programme for the Municipal Year, 2017/18.

Resolved – (1) That the Committee's Work Programme for the Municipal Year, 2107/18 be approved.

(2) That it be noted that a report on Communications and Engagement would be the primary focus of the January meeting of this Committee.