

STREETSMART, HIGHWAYS AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, 28 SEPTEMBER 2016

PRESENT:- Councillor Colin Lovell in the Chair; Councillors John Ballman, Alan Bishop, Matthew Courtliff, Wayne Crabbe, Paul Dixon, Mary Friend, , Jane Milner-Barry, Kevin Parry, Gary Sumner, Caryl Sydney-Smith, Vera Tomlinson, Chris Watts, Peter Watts, Steve Weisinger, David Wood and Julie Wright.

In attendance: Councillor Dale Heenan (Cabinet Member for Sustainability, Highways and Transport).

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Nick Martin and Timothy Swinyard, Mary Martin (Cabinet Member for Communities and Keith Williams (Cabinet Member for Streetsmart).

6. Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 29th September 2016, be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

7. 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.

8. Public Question Time

Ms Sarah Church submitted a written question regarding the effect proposed cuts on the library service would have (a) on social exclusion and (b) additional cost to the Council in relation to future mental health provision. A written response was tabled at the meeting.

Ms Sarah Church asked a supplementary question regarding the distance residents would need to travel to a visit a library under the proposals set out in the Library consultation.

Ms Shirley Burnham submitted written questions relating to the Library strategy consultation and the role of the Committee in scrutinising the process. A written response was tabled at the meeting.

Ms Burnham asked a supplementary question regarding the same issue and the substantive nature of the proposed changes to the library service in Swindon. The Chair responded at the meeting.

Mr Clive Worman asked a number of questions on details relating to the Streetsmart waste and recycling changes 2016/17 and the operation of the recycling centre. The Chair responded at the meeting.

9. Library Strategy

The Committee considered a joint report of the Cabinet Member for Communities and Head of Localities, Community Involvement and Volunteering entitled "Securing a sustainable future for Swindon's Library Service previously considered by the Cabinet at its meeting held on 13th July 2016.

The Head of Localities, Community Involvement and Volunteering introduced the report and Members discussed:

- The process for purchasing library books and the discounts received by the Council through its purchasing arrangement.
- The libraries' policy of not accepting donations of good condition second hand books.
- The feasibility of enhancing service provision via the introduction of a voluntary annual fee for library users, perhaps in return for an enhanced service, for those users.
- The introduction of a fee structure for specific library services such as the reservation service.
- Possible changes to some library services such as a click and collect service.
- The exploration and identification of further potential savings within the library service and whether there is scope for further savings without substantially reducing the number of libraries.
- The work of the Cabinet Member Advisory Group currently overseeing the consultation process and the development of the library service.
- The involvement of Ward Councillors in the libraries strategy consultation process and future shaping of the library service provision.
- The impact of library closures on local businesses.
- The need to engage smaller businesses as part of the library consultation process.
- The limited response rate to the consultation of users in the 19-35 age group.
- The engagement of educational establishments within the consultation.
- The comments of Justin Tomlinson, M.P. regarding the need for a coherent response to the consultation.
- The proposal on future library provision submitted by library staff as part of the consultation.
- Book stock replacement in libraries to be run by volunteers.
- The outcome of the previous library consultation exercises in Gorsehill.
- The limitations of the mobile library service.
- The option of using the central library for other uses and using this resource and the sale of properties used by services sharing that facility to protect branch libraries.
- The impact of the proposed strategy on access of vulnerable groups to computer facilities, especially those provided in areas of deprivation. (It was noted unemployed people needed to look for work every day and for many this was done through information technology in local libraries.)
- The effect the loss of computers in local libraries would have on education provision.
- The threat of greater isolation of vulnerable groups if local libraries were to close.
- The benefits of extending the library consultation process to tie in with the Corporate Governance Review, on the basis that any parishes created might

wish to support the current library provision within their boundaries.

- The dual purpose use of library buildings to reduce direct costs to the library service (for example as Parish Council offices, other voluntary groups, public sector partners or businesses).
- The future use of automation in any future library service provision.
- The responsibilities of volunteers and the Council in respect of any future volunteer model of a library service.
- The likelihood that volunteers can be attracted to man libraries, given the limited responses for Council volunteers in other service areas.
- The value residents put on the provision of a local library service.

Resolved - (1) That the Head of Localities, Community Involvement and Volunteering be thanked for attending the meeting and his full and open responses to members' questions and observations on the issues raised.

(2) That the report be noted.

(3) That a Task Group comprising Councillors John Ballman, Alan Bishop, Colin Lovell, Jane Milner-Barry, Vera Tomlinson, Chris Watts, David Wood and Julie Wright be established to review possible savings to the current library service budget.

10. Highways Winter Programme Review

With the agreement of the Committee this item was withdrawn.

11. Streetsmart Waste and Recycling Changes 2016/17

The Committee considered a joint report of the Cabinet Member for Streetsmart and Head of Streetsmart updating members on (a) the upcoming changes to the waste and Recycling service from 31st October 2016, and (b) a revised Policy and Waste Charter. The Head of Streetsmart introduced the report highlighting the key issues set out within the report, including up-coming changes to the waste and recycling service, changes to the operation of the household recycling centre service, the revision of the Council's waste policy and the introduction of a revised policy and waste charter.

The Committee discussed the following issues:

- The revision of household waste collection and recycling routes to optimise and improve service provision.
- The revision of waste collection and recycling days for households and potential benefits that might accrue from waste collection and recycling being on different days.
- The publicising of changes to this service.
- The estimated savings from the proposed changes to service delivery.
- The proposed withdrawal of the recycling "bring" sites and how this would affect households without front garden storage areas for recycling and houses in multiple occupation. (It was noted that the Head of Streetsmart would liaise with ward councillors in respect of these issues and the blue bag waste service provision).
- The purchase and operation of new vehicles to facilitate the change of the household waste collection and recycling service.
- Consultation with employees and unions regarding the proposed changes.
- The earlier commencement times for collections of household waste.

- Whether the changes to the recycling centre would lead to fly-tipping and how this would be handled through education and prosecution.
- The benefits to crews of households pre-sorting recyclables in separate boxes.
- The range of materials that can currently be recycled by Public Power Solutions (PPS) and at the household recycling centre.
- The Waste Policy and Charter to be submitted to the December meeting of the Committee.
- The need, from a financial and operational basis, to avoid multiple journeys to areas using the blue bag waste collection service.
- The Diversity Impact Assessment produced as part of the change in service delivery.
- The need to clarify with the Council's customer service section that there is no cost for providing additional recycling boxes.
- The impact on service provision of Parish Councils providing grounds maintenance services.

Resolved – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the Head of Streetsmart be thanked for attending the meeting to present the report and for his full and open responses to members' questions.

12. StreetSmart Grass Cutting Review for 2016/17

The Committee received a joint report of the Cabinet Member for Streetsmart and the Head of Streetsmart reviewing the performance of the Streetsmart grass cutting service during the 2016 season. The Head of Streetsmart made an oral presentation setting out key issues within the joint report.

The Committee considered the following issues:

- The backlog of work within the 2016 season arising from abnormal grass growth over a two month period and plans to prevent similar problems in future years.
- Enquiries from Parish Councils to take over additional grass cutting and grounds maintenance responsibilities and the future provision of grass cutting services following the conclusion of the Corporate Governance Review.
- On-going discussions with Parish Council's on the frequency of work to green areas retained by Swindon Borough Council.
- The need to engage with ward councillors regarding safe and clean days organised through Swindon Borough Council.
- The use of Council staff on contracts with private companies, the apparent difference in standards and whether such work exasperated the backlog in work previously discussed (It was noted that the specification for work for private companies would be set out in the contract and such money went directly to the Council).
- Future work on highway land to maintain safety standards.

Resolved – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the Cabinet Member for Streetsmart and Head of Streetsmart Head of Streetsmart be thanked for attending the meeting to present the report and for their full and open responses to members' questions..

13. Comparison of Parish and Borough Council costs for Grounds

Maintenance

The Committee noted that this item was withdrawn.

14. Committee Work Programme 2016/17

The Committee received the report of the Director of Law and Democratic Services setting out the agreed items for inclusion in the Committee's Work Programme 2016/17.

Resolved – (1) That the Committee's Work Programme 2016/17 be noted.

(2) That the Work Programme 2016/17 be amended to include a report on Street Lighting within the Borough at its November meeting,

(3) That, further to (2) above, the report on the comparison of Parish And Borough Council costs for Grounds Maintenance be move dto the Janury meeting of this Committee.

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