

## **STREETSMART, HIGHWAYS AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**WEDNESDAY, 23 NOVEMBER 2016**

PRESENT:- Councillor Colin Lovell in the Chair: Councillors John Ballman, Alan Bishop, Matthew Courtliff, Paul Dixon, Mary Friend, Nick Martin, Jane Milner-Barry, Kevin Parry, Timothy Swinyard, Chris Watts, Steve Weisinger, David Wood and Robert Wright.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Wayne Crabbe, Vera Tomlinson, Peter Watts and Julie Wright.

### **15. Minutes**

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2016, be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

### **16. 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.

### **17. Public Question Time**

There were no public questions.

### **18. StreetSmart Six Month Service Review**

Councillor Keith William, Cabinet Member for StreetSmart, was in attendance and presented to the Committee a report providing the Committee with a six monthly performance review of StreetSmart services and offering a summary of progress and performance in respect of each of the following service areas within his portfolio of responsibility:

- Waterside Depot Management;
- StreetSmart
- Public Toilets:
- EnviroCrime:
- Waste Disposal/Waste Minimisation:
- Street Cleaning:
- Recycling:
- Refuse Collection – Domestic and Trade:
- Ground and Tree Maintenance and Open Spaces:
- Removal of Graffiti and Abandoned Vehicles:
- Parks (StreetSmart services only);
- Environmental Issues: Landscape and Countryside (including Community Forest);
- Playgrounds, including those that are not presently utilised:
- Maintenance of Roundabouts and non-HRA verges:

At the request of the Chair, Councillor Williams, in his presentation of the report, commented specifically on those elements within his portfolio which he felt had been most successful, those where a different approach might have produced better results and the lessons that might have been learned as a consequence, and the challenges he expected to be faced by the Council in relation to these service areas in the coming year and beyond, particularly in relation to on-going budgetary constraints.

Following his presentation of the report, Councillor Williams responded to members' specific questions and observations on the following matters:

- Improvements to the house recycling centre at Barnfield Road.
- The current range of services provided to the public at the household recycling centre at Barnfield Road.
- The work of the environmental crime team in dealing with fly tipping.
- Prosecutions under taken against the perpetrators of fly tipping and the need to publicise the details of fly tippers where possible.
- Work by officers to educate the public and reduce instances of littering.
- The relative success of the changeover in recycling and household rubbish collections.
- The efficient replacement of damaged household recycling boxes and rubbish bins.
- The financial viability of the recycling process currently operated by the Council.
- Instructions to staff regarding what was and was not acceptable for collection and recycling.
- The insurance of volunteers who participate in "litter picks" organised by the Council or community groups.
- The maintenance of roundabouts and highway verges to ensure appropriate lines of vision are maintained.
- The potential closure of local recycling facilities.
- Proposals to transfer grounds maintenance to parish Councils and the feasibility of transferring the Council's grass cutting fleet to parishes.

Resolved – That the Cabinet Member for StreetSmart and the Head of StreetSmart be thanked for attending the meeting and for their full and open responses to members' questions and observations on the issues raised.

## **19. Volunteering and Locality Working - Update**

With the agreement of the Chair this item was withdrawn to allow officers to work on the Library Strategy.

## **20. Waste Services Update**

The Committee considered an oral report by David Robinson (Waste Recycling Manager) in respect of changes to the Council's Waste and Recycling Service. Mr Robinson highlighted the following issues:

- The changes to the waste collection and recycling service would affect approximately 55,000 households within the Borough.
- The changes had taken approximately a year to plan and would affect both

routes undertaken by waste and recycling teams and collection days.

- The vehicle fleet for waste and recycling collection would be replaced by the end of December and would provide greater capacity and more fuel efficient vehicles.
- The new vehicle fleet also provided better information technology to optimise routes and provided real time data updates.
- The planned changes achieved savings of approximately £300,000 with the opportunity for further efficiencies in the future.
- There would be one fewer kerbside crew and one fewer waste crew under the new arrangements.
- The new arrangements allowed capacity for future housing developments over the next three years.
- The transition to the new system had so far been satisfactory with a high rate of collections on the scheduled days.

Following Mr Robinson's presentation the Committee discussed in greater detail the following matters relating to the proposed changes to the Council's Waste and Recycling Services:

- The capacity of in-cab technology to record and report damaged or contaminated recycling boxes.
- Technology on the vehicle to prevent the overloading of vehicles which have a 26 tonne capacity.
- The smooth changeover of collection dates for waste and recycling.
- The continuation of the blue bag waste collection service and use of narrow trucks in some areas of the Borough.
- Refresher training for waste and recycling vehicle teams.
- Work undertaken to inform residents of changes to collection dates and times.
- The ability to use information technology to confirm that vehicles had visited areas within their routes.
- Future services improvements that might arise through increased use of information technology imbedded in vehicles.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

## **21. Libraries Task Group Update**

The Committee considered a report of the Head of Localities, Community Involvement and Volunteering setting out (a) the recommendations of the Libraries Task Group in respect of Council's review of its library service, and (b) the minutes of the meetings of the Libraries Task Group held on 20<sup>th</sup> October and 3<sup>rd</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> November 2016. The Chair of the Libraries Task Group, Councillor Chris Watts, introduced the minutes of Task Group highlighting:

- The intensive work of the Task Group and officers in support of the review of the library service.
- That non-political approach adopted by the Task Group.
- The consideration of the proposals set out in the Libraries Review in the light of finding additional money to support additional branches of the service.
- The Task Group's assurance that all options for the library service had been

considered, including a “Trust Model”.

Following the introduction by Councillor Watts, and an invitation to respond, the Chair invited Councillor Mary Martin, Cabinet Member for Communities, expressed her appreciation to the Task Group for their work and detailed consideration of the issues commenting that it was very useful, from the perspective of finalising recommendations for Council to have the Task Group approach the issue from a fresh perspective. Councillor Martin thanked the Task Group for their recommendations which she felt broadly reflected the direction of travel of her own work in reviewing the service.

Following the presentation of the report and recommendations the the Committee discussed the issues raised, including:

- Trust Models not being permitted purely to avoid the payment of Business Rates and the recognition that any Trust would need to show that it's primary goal was service provision.
- The requirement that savings arising from any proposals should finance an extension of the core library service.
- Information technology issues and future support relating to the provision of the library service.
- The current model for providing information technology to the library service.

Resolved – That the recommendations of the Libraries Task Group be supported by this Committee and commended to the Cabinet Member for Communities for inclusion in her report to the Cabinet on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2016.

## **22. 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 Libraries update report and a report on Street Lighting within the Borough at its January meeting.

(3) That a Volunteering and Locality Working Update Report be submitted to the March 2017 meeting of this Committee.