

STREETSMART AND HIGHWAYS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, 16 JULY 2014

PRESENT:- Councillors Abdul Amin, Andrew Bennett, Alan Bishop, Brian Ford, Mary Friend, Neil Heavens, Fay Howard, Colin Lovell, Nick Martin, Derique Montaut, Maureen Penny (Chair), Eric Shaw (Deputy Chair), Timothy Swinyard, Vera Tomlinson, Joe Tray, Steve Wakefield, Peter Watts and Robert Wright

An apology for absence was received from Councillor David Wood.

6. Declarations of Interest

The Chair reminded members of the need to declare any known interests in any matter to be considered by the Committee. No interests were declared.

7. Public Question Time

Mr Nas Orchard submitted a written statement regarding his and other local residents concerns on road safety issues along Welcombe Avenue, from Goodard Park School to Bidport Road. Issues raised were speeding, buses vibrating houses, cars parking in inappropriate places, road repairs, drainage, and parking wardens and the police regulating the area. The response from Naz Ali, the Locality Lead, was noted, and Councillor Amin confirmed that he is already working with the residents to move these issues forward.

The Chair expressed concerns that Speedwatch training takes place in Devizes which is a long distance to travel for the residents of Swindon. It was agreed that this issue would be taken up with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Mr Roy Worman from Haydon View Community Association queried the take-up figure on green waste bins and asked if it still applies. He also referred to the lack of reference numbers being given out on enquiries, and what performance tables are available for the public to scrutinise Streetsmart work. The Chair agreed that a written response would be provided to Mr Worman on his questions.

8. Minutes

It was queried and confirmed that the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy had been suggested as an addition to the Work Programme by officers, and agreed by members as part of the draft Work Programme item at the last meeting. It was queried if the Strategy is still in draft form and agreed that this needs to be confirmed with a view to removing it from the Work Programme.

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 June 2014 be accepted as a correct record.

9. Review of Green Waste

The Committee received a report providing a review of the new Green Waste service implemented from 31 March 2014. The report also contained information on

fly tipping as requested at the last meeting and whether there was evidence of this happening more in rural or urban areas.

With the agreement of the Committee, Leon Barrett, Head of Streetsmart, introduced the report in two sections and firstly dealt with the new Green Waste service.

He advised that there had been 11,000 subscriptions to the service since its implementation and that there will be a service review meeting held on 11 September 2014. He asked members to note that as part of the review process initial comments from users had already been gathered which fell under the following categories: requests for bags even though the property can accommodate a wheelie bin; concern that the green waste goes directly into the green wheelie bin in relation to the associated smell and cleaning; could the Council consider a smaller size bin; can customers pay the subscription fee by instalments; are there concessions available for the elderly or those on benefits; and the renewal process. These and any other feedback received during the following months will be considered as part of the review in September.

Members then asked questions and made observations on the following issues relating to the new Green Waste Service which will be incorporated into the service review in September:

- The decision behind the setting of the target level of subscriptions when the current subscription level is adequately covering costs.
- The £40 annual subscription fee and how wheelie bins can cost the same as green waste bags.
- The green waste service having been designed predominantly as a wheelie bin service due to Health and Safety Executive advice that this will improve the health and wellbeing of the collection crews when the paper collection box has to be manually lifted and this can be extremely heavy.
- The levels of profit expected once the subscription levels reach the projected 16,000 target.
- Swindon Commercial Services being asked to check black bins to ensure that residents are not putting their green waste into those rather than paying the subscription fee.
- The cost to the Council for the green wheelie bins and how this relates to the annual subscription fee.
- The possibility of reducing the number of different coloured bins and potential savings for the Council as a result.
- If a risk assessment had been completed for the move to a wheeled bin system.
- A schematic map being available in future performance reports of sign up to the service across the Borough.
- Any increase in the number of bonfires now being seen across the Borough.
- It was agreed that the outcome of the service review in September would be brought to the November meeting of this Committee.

Leon Barrett then introduced the second part of the report regarding fly tipping. He noted that on average the Council receives around 3000 enquiries per month, 10% of which relate to this issue. There is a 4% difference in the figures compared to the previous year's figures, mainly due to confusion over new collection dates and what

can and cannot be put into the differing bins. There can also be multiple logging of the same instance of fly tipping if more than one resident contacts the Council. The focus will be on how to prevent fly tipping from occurring, and the various services involved are working together to find a solution.

Councillor Brian Ford, Cabinet Member for Streetsmart, noted that officers had met with the Enforcement Officer to discuss this issue, and that there had been prosecutions for fly tipping last year.

Members then asked questions and made observations on the following issues relating to fly tipping:

- The length of time it takes to prosecute a person for fly tipping and the evidence required when there will be no documents within green waste that could be used to identify the culprit.
- The possibility of an awareness campaign to ensure residents are informed that fly tipping can be prosecuted, and also educating school children on the issue.
- The procedure followed once an instance of fly tipping is initially reported, and ways to improve upon this without encouraging further fly tipping.
- The instances of fly tipping of hazardous waste on farm land.
- The length of time it takes the Council to deal with an instance of fly tipping compared to instances of graffiti.
- The introduction of new anti-social behaviour laws and how these may help to convict more people of fly tipping.
- The regularity with which officers will visit an instance of fly tipping and their responses depending on the type of material that has been fly tipped.
- The possibility of a campaign to encourage residents to use composters.
- It was agreed that any further issues identified would be sent to the Scrutiny Officer separately to the meeting for the relevant Task Group to scrutinise.

Resolved – To note the contents of the report.

10. Performance Dashboard

The Committee received a report presenting an overview of operational performance relevant to the Committee's remit. The performance dashboard is an enabler to inform future work packages within the Committee's annual work programme, and is expected to evolve and improve over time.

Karen McMahon, Head of Business Services and Support, introduced the report and advised that the dashboard is made up of operational performance information from Customer Services contact information, Customer Complaints, Highways, Streetsmart and Leisure for the month of May 2014.

After the presentation of the report and performance dashboard appendix, members asked questions and made observations on the following issues:

- It was noted and agreed that future dashboards will contain more than one month's data to allow for scrutiny of seasonal changes.
- The value of using the Red / Amber / Green system to record service performance and target achievement to easily identify issues.

- The reasons behind the differences between the figures relating to calls coming in and calls being answered as set out in the appendix.
- The drop in the number of people visiting the One Stop Shop and the possible causes behind this.
- Possible alternative data which could be put into the dashboard such as a serial complainers analysis, and how the Council performs compared to other authorities.
- Members meeting with the Head of Business Services and Support separate to the meeting to discuss patterns within the dashboard, and levels of complaints and how they relate to the performance of services.

Resolved – To note the contents of the report.

11. Work Programme 2014-15

The Committee received a report of the Director of Law and Democratic Services regarding the development of its work programme for 2014/15.

The Committee noted that the proposed item on Libraries currently scheduled for the September meeting will be moved to the January 2015 meeting.

The Committee also noted that the number of task groups had been reduced to three from the original proposed four as the Signage task group had been removed. The task groups have started to meet and work is progressing.

Resolved – That the Committee's updated work programme, detailed in the report, be noted.