



EAST
CAMBRIDGESHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

REGULATORY SERVICES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Regulatory Services Committee held in the Council Chamber, The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely on 6 November 2017 at 4.30pm.

P R E S E N T

Cllr Anna Bailey (Chairman)
Cllr David Ambrose-Smith (as a Substitute)
Cllr Sue Austen
Cllr Mike Bradley (as a Substitute)
Cllr Elaine Griffin-Singh
Cllr Julia Huffer
Cllr Stuart Smith (as a Substitute)
Cllr Jo Webber

OFFICERS

Jo Brooks – Director Operations
Liz Knox – Environmental Services Manager
Ian Smith - Finance Manager
Adrian Scaites-Stokes – Democratic Services Officer
Hetty Thornton – Performance Management Officer
Dave White – Waste Services Team Leader
Members of the public - 1

16. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The following questions were received from Caroline Seagrave:

With reference to agenda item 10, specifically Section 7, subsections 7.4 and 7.5:

Is there currently a list of private and unadopted roads which, subject to an indemnity, are suitable for collections and those that will need to be served by an agreed collection point and is the council currently aware of the number of households this could impact?

If this information exists can it be made available?

I live on a private road but the road is owned by a management company (who will need to give any indemnity, not individual residents, and on whose land any rubbish is likely to be placed), has communication with the ultimate landowner, rather than directly with residents, been factored into the communication strategy?

The Director, Operations stated that the report, under section 7.4, was incorrect and that the wording should have stated that the Council would conduct a survey (not had conducted a survey), as it currently did not have a list of those types of roads. She apologised for the error. The survey would collect data

about all private and unadopted roads and would also give information about who needed to be contacted. So once the survey was completed the Council would use its strategy to communicate with everyone affected.

17. APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Councillors Neil Hitchin, Chris Morris, Hamish Ross and Carol Sennitt.

Councillors David Ambrose Smith, Mike Bradley and Stuart Smith attended as Substitute Members.

18. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

19. MINUTES

It was resolved:

That the minutes of the Regulatory Services Committee meeting held on 24th July 2017 be confirmed as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman.

20. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman made the following announcement:

- The new Homelessness Reduction Act was the biggest piece of housing legislation since 2002. To ensure its success, ring-fenced grants would be available. To date this Council had secured £168,000 for 2017/18 and £191,000 for 2018/19. Additional Government funding had also been achieved of £24,000, £22,000 and £25,000, so this Council was in an outstanding position. This funding was primarily to prevent homelessness and this Council was streets ahead of many others in achieving that. The funding would be used to expand the housing team, by creating additional 2 year fixed term posts, so it could provide a more holistic service. The focus would be on prevention through the concentration on intervention work. This information would be provided for all Members of Council.

21. REVIEW OF SERVICES CHARGES FOR TRAVELLER SITES

The Committee considered a report, reference S163, previously circulated, that updated Members on the full review to be undertaken of the Traveller Community and their sites.

The Director, Operations reminded the Committee that six months ago site rents were increased with a request to undertake a services review. A new Traveller Liaison Officer had been appointed, who had been asked to complete the review. This would include consideration of refurbishment of the sites and the opportunities to achieve grant funding.

Councillor David Ambrose Smith queried the timing of the review, as it should take budgetary implications into consideration. It was suggested that a three month review would fit in better with the financial timetable.

Councillor Ann Bailey thought that officers would need space to complete the review properly. She was also pleased that the Burwell site would be covered in the review, as local Members and the Parish Council were keen that it be included.

It was resolved:

- (i) That the contents of the report be noted;
- (ii) That the results of the review be brought back to the Regulatory Services Committee in April 2018.

22. FLY TIPPING – FIXED PENALTY

The Committee considered a report, reference S164, previously circulated, that proposed setting a level for Fixed Penalty notices for fly tipping.

The Environmental Services Manager advised the Committee that the responsibility for environmental crime enforcement had been moved to Environmental Services. As a result, three officers in the department had undertaken relevant training and would undertake investigations. For anyone found fly tipping the Council could apply a fine. After calculating the costs, a fine of £400 would recover the associated costs and would be a deterrent. Setting an early payment fee would not cover the costs, so was not recommended.

Councillor Julia Huffer understood that the Council for dealing with fly tipping on public land but queried such instances on private land. On it being confirmed that the Council could only deal with it on public land, it was suggested that the public be informed that this was the case.

The Environmental Services Manager intended to do some publicity on this and other related issues, to make it clear where the Council could act. Advice on these matters would be available.

Councillor Elaine Griffin-Singh thought the Council had to be careful in handling the publicity, as it could encourage fly tippers to use private land instead.

Councillor Stuart Smith suggested that closed circuit television cameras should be positioned to discourage fly tipping. The Waste Services Team Leader explained that the Council had no equipment it could use and it would be difficult to target relevant sites to get usable information. Councillor Anna Bailey thought a business case would have to be initiated to use cameras. The Environmental Services Manager would install suitable signage at regularly used sites, warning of investigation and prosecution to dissuade fly tipping.

It was resolved:

- (i) That the fee for fixed penalty notices for fly tipping be set at £400;
- (ii) That an early payment fee is not set.

23. DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT REVIEW IMPLEMENTATION

The Committee considered a report, reference S165, previously circulated, that gave an update on the implementation of the countywide review of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) and progress made by Care & Repair on the implementation of their improvement plan.

The Environmental Services Manager reminded the Committee that back in January 2017 it had been informed that a review would be undertaken. Three key findings followed, as detailed in paragraph 3.1 of the report. The Council had received reduced funding from the County Council and Clinical Commissioning Group and this gap had been bridged by an increase in Care & Repair fees. The diverted funding had been used towards housing needs.

The County Council had accepted that 2018/19 would be a transitional period with reduced funding available. The anticipated additional income via the Better Care Fund would not now be sufficient to help fund the service in the future and would not allow its costs to be covered. Therefore it would be necessary to increase Care & Repair fees to 20%.

Each care and repair agency in the county had developed its own Improvement Plans, with Appendix 1 to the report detailing this Council's service. Although good progress had been made against the Plan, the 20% fee level would enable the full implementation of the Plan.

Councillor Anna Bailey acknowledged that the Council gave out relevant grants but also gave an added value service. Large amounts of funding had been received which had resulted in improved service waiting times. Huge efforts had been made to reduce those times, but there was still some way to go.

Councillor Mike Bradley queried the figures shown in paragraph 2.2 compared to numbers on page 8. The Environmental Services Manager explained that the numbers on page 8 were a comparison showing the net cost of the service if different percentages were applied. The recommended level of 20% would result in a fairly cost neutral service.

Councillor Sue Austen asked what effect this increase would have on people who were on benefits. The Environmental Services Manager stated that most grants would not be affected. For larger adaptations it was hoped that the number of requests could be reduced, as people would be encouraged to seek out more suitable dwellings. The Council was working with the County Council on these matters to ensure the public purse was used better.

It was resolved:

- (i) That the progress on implementation of the county wide review of DFGs and East Cambridgeshire District Council's Improvement Plan be noted;
- (ii) That an increase of fees to 20% for Care and Repair services be agreed.

24. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT – SIX MONTH REPORT UPDATES

The Committee considered a report, reference S166, previously circulated, that updated Members on progress made over the previous six months within Service Delivery Plans for the services under the remit of the Committee.

The Performance Management Officer advised the Committee that the comments of the relevant Service Delivery Champions and Corporate Risks were shown. The Planning department had not reached its target of 90% for determining planning applications and had only achieved 45%. This was down to the increased volume of applications received. The Waste service had missed a couple of targets, but these would be addressed when the service came in-house. Care & Repair had not reached their targets, although the figures had improved. All other services were meeting their requirements at this stage.

Building Control

Councillor Anna Bailey thought this was an impressive report and all targets had been hit.

Environmental Services

Councillor Mike Bradley noted that very little had been done on inspections and how would this be affected by the loss of one officer, who was leaving? It was noted that £100,000 had been secured from Sanctuary but would this be obtained in the future? The Environmental Services Officer stated that the officer would be replaced. As it was only halfway through the year it was anticipated that sufficient resources would be available to meet the targets set. The Council had already contacted Sanctuary and future funding had been promised. This would be mutually beneficial.

Licensing

Councillor Anna Bailey thought the report showed an impressive set of figures. Councillor Sue Austen was very proud of the department's achievements.

Housing & Community Safety

Councillor Mike Bradley queried whether the Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP) was good at collecting debt. Councillor Anna Bailey stated that ARP was running a new service to recover ancient debt. She considered the Council's Housing department a wonderful service and, despite some staffing issues, had delivered an excellent service.

Planning Service

Councillor Anna Bailey acknowledged the extreme levels of pressure the department was under. A couple of performance areas had been highlighted and the department was conscious that they had to be dealt with. Now that the Council had agreed its new Local Plan things should hopefully calm down. Finding additional resources for the department was a challenge but the Committee was willing to help when needed. Councillor Mike Bradley seconded those sentiments as the department had done an excellent job under pressure. Due to that some issues had not been addressed. As, hopefully, the pressure eases it was expected that those other issues would start to come through.

Waste Services

Councillor Anna Bailey noted the enormous amount of work done. It was hoped that the difficult targets for recycling would be tackled via a suitable action plan. Councillor Julia Huffer agreed that it had been a difficult time for the service but it was now fully focussed on bringing the whole service in-house.

It was resolved:

- (i) That the progress made against priorities of the Council including areas where the service has been under achieving and where outstanding performance was delivered be noted;
- (ii) That the comments made by the Service Delivery Champions be noted.

25. PROGRESS REPORT: IN-SOURCING OF THE WASTE AND STREET CLEANSING SERVICES

The Committee considered a report, reference S167, previously circulated, that provided a progress report on the in-sourcing of the waste and recycling services to East Cambridgeshire Trading Company.

The Waste Services Team Leader advised the Committee that, contrary to the information given in the report, the survey of private and/or unadopted roads had to still to be completed. A variety of other issues had to be resolved including governance arrangements to secure the transfer of the service, future management arrangements, targeting areas, reconfiguring the street cleansing service, arranging the transfer of staff, a review of current procedures and processes, reviewing health and safety measures, procuring new vehicles and plant, vehicle maintenance and fuelling and performance management.

There was a recommendation to enhance the recycling service by making available an extra blue bin for an extra £25 to any resident wishing one. In addition, a revised policy for fly tipping had been drawn up and a policy for waste collections on private and/or unadopted roads would be developed.

The Chairman thanked all the officers and Members involved for their hard work in preparing for the transfer of the service.

Councillor Sue Austen was concerned about collections made in Upherds Lane in Ely, as the road was unadopted and residents would have trouble leaving their bins beside the highway. The Waste Services Team Leader suggested that a general approach for all such roads would be taken but with different strategies for each individual case. Some areas were known to be a problem, as they were hazardous and vehicles had been damaged. There had been no indemnity, as collections had been completed on an ad hoc basis, therefore this would be given serious consideration so a common sense approach was taken.

Councillor Anna Bailey thought it sensible to have a common sense policy to approach such issues and the time was right to undertake the survey of those types of roads. Residents had wanted additional resources to help their recycling so offering a second blue bin would assist them and would be good for the recycling rates. They could be provided for a one-off fee with no ongoing costs. With reference to the performance management framework, Members would want to have reports in the future of the service expectations and performance.

Councillor Jo Webber queried how the survey would be undertaken. Local Members and parish councils could be approached to provide information. Some roads were managed by management companies, so it would be useful to find out that information.

The Waste Services Team Leader admitted that there were some areas where it was not known if there were private roads or not. County Highways did have an online database that would be checked. The collection rounds would also be followed to help identify such roads. It was anticipated that gathering the information could take several months. Any local knowledge would be well received.

Councillor David Ambrose Smith questioned the size of the vehicle to be used for street cleansing, as it appeared that it would be too big. The Waste Services Team Leader explained that two such vehicles were currently being used but only one would be wanted after the transfer. A larger vehicle was required to deal with bulky waste and it gave some flexibility as a back-up vehicle for use elsewhere.

It was resolved:

- (i) That the submission of a further progress report in January 2018 to include the project Gantt chart and final version of the Memorandum of Agreement and its schedules be approved;
- (ii) That the proposal to provide a second blue bin for dry recyclables on request from residents based on a one-off charge of £25 to cover the costs of providing the bin and the associated administration as detailed in Section 5 of this report be endorsed;
- (iii) That the revised policy, responsibilities and processes for dealing with incidents of fly tipping on public land as detailed in Section 6 of this report be noted;

- (iv) That the proposed approach to providing waste collection services to private and unadopted roads as detailed in Section 7 of this report be endorsed.

26. BUDGET MONITORING

The Committee considered a report, reference S168, previously circulated, that updated Members with budget monitoring information for services under the remit of the Regulatory Services Committee.

The Finance Manager noted that this was the second budget report of the year and it projected an under spend of £295,000. £250,000 of this related to increased fees from the Planning Department with the remainder from underspends. The capital programme spend was still on course for the budget target.

Councillor Mike Bradley queried the figures for homelessness, as the figures appeared distorted and questioned whether this was due to cash flow issues. It would have been helpful to include the figures for Disabled Facilities Grants separately and brief explanatory notes on the figures page. The Finance Manager could accommodate those requests and pointed out that an explanation had been included within the body of the report.

The Chairman offered thanks to all the officers and others for their collective efforts with regards to the budget.

It was resolved:

- (i) That the projected end of year saving on its approved budget of £295,000, being a combination of underspends on expenditure budgets and additional income on income budgets be noted;
- (ii) That the projected capital programme outturn of £2,351,922 be noted.

27. FORWARD AGENDA PLAN

The Committee noted its forward agenda plan.

The meeting concluded at 5.35pm.