



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 24 July 2017 at 4.30pm.

P R E S E N T

Cllr Anna Bailey
Cllr David Ambrose-Smith (as a Substitute)
Cllr Sue Austen
Cllr Elaine Griffin-Singh
Cllr Neil Hitchen
Cllr Stuart Smith (as a Substitute)
Cllr Jo Webber

APOLOGIES

Cllr Julia Huffer
Cllr Chris Morris
Cllr Hamish Ross
Cllr Carol Sennitt

OFFICERS

Jo Brooks – Director Operations
Liz Knox – Environmental Services Manager
Adrian Scaites-Stokes – Democratic Services Officer
Ian Smith - Finance Manager
Jenny Winslet – Senior Environmental Health Officer
Nick Wyatt – Sustainability Officer

4. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

5. APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Councillors Julia Huffer, Chris Morris, Hamish Ross and Carol Sennitt.

Councillors David Ambrose Smith and Stuart Smith attended as Substitute Members.

6. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

7. **MINUTES**

It was resolved:

That the minutes of the Regulatory Services Committee meeting held on 25th May 2017 be confirmed as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman.

8. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman made the following announcements:

- The new waste trucks had been procured and their livery would be in the new corporate blue. Officers and some Veolia staff had visited the factory to view how the trucks would be manufactured. Delivery of the trucks was expected next February.
- The Council's Housing Department had achieved the Bronze Medal from the National Practitioners Service. This was a result of a lot of hard work put into preventing 16 to 17 year-olds being placed in bed and breakfast accommodation to avoid homelessness. This had been challenged by three other local authorities, who had reviewed the work done, and it had proved successful. A special mention must be made of Sarah Burton, who had been awarded for her work on the community hub model and congratulations were offered to her.

9. **APPROVAL OF THE 2017/2018 FOOD AND HEALTH AND SAFETY SERVICE PLAN**

The Committee considered a report, reference S65, previously circulated, that updated Members on the service plan for both food and safety to satisfy requirements of the Food Standards Agency and Health and Safety Executive.

The Senior Environmental Health Officer advised the Committee that the report summarised what was expected, what had been done and what was planned to do.

Councillor Jo Webber asked what take up there had been relating to the food business seminar. It was prudent to offer support to independent businesses, as national chains tended to have their own support.

The Senior Environmental Officer stated that the second year the seminar had been held had been over-subscribed, with around 40 attendees, even though a charge had been made. The aim of the seminars was to help businesses achieve a higher rating, from 3★ to 4★ or 5★, by going through failures in processes and demonstrating practical solutions. Out of the c650 businesses only 40 did not reach the 3★ standard. Another seminar will be held around January time.

Councillor Anna Bailey noted that the document demonstrated that the Council was doing its statutory duty and that it was really good that such support was available for the businesses.

It was resolved:

That the East Cambridgeshire District Council Food and Health and Safety Service Plan at Appendix 1 be approved.

10. **HOME ENERGY CONSERVATION ACT 1995 (HECA) FURTHER REPORT AND ACTION PLAN**

The Committee considered a report, reference S66, previously circulated, that updated Members on the progress on the 2015 Action Plan and the 2017 to 2019 Action Plan.

The Sustainability Officer advised the Committee that in 2012 the Department of Energy gave guidance that local authorities had to produce a HECA report, that had to be updated every 2 years. So the report gave an update on the 2015 Plan and set out the new updated Plan to 2019. The most notable achievement during the previous plan was the forming of a partnership with the other local authorities in Cambridgeshire. The Action on Energy scheme had also been very successful, as the Council had accessed Green Deal funding totalling £7.8 million. That funding had now ceased but other funding streams were coming through. This included the Warm Homes Fund, which aimed to help 'off-grid' houses improve their energy efficiency.

Councillor Jo Webber asked how much funding for fuel poverty had gone to private housing? With regard to pre-1911 housing, what processes would be placed by the Government to tackle the numerous problems those buildings had?

In response, the Committee was informed that the figures for fuel poverty would be checked and confirmation given. Funding was coming out all the time, so things were constantly changing. There was no formal Government statement about how to deal with the older houses, but they had to be given a certificate and managed by local authorities.

Councillor Neil Hitchin thought that nobody really had a clue as to what the certificates were about. Relating to the 'off-grid' homes, did this refer to remote dwellings and the requirement to improve their fuel poverty situations? Work on the older houses had to be completed carefully, otherwise such buildings could be ruined. The Sustainability Officer explained that the matter was concerned with improving energy efficiency by making the most of what people had already got and making residents aware of the funding they could tap into. The Council would be relying on experts when dealing with the older houses.

It was resolved:

That the 2017-2019 Action Plan within the HECA Further Report be approved.

11. **TACKLING RECYCLING IN LOW PERFORMANCE AREAS**

The Committee considered a report, reference S67, previously circulated, that detailed an action plan to tackle low levels of participation in recycling in some geographical areas.

The Sustainability Officer advised the Committee that some geographical areas of the district were not recycling as well as others. 2-year data had been collected from various sources, including from when lorries were weighed at the tip and talking to staff, to identify problem areas. The suggested approach to be used to tackle these problems was not unique and had been successfully employed by other local authorities. The Action Plan drawn up showed how the Council would target internal and external resources to produce a cultural shift to help increase recycling rates, possibly up to the 60% target. The Plan, which would be reviewed after 12 months, could include house visits to help people recycle properly and educate others.

Councillor Stuart Smith queried recycling points by parish councils, as they could gain funding through their use, to see if they had been included in the recycling figures. It was revealed that the figures for that were not included.

Councillor Jo Webber highlighted the fact that lots of people did not know what happened to their recycled rubbish and many thought it ended up in landfill anyway. The Sustainability Officer acknowledged that some people did not believe the materials were recycled. The message was being put across, through the use of roadshows, as part of the education programme.

Councillor Elaine Griffin-Singh questioned whether the message highlighted that the Council gets money from its recycling and that the income could affect council tax rates. This could mean that council taxpayers would benefit from lower council tax rates.

Councillor Anna Bailey thought that some vulnerable and elderly residents should be offered help with their recycling bins, but they had to be approached sensitively. Consideration should also be given to working with the County Council to help promote assisted bin collections and identify people who needed that help.

It was resolved:

That the action plan which has been developed to tackle low performing recycling areas identified within the district (Appendix 1) be noted.

12. **UPDATE ON PROGRESS TOWARDS BRINGING WASTE SERVICES UNDER COUNCIL CONTROL**

The Committee considered a report, reference S68, previously circulated, that updated Members on progress towards bringing the waste services under the Council's control.

The Sustainability Officer reminded the Committee that the waste services would come under Council control by 1st April 2018. A Waste and Street Cleansing Board, which met monthly, would oversee the transfer of the services. It also dealt with the project plan to monitor progress and deliver to the challenging deadline, the shareholder communication plan, purchasing of the new vehicles and consideration of transferring the staff. The Gantt chart included with the report was used to help monitor progress.

Councillor Anna Bailey thought that it was important that the Committee was cognisant of progress, as the public would be looking at the services, so it needed to be right.

Councillor David Ambrose Smith was interested in the independent assessment of street cleansing and wanted to know if the draft plan was complete.

Councillor Jo Webber was curious about the involvement of Customer Services in the process, as it would need to provide information to the public about the new service and would affect the calls it took. The Sustainability Officer explained that the communication plan included key dates to get a clear and concise message across. At the appropriate time various parties, including Customer Services, would become involved. This was all linked into the communication plan and risk register.

The Director, Operations, divulged that the draft plan looked at what the Council already had and what would be needed. The specification for the vehicles, for example, included the requirements for keeping the streets clean. So the draft set out what the Council would like, but there were likely to be cost implications which would be considered by the Trading Company's Board. This Committee would also consider relevant matters around the transfer of this service. Once the service specification was agreed then a host of people would become involved including Customer Services, parish councils and others to help manage people's expectations. There was still a lot of work to be done.

Councillor Stuart Smith was concerned about fly tipping but thought transferring the current staff over would help improve the situation, as they could identify incidents as they went round. However, information technology was a problem in recording incidents and improvements were also needed in feeding back on reports of those times.

The Director, Operations, reminded the Committee that the only Enforcement Officer had left. So, to increase resilience, three officers had completed relevant training and could sort out reports of fly tipping, so a difference would be seen. Information technology as a whole was being looked at, including for provision of WiFi at the depot and GPS mapping. So improvements were expected and people would be informed on what was going on. As the staff were coming in-house they would be issued with radios so could keep in contact with the Open Spaces team when they report incidents. Dealing with these instances should take between 24 to 48 hours, but would depend on the actual circumstances in each case. A legal person would be working on a Memorandum of Agreement to ensure that key performance indicators were met.

Councillor Jo Webber asked what was being done to tackle food waste? She had picked up a sample of a small paper bag and these type of bags could be used for that. These could be purchased from elsewhere and placed in the green bin when full, rather than use newspaper to wrap the food. The Sustainability Officer revealed that much discussion had taken place on that subject, and suitable funding was being sought.

It was resolved:

That the progress made to date towards bringing waste services under Council control be noted.

13. **ANNUAL REPORT OF REPRESENTATIONS ON OUTSIDE BODIES**

The Committee considered a report, reference S36, previously circulated, that updated Members on the Asset Management Planned Maintenance Programme for 2017/18 including spend to date.

The Chairman offered thanks to the representatives and their reports.

It was resolved:

That the Annual reports from appointed Council representatives on the activities and manner in which funding is spent by the outside bodies within the responsibility of the Regulatory Services Committee be noted.

14. **BUDGET MONITORING**

The Committee considered a report, reference S36, previously circulated, that updated Members on the Asset Management Planned Maintenance Programme for 2017/18 including spend to date.

The Finance Manager noted that this was the first budget report of the year and it projected an under spend of £225,000. This was mainly due to increased fees from the Planning Department.

Councillor Elaine Griffin-Singh was not enamoured of the phrase 'under spend', as it was not transparent to the public. It actually meant that the Council was making a profit.

The Finance Manager explained that there were two elements to this. The first related to spending less than expected, while the second related to increased income. Both were explained as 'under spends'.

Councillor Anna Bailey thought that the additional income should be described as such, as it reflected on the service. Thanks were offered to the Planning Department for their performance, though there were concerns about officers' workloads. Additional resources could be provided if needed .

It was resolved:

- (i) That the projected under spend of £225,000 compared to its approved revenue budget of £3,595,652 be noted;
- (ii) That the projected capital programme outturn of £2,351,922 be noted.

15. **FORWARD AGENDA PLAN**

The Committee considered its forward agenda plan.

The Chairman noted that only one item was scheduled for the September meeting and, after confirmation from the Director Operations that it was not time critical, it was moved back to the November meeting. Therefore it was agreed to cancel the September meeting.

The meeting concluded at 5.32pm.

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