

MINUTES
OF A MEETING OF THE
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

held on 20 January 2020

Present:

Cllr D E Hughes (Chair)
Cllr M A Whitehand (Vice-Chair)

Cllr R Mohammed	Cllr J E Bond
Cllr C Rana	Cllr G G Chrystie
Cllr M I Raja	Cllr J R Sanderson

Also Present: Ray Morgan, Douglas Spinks, Jacqui Hutton, Joint Waste Solutions - Matt Smyth, Sarah Beck, Richard Bisset and Phil Wright (Gatherwell), Councillors AM Barker and K Davis.

Absent: Councillors S Hussain

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Saj Hussain.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on Monday, 25 November 2019 be approved and signed as a true and correct record.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES

Freedom Leisure

Following the last meeting, it was noted that Leigh Clarke would inform the Chairman of the total cost of service spent on Pool in the Park per annum.

Members discussed the positive improvement in communications from Freedom Leisure to the public and the ongoing refurbishment works, however it was added that some members of the public felt that there were ongoing issues that affected their experience.

Play Area Maintenance

It was requested to review the Renewal/Renovation Plan at a future meeting of the Committee.

4. URGENT BUSINESS

The Chairman raised an item of Urgent Business on the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) Bid following the member's briefing on 16 January and would be discussed after agenda item 7. The reporting officer would be Ray Morgan.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

6. JOINT WASTE MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE REVIEW

The Chairman introduced Richard Bisset, Head of Operations, Matt Smyth, Managing Director, and Sarah Beck, Operations Manager, from Joint Waste Solutions (JWS). Together, JWS provided a presentation that detailed their role within the County, an update on performance figures and their priorities for the future.

Members raised concern over the increase in complaints during the winter period, which were a result of high levels of sickness of staff and vehicle breakdowns. In order to avoid the situation being repeated, JWS have now increased the levels of staffing (and training) and scheduled more regular vehicle MOTs and services to hopefully prevent further maintenance issues. One complaint had been raised by Cllr Chrystie regarding aggression from a member of staff which would be dealt with in liaison with the contractor – Amey. Further concerns were raised about the frozen bins and missed collections during the winter season and that residents had reported the bin store was too small to hold individual bins for some flats.

It was reported that the Amey Improvement Plan was reviewed annually and noted a 10% increase in staffing levels during peak seasons, the development of the online feedback form to make it more user friendly and employing members of staff specifically allocated to garden waste and its contract work.

Following a question raised, it was confirmed that contaminated loads were rejected based upon the smell and visual inspection, with the aim to keep the number of rejected loads as low as possible. JWS had been working with Amey to educate residents on recyclable materials. Members then questioned whether certain materials could be recycled, it was confirmed that there was no facilities to enable the recycling of nappies yet however aerosols and tetra pack recycling was being investigated. It was noted that clinical/hazardous waste was treated very differently and was always incinerated.

The suggestion of organising a bulky item collection service was discussed, to assist with the prevention of fly-tipping, however it had previously been looked in to. Issues were surrounding the unknown amount of waste that may be presented, and the lack of resources at present.

The Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services, was in attendance and informed the Committee of an App that advises residents on which bin an item should go in to if ever unsure. The Committee requested further information on materials that can be recycled and it was suggested to hold a member training session on the topic which can then be fed back to residents. JWS then gave their clear priorities for the future, including improving their KPI performance within Woking and the County.

Following a discussion about the statistics reported in the Green Book, the Portfolio Holder agreed to review the performance indicators to ensure they were a true reflection of the service and provided members with all the appropriate information.

It was requested that JWS and Amey would return to the Committee to review the performance early in the next municipal year, and this is to be added to the work programme.

The Chairman thanked JWS representatives for the presentation and the information provided.

7. WOKING COMMUNITY LOTTERY (OSC20-002)

The Chairman introduced the Community Lottery item, which had been brought to the Committee to pre-scrutinise the recommendation before it went to the Executive, and introduced Phil Wright, Business Development Manager for Gatherwell.

Mr Wright provided background on the work undertaken by Gatherwell, an External Lottery Management Company licensed by the Gambling Commission that runs lotteries on behalf of good causes across the UK and explained their mission of raising money within the community for the community.

Mr Wright detailed how the scheme works and that 60% of each ticket sale goes to a good cause, 20% to fund prizes and 20% to running costs and VAT. Payments can be paid by direct debit or 1/3/6/12 month upfront payments, tickets cost £1. Gatherwell would work with Woking Council, if the scheme was approved by Council, and provide professional high resolution marketing materials/branding, web design, payment administration, support for players and assist with the launch.

The Committee noted the report by Guildford which set out their experiences and costs, and provided valuable background information to the Scheme.

Following questions from Councillors, Mr Wright confirmed that the minimum subscription period was one month, the minimum age to participate was 16 as per other lotteries and present government legislation and the scheme was designed for local authorities, Gatherwell are present at LGA Conferences and work with over 50 Councils at present. It was reported that the organisation had recently seen a change in Managing Directors, and was purchased by an Australian company. Members noted the high percentage that goes to charity and the positive impact the scheme would have on the community and local organisations.

RECOMMENDED to the Executive that

in accordance with the findings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Council explores further the possibility of adopting a Community Lottery Scheme and that a proposals report be brought back to a future meeting of the Executive.

11. HIF BID

In accordance with the Officer Procedure Rules, the Chief Executive, Ray Morgan, and Deputy Chief Executive, Douglas Spinks declared a disclosable personal interest (non-pecuniary) in any items under which the Thameswey Group of Companies.

Mr Morgan provided the presentation that was privately shown to members on 16 January, and was available to view on the resources tab on the webcast along with the other documents referred to.

The draft contract had been received by Woking Borough Council and the conditions were being reviewed. Mr Morgan anticipated it would be taken to the Executive on 6 February. The Council will need to use Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) powers and this would be detailed in the report to Executive and Council. As the bid was submitted by Surrey County Council's Cabinet, it was agreed to transfer the responsibility to Woking Borough Council to lead the project.

Mr Morgan reported that 50% of businesses within the triangle site had been offered alternate premises, 30% wanted to cease trading and 20% were in discussion with the Council. All the moves to date had been voluntary and the Council were offering support for all businesses and residents within the triangle site.

It was added that the changes to the road layout resulted in the Fire Service changing their rescue route, final decision on the new route was expected imminently. The final plans from Network Rail were expected by October 2020, which would document the future plans for the service in Woking and were seeking individual approval for the fly over.

Mr Morgan informed the Committee that the project will add a further 3,304 properties to those already identified in the Site Allocation DPD and detailed the changes to the current road layout that could be seen on the proposals. The benefits of the project were discussed, noting the positive impact on congestion and cycle routes in that area currently. Precautions would be taken to ensure the safety of bats in the empty buildings.

Members praised the hard work undertaken by Officers to achieve the work to date. Concern was raised over inflation costs, however Mr Morgan confirmed that it had been taken into consideration and estimated inflation costs were included in the finance programme, the uncertain costs were the service diversions etc.

The Chairman noted the opportunity for the grant was welcome and would assist with supporting the development of within the borough. All the information that had been discussed during the meeting is available online for the public to review before consultations being. On behalf of the Committee the Chairman advised that as Committee members had recently received the latest information and would be able to discuss further at the Executive and Council.

The Chairman thanked Mr Morgan for attending and presenting to the Committee.

8. WORK PROGRAMME (OSC20-001)

The Committee reviewed the work programme and upcoming items.

RESOLVED

That the Work Programme be noted.

9. PERFORMANCE AND FINANCIAL MONITORING INFORMATION

The November Green Book was reviewed and discussed, with members noting ThamesWey's large budget variance and that some properties were purchased outside of the borough. Mr Morgan explained that ThamesWey had authority to work outside of the borough within a commute time of 30 minutes to Woking and that the budget variance was high due to the level of flexible funding.

A question on the cost paid for properties in Sheerwater was raised, which was set by the Council policy at the market value of the property with an additional 17.5% compensation and another option was an equality loan. If there were further individual cases that needed to be discussed, Mr Morgan advised that he would be happy to receive them after the meeting. Following another question, it was advised that the Council do not normally publish payment transactions, unless payments are being made as the local authority Council rather than through a commercial entity.

Attention was drawn to the number of days lost due to sickness, that showed a consistent trend above target due to some recent cases of sickness periods. It was also noted there would be an additional note in the December or January Green Book that would refer to the electoral register as the annual audit takes place in December.

The street cleaning satisfaction chart showed a lower trend which was based on customer perception surveys and could be challenged by seasonal weathering and is an endless task. The Council is working with Serco to address any issues raised. Serco were due to come to the Committee, but the item was deferred due to staff sickness and would be scheduled for a future meeting.

10. TASK GROUP UPDATE

The Chairman informed the Committee that the Woking Football Club and Associated Developments Task Group had met three times to date and was on track. The resulting report would be taken to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee shortly.

The Chairman thanked Jacqui Hutton, Woking Borough Council Solicitor, for her assistance and guidance throughout the municipal year as this would be the last Committee meeting attended by Jacqui.

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and ended at 10.37 pm

Chairman: _____

Date: _____