

Pre-Scrutiny Questions and Answers – Overview & Scrutiny Agenda 23 January 2024

Report Title: Waste Enforcement Update

Report Author(s): Zoe Court – Neighbourhood Services Manager

Councillor Armstrong:

One of the planned activities mentions trialling redeployable CCTV cameras, something I fully support. Can you give the committee some further detail on this? Do we have cameras already (how many, what's the resource needed per camera?), if not what timeline is expected to get this activity going? What strategy did you have in mind and what are the enforcement options should we get direct evidence of fly tipping?

Response:

I can confirm we have budget to buy some 'redeployable' CCTV cameras and my team are currently exploring different suppliers, as we may need to work with procurement depending on costs. WDC does have several redeployable cameras that were purchased for the Commonwealth Games in 2022, which we have used before for a short trial in Sydenham.

The current priority is to improve the 'street scene' within central and south Leamington town centre, reducing black sacks and wheelie bins being presented/stored on the highway, so I expect the CCTV work to start in the Summer, so I can provide Cllrs with more details once we have finalised our approach for the use of this cameras.

Councillor Milton:

The figures in the appendix are really helpful. In terms of the 'number of incidents by primary waste type' the 'other (unidentified)' section generally makes up about half the reports. Can you give some commentary for the committee about why we have such a large number of these. Is it genuinely 'unidentifiable' or is it just not reported accurately?

Response: It's not reported accurately, many people leave the category (or categories) blank, so we have to add them into the other unidentified section manually for both the waste type and the land type. As they will add the detail in free text it's fine for the reporting and locating for the contractors so it's fair people think they have reported it well enough but it doesn't work for our figure. We are looking at what improvements can be made and if the crews can add a description on the hand helds expected later this year.

The heat map is useful, but I wonder if you have a view about how different it would look if it were done based on size and weight of incidents rather than number? This might help paint a fuller picture for our rural communities in particular.

Response:

I will investigate this as part of the new system idverde will be introducing this year where the crews will be logging flytips on handheld devices, in the meantime I will liaise with our ICT to see if there is an option to add this information.

Councillor R Dickson:

The Appendix 4 map is very useful. Is there a more up-to-date version than 23 August 2023?

There are media reports that WCC is considering the closure of three household recycling centre in 2027/28. I'm not sure if any of these are in Warwick District, but there could be an impact - albeit not in 2024/25 - on flytipping. Is there dialogue between WCC and WDC on this matter?

Response:

We have a meeting with ICT this month to try and simplify how we captured data to produce the heat maps, as I would like them on a monthly basis. idverde are in the process of rolling out a new system, which will see the crews using hand helds - from this I am hoping they will produce heat maps which will be in 'real time' - I will keep Councillors updated on this work.

WCC/WDC have quarterly Waste Partnership Meetings - I will ensure this is on the agenda and report back.

Councillor D Harrison:

Section 1.1 of the Report mentions the importance of education, engagement and enforcement in tackling fly-tipping. Following recent experiences in my Ward of repeated fly-tipping in particular spots, what is the most effective deterrent? – signage (risk of fine), CCTV (or CCTV signs), conversations with close by residents?

Please do let me know if you have specific areas of concerns so we can prioritise this area in with our current 'hot spots' - a combination of doorstepping and talking to residents is beginning to have a positive impact but we do need more signage and comms relating to the Council issuing fines to act as a deterrent - a combined approach is needed.

I read in the Oct /Nov edition of the LGA first magazine, that a government ban on councils' ability to charge for DIY waste will lead to reduced waste services. Has that been an issue of this within Warwickshire CC and Warwick DC?

Response: We do get DIY waste flytipped, often in more rural areas, which is where I think CCTV will be useful to capture vehicle number plates, WCC has quarterly Waste Partnership meetings with all district councils, I will ensure this is added to the next agenda and update Councillors.

Councillor Payne:

On the proposed 'Rapid Response' team for fly-tipping, what plans are there for cross-departmental working? Is there a wholistic management strategy planned, so that fly-tipping services can work in partnership with both general street cleaning services, wildlife conservation and Environmental Health etc.?

Response:

There is already joint working across my team and Environmental Health, as flytipping can cause significant risk to health, pollution and wildlife. Clearing flytipping is a priority to reduce these risks and we work with various agencies to clear flytipping - for example there was recently a fridge dumped in a river, we were unable to remove it so this was passed to environment agency to action. Having a dedicated team will improve the removal timescales. The street cleansing crews will remove small flytips, for example waste dumped by our litter bins.

Report Title: Waste Contract Report

Report Author(s): Zoe Court – Neighbourhood Services Manager

Councillor Milton:

s2 indicates an additional cost of c£20k for ICT integration work. Is there a confidence level for this? From my experience it feels like a very low figure and I'd like to understand the level of risk involved.

This was the costs quoted when I inquired last year, I am writing a business case shortly which will include these details, the system is up and running it's a case of creating integration with WDC CRM.

s3.3. deals with the 50/50 split of cost. Would we have approached this ratio differently if we hadn't been planning to merge the two councils.

Difficult for me to answer this one with confidence, but I would say all negotiations would have been based on us merging.

S3.6 I note that the recharges have been decreasing over time. Could you provide some commentary about why this is to help fill out the picture.

Yes, the first year had much higher costs due to the ICT work needed, volume of enquiries have now dropped so less contact centre staff required.

Just on a formatting point can we try and make sure that the tables in the appendix fit onto one page in future. There are a couple of terms as well which could do with a bit of explanation (e.g. ACD which I presume is 'average call duration?') and I'm unsure what the final table which talks about eforms is telling me. Could that have a bit of commentary?

Yes, no problem - I just lifted what was sent from SDC. ACD is as you say and eforms relate to the number of enquiries made via webforms (missed bins etc)

Councillor R Dickson:

The comments about the 50:50 split of costs are noted (para 3.3). If the costs had been split between SDC and WDC pro rata based on the difference in size of collection area, what would have been the average annual cost saving to Warwick District taxpayers based on experience since the new contract came into force? Is there any opportunity to renegotiate this aspect of the IAA?

Also are tours of the MRF still possible?

Response:

All negotiations relating to the split of area/costs were based on us merging, it's difficult for me to say what we could have saved but I am going to be starting work on a business case looking at this, so will see if this can be calculated.

in response to the MRF visit - yes, this is something that we be organised for all interested Councillors in early Spring - I am just trying to see if they can do evenings and/or weekends as they have only offered weekdays at the moment. I'll liaise with Committee Services on some suitable dates and these will be shared with Councillors soon.

Report Title: Development of Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Work Programme

Report Author(s): Graham Leach – Monitoring Officer & Head of Governance

Councillor Payne:

Overview and Scrutiny has responsibility for policy development, with its powers and procedures governed by the Overview & Scrutiny Procedure Rules (1.3 and 1.7 in the Report). Does the Council identify and review any discrepancies between the theoretical powers of the committee, and how it works in practice?

In other words, how many procedures in the Council's Constitution, which the Committee could be using in principle, are going unused?

Response:

My view on Overview & Scrutiny ability to develop policy is an area that they are seeking to develop as Committee and the Chair is very keen to move towards, to get away from the reactive work of responding to Cabinet reports.

In respect of wider Committee responsibilities, all Committees are provided training on their role and responsibilities when they first start each year, which is further supplemented through the year with more detailed training as considered by the Committee/the Chair or LCG.

The final area is that we are due to review the Constitution and its operation of this may be a point that O&S wish to comment on ahead of that process starting.