

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 28 June 2016 at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 6.00 pm.

Present: Councillor Boad (Chairman); Councillors Bromley, Mrs Cain, D'Arcy, Davison, Edgington, Miss Grainger, Margrave, Naimo, Parkins and Mrs Redford.

Also Present: Councillors Cross and Shilton.

12. **Apologies and Substitutes**

- (a) There were no apologies.
- (b) There were no substitutes.

13. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

14. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 June 2016 were unavailable for approval and would be approved at the next meeting.

15. **Comments from the Executive**

The Committee considered a report from Democratic Services which detailed the Executive's responses to the comments the Overview and Scrutiny Committee made regarding the reports submitted to the Executive in early June 2016.

Resolved that the report be noted.

16. **Waste Collection Update**

The Committee considered a report from Neighbourhood Services which provided a review of the performance of the waste collection services and details on whether there were any discernible patterns in relation to customer complaints.

In response to questions, the Contract Services Manager and the Portfolio Holder - Neighbourhood Services, Councillor Shilton, informed Members that:

- in respect of recyclable materials, the Council had benefitted from very competitive prices from its contractor;
- the contractor would have to bear the risks associated with this competitive contract, and would not be able to reduce its service to recoup any losses;
- the problems regarding waste collection experienced last Christmas would not re-surface next Christmas. Lessons had been learnt and

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there was now regular dialogue between the contractor and the Council. The service was now receiving plaudits from residents;

- residents could request waste advice visits to discuss problems with disposing of certain types of waste, for example, nappies. Residents might be provided with a larger waste bin as a result;
- in-cab technology would allow cameras to be fitted to the waste trucks. The film footage could be used to prove fault in accidents and the Council would have access to the footage;
- only a small number of the problems with the service were crew related. It would take too many resources to investigate every incident, especially when there were so few. When an investigation took place and the contractor was at fault, it was served with a default notice and bore the costs;
- if whole streets were missed on a waste collection round, the reasons for this were investigated, however, odd missed properties were not; and
- Satisfaction Surveys were stopped by the Council three to four years ago due to the cost of undertaking them.

The Chairman thanked both the Contract Services Manager and Councillor Shilton for the report and for answering questions.

The Committee was interested to see if there had been less recycling subsequent to the introduction of charges for bins. It therefore

Resolved that a report be provided in six months' time detailing the trend in respect of recyclable waste subsequent to the introduction of charges for bins.

17. Recruitment and Retention

The Committee considered a report from Human Resources which set out the policies and procedures the Council operated relating to recruitment and retention of staff, and highlighted further actions that had been identified to ensure that the Council was fit for purpose and able to deliver its services efficiently and effectively, with the right people, in the right place, at the right time. The implementation of these further actions would be reviewed in line with changing organizational needs and the impact of legislative and external factors.

In response to questions, the HR Manager and the Head of Cultural Services, informed the Committee that:

- overall, retention and recruitment of staff was not a general issue for the Council, but there were one or two areas where this proved difficult, such as:
 - Cultural Services – recruitment of staff was proving to be difficult whilst there was so much change in the service area. Management was trying to ensure there was a variety of options to spread the skills and to support the staff; and
 - Development Services – recruitment and retention of staff was a national issue within this area. A review was being undertaken to look at how the Council recruited; the packages on offer; and to promote the non-monetary benefits of working for the Council;

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- the Council was looking at the feasibility for apprenticeship schemes;
- the Council monitored the use of Agency staff. Human Resources made regular reports to the Senior Management Team;
- advertising for new staff was done internally first before the vacancy was advertised externally. The response rate was monitored. The use of Social Media to advertise opportunities was being investigated; and
- the Council benchmarked its staff turnover against other nearby Authorities and other District Authorities.

18. An update on the pre-application charging regime for development proposals

The Committee considered a report from Development Services which provided an update on the progress with the introduction and operation of a chargeable pre-application advice scheme.

In response to questions, the Development Manager, the Head of Development Services and Councillor Cross, the Portfolio Holder for Development Services, informed them that:

- since introduction of the charging for the service in April, £16,000 income had been made; and it was anticipated that if continued, the service would become self-financing;
- the trial of the service had been running now for five months. It was felt that the trial needed another five to six months before it would be identified if a full-time or part-time member of staff should be employed to run the service; currently the work was being undertaken by a member of staff provided by an agency, who was working two and half hours on a Wednesday afternoon;
- the service was being marketed on the website;
- a satisfaction survey might be considered once the service was fully self-financing; and
- the fee scale would be reviewed in due course; currently the emphasis was to get the service operating efficiently.

19. Task & Finish Group – Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO's)

Resolved that the membership of the Task & Finish Group – Houses in Multiple Occupation is Councillors Davison, Miss Grainger, Mrs Knight, Naimo, Quinney and Thompson.

20. Review of the Work Programme & Forward Plan

The Committee considered its work programme for 2016/2017 and the Forward Plan.

Resolved that a follow-up report on the pre-application charging regime for development proposals be provided in six months' time.

(The meeting finished at 7.43 pm)