

ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 20 September 2018

Present:

Councillor T Jones (Chair)

Councillors	S Foulkes	B Kenny
	A Brame	C Muspratt
	K Cannon	T Smith
	T Cottier	A Sykes
	T Cox	B Berry
	G Ellis	A Hodson

Deputies

Councillors A Leech -for G Wood',
L Grey – for S Jones

14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The following apologies were received from Councillors Gill Wood and Sharon Jones. Councillors Anita Leech and Liz Grey acted as Deputies.

15 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST / PARTY WHIP

Members were asked to consider whether they had any disclosable pecuniary interests and/or any other relevant interest in connection with any items on the agenda and, if so, to declare them and state the nature of the interest.

Members were reminded that they should also declare whether they were subject to a party whip in connection with any items to be considered and, if so, to declare it and state the nature of the whipping arrangement.

Councillor Steve Foulkes declared a personal interest by virtue of him being a member of Magenta Living Board

Councillor Anita Leech declared a personal interest by virtue of her being a member of Magenta Living Board

16 MINUTES

Resolved – That the minutes of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committees held on 5 July (ordinary meeting), 5 July (special meeting) and 17 July 2018 (call in meeting) be approved and signed as a correct record.

17 **CORE STRATEGY LOCAL PLAN PROGRESS UPDATE**

The Assistant Director for Major Growth Projects and Hsg Delivery provided Members with a verbal update regarding the progress of the core strategy local plan.

Members heard how, following the Cabinet decision on 23 July 2018, a formal consultation had started. It was reported that, there had been 15 events over 2 weeks attended by approximately 15000 people.

Members were advised that an outcome report on the consultation is expected to be reported to full council. Following this, the findings would be reported to full council and the implementation would take approximately 12 months.

Councillors thanked the Assistant Director for the update and commended him on the success of the public meetings.

Resolved – That the verbal report be noted

18 **FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT - 2018 -19 QUARTER 1**

The Senior Manager for Corporate Finance reported on the Financial Monitoring Report for 2018 – 19 (Quarter 1) and explained that the purpose of the report was to update the committee on the financial position of the Council. He also provided a verbal report in the form of PowerPoint slides. The written report and appendices set out the projected revenue and capital monitoring position for 2018/19 as at the close of quarter 1 (30 June 2018). The report also provided details of the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2019/20 – 2022/23 (MTFS) and preparation of the budget for 2019/20.

Members were advised that, in July the Cabinet agreed a new MTFS covering the period 2019/20 – 2022/23 during which the Council would continue to implement the pledges contained in the Wirral Plan whilst operating in a challenging financial environment.

Members heard how the revenue overspend is £2.2m for the year, mainly due to slippage on implementing savings options. It was then reported that the overspend for 18/19 is £0.7million.

It was reported that during the period 2019/20 – 2022/23, the Council will continue to face financial constraints and pressures and that the medium term financial planning period to 2023 will see continued grant funding reductions and financial pressures as a result of increasing demand. It was further reported that the MTFS from 2019 to 2023 describes the way that the Council will address challenges via a three phased approach – The Medium Term Financial Strategy, The Medium Term Financial Plan and The Financial

Resilience Plan. Details of how the Council sought to resolve the funding gap in the short and medium to long term were set out within the report.

The role of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was explained and responsible services were set out into 3 board blocks including: - **Environment** – waste collection, waste levy, environment health, licensing, trading standards – **Housing and Planning** – supported housing, homelessness, housing standards and; **Planning & Leisure and Recreation** – Sport and Rec, Libraries, Parks, Cultural Services.

Councillor S Foulkes thanked the Senior Manager for Corporate Finance and commented how he would have preferred to see the presentation in advance of the meeting. He requested that Members are provided with all the appropriate information in advance of the meeting.

It was moved by Councillor S Foulkes and seconded by Councillor A Leech and:

Resolved - That all information including PowerPoint presentations be provided to Members in advance of the Committee

In response to Members questions, the Senior Manager for Corporate Finance advised that there had been delays in improving Leisure Services particularly at Leasowe as a result of issues with the drainage. Members were informed that this will still go ahead and will be achieved but not as originally planned. The Interim Director Highways & Streetscene then informed Members that he would respond by email to a question raised about Union involvement on this issue.

In response to a further question regarding a parking meter at Arrowe Country Park that had been out of order over the summer period, Members were informed by the Interim Director for Highways & Streetscene that he would investigate and report back.

The Interim Director for Highways & Streetscene also advised that he would report back on progress towards improving facilities at Woodchurch Leisure Centre.

Resolved –

(1) That members note the report and appendices; and

(2) that all information including PowerPoint presentations be provided to Members in advance of the meeting

The Interim Director Highways & Streetscene provided a verbal update on performance thus far of the Kingdom contract. Members were advised that the contract had only been in place for six weeks.

Members were then informed that The Director of Kingdom is proposing to attend the meeting of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee scheduled to meet in January 2019.

Members heard how during August 2018, 371 Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN's) had been issued for litter, dog fouling and dropping cigarettes. It was reported that Kingdom had introduced plain clothes officers to target dog fouling to ensure that they are taking effective action. Members were then advised that in August on 49 occasions people had made representations against being issued with a FPN. It was reported that 60% of the cases were upheld and 40% will be cancelled.

It was then reported that there had been community initiative events in order to raise awareness. It was further reported that there have been a number of incidents whereby Kingdom Officers had been subject to offensive behavior and on one occasion a brick had been out thrown through a van window. The Interim Director Highways & Streetscene informed Members that the Council takes this kind of behavior very seriously.

Councillor T Jones expressed his best wishes to individuals involved in the incident mentioned. He then requested that figures due to be presented to the January committee include up to the second week of December.

In response to a question, the Interim Director Highways & Streetscene informed that there are still low levels of fines for dog fouling as enforcement is often quite difficult and that measures are being put in place including the involvement of plain clothes officers.

In response to another question Members were advised that a note would be circulated about how Members can get involved in community initiative projects.

In response to a further question, Members were informed that there were no figures on any court cases as this stage is too early within the contract. The Legal Advisor to the Committee gave advice regarding legal action processes and how costs are awarded.

Councillor S Foulkes requested that a written report be provided for future updates.

Resolved – That Members note the verbal update

20 **WIRRAL FLOOD & WATER MANAGEMENT PARTNERSHIP - TERMS OF REFERENCE**

A report by the Interim Director – Highways and Streetscene advised that the Wirral Flood and Water Management Partnership (WF&WMP) was set up in 2009 in response to the Pitt Review in 2008. Members were advised that the main purpose of the partnership was to achieve, through joint working, an effective management of flooding and coastal erosion incidents on Wirral; to take such collective measures in order to minimise the potential impact of such incidents; and to seek the implementation of more permanent and sustainable solutions to the mitigation or alleviation of flooding and coastal erosion.

Members heard how the revised draft terms of reference for the WF&WMP sought to establish a formal link with Wirral Council's Overview and Scrutiny function and to provide appropriate governance and elected member oversight of local flood and coastal erosion risk management activities.

The report sought approval of the revised draft terms of reference of the Wirral Flood & Water Management Partnership. It was explained how, if approved, these revised draft terms of reference would replace the current outdated terms of reference and would require the consequential appointment of three cross – party working group representatives from the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Resolved –

(1) That the revised draft terms of reference of the Wirral Flood & Water Management Partnership be approved; and

(2) that the Chair and Party spokespersons of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee be appointed onto the Wirral Flood & Water Management Partnership.

21 **RECYCLING IN WIRRAL**

A verbal presentation delivered by Claire Brandwood, Team Leader – Waste and Prevention updated Members of progress to recycling in Wirral.

Members were advised that Wirral's recycling performance had remained fairly steady from 2011 at 40.6%, until 2017/18 when it reduced to 33.2%. . It was explained that the national target is to reach 50% by 2020. Members heard how Wirral Local Authority has a statutory function to collect household waste set out by controlled waste regulations

The Committee heard an update of Wirral's recycling performance and Members were advised that: collected recycling had decreased slightly,

quality requirements of recycling are much higher and bring bank collections had decreased by 600 tonnes per year. Members were reminded that Wirral is a Waste Collection Authority and that collected waste is consigned to a disposal authority – the Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority (MRWA). Members were informed that Merseyside districts (except St Helens) entered into contract with MRWA regarding what materials can be collected for co – mingled recycling:

Benchmarking information was then provided against the national average and it was reported that dry recycling in Wirral (paper, cardboard, glass, cans plastics) had traditionally been above the national average, however, a decrease in 2017/18 meant Wirral is now below the national average. It was further reported that in 2017/18, 60% of councils saw a decrease in recycling rates.

Members then heard how the national average of composting/ food treatment is 21.1% and that Wirral composting is currently at 11.47%. The Committee were informed that at its highest, Wirral composting (pre subscription) was 15.28%. Members were advised that if Wirral Council were to introduce a separate food collection, it would add approx. 8%, however, there would be affordability issues in introducing this.

Information was provided regarding the waste strategy and it was explained that the strategy would have five pillars, as follows:

- Becoming a zero avoidable waste economy by 2050
- Phase out avoidable plastic waste by 2042
- New targets for waste and recycling, which after Brexit will be the same as the EU's circular economy package (55% recycling by 2025, 60% recycling by 2030 and 65% recycling by 2035)
- Stopping food waste going to landfill by 2030.
- Reforming the packaging recovery note (PRN) scheme.

Details of Waste Management Improvement Action Plan were then provided and Members were informed of priorities including: replacing grey recycling bins free of charge, removal of unauthorised additional bins, an audit of current authorised additional bins and implement audits for all requests for additional bins. Members then heard how the improvement plan alone would not achieve the higher recycling levels required in the future and that the maximum possible with the current system is 42.4%. It was reported that if the authority were to add cartons, aerosols and other plastics it would amount to 44.7% and to add food would amount to 69.7%.

In response to a question Members were advised that other Merseyside Authorities do not charge for garden waste and that when Wirral didn't have a subscription service they had the best results in Merseyside.

In a response to a further question the Committee were informed that garden and food waste have to be treated separately, therefore, it would not be an option to put this waste together in the brown bin.

Another question was asked about other authorities and the possibility of selling waste to them, working in collaboration, In response, it was reported that this could be investigated.

In a response to another question, the Team Leader for Waste and Prevention commented that the Government had put a lot of resources into the research of new packaging and that she hoped that a solution would come out in a new Government Protocol.

Councillor T Jones requested volunteers for a Recycling Task and Finish Group. Councillors Muspratt, Sykes and Brame put themselves forward

Resolved –

- (1) That the verbal report be noted;**
- (2) Councillors Muspratt, Sykes and Brame be appointed to the Recycling Task and Finish Group; and**
- (3) the Recycling Task and Finish group be added to the work programme.**

22 2018/19 QUARTER 1 WIRRAL PLAN PERFORMANCE

A report by the Strategic Commissioner for Environment provided the 2018/19 Quarter 1 (April – June 2018) performance report for the Wirral Plan pledges under the remit of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The report was provided in appendix 1 of provided a description of the progress in quarter 1 and also provided data in relation to a range of outcome indicators and supporting measures.

The Strategic Commissioner for Environment responded to questions by Members and resolved to provide written responses to the following questions:

Request for a breakdown across the Borough of levels of people who smoke, pinpointing the hotspots

Comments sought on weight loss initiative provided by Slimmers World and concerns that in Beechwood, there is not a Slimmers World group to access, making it particularly difficult as 46% of people do not have access to a vehicle.

Clarity to be sought on police crime recording figures

Information to be sought on homelessness figures.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

23 **ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK
PROGRAMME REPORT**

A report by the Chair of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee explained the process for developing and managing the scrutiny work programme for the municipal year. Members were advised that the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee, in cooperation with the other three Overview & Scrutiny Committees, is responsible for proposing and delivering an annual scrutiny work programme.

Resolved – That the work programme for 2018/19 be approved subject to the addition of the Recycling Task and Finish Group.