

SOUTH RIBBLE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Scrutiny Committee

Meeting held at 6.00pm on Tuesday, 26 January 2016 in Wheel Room, Civic Centre, West Paddock, Leyland PR25 1DH

Present:-

Councillor M Titherington (in the chair)

Councillors Mrs Ball, Mrs Blow, Coulton, Martin, K Jones, M Tomlinson, Mrs K Walton, Wharton and Mrs Woollard

In Attendance:-

Darren Cranshaw (Scrutiny and Performance Officer) and Andy Houlker (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

Also in attendance:

Councillor Mullineaux (Cabinet member for Neighbourhoods & Street Scene) and Mark Gaffney (Director of Neighbourhoods, Public Health and Asset Management)

Public Attendance:- 1

Other Members & Officers:- Councillors Bennett, Mrs Mary Green, Michael Green, Mrs S Jones, Mrs Moon, Ogilvie, Mrs M Smith, P Smith and an officer

Minute No.	Description/Resolution
37	Apologies for Absence Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs B Nathan and Watkinson.
38	Declarations of Interest Councillor M Tomlinson indicated that in respect of Item 6 (Waste Management Partnership) on the agenda that if the discussion became too detailed he would declare a personal interest as an elected member of Lancashire County Council and remain in the meeting.
39	Minutes of the Last Meetings Further to min. no.35, 8 December 2015, the chairman took the opportunity to inform those present that a consensus of the committee felt a special meeting of the committee should be convened to look at the draft Corporate Plan, Budget and Risk Register 2016-2017 before it was considered by the Cabinet on 10 February 2016. He added the most convenient date for this meeting was Thursday 4 February 2016. RESOLVED (unanimously) that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the minutes of the meetings held on 8 December 2015 were approved as a correct record and signed by the chairman; and 2. a special meeting of the committee be convened at 6.00pm on Thursday 4 February 2016 to look at the draft Corporate Plan, Budget and Risk Register 2016-2017.
40	Matters Arising from Previous Meeting(s) The committee considered the list of matters arising from the last and earlier meetings. It was agreed to remove all the matters from the list, with the exception of the following: <i>23/06/15 – Performance, Budget and Risk monitoring report – year end 2014/15 (April 2014 – March 2015) – min. no.5 (6 & 7)</i>

	<p>22/09/15 – Cabinet Member Update – Housing & Healthy Communities – min. no.13 (3)</p> <p>08/12/15 – Cabinet Member Update – Finance & Resources – min. no.34 (2, 3 & 5)</p>
41	<p>Cabinet Member Update – Neighbourhoods & Streetscene</p> <p>The chairman welcomed Councillor Mullineaux (Cabinet member for Neighbourhoods & Streetscene) and Mark Gaffney (Director of Neighbourhoods, Public Health and Asset Management) to the meeting.</p> <p>The Cabinet member was pleased to attend and commented there were a number of matters to bring tonight. When asked about his short term vision/priorities the main three indicated were keeping on top of and improving the waste collection/recycling system, maintaining the high standard of the borough's parks (such as retaining the three Green Flags) and, acknowledging the importance of Withy Grove Park by if possible it also gaining a Green Flag.</p> <p>The committee noted under 3.1 (parks & open spaces) the council was looking at continuing the events programme on the parks (in particular Worden Park). In response to the comment that some had infrastructure issues/problems, the Cabinet member indicated that the council would subject to resources improve the parks where possible.</p> <p>The Cabinet member commented that the new technology in the council's fleet of refuse collection vehicles, included trackers in the vehicles, improved contact with them whilst out, provide real time information and improve its dealing with missed bins. He added that the council already had a very good record. There might be advantages for trackers to be installed in all council vehicles for routing, efficiency issues and lone working. An example of its usefulness could be helping to deal with a potential insurance claim that a council vehicle had damaged someone's car. The council's information could be analysed to see if a vehicle was where said at a particular time. This technology had been built into the council's new waste collection contract which as previously reported was £600,000 less than the previous contract.</p> <p>In respect of the new waste collection contract, it was confirmed that the cost of the additional monitoring staff was included in the cost of the contract and it might take one to two years for the contract to fully bed in. It was the council's largest contract. To date the transition to the new contract had been very smooth with no real problems. The committee was advised that the positioning of wheelie bins prior to collection was an operational matter and if councillors had any issues these should be reported to the Director.</p> <p>Regarding reported cases dog fouling and fly tipping, the Cabinet member commented that between January 2015 and December 2015 there had been 808 cases of dog fouling and over the same period 303 cases of littering. Councillor Mullineaux confirmed that the subsequent number of fixed penalties was low, and reasons behind that had been reported previously. The council's business transformation project might not necessarily increase the number of fixed penalties but would make working practices smarter and more responsive.</p> <p>The committee referred to the council's launch of digital by default and sought assurance that as more residents used social media (such as Twitter), that if fouling/littering were reported this way they would be acted on. The Director confirmed such information was received and acted on.</p> <p>The Cabinet member and Director explained that to issue a fixed penalty for littering from a vehicle was very difficult, unless a person admitted to it. Unlike in a case of speeding where the case was against the vehicles keeper, for littering it was not and the council could not use driver details but needed witness statements. It was a weakness in the legislation.</p> <p>The committee referred to the recently televised London borough that was proposing to</p>

use dog DNA to tackle dog fouling by identifying the responsible dog. It was understood that the Local Government Association (LGA) had statistics on all local authorities. It was suggested that the council could approach the LGA for examples of best practice to improve the council's efforts on dog fouling. The subject of dog fouling had previously been raised by the committee but the council was apparently not making progress in tackling it. The council was going digital, would this make it easier for an enforcement officer to issue a notice? The Cabinet member commented that the council needed eyes and ears on the ground and needed residents on side. The council could not patrol 24/7 and culprits were difficult to track down. The council had tried to identify hot spots getting councillors involved along with residents but with little take up. Whilst there might be complaints about dog fouling, to tackle it the council needed individuals to be reported. The Director added that based on the earlier figures there were on average 6 / 15 complaints per week of littering and dog fouling respectively. This was a small number. The business transformation project would improve the council's processes. The committee was reminded that instances had to be witnessed (in seconds) for the council then to take action. The council patrolled hotspots and councillors were provided with spray cans. The council needed intelligence of when and where cases were happening.

The Cabinet was not aware of instances of commercial dog walking companies using the borough's parks and open spaces inappropriately. Now that he was aware he would be looking into the matter.

The Clean for the Queen project was an exercise to get communities more involved and the council had included its Neighbourhood Forums. Whilst Councillor Mullineaux would lead on it, it was an opportunity for communities.

In respect of the Community Payback Scheme, the Cabinet member indicated this could be discussed further with a view to being used across the borough.

The Cabinet member and Director confirmed that the percentage level of satisfaction was consistently quite high (up/down 1-2%). These were overall figures and it would be very difficult to break down (such as verge mowing) and would need a separate exercise. The areas covered currently included parks, open space and grounds maintenance.

Councillor Mullineaux stated that in respect of the recent flooding, he could not be more pleased with the time spent by council staff, the overall view of residents that the council had supported them as best it could. The council's staff had gone above and beyond and deserved praise. In the future, flooding needed to be looked at and prevented where possible.

Councillor Bennett (in the audience) felt the report had many good aspects, such as the level of investment. Last year he had had concerns about the new waste contractor, however, he had not received one complaint.

The Cabinet member responding to the member of the public commented that there was approximately 20 members of staff authorised to issue a fixed penalty notice. It was confirmed that with the police and other agencies this number increased. The council would where it could provide help and advice residents on dog fouling. Whilst he did not have details to hand, he confirmed that a fixed penalty notice had been issued on Parkgate Drive and, that on receipt of information the council would do the best it could.

RESOLVED (unanimously) that:

1. the committee thanks the Cabinet member for Neighbourhoods & Streetscene and the Director of Neighbourhoods, Public Health and Asset Management for their attendance and responses to the committee;
2. the committee notes the progress being made in the Neighbourhoods & Streetscene portfolio;
3. the committee expresses concern at the low levels of enforcement around dog fouling and litter and asks a report be provided to a future meeting to outline what steps the Cabinet member is going to take to increase the level of enforcement

	<p>(including use of benchmarking and best practice etc);</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. the committee requests confirmation that residents can report cleansing and environmental issues to the council through social media; 5. the committee requests that the Cabinet member investigate the use of the borough's parks and open spaces by commercial dog walking companies; and 6. the committee requests that the Cabinet member gives further consideration to making more use of the Community Payback Scheme on local projects
42	<p>Waste Management Partnership</p> <p>The Cabinet member for Neighbourhoods & Streetscene (Councillor Mullineaux) and Mark Gaffney (Director of Neighbourhoods, Public Health and Asset Management) remained present to address the committee on the council's Waste Management Partnership.</p> <p>The committee commented that sometimes there was a lack of clarity of what could/could not be recycled and wondered if this could be further promoted. Councillor Mullineaux commented that at the moment this was difficult to promote recycling as was included in the county council's review of waste collection. To date the council had through its website and education programme promoted to residents the benefits of recycling. The Director added that school pupils were the best way to get adults. The chairman agreed with Councillor Bennett's comments under the previous item, in that the introduction of the new waste collection contract had gone well. He had also not received any complaints from residents.</p> <p>The Cabinet member confirmed that in the future the potential for a shared waste collection service could be looked at.</p> <p>In respect of the forthcoming demise (2018) of the Cost Sharing Agreement (CSA) with the county council, Councillor Mullineaux also assured the committee that the council was closely looking at this. The results of the county council's review of waste collection were not expected until March and as yet it was not known what might come out of it. The council had been disappointed the county council had only looked at waste collection and not also included waste disposal. The Director added that the county council had commissioned consultants who had collected data from the district councils.</p> <p>Councillor Mrs M Smith (in the audience) confirmed that all district councils in Lancashire had been involved in the review and had wanted it to also to have included waste disposal. On the demise of the CSA, all the districts would lose financially. This council about £900,000 some others less. To what extent this review would help districts was currently a moot point. This council was already working hard to lessen the impact of the end of the CSA in 2018. She hoped she was wrong but Councillor Mrs Smith was not overly optimistic that this review would provide this council with opportunities. The committee appreciated the update and that the Cabinet was dealing with it. Also noting this item was listed as a high risk on the council's Corporate Risk Register.</p> <p>The Cabinet member stated that the council had a good track record on its level of recycling. However, there had been a slight drop in the recycling rate which appeared to correspond with a slight increase in residual waste to landfill. He added that in future it might not be possible for food waste to be included with recycling. In respect of the level of trade waste recycled (18%), the committee was advised that unlike residential waste there was no require to recycle trade waste (it could all be sent to landfill). The council encouraged increased trade waste recycling but concentrated on residential waste.</p> <p>In respect of recycling clothes by the council, it was confirmed this was very low. There was very little demand as this was very well catered for by charities etc.</p> <p>Responding to the member of the public's reference stickers on wheelie bins and to recycling by Chester, the Cabinet member and the Director indicated information leaflets were circulated where there was an identified problem of people putting the wrong items in bins. There was a regular item in the council's Forward newspaper. Although at the</p>

	<p>moment it might be wise to wait and see what came out of the county council's review. The separation of roles was explained in that this council was responsible for waste collection and the county council for waste disposal. It was thought Chester was a Unitary Authority and there responsible for both aspects. Another apparent limitation after the end of the CSA was where this council chose to send its recyclable items. In that the Farington Technology Plant took all recyclables and if it had capacity this council was obliged to go there.</p> <p>RESOLVED (unanimously) that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the committee thanks the Cabinet member for Neighbourhoods & Streetscene and the Director of Neighbourhoods, Public Health and Asset Management for their attendance and responses to the committee; 2. the committee commends the Cabinet member and Director for the smooth transition to the new Waste Management Partnership and the significant savings generated; 3. the committee requests that further information be provided to explain the reduction in the council's recycling rate; and 4. the committee requests that it receives updates on Lancashire County Council's Waste Review and this council's proposed actions to address the £1m reduction in income when the Cost Sharing Agreement ceases.
43	<p>Worden Park Vision Plan – progress update</p> <p>The Cabinet member for Neighbourhoods & Streetscene (Councillor Mullineaux) and Mark Gaffney (Director of Neighbourhoods, Public Health and Asset Management) remained present to provide an update on the council's Vision Plan for Worden Park.</p> <p>In response to the committee's comments about short, medium and long term priorities and a strategy to deliver the vision plan, the Cabinet member commented that overall this was anticipated to be a 20 year process and it was difficult to prioritise the aims/visions. However, over the last 12 months there had been a lot of work benefiting the park as a whole. Whilst some recent successes might not have been listed in the plan, they had arisen and been things the council could do.</p> <p>The committee was keen to see priorities with target dates and possibly where funding might be sourced. In future actions/progress against those could be used as a measure of success/performance. The inspection of the park in 2014 associated with the Green Flag award had made similar comments about a lack of prioritisation. The Cabinet member stated the plan was a 20 year vision the council looked for and it was difficult to this into black and white of what was achieved. There was an opportunity with the car park and the front entrance had been a problem. Items such as this would happen all the time. He accepted there were no targets/priorities. Where opportunities arose to make improvements the council would take them, but there may also be times when the council could not allocate resources.</p> <p>In respect of the 2014 report, the Director commented that that was now two years old. The park had met the necessary criteria for the award and the feedback provided an opportunity to improve. There was a list of capital projects for the park but the council could not say how they would be funded. Over the years the council had invested a lot in the park but could not say when bearing mind the financial pressures faced by the council.</p> <p>The committee was informed that the council regarded visitor numbers to the park as a measure of value for money. Visitors came from the wider northern region. Surveys/measures have suggested visitors were happy with the park. In respect of self-sustainability, this would require a different operational model with service changes. The buildings needed a different approach and as known those on the park had been included in the council's corporate asset review.</p> <p>In respect of the car parking at the park and the local college's students, the committee was advised that 100 permits had been issued (at £60 each) valid in term time only. The</p>

council needed to be careful not to issue too many to the college. Whilst it was initially envisaged the overflow car park would be used two days a week, the construction materials used were for constant use. It was wondered if it might now be more appropriate to refer to the car parks as A and B.

The Cabinet member indicated as a potential source of income, the council might in the future look at education visits and encourage schools to visit the park.

Regarding the public toilets on the park, these were last refurbished about 4-5 years ago and might be due again. However, they were not in the best location (suffering from abuse/vandalism) and may in the future be re-located. Turning to the football changing facilities whilst these might not be particularly pretty they were fit for purpose and robust against vandalism.

The committee commented that it was advised good progress was being made, but it was difficult to see/measure without measureable targets to compare against.

Whilst aware of the asset review, the committee was intrigued to know what was happening to try and increase usage of the Arts Centre and Derby Wing in the park which had now been empty for a long time. The Cabinet member indicated that the council had tried to market certain buildings in the park for some time. It was very difficult to promote and also generate income from it. The Director added that those buildings were only suitable for certain uses and there may need to be a different approach to the park. Those buildings were also in need of significant investment. The council was talking to potential partners and what the opportunities might be.

Councillor P Smith (in the audience) referred to the 2014 inspection report and commented that the council had committed an additional £100,000 pa to Worden Park for the next four years.

The member of the public commented in view of the history of the buildings in the park, it was sad to see the level of neglect to the hall. He also had some concern that the plans for the proposed restoration works of the conservatory and arboretum might not be Georgian or Edwardian style whilst the plan mentions restoration and conservation. The director commented that any works would be subject to Listed Building Consent and construction materials would be considered as part of that.

In respect of the number of football pitches and the plan map, the Director offered to check for any inconsistencies.

The member of the public was advised that the proposed budget for 2016/17 had yet to be published as part of the papers for the meeting of the Cabinet to be held on 10 February.

The member of the public then informed the committee about security and vandalism issues associated with the park.

RESOLVED (unanimously) that:

1. the committee thanks the Cabinet member for Neighbourhoods & Streetscene and the Director of Neighbourhoods, Public Health and Asset Management for their attendance and responses to the committee;
2. the committee requests that a SMART and target based action plan be developed for the short, medium and long term actions, aims and aspirations that will implement the Worden Park Vision Plan;
3. the committee expresses concern about the feedback the council received following the Green Flag inspection and asks that a report be presented to a future meeting explaining what the council has and was doing to respond/address the feedback;
4. the committee welcomes the Cabinet member's offer to look at extending educational visits to Worden Park;

	<p>5. the committee requests that the maintenance of the public toilets on Worden Park be closely monitored with a view to their refurbishment; and</p> <p>6. the committee requests that the Cabinet member provides a response to the member of the public regarding concerns raised (including football pitches and vandalism).</p>
44	<p>Update on Scrutiny Matters</p> <p>a) Verbal update on Lancashire County Council's Health Scrutiny Committee – The Chairman reported he had attended that morning, indicating it had discussed the transformation of care for people with learning disabilities/autism. This was a detailed and complex matter developing a strategy that moved from institutional to residential care. As previously agreed a copy of the minutes of the meeting would be circulated.</p> <p>b) Member feedback on meeting and training attended on behalf of the committee – the chairman had attended meetings of the South Ribble Partnership Steering Group and the NW Employer's Strategic Scrutiny Network.</p> <p>c) Scrutiny Work Programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Update on the Health Steering Group Progress to date was noted and agreed to replace the group's chairman (Councillor Mrs B Nathan (resigned due to potential conflict of interest)) with Councillor Wharton. - Update on the Highways Task Group Councillor Mrs Ball (chairman) confirmed that the group had now met and discussed what members wanted to look at. It was agreed to look at Road Casualties & Deaths in South Ribble. <p>d) Scrutinising the council's preparedness for major incidents, including flooding – that a review group be created consisting of all the members of the Scrutiny Committee (appreciating that not all councillors would be able to attend all meetings).</p> <p>e) Creation of task and finish group looking at the external use of the Banqueting Suite and Catering Service – that a task and finish group be created consisting of Councillors Mrs Ball, K Jones and Martin.</p> <p>f) Cabinet and Scrutiny Forward Plans – that with the exception of the following relating to meetings of the Cabinet, the committee noted the Cabinet and Scrutiny Committee Forward Plans. That in view of the cancellation of the meeting of Cabinet in January 2016 and the very large number of items to be considered at its meeting in February, the Chairman agreed to raise this with the Leader.</p>

..... Chairman

(The meeting finished at 8.25pm)