

MINUTES OF BROOKE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

13 SEPTEMBER 2018

PRESENT:

Members of the Committee: Councillors Claire Edwards (Chair), Mrs A'Barrow, Keeling, McQueen, Mrs New, Pacey-Day, Picker, Srivastava and Mrs Timms

Officers: Shaun Barnes (Waste and Transport Manager), Ruth Barnett (Principal Accountant), Mark Finnegan (Principal Accountant) and Linn Ashmore (Democratic Services Officer)

9. MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on 28 June 2018 were approved and signed by the Chair.

10. FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING 2018/19 Q1

The committee had previously been requested to bring copies of the relevant Cabinet report from 3 September 2018 to the meeting. During discussion the following points and questions were raised:

Effects of the economic situation on next year's budget - The Cabinet report was based on the in-year financial position and the position was monitored against the current budget. Officers had begun work on the budget reports setting the scene for the next financial year.

Brexit could have a massive impact on local government funding. The impact of the Local Government Settlement would be covered in a separate report to Cabinet and would be used to inform the budget setting process for next year. There could be a possible rise in the rate of inflation over the next 18 months which would have a positive effect on the Council's investments. At the current time the interest rate was low.

Future financial plans and plans in relation to the green waste collection service – As part of the budget setting process the Council was facing a significant challenge for 2019/20 and therefore looking at a range options within the medium term financial plan. There were some significant challenges ahead and the Council was looking for opportunities to make savings. A range of options were being considered and garden waste would be reviewed alongside other budget considerations.

Interest rate rise and the short and long term spread of reserves – The Council's Treasury Management Strategy specifies a £20 limit for principle sums invested for periods longer than 364 days. The Council has a diverse portfolio, containing a lot of liquid assets at present. The return rate for longer term investments was low in comparison with shorter dated maturities and there needed

to be a balance between the degree of creditworthiness on longer term investments and the rate of return. Opportunities were explored in consideration of Council strategies and policies and there was a tendency to take a cautious approach.

Concerns were raised in relation to the adverse variance figures and the challenges faced in relation to:

- the Hall of Fame;
- the impact of homelessness on bed and breakfast and temporary accommodation costs;
- the related pressures for Biart Place and Rounds Gardens and lack of rent for properties that remain empty; and
- the effect of delays in payment of Universal Credit.

A special meeting of the committee had been scheduled into the work programme to consider the re-development of Biart Place and the potential repair or regeneration of high-rise blocks. Further details were awaited following a report to Council and a housing member conversation or a scrutiny meeting would be required.

Staff vacancies and sickness absence - Members asked what more could be done to manage this? It was noted that some work had been carried out on reviewing pay scales and other staff benefits. There were a number of complex issues such as the supply and demand of relevant public-sector skills and expertise.

Members were keen to understand more about the retention of staff and health issues and it was agreed more in-depth discussions would be required during the review of Employee Wellbeing.

Performance data – Members commented that the information contained in the tables at appendix 4 to the Cabinet report could be presented in a manner that would make scrutiny easier. A comment was made that member training on reviewing performance and RPMS could be helpful.

Officers informed the committee that performance reports could be better aligned with finance. A new approach was being developed that would make better use of business intelligence that would be more appropriate for members. For example, making the necessary links on growth in housing and the number of stickers sold for green waste bin collection. This approach would make best use of these relationships. Further commentary would also provide a picture of what lay behind the statistics.

Members referred to the figures for the Benn Hall performance information and were informed that the aim was to break-even rather than make a profit.

It was important that the Council focuses on the longer-term plans for self-sufficiency.

RESOLVED THAT – the Principal Accountants be thanked for their attendance.

11. REVIEW OF WASTE AND RECYCLING EDUCATION

The Committee received a presentation from the Waste and Transport Manager on Waste and Recycling Education. A copy of the presentation is attached at Annex 1 to the minutes.

In addition to the presentation the following points were made:

Recycling Rates

- The longer-term effects of Brexit on recycling rates were unknown.
- The recycling rate for Rugby was 47 percent which equated to 5,081 tonnes. This was slightly higher than the national average of 45 percent.
- There was a national decline in recycling levels. Reasons for this included families buying less food, contamination levels had increased, and there were fewer national educational messages.
- Rugby's recycling rate compared favourably with neighbouring authorities. Those with larger rural areas collected more green waste and Stratford District Council did not charge for the collection of green waste.
- It was clear that due to the variation in collection schemes and charging it was difficult to make comparisons with other authorities.
- The sign up for the green waste collection in newly built properties was 51 percent.

Contamination

- The contamination rate for Rugby was 11 percent compared to the national figure of 12 percent.
- Levels of contamination were higher for communal bins, including houses in multiple occupation (HMO) and bins located in alleys.
- The number of fly tipping incidents involving smaller items had not changed but reports of large commercial fly tipping had increased on a national level.
- The operational response to contamination was to not empty bins and force behaviour change.
- There was no evidence to suggest that green waste was being put in black bins following the introduction of the green waste collection charge. Some residents were sharing green bins or home composting.

Collection Levels and Waste Disposal

- The recyclables market crashed after China imposed an import ban. There was no longer any market value in plastics.
- Where rejected recycle was sent and disposed of was the decision of the processing plant and the Council had no control or influence over this.
- Warwickshire County Council was the responsible authority for the contract and the disposal of residual waste.
- The MRF contract was due to end in March 2019. Interim arrangements would be put in place and the contract would go out to tender. A long-term contract would be avoided because the future was unknown.
- Collection levels were affected by a number of factors including national events and extreme changes in the weather.
- An increase in recycling levels last year could have occurred as the result of the green waste collection literature.

- There were no tonnage figures for green waste collected prior to the introduction of the collection charge. It was possible that these could be calculated and Members agreed these would be useful.
- Opportunities to share waste collection in the outlying villages with the nearest neighbouring authorities could result in savings.

Behavioural Change and Education

- The approaches taken by other local authorities varied. Examples included:
 - Changing to three-weekly collections which resulted in a 20-30 per cent increase in recycling.
 - Leaving bins unemptied.
 - A mixture of the above.
 - Two-weekly collections with smaller bins.
 - Voucher schemes.
- Changing to three-weekly black bin collections would not result in a drop in the overall tonnage collected but fewer vehicles would be required and this would reduce the cost to dispose of residual waste at landfill which was currently £114 per tonne.
- Results from bin audits have shown that a large proportion of waste in black bins could be recycled.
- There was a high proportion of private managing agents and social landlords in Rugby and they could be transferred onto trade waste contracts.
- To standardise the various collection schemes in place across local authorities would require huge sums of capital investment.
- Information on contamination costs should be made public.

The Committee noted that that the trial use of video as an educational tool was the focus of the Informing and Engaging Our Communities Task Group.

Members requested monthly comparison figures for green waste collection over the past three years.

RESOLVED THAT – the Waste and Transport Manager be thanked for his informative presentation.

12. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2018/19

The committee received a report (Part 1 – Agenda Item 7) concerning the progress of scrutiny reviews and the forward work programme for 2018/19.

The Chair informed the Committee that a response had been received from the Head of Corporate Resources and Chief Financial Officer on the following review topics:

Employee Wellbeing

Following the approval of the new Human Resources Strategy and Action Plan officers were currently looking into ways that scrutiny could add value.

Special Expense Scheme – Council Tax

Officers from the finance team were drafting a summary on the possible outcomes for the review for the approval of the Financial Services Manager. It was expected

that the draft one-page strategy would be included on the agenda for the next meeting.

Our Rugby, Our Future – 9.30am-12.30pm 17 October 2018

Committee members were invited to drop in and lend their support.

Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 8 November 2018

Committee members were asked to submit questions for the portfolio holders to democratic.services@rugby.gov.uk by 15 October 2018.

The Overview and Scrutiny Report 2016-2018 had been produced by the scrutiny committee chairs and would be submitted to Council on 27 September 2018 for approval prior to publication.

RESOLVED THAT – the forward work programme be noted.

CHAIR

Waste and Recycling Education

Brooke Overview and Scrutiny Committee

13th September 2018



Recycling Rates

- WfH (waste from Households) is the agreed UK measure used to report household recycling
- There is an EU target for the UK to recycle at least 50% of household waste by 2020
- The UK waste from households recycling rate was 45.2% in 2016 (increasing from 44.6% in 2015)
- The recycling rate for England was 44.9%

WRAP Research (2015)

- Self-reported recycling levels are high and relatively stable for most materials.
- Just under half of UK households say that on the last disposal occasion they disposed of at least one material in the general rubbish bin that their council collects as part of the kerbside recycling collection.
- 47% of households are putting at least one material in their recycling that is not intended to be collected locally for recycling

WRAP Research (2015)

- Around a quarter of households are ‘completely effective recyclers’
- Across the UK, one-third of the population used a council food waste collection service the last time they had food to dispose of
- For dry recycling, levels of uncertainty about what is and isn’t collected locally for recycling are still high.
- Rates of recycling paper, card, cans/tins, aerosols and foil all increase in line with age



Rugby Recycling Rates

- Recycling rate within Rugby Borough varies between 45 and 48%, comparing favourably with national averages (44.9%)

Rugby Borough Quarter 1 2017/18	
Recycling, Composting and Re-use Rate	5,081 tonnes
	47%
Residual	5,674 tonnes
	53%
Total	10,755 tonnes

Warwickshire Recycling Rates

For recycling, we compare favourably in Warwickshire

	North Warwickshire	Nuneaton & Bedworth	Rugby	Stratford	Warwick
	Q1 2018/19	Q1 2018/19	Q1 2018/19	Q1 2018/19	Q1 2018/19
Recycling Rate	1,398 tonnes 17%	2,650 tonnes 18%	2,683 tonnes 25%	3,723 tonnes 23%	2,463 tonnes 17%

Recycling Rates

Residual waste is high

	North Warwickshire	Nuneaton & Bedworth	Rugby	Stratford	Warwick
	Q1 2018/19	Q1 2018/19	Q1 2018/19	Q1 2018/19	Q1 2018/19
Residual Waste	3,907 tonnes 48%	7,179 tonnes 50%	5,503 tonnes 51%	5,457 tonnes 33%	6,052 tonnes 43%

Contamination Rates

- Current contamination rates for Rugby are approximately 11%
- This means that for each 100 tonnes of recyclate presented, 11 tonnes is rejected due to being contaminated
- Rejected recyclate is then sent to landfill or incineration
- Increasing concern about the stability, availability and affordability of the end markets for the recyclate



Reasons For Contamination

- Confusion over what can be recycled and how it should be recycled.
- Intentional contamination
- Houses in Multiple Occupation and communal bins
- Alley collections

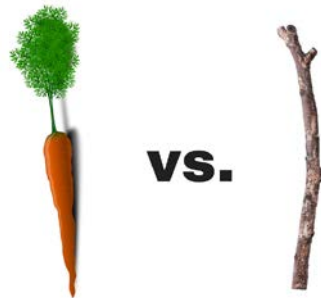
Summary for Rugby

- Household Recycling works well in Rugby and dry recycling rates are good
- There are issues with contamination levels and the additional costs incurred as a result.



Solutions

- Behavioural change is key – encouraging more recycling and reducing contamination.
- Behavioural change can be achieved through enforced changes and/ or education



Behavioural Change (enforced)

- Less frequent collections?
- Smaller bin size?
- Politically less popular, BUT evidence base to suggest that this works

Behavioural Change (enforced)



Behavioural Change (educational)

- Working with our communities
- Better information, advice and guidance
- Targeted Campaigns



Behavioural Change (Education)



The Deal

Wigan Council

Our part

- Keep your Council Tax as one of the lowest
- Help communities to support each other
- Cut red tape and provide value for money
- Build services around you and your family
- Create opportunities for young people
- Support the local economy to grow
- Listen, be open, honest and friendly
- Believe in our borough

Signed *David Molyneux*
Councilor David Molyneux, Leader of Wigan Council

Your part

- Recycle more, recycle right
- Get involved in your community
- Get online
- Be healthy and be active
- Help protect children and the vulnerable
- Support your local businesses
- Have your say and tell us if we get it wrong
- Believe in our borough

Signed

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National Educational Campaigns



RECYCLING KNOWLEDGE

Find out more about recycling and how you can be involved in your local area.

Recycling doesn't only help the environment: we can all benefit from recycling things from around the house, at work and during our leisure time.



Which items can & can't be recycled?



Recycling symbols explained



Food recycling



How is it recycled?

RECYCLING KNOWLEDGE

- Getting started
- How is it recycled?
- Recycling around your home
- Recycling from the bathroom
- Food recycling
- Recycling symbols explained
- Facts and info
- Northern Ireland
- Recycle Week campaign



Local Educational Campaigns



Education Plan for Rugby

- Targeted enforcement activity around known problems/issues
- Targeted Educational activity around known problems/issues
- Borough wide educational activity to promote:
 - Increased recycling
 - Reduced contamination
 - Organic waste options



Education Plan for Rugby

- ‘Right for Rugby’ campaign objectives:
 - To reduce the amount of waste collected
 - To reduce contamination in the blue-lid and garden waste bins
 - To signpost customers to the “next bin day” web app

Education Plan for Rugby

- In addition, we have the following communications objectives:
 - To trial use of video in a way that maximises learning
 - To involve councillors in a campaign with measurable objectives
 - To create content in a format that can be reused, and that is inclusive