

ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD COMMITTEE

26 January 2017 at 7.30 pm

MEMBERS: Councillor Jill Whitehead (Chair), Councillor Nighat Piracha (Vice Chair) and Councillors Manuel Abellan, Adrian Davey, Richard Marston, Patrick McManus, Steve Penneck, Tony Shields, Paul Wingfield and Hanna Zuchowska.
(*Absent) Councillor Ruth Dombey (ex-officio).

21. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed all those there present.

22. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATIONS OF SUBSTITUTES

No apologies were received.

23. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

24. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

An amendment was proposed to the minutes of the last Meeting. Agenda item 19 at 2.1, points a) to c), it was noted that Councillors Shields and McManus voted against the recommendation.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 15 September 2016 were agreed and signed as an accurate record, subject to the amendment.

25. PETITION: SAVE SUTTON'S THEATRES

The lead petitioner was unable to attend the meeting and gave his apologies. The Chair, Councillor Jill Whitehead read out a brief statement from the lead petitioner at his request. The statement referred to discontent at the theatre closures and said that many local residents valued the venues highly. Residents felt that the theatres improved and enriched local people's lives.

The Chair invited Jan Underhill, Executive Head of Wellbeing, to comment on the petition. She pointed out that the decision that the Council could not continue to run the theatres was taken at Environment and Neighbourhood Committee meeting of 4 September 2014, and after a full public consultation. The Council had therefore gone out to the market on two occasions, the last occasion being to seek expressions of interest for the commercial leases of the vacant theatre buildings. Unfortunately, the six expressions of interest received from local organisations had generated no

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viable, sustainable bids for the leases. She added that the Council is, however, currently exploring the plans put forward by some of the bidders in more detail. The

Chair reminded the Committee that the Council is still under pressure to reach considerable savings targets, and has no legal obligation to provide theatres.

Members thanked the petitioners for their expression of support for the theatres. A failure to attract audiences and a lack of financial sustainability were given as reasons behind the recent closure of Sutton Theatres Trust. Members underlined the point that any new proposal needed to cover maintenance and repair costs in addition to means of income generation.

One member questioned why the fittings at the Charles Cryer Theatre had been sold. The Executive Head of Wellbeing explained that when the Sutton Theatre Trust took over the theatre, equipment essential to running a theatre was transferred to them. When the Trust went into administration the equipment was in their ownership and subsequently put on sale.

The Executive Head of Wellbeing informed the committee that the process of the transfer of the theatres and equipment to the Sutton Theatre Trust had been handled by Environment and Neighbourhoods and Asset Management (Resource Directorate).

RESOLVED: that

- 2.1 The petition was considered and the appropriate course of action be determined as set out in the options section of the report.

26. REVIEW OF ENVIRONMENT, HOUSING AND REGENERATION FEES AND CHARGES FOR 2017/18.

Scott Funnell, Head of Environment Commissioning, presented the report.

Following the presentation, Members questioned how the Council compared with other boroughs in relation to burial charges. Officers confirmed that the Council is competitive and charges were slightly lower than Merton and Croydon Councils.

Members also enquired as to how many licences the Council had issued for performing animals and zoos. Warren Shadbolt, Executive Head of Safer and Stronger Communities, confirmed the council has to publish all licences issued and would confirm any specific number after the meeting.

Members asked why the Council was incurring increased costs in postage relating to the new European passport return service. Officers confirmed that this was because there was still a legal need to send physical copies to applicants.

With regards to Shared Highways and Transport charges, Members asked how prices in Sutton compared to Kingston. Officers confirmed they would confirm comparative prices after discussions with Kingston Council.

One member commented that their Local Committee allocated funds to Little League football, yet the report detailed increased charges for the Little League pitches. Officers confirmed that the Environment, Housing and Regeneration service needed to ensure fees and charges covered the costs to maintain local pitches, adding that it is at the discretion of each Local Committee as to whether or not to subsidise.

RESOLVED: that

- 3.1 The increased charges for the following services be approved- Commercial Waste, Bulky Waste, Parks (including Biodiversity), Cemeteries, Highways and Transport, Regulatory Services, Sports and Leisure Management, Registration Service, Libraries, as set out in Appendices A - J, and the Life Centre.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 15.4 Councillor McManus requested that his abstention from the vote be recorded.

27. ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOODS PERFORMANCE REPORT

Scott Funnell, Head of Environment Commissioning presented the report showing performance and financial data via the Council's performance management system (Covalent). Members were reminded that this was the second time the performance report had been presented to the Committee.

From the indicators, Members discussed the percentage of household waste sent for refuse, recycling and composting and the predicted impact of the new waste arrangements. The target of 40% was reached in the summer yet there was a decline in winter. It was confirmed by officers that the figures shown were for a specific month only, and 40 percent was the average for the year. The recycling targets would be reviewed after the first year of the new waste collection contract which would be starting in April. Members suggested adjusting the Covalent figures to smooth monthly seasonal changes in winter (which reflected Christmas collections), and which would show the results for the year to date, or on a quarterly basis, rather than for one month, which Officers agreed to explore.

Members asked if there was any recovery plan for red and amber indicators, and whether this information could be included on the dashboard. Officers responded that under "Household waste sent for refuse, recycling and composting", for example, the introduction of food waste under the new Waste Contract in April forms part of the recovery plan, and further notes were already available on dashboard.

Members also considered indicators relating to missed-bin collections as well as library and heritage performance. Members again commented that it would be useful to have the information given with year-to-date figures.

The Chair then invited members to share any suggestions relating to the key performance indicators. Members requested data concerning the Indigo Parking contract where the key performance indicator would be the number of parking tickets issued, and the numbers where an appeal was made to the Parking Appeals Tribunal. Officers agreed to examine data already available and comment at a future committee. Members were also in agreement that parking would be a good issue to discuss at a future committee as an important issue to residents.

Members suggested that future meetings on this item could focus on particular themes which would allow members to review the relevant indicators and work through the areas of service.

Finally, Members enquired as to whether outside contractors such as for the new SLWP contracts could be invited to the Committee in future to review performance. Mary Morrissey, Strategic Director of Environment, Housing and Regeneration, responded positively and agreed to propose future themes for the Chair's consideration.

Members commented that the Covalent data was very easy to view and use, and thanked officers from the Environment, Housing & Regeneration directorate.

RESOLVED: that:

2.1 The performance dashboard was considered and commented upon.

28. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on 30 March 2017 at 7:30pm in the Civic Offices.

The meeting ended at 8.20 pm

Chair:

Date: