

ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD COMMITTEE

1 November 2017 at 7.30 pm

MEMBERS: Councillor Jill Whitehead (Chair), Councillor Nighat Piracha (Vice Chair) and Councillors Manuel Abellan, Richard Marston, Patrick McManus, Steve Penneck, Tony Shields, Paul Wingfield and Hanna Zuchowska.

9. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed all those present.

10. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATIONS OF SUBSTITUTES

Apologies were received from Councillor Adrian Davey.

11. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the last meeting held on the 22 June 2017 were agreed and signed as a correct record by the Chair.

12. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

The following declarations of interest were declared:

Item 5 - Councillor Steve Penneck, non-pecuniary, by virtue of his employment.

Item 6 - Councillor Richard Marston, non-pecuniary, as a volunteer

Item 7 - Councillor Jill Whitehead, non-pecuniary, as A Friend of Grove Park and Councillor Richard Marston, non-pecuniary, as a Friend of the Woodland Trust and as a Tree Champion for London Borough of Sutton.

13. OUTCOME OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FINDINGS INTO THE NEW WASTE CONTRACT

The Chair thanked the Scrutiny Committee and the Task and Finish Group for their hard work and proposed that the Committee should accept all 27 recommendations, and that the report should help partnering Boroughs to implement the changes, and also enable London Borough of Sutton (LBS) and the South London Waste Partnership to monitor progress.

The Chair pointed out that the recycling rate had now reached over 50%, which was one of the best in London, and that this meant less being sent to expensive landfill, and so savings were being made. She did recognise that much better preparation was needed in the run up

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to service change, but that it had been difficult to deliver such a large service change with much fewer resources at a time of austerity. The Council was working very hard to put things right, which was why the Scrutiny Committee had been set up, and proposed to act on all its recommendations. A lot of progress was already being made, and this was the number one priority.

The Chair invited Councillor Tony Shields to comment on the Scrutiny report from the Opposition point of view, and he highlighted the following –

- Local residents were not consulted and were misinformed about the project;
- Collections were still erratic for some local residents; and
- Local residents should be compensated for repeated missed collections

The Chair then invited the Chair of Scrutiny, Councillor Ali to comment and she highlighted the following -

- The Task and Finish Group worked hard including officers;
- The report reflected all contributions made;
- The Recommendations were valid and she asked that the committee take them forward for future actions, monitoring and review; and
- That there were lessons to be learnt for partners entering the SLWP contract, and for future contracts procured by the Council and its partners.

Matt Clubb, Assistant Director of Environment Commissioning, presented the report including the management response relating to each of the four main themes (ICT and Communication, Risk Management, Member Engagement and Staff Engagement), and the action plan covering the strategic and operational recommendations.

Members were pleased with the work being done to progress the recommendations, and thanked the Scrutiny Committee and officers for their work, but identified ongoing issues relating to the flats project and the need to find a way to consult with local residents that was permissible under procurement rules. Members also identified a number of lessons to be learnt for future projects and were of the view that the action plan, following approval at this Committee, needed to be implemented quickly with a clear statement of actions and deadlines for completion.

The Committee proposed the following should be included in the Action Plan:

1. A date for completion of visits and actions under the Flats Project be decided upon.
2. It should propose to the SLWP that the terms of reference of the Joint Waste Committee should be extended to include waste collection as well as waste disposal
3. A toolkit/guide providing information on service standards, and the respective responsibilities of the Council/SLWP/Veolia, be produced initially for members by the end of December 2017, and then a similar guide for local residents to go on the Council's website.
4. The Strategy & Resources Committee be asked to look at risk culture and the effectiveness of high level risk management across the Council.
5. The Council should be asked to review its current interpretation of the purdah rules, which limits the nature and extent of communications during election periods.

Matt Clubb informed the Committee that the flats project continues to be a priority and Veolia has already identified additional resources for this. Improvements were also being made to the ICT system and processes, relating to how calls were logged and acted upon, with significant learning being put in place for the other Boroughs of the SLWP.

RESOLVED: that the Environment and Neighbourhood Committee:

1. Accept all the recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee.
2. Agree the Management response in Appendix B.
3. Agree to receive a report taking forward the Action Plan in 12 months time and the following items be included in the Action Plan -
 - a. A date to be agreed with officers for the Flat Project to be completed.
 - b. Consideration be given to review of the Terms of Reference for the Joint Waste Committee (JWC).
 - c. A toolkit/Guide be produced for members by December 2017 relating to the service standards, and roles and responsibilities, to be followed by a similar guide for local residents about the services.
 - d. A report be produced for the Strategy and Resources Committee relating to the issues raised regarding Risk Management across the organisation.
 - e. A request be made to the Chief Executive's office to review the Purdah rules for elected members.

14. LIBRARIES VOLUNTEER PILOT

Jan Underhill, Assistant Director, People Services Directorate presented the report.

Members were of the view that the Libraries Volunteer project had been a success and thanked the library service and the team. Members thought that the approach was very professional and it should be rolled out to other libraries and cultural/heritage centres besides the pilot sites, and also to other departments of the council such as the Parks Department, where volunteers were highly valued, and where service benefits could be gained.

Jan Underhill informed the Committee that the service was looking into a volunteer portal on the main Council website for volunteers to register online and there was an opportunity to recognise the number of volunteers interested in other areas e.g. gardening. She also stated that volunteers added real value and should be approached in a professional manner and built into the core business, identifying and applying their particular skills.

RESOLVED: that the Environment and Neighbourhood Committee:

1. Agree to roll out an enhanced Volunteer offer across the whole of the Libraries, Heritage and Arts Service led by the libraries Volunteer Officer taking into account learning gained from the volunteer pilot regarding recruitment, marketing and retention of volunteers.

2. Note that the Libraries Heritage and Arts Service will continue to grow opportunities for volunteering across the libraries and heritage network with a specific focus upon volunteer opportunities for young people in particular.

15. PROPOSED APPROACH TO PREPARING A PARKS STRATEGY

Mark Dalzell, Head of Neighbourhood Services, presented the report, and he informed the Committee that this was an update on the last strategy which was produced in 2007. The new strategy would review progress, develop the offer to residents and consider opportunities. The report set out the suggested approach to undertake the Parks Strategy Review and develop a new strategy. Members proposed that there should be a Parks and Open Spaces Strategy, to take a broader view, and accord with the Mayor of London's new draft Environmental Strategy.

The Chair welcomed the report and stated that it was very timely, given that the Mayor of London wanted to make the whole of London a National Park City. The Parks Strategy would be looking at key areas such as use of volunteers and Friends groups, health and well-being, enjoying an active lifestyle and encouraging visitors to come to the parks from within the Borough and wider afield.

Key local and regional bodies would be consulted during the strategy review, and research would be undertaken to examine demand for and use of green spaces, identifying trends. Issues such as access to, and quality of green spaces in some areas of the borough would be looked at to see how these could be improved. It would also be looking at how parks could contribute to the local economy through local community events. The opportunities for further HLF bids (as per Beddington Park) would be considered, along with other sources of potential funding.

Mark Dalzell reassured the Committee that LBS was committed to maintaining the quality of its parks and that the parks strategy was in the context of the Local Plan which strongly supports maintaining the quality of the open space and creating open spaces.

RESOLVED: that

The Environment and Neighbourhood Committee:

1. Approve the process and timetable for the Parks and Open Space Strategy and review as set out in this report.
2. Approve a member Task and Finish group to meet twice to discuss issues in more detail before proposals are brought back to Committee for decision as set out in this report. Members to include -
 - a. Councillor Tony Shields
 - b. Councillor Richard Marston

16. ANY URGENT ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD AT THE DIRECTION OF THE CHAIR

There were no urgent items.

17. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on 23 November 2017 at the Civic Offices.

The meeting ended at 9.17 pm

Chair:

Date: