

Minutes



Performance Scrutiny Committee - Place and Corporate

Date: 2 September 2019

Time: 4.00 pm

Present: Councillors C Evans (Chair), M Al-Nuaimi, D Fouweather, I Hayat and J Richards

In Attendance: Steve Davies (Area Manager West and Strategic), Silvia Gonzalez-Lopez (Waste Recycling Strategy Manager), Tracy McKim (Partnership Policy & Involvement Manager) and Meryl Lawrence (Scrutiny Adviser)

Apologies: Councillors G Berry, J Clarke, K Critchley and D Williams

1 Declarations of Interest

None.

2 Minutes of the Meetings held on 10 and 24 June 2019

The Minutes of the meetings held on 10 and 24 June 2019 were **approved** as a true and accurate record.

3 Recommendations Monitoring - Budget Proposals 2019-20

Apologies from the Strategic Director – Place, the Head of City Services and the Head of People and Business Change were passed to the Committee, as the Officers were unable to attend the Committee meeting.

City Services

Attendee:

- Steve Davies (Senior Strategy Manager, City Services.)

The Senior Strategy Manager, City Services presented a brief overview to the Committee and highlighted the key areas for consideration as follows:

- **CS1920/06 - Refuse Collection – Review of Charging for Waste Special Collections**
Projection that saving would be achieved.
- **CS1920/07 – Off Street Parking – Changes to Council Parking Charges**
Projection that full saving would be achieved.
- **CS1920/08 – Customer Services – Reduction in Customer Services Operating Hours – Information Station only**
Full saving had been achieved.
- **CS1920/10 – Introduce Parking Charges within Tredegar Park and Fourteen Locks**

- It was anticipated that the full saving would not be achieved in Year 1 because of the unavoidable delay due to the statutory consultation process for traffic orders.

Members asked the following:

CS1920/06 - Refuse Collection – Review of Charging for Waste Special Collections

- A Member referred to the statement on page 21: *“There has been no increase in the tonnage of reported fly tipping across the city between April and June when compared to the same period in 2018”* and queried whether there had been an increase in fly tipping incidents. Members were advised that the service area monitored the tonnage of waste, which could have variations month to month. Fly tipping could also vary seasonally, reports were recorded, and the information could be provided to Members however, there had not been an increase in fly tipping.
- A Member referred to the smaller refuse bins, which had increased recycling and asked if the officers could provide ward-by-ward analysis of recycling amounts, so hotspots could be identified and wards that were struggling could have more resources to help them to recycle. Members were advised that the total weight of recycling was collated by recycling round, and it would be difficult to match up to Wards.
- A Member enquired how CCTV and camera investment for fly tipping hotspots were progressing. Members were advised that there was a Capital bid to purchase and Officers would be meeting with the Procurement team this week, so should be ready after the tender process.
- A Member asked if within the budget, there was enough resources to enforce fly tipping. Members were advised that there were resources, however, it was difficult to prosecute without either evidence being found in the waste, or a signed witness statement obtained as evidence. Fly tipping usually came from commercial origins who were careful not to leave any evidence behind, so successful prosecution numbers were quite low.
- A Member referred to properties with no front gardens where recycling and bins were sometimes overflowing and litter could be left behind after collection, and asked would there be anything in the budget to clean pavements. Members were advised that bin usage was monitored, any excess produced by the residents had to be dealt with themselves, however it was appreciated that when bins are clustered some waste could be left. If the crew could not source where the rubbish has come from, it would eventually be collected and when issues were known, the team could act.
- A Member asked whether Officers were concerned about extra costs. Members were advised that they were, and that was why engagement work was so important, however, there were funds in the budget for residents who needed additional support managing their refuse and recycling.
- A Member asked whether the response from the public upon Special Collections had been monitored. Members were advised that the income received and the tonnage of items collected items was being monitored.

CS1920/07 – Off Street Parking – Changes to Council Parking Charges

- A Member referred to the statement on page 22: *“Any shortfall incurred through Council’s decision to delay resident permits implementation until 1st July will be accommodated within existing City Services revenue budgets”* and asked from which budgets any shortfall would be absorbed. Members were advised that any shortfall would be accommodated from the existing parking budget.

- A Member referred to the implications upon providing the service of a 130% increase in parking permit applications since April 2019 and asked whether it had been taken into account in the budget. The Officer confirmed that the income from the Permits covered the administration of the service and the Contact Centre would accommodate.

CS1920/08 – Customer Services – Reduction in Customer Services Operating Hours – Information Station only

- A Member referred to the closing of the Information Station on Wednesdays which had caused an increase to the average waiting time for face-to-face services to within 23 minutes, and asked whether this was acceptable. It was confirmed that the average wait time reported was still within the service level agreement. Members asked whether the call wait times had also increased. It was advised that this information could be provided to Members.

CS1920/10 – Introduce Parking Charges within Tredegar Park and Fourteen Locks

- A Member referred to the proposed saving not being met in Year 1 and the ample parking in streets available near Fourteen Locks and asked if the saving cannot be achieved, would it be better to not proceed with charges. Members were advised that the service area was unable to realise the full saving because of the unavoidable delay due to the statutory consultation process for the traffic order.

The Chair thanked the Officer for attending.

People and Business Change:

Attendee:

- Tracy McKim (for Head of People and Business Change)

PSB1920/02 – Partnership – Reduction in Voluntary Sector Grants

The Officer advised the Committee that this budget proposal looked at a small number of grants that totalled around £286,000, to make a saving for £54,000. Unfortunately, following SEWREC ending their service in Newport, the saving of £46,000 was almost entirely from SEWREC. The service area wanted to ensure the voluntary sector could recover from SEWREC closing before further action could be taken. A £46,000 saving was made as a consequence and a full review would take place later this year.

Every grant recipient had been given notice in relation to the withdrawal of funding at the end of this financial year, and services been engaged regarding what might the service look like in the future. Some of those services were housed in Newport Council property so the funding gap would have a consequence to the Council but some services will absorb the loss.

Members asked the following:

- A Member asked if there had been closures outside of the Council. Members were advised that the Council was the contributor to many services, SEWREC had folded very quickly and some services have continued. Other services that had run out of the service building had continued because their funders have moved to other providers or had charity funding.
- A Member enquired about Citizens Advice. Members were advised that a review had yet to be completed because of the SEWREC loss and that all recipients were in the same position.
- Members queried the £8,000 shortfall. It was clarified that SEWREC did not owe the Council any money, the Council had made almost all of the savings because of the closure of SEWREC.

- A Member referred to Shop Mobility moving buildings and asked would there be any additional support for them. Members were advised that it is unsure whether the decision directly affected them, but advised of the Committee's recommendation on page 28 for finding alternate accommodation.
- Members queried the statement on page 25 – "*It is anticipated that the scope of the commissioned service will be established by the end of September and contract set shortly after this*", and asked if this was being dealt with at Officer level with no Member involvement. It was advised that the review was about what is needed, the target date was end of September and work had already started and the priorities were known from various Plans, Well-being Plan, etc.
- A Member asked whether groups were encouraged to apply. Members were advised that this funding would not be for new organisations to apply. The team was working with existing providers to help provide the best service for the residents of Newport. It would be reviewed if the sum of money needed to be reduced, to consider how best to meet community needs and how to mitigate too much hardship.
- A Member referred to the proposed saving of £54,000 and SEWREC closing and asked about the impact. Members were advised that the team had started to progress the work but paused when SEWREC closed, as they did not want to further deplete what was a complex environment and were not fully aware of how it would affect the Council and the communities served. The £8,000 shortfall had been absorbed in the People and Business Change budget. The service area would have to manage within their budget and spend less, but it was not a pressure for the Budget.

The Chair thanked the Officer for attending.

Conclusion - Comments to the Cabinet

The Committee welcomed the report and noted the Officer responses in relation to the recommendations made by the Committee at the 14 January 2019 meeting upon the 2019-20 Budget proposals and made the following comments:

CS1920/06 - Refuse Collection – Review of Charging for Waste Special Collections

- The Committee requested that the number of fly tipping incidents be provided in future reports rather than just the tonnage, to measure whether there had been an increase.

CS1920/08 – Customer Services – Reduction in Customer Services Operating Hours - Information Station only

- The Committee requested the average call waiting times for the Contact Centre, to measure whether there had been an increase since the Information Station closed on Wednesdays.

CS1920/10 – Introduce Parking Charges within Tredegar Park and Fourteen Locks

- A Minority view was expressed that charges for car parking at Fourteen Locks should be revisited, as the proposed saving would not be achieved.

4 Waste Strategy Action Plan Monitoring

Attendee:

- Silvia Gonzalez-Lopez (Waste Service Manager, City Services)

The Waste Service Manager presented the Draft Newport Waste Strategy 2019-2025 to the Committee to provide context. The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee had considered a report upon the Wales Audit Office Waste Service Follow Up Review in March

2019, and referred the Monitoring of the Action Plan to this Committee, as it was within its remit. The Waste Service Manager gave a presentation of the Draft Waste Strategy and the new Action Plan to the Committee. All actions included in the Draft Strategy are part of the City Services Service Plan monitored by the Committee on a six monthly basis.

Members asked the following:

- A Member enquired about the nature of the proposed second site. The Waste Service Manager advised that the second site would be like the Household Waste Recycling Centre on Docks Way.
- A Member referred to the recycling targets stated on page 35 of the report asked about potential to meet future increases to recycling targets above 70% from Household Waste. Members were advised that there was no higher target than 70% set by Welsh Government, and that targets had only been set until 2025 presently.
- A Member asked how much of the 64% 2019/20 target for minimum overall recycling was household waste? Members were advised that this was up to each Council and that the total performance was calculated on total tonnage.
- Members discussed food waste, and a Member enquired whether there was a food waste and recycling collection service for restaurants and businesses. It was advised that the Council did not collect and that legislation does not require businesses to food recycle however, this would change in the future and business would need to have proper waste streams for collections in place. While such services could be developed for businesses in the future, the businesses could choose which company would provide their service.
- A Member enquired about recycling enforcement and monitoring. Members were advised that excess waste is monitored, and people generate waste within their allocated capacity, but sometimes put recycling in refuse bins. The Service area monitors the recycling and speaks to people where identifiable and that the main objective is to create a behaviour change.
- A Member commended the Action Plan as a comprehensive document with really good performance levels, and asked how much of the recycling material collected was recycled and where it went. Members were advised that the Council had a duty to report what is collected on a quarterly basis, not only by tonnage collected but also what material was sent for treatment and where. An example was given of glass which is taken to Cwmbran, it had to be ensured that the property was permitted and then reported where the items went from there. Once the premises took ownership of material then the Council could report. The Officer advised that the benefit of kerbside collections was that the materials quality were good compared to others in the waste industry. Members were assured that there was confidence that the materials were being recycled, and that all of the information was on a website.
- A Member referred to reports of recycled materials being exported to other countries. The Officer advised that if this happened the Regulators would take action. The Authority reported where its recycled materials went and were processed in the UK.
- A Member asked did the Council engage with supermarkets about collecting their food waste? It was advised that the Council could engage but the big firms had national contracts. It was clarified that no supermarket waste came to the Council's site.
- A Member asked did the Council make a profit from treating garden waste by compost plant. The Officer advised that this only started a year ago and had certification in April, and they planned to look at outlets to promote the product to make profit.

- A Member enquired about what the Council did with food waste collected. Members were advised that the Authority had an inter-authority agreement including Merthyr and Bridgend, for food waste. The contract had taken account of all costs when fees were calculated for the gate fee for food waste and benefitted from the bio gas and electricity to reduce its fees.
- Members discussed the high numbers of nappies collected and asked whether there was going to be a way to improve the recycling of nappies. Members were advised that the Authority is actively looking for alternatives as the recycling percentage from nappies is very low, with only a few companies recycling them as it has been really expensive so been cheaper to incinerate. However this was being addressed by Welsh Government and conversations taking place with other Councils. Plans were in place, and alongside this would be the promotion of the real nappies scheme.
- A Member suggested that a Visit for Members of the Committee to the recycling centre be arranged. Members were advised that this could be arranged.
- A Member asked whether there were any plans to encourage small businesses upon reduced packaging, fruit without plastic, etc. The Recycling Shop was visionary and moving that model into other areas could lead by example. Members were advised that the Council was happy to engage with businesses.
- A Member asked what was currently being sent to landfill. Members were advised that the amount of household waste was really low at that moment, around 3% maybe of municipal waste, just inert waste and bulky items could be a problem. Municipal waste was recycled or incinerated.

The Chair thanked the Officer for attending.

Conclusion - Comments to the Cabinet Member

The Committee noted the content of the Draft Waste Strategy and Action Plan Update upon progress and agreed to forward the Minutes to the Cabinet Member as a summary of the issues raised.

The Committee wished to make the following comments to the Cabinet Member:

1. The Committee welcomed the comprehensive report and Action Plan Update presented and acknowledged the levels of performance achieved.
2. The Committee acknowledged that all Actions included in the Draft Strategy are part of the City Services Service Plan, which will be monitored by the Committee six-monthly.
3. Small businesses / shops could be encouraged to reduce packaging e.g. fruit without plastic etc.
4. It was requested that a Visit to the recycling centre for Members of the Committee be arranged.

5 Scrutiny Adviser Reports

Attendee:

- Meryl Lawrence (Scrutiny Adviser)

a) Forward Work Programme Update

The Scrutiny Adviser presented the Forward Work Programme, and informed the Committee of the topics due to be discussed at the next two Committee meetings:

Monday 4 November 2019 at 4pm, the agenda item;

2019-20 Service Plan Mid-Year Reviews for:

- Law and Regulation
- Finance
- People and Business Change

Monday 18 November 2019 at 4pm, the agenda item;

2019-20 Service Plan Mid-Year Reviews for:

- Regeneration Investment and Housing
- City Services

The Committee **agreed** the topics as above.

b) Action Sheet

The Scrutiny Adviser presented the Action Sheet and advised the Committee that as indicated in the table the actions from the previous meetings had been completed.

The meeting terminated at 7.00 pm