

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE – 4 JUNE 2013

SUBMITTED TO THE COUNCIL MEETING – 16 JULY 2013

(To be read in conjunction with the Agenda for the Meeting)

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| * Cllr Robert Knowles (Chairman) | * Cllr Stephen O’Grady |
| * Cllr Mike Band (Vice-Chairman) | * Cllr Julia Potts |
| * Cllr Brian Adams | * Cllr Stefan Reynolds |
| * Cllr Carole King | * Cllr Adam Taylor-Smith |
| * Cllr Bryn Morgan | * Cllr Keith Webster |

* Present

Cllr Ross Welland attended and spoke on Agenda Item 15
(Minute No. 13 refers)

Cllr Simon Thornton was also in attendance

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED that the Leader of the Council, Cllr Robert Knowles, be appointed Chairman of the Executive for the Council Year 2013/2014.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED that the Deputy Leader of the Council, Cllr Mike Band, be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Executive for the Council Year 2013/2014.

3. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive held on 9 April 2013 were confirmed and signed.

4. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest raised under this heading.

5. QUESTIONS

The Executive received the following question from Mr David Beaman in accordance with Procedure Rule 10:-

“What actions are taken by Waverley Borough Council to ensure that all the Recreation Grounds under their ownership have adequate insurance cover and are managed in an efficient and cost effective way?”

The following written response was sent in the questioner’s absence:-

“The Council conducts regular reviews of all its assets, including recreational grounds, and ensures it has appropriate insurance cover. It also ensures its contractors and users of recreational grounds have appropriate insurance arrangements in place.

The Council’s recreational grounds are actively managed by the Head of Community Services and his professionally qualified staff, who employ experienced contractors as appropriate.

Services are procured through tendering processes and contracts contain performance measures to ensure that the Council receive the services specified and for which it is paying. The Council employs contract monitoring staff to actively manage the facilities and maintain standards.”

PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COUNCIL

6. GARDEN WASTE SERVICE

- 6.1 The future of Waverley’s garden waste collection service was debated at Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee in November 2012. At that meeting, the challenges associated with the current service were discussed in detail and a proposal was considered involving a move towards the introduction of wheeled bins for collection, alongside the implementation of a lower annual subscription charge.
- 6.2 Following that meeting officers undertook to carry out further research in order to:
- i. Test locally the assumption that residents would be in favour of moving from sacks to wheeled bins for collection of garden waste;
 - ii. Establish current barriers to participation in the service;
 - iii. Better understand the impact of the current charging regime on take-up;
 - iv. Verify the likely number of subscribers based on a wheeled bin service with a reduced annual charge, and;
 - v. Identify the potential financial exposure should the modelled assumptions prove to be overly optimistic.
- 6.3 In order to achieve this more detailed understanding, a number of consultation exercises were carried out. Building upon the emerging conclusions from the consultation exercises, as detailed at Annexe 1, Officers then carried out further work looking at the experience of others (specifically across the Surrey Waste Partnership) in order to help to test the emerging model of:
- i. A wheelie-bin based subscription service
 - ii. A reduction in annual charge to £40 per bin
 - iii. A requirement on the customer to purchase the bin at cost (£20)
 - iv. The cessation of income-related subsidies
 - v. The continuation of the free Saturday service at Godalming and Haslemere

- 6.4 Work has also been carried out to test assumptions made during the cost-modelling process (particularly the anticipated level of take-up, and the cost of gate fees) to better identify the level of risk associated with an alternative service model. The conclusions of this work are set out at Annexe 2.
- 6.5 The consultation findings, the results of the service-modelling exercise, and the emerging conclusions were presented for consideration and comment to Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 24 April 2013, and the Committee made the following observations:
- i. The Committee was concerned that the report was being overly confident in taking the proposals forward as there was only a small amount of feedback obtained from the surveys with residents.
 - ii. The Committee was concerned that the proposals were being built around price and could end up costing residents more. This could, therefore, deter future take up.
 - iii. The Committee was not clear about the costing and whether these were accurate estimates when the participation rates were unknown and possibly over confident.
 - iv. Some Members did not feel residents would want to keep a further bin by their house, particularly those where space was minimal, and that using sacks was much easier and preferred.
 - v. Some Members felt that the bins should be provided free of charge to residents to encourage take up of the service. If not for all, then at least to support the elderly and tenants.
 - vi. The Committee asked if officers could look into a way of offering both a bin and sack service so residents could make a choice on how they collected their garden waste.
 - vii. There was concern about the charging for the service, especially for those that would need more than one bin, and felt that more consideration should be given to the pricing for the delivery of the service.
- 6.6 As a result of these comments, Officers have now carried out further work testing the assumptions made to provide as much confidence as possible, and modelling further scenarios- particularly around the issue of how much to charge (if at all) for the initial purchase of a wheeled bin. A table, providing a detailed response to each of these comments in turn, is to be found at Annexe 3.
- 6.7 From this work it has become clear that, if the reasonable assumption is made that take-up of the new service is marginally higher if the initial charge is lower, and higher still if the bin is provided free of charge, the five-year business case for a £10 initial charge (whilst not as compelling as that for a £20 initial charge) can still be made, with the service paying for itself within three years. The detailed workings behind this are shown in Annexe 4. In light of the feedback and observations from Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee, it is this approach that is now being proposed.
- 6.8 In summary, in respect of the other comments:-

- a. Members of the Committee were assured that many similar levels of participation could be demonstrated by empirical data from other boroughs & districts, both in Surrey and further afield;
- b. Whilst, for the reasons set out in Annexe 4, a combined bin and sack service is not practical, sacks can still be used in the garden and emptied into the wheelie-bins;
- c. The proposed pricing structure is constrained by the need to cover for the provision of the free Saturday 'bring' service and the need to provide for the purchase of bins not covered by the grant from SWP.

6.9 If the proposals contained within this report are approved, a project plan will be developed setting out how this project will be implemented in time for an April 2014 launch date. This spring launch will ensure that the largest possible number of existing and new customers are captured at the earliest opportunity. It will also clearly be necessary, alongside a detailed capital bid and project plan, to develop a communications plan to ensure the service re-launch is as successful as possible, both in terms of retaining existing and attracting new customers.

6.10 From the customer feedback received to date, it is reasonable to assume that the proposals for a wheeled-bin service at a lower subscription charge would be widely considered a 'good news' story. Essentially, we will be providing an improved service at a lower charge, whilst increasing the volume of garden waste we compost and moving the service to a cost-neutral position. It is intended that a detailed communications plan, taking into account these key messages, would be developed for approval once a decision is made to proceed with the proposed changes to the service.

6.11 In terms of key messages, the impact on individuals would be:

- For existing customers paying £60 for four sacks, they would have the option of reducing their capacity from 360 litres (4 x 90 litre sacks) to a single 240 litre bin, or increasing it to two 240 litre bins (480 litres). If they opted for a single bin, there would be a £10 drop in price in year one (£10 one-off bin charge plus £40 annual subscription), with a 30% reduction in costs thereafter. However, if they elected to take two bins (for which they would need to pay the necessary charges), they would encounter a year one cost of £100 (2 x £10 one off charge + 2 x £40 subscription charge), followed by an ongoing annual cost of £80. They would however benefit from an additional 120 litres of capacity on an ongoing basis.
- Those currently taking two sacks at a cost of £50 will experience no change in costs in year one before they experience an annual saving thereafter of £10, and they will benefit from an additional 60 litres of storage capacity. Their cost per collection will drop from £2.00 to £1.60.
- Assuming the decision is made to cease income-related subsidies for the service, existing customers currently benefiting from them will experience an uplift in their annual subscription charges of either £10 or £20 depending on how many sacks they currently have- as well as

being required to pay the initial charge for a bin. However, it should be remembered that this is the first uplift for four years, and is for a much improved and more customer-friendly service. This change equates to an increase, per collection, of either 40 or 80p.

- 6.12 The current garden waste service is being subsidised by approximately £40,000 per annum. A target saving of £35,000 per annum from 2014/15 onwards was identified as part of the 2012 Star Chamber process in anticipation of a revised approach to garden waste collections being implemented during 2013/14.
- 6.13 Detailed financial modelling shows that the proposed change to a wheelie-bin based system, with a reduced subscription charge, should increase take-up of the service, improve current garden waste recycling performance and significantly reduce the cost of the service - potentially to break-even point (it should be noted that, whilst Councils are allowed to charge for the provision of a garden waste service, they are not permitted to make a surplus from the operation of the service).
- 6.14 Any such service will require some initial one-off capital investment in purchase, storage and distribution of wheeled bins, and promotion of the scheme. This cost is detailed in the draft Capital bid at Annexe 3. A 'New Initiatives' grant of £31,000 from the Surrey Waste Partnership is available to part-fund this project should Members agree to these proposals; and it is felt that there is scope to utilise some of the remaining LPSA Performance Reward Grant Allocation (obtained in 2009 and 2010 for meeting targets on minimising non-biodegradable waste going to landfill, and of which there is approximately £128,000 remaining) to further assist with the mobilisation cost of this project.
- 6.15 It is clear from the consultation feedback set out in Annexe 1 that the majority of existing and potential customers would prefer wheeled bins over sacks, and that there is considerable potential to attract new customers with a decrease in the subscription rate. Although some existing customers will experience an increase in costs if this new approach is implemented, the majority will find that they are paying the same, or less for a much improved service.
- 6.16 Research and the experience of others tells us that the imposition of an initial one-off charge for a bin, and the cessation of income-related subsidies would have little impact on participation levels; and modelling and feedback suggests that the most appropriate initial charge would be £10 per bin which, whilst not covering the capital cost, will generate sufficient additional business to pay for itself in three years.
- 6.17 Detailed modelling suggests that a wheeled-bin scheme at an annual charge of £40 would attract between 4,000 and 10,000 customers in Waverley- an increase of between 30% and 300% on current numbers- which in turn would improve considerably- and in the best case nearly double- the Council's current garden waste recycling performance.

- 6.18 Financial modelling demonstrates that, even at the lower end of the spectrum of participation, the scheme would result in an improvement on current costs of approximately £20,000 per annum.
- 6.19 The Executive accordingly

RECOMMENDS that

1. **officers be asked to proceed with the implementation of a revised garden waste service, as follows:**
 - i. **a wheelie-bin based subscription service**
 - ii. **a reduction in annual charge to £40 per bin**
 - iii. **a requirement on the customer to purchase the bin at a cost of £10**
 - iv. **the cessation of income-related subsidies**
 - v. **the continuation of the free Saturday service at Godalming and Haslemere; and**
2. **the allocation of capital funds be approved, as set out in the Capital Bid Form, to enable the project to proceed, with a view to commencing the new service in April 2014.**

[Reason: to consider an analysis of the consultation findings and seek approval to proceed with a new service model].

Part II – Matters Reported in Detail for the Information of the Council

There were no matters falling within this category.

Part III – Brief Summaries of Other Matters Dealt With

7. **EXECUTIVE FORWARD PROGRAMME**

RESOLVED that the forward programme of key decisions for Waverley Borough Council be adopted, subject to amending the date of Parking Services – Review of Cashless Payment Options to December 2013 and amending the description to read “to consider the preferred option” instead of “to agree the preferred option”.

8. **ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 2012/2013**

8.1 **OVERALL REVENUE OUTTURN (GENERAL FUND AND HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT)**

RESOLVED that

1. the Revenue Outturn position for 2012/2013 be noted;

2. Revenue Carry Forwards of £39,130 on the General Fund from 2012/2013 to 2013/2014 be approved, as detailed in Annexe 3 of the report;
3. Revenue Carry Forwards of £477,000 on the Housing Revenue Account from 2012/2013 to 2013/2014 be approved, as detailed in Annexe 3 of the report;
4. the minimum level of the General Fund working balance be increased from £3.1 million to £3.2 million in recognition of current legislative uncertainties;
5. £200,000 of the 2012/2013 underspend be set aside as an earmarked reserve to meet potential future liabilities for Business Rates revaluation reductions for previous years; and
6. officers be requested to carry out investigations into the areas where significant variances have occurred in 2012/2013 (particularly Building Control, Day Centres, Green Waste Recycling and Special Refuse Collection); to assess the potential impact on the 2013/2014 budget; and to bring forward proposals for remedial measures as part of the Budget Management Reporting process.

[Reason: To note and approve the outturn figures for 2012/13 and reinforce the financial position going forward.]

8.2 CAPITAL PROGRAMME OUTTURN (GENERAL FUND AND HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT)

RESOLVED that

1. the Capital Outturn position for 2012/2013 be noted;
2. the transfer of budgets totalling £1,631,225 be approved, as detailed in Annexe 1 of the report, from the 2012/2013 to the 2013/2014 General Fund Capital Programme; and
3. the transfer of budgets totalling £858,750 be approved, as detailed in Annexe 2 of the report, from the 2012/2013 to the 2013/2014 HRA Capital Programme.

[Reason: to seek approval to add rescheduled expenditure and minor slippage from the 2012/13 to 2013/14 programme]

8.3 MANAGEMENT OF VOIDS

RESOLVED that

1. a waiver of Contract Procedure Rule 6.6 be approved and Navigation Partners be appointed to undertake a review of the voids process and project manage the implementation of the new process, including aligning the Orchard House Management IT system to it and that the

£33,000 for this work be vired from the 2012/13 underspend on the Housing Revenue Account; and

2. officers undertake a tendering process to procure the necessary expertise to carry out reviews of other Housing Service customer-facing processes in the future.

[Reason: to seek additional resources to review the business process for voids and align the IT system to deliver an improved service].

9. SURREY WASTE PARTNERSHIP

RESOLVED that the Strategic Director signs the Memorandum of Understanding on behalf of Waverley Borough Council.

[Reason: to seek approval to continue to be involved in the project looking into the possibility of a joint waste contract.]

10. LOCAL PLANNING ENFORCEMENT PLAN

RESOLVED that the Local Planning Enforcement Plan be adopted.

[Reason: to propose a plan that can guide the local approach to enforcement].

11. PLANNING APPLICATION AND ENFORCEMENT PERFORMANCE

RESOLVED that

1. the proposed actions covering planning applications, planning enforcement and appeals be endorsed; and
2. the target for determining all “minor” and “other” applications be retained at 80% and 90% respectively and the presentation of performance figures be revised for “majors” so that they are cumulative through the year.

[Reason: to endorse actions and agree targets for performance in the planning service].

12. REDEVELOPMENT OF LADYMEAD, BARNETT LANE, WONERSH: APPROVAL TO SUBMIT PLANNING APPLICATION

RESOLVED that approval be given to the submission of a planning application for the redevelopment of Ladymead, Barnett Lane, Wonersh to provide four new family sized affordable homes to meet housing need.

[Reason: to seek approval to submit a planning application to provide more affordable housing in the borough].

13. PROPERTY MATTERS

RESOLVED that

1. Waverley enters into a Deed of Dedication with Surrey County Council in respect of the land shown outlined on the plan for highway purposes at Shackstead Lane, Godalming;
2. a deed of easement of access be granted for 4 Greenside Cottages, The Green, Ewhurst, on terms and conditions as set out in the (Exempt) Annexe, other terms and conditions to be negotiated by the Estates and Valuation Manager; and
3. the length of the lease granted to Farncombe Cricket Club be extended to 25 years.

[Reason: to consider a number of property-related issues in the borough.]

14. QUEEN ELIZABETH II FIELDS CHALLENGE (QEIIFC)

RESOLVED that the selection of a non-charitable deed of dedication to protect our nominated QEIIFC sites (Holloway Hill Recreation Ground, Haslemere Recreation Ground and Woolmer Hill Recreation Ground) be approved.

[Reason: to seek agreement to establish three nominated recreation grounds as QEIIFC sites.]

15. APPOINTMENT OF SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGS)

RESOLVED that the following Special Interest Groups be appointed for 2013/2014, with memberships to be advised by the appropriate Portfolio Holder(s) in due course:-

- i. Healthcare and Wellbeing SIG
(Portfolio Holder: Cllr Robert Knowles)
- ii. Constitution SIG
(Portfolio Holder: Cllr Robert Knowles)
- iii. Superfast Broadband SIG
(Portfolio Holder: Cllr Stephen O'Grady)

16. APPOINTMENT OF EMPLOYERS' NEGOTIATING TEAM 2013/2014

RESOLVED that the following members be appointed to the Employers' Negotiating Team for 2013/2014:-

Leader, Cllr Robert Knowles
Deputy Leader, Cllr Mike Band
Cllr Brian Adams
Cllr Peter Isherwood

Cllr Stefan Reynolds
Cllr Simon Thornton

15. APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES 2013 - 2015

RESOLVED that the appointments to Outside Bodies for the period 2013 – 2015, as set out in Annexe 5, be agreed.

16. APPOINTMENTS TO SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL LOCAL COMMITTEE TASK GROUPS 2013-2014

RESOLVED that the appointments to the Waverley Local Committee Task Groups for 2013-2014 be as follows:-

Farnham Task Group

Cllrs Julia Potts, John Ward and Carole Cockburn

Godalming, Milford and Witley Task Group

Cllrs Simon Thornton and Denis Leigh

Haslemere and Western Villages Task Group

Cllrs Robert Knowles and Bryn Morgan

Cranleigh and Eastern Villages Task Group

Cllrs Brian Ellis and Maurice Byham

Youth Task Group

Cllrs Carole King and Jennifer O'Grady

The meeting commenced at 6.45 p.m. and concluded at 7.41 p.m.

Chairman