

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 5 NOVEMBER 2018 FROM 7.00 PM TO 8.30 PM

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Guy Grandison (Chairman), Mike Haines (Vice-Chairman), Rachel Burgess, Clive Jones, Dianne King and David Sleight

Other Councillors Present

Councillors: Malcolm Richards

Officers Present

Callum Wernham (Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist), Neil Carr (Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist), Mark Cupit (Assistant Director, Delivery and Infrastructure), Geoff Hislop (Car Park Manager) and Clare Lawrence (Assistant Director - Place)

28. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Bill Soane and Shahid Younis.

29. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 10 September 2018 and the Extraordinary meeting of the Committee held on 1 October 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

30. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

31. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

32. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Member questions.

33. CIVIL PARKING ENFORCEMENT

The Committee considered a report, set out in agenda pages 17 to 28, which provided an update on the Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) strategy after its first year of enactment.

Clare Lawrence, Assistant Director – Place, stated that the business case for the CPE was based on a cost neutral arrangement and that the operation had met this assumption after its first year. She added that there had been a number of problems in recruiting Civil Enforcement Officers and that there was currently one vacant post which was actively being recruited for. Clare added that once the posts were fully recruited that hopefully this would allow for the cost neutral operation to continue. Clare stated that the patrols of the Civil Enforcement Officers were updated monthly on the Councils websites should Members or members of the public wish to view where the patrols had been.

Malcolm Richards asked as to the number of Civil Enforcement Officer posts. Geoff Hislop, Car Park Manager, stated that there were 8 posts in total, with 7 currently filled and one post being actively recruited for. He added that there were 6 posts at the 6 month stage of the operation and it was decided to increase this number to 8 posts to have a greater capacity.

Rachel Burgess asked whether the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) had been achieved by the contractor (NSL). Geoff Hislop stated that there had been 5 instances where the KPIs had been missed, and in each case this had been related to correspondence letters being issued. He added that this had resulted in a reduction of payments to NSL. Geoff stated that after liaison with NSL by himself and his team there had been recent improvements in this area.

In response to a Member question about incentives for NSL with regards to the quantity of issued tickets, Geoff Hislop replied that there were no incentives for NSL to issue more tickets than were required.

Rachel Burgess referred to page 27 of the agenda, and asked the Officers opinions on Borough residents not being able to have visitors parking for over 30 minutes under the new electronic permit system. Clare Lawrence stated that the permit system had become electronic under CPE and had replaced a paper permit system. She added that there was still a visitor and carer provision under the new electronic system. Clare stated that there had been a consultation for Rose Street residents in which there was a 51/49 percent split from residents in favour of the electronic system. Clare added that she had liaised with the Executive Member for Highways and Transport regarding the issue and that Members were invited to give their views on the permit system. Clare stated that reverting to paper permits would be a step backwards, and that this system was at a greater cost to the Council and was open to abuse (for example, permits being sold online).

In response to a Member question regarding the Parking Strategy item due to go through Executive, Clare Lawrence stated that the item had been taken off of a previous Executive forward programme due to a capacity issue with the volume of work that Highways were undertaking and that she hoped that the item would go through Executive in the New Year.

In response to Member questions regarding the volume of penalties issued at Dinton Pastures, Geoff Hislop stated that Dinton Pastures was in between Wokingham and the outer Borough and was en route between various other locations that the patrols went through, and as a result the Civil Enforcement Officers would check the car park on their journeys.

Clive Jones asked what the criteria was for deciding where the Civil Enforcement Officers would patrol. Geoff Hislop stated that the Officers worked shift patterns, and that there was always a patrol (between 7am and 10pm) occurring within Wokingham. He added that another Officer would be on patrol on foot within the Borough and another on Patrol in a vehicle.

Clive Jones asked whether Officers were aware of a petition from Earley residents for a permanent Civil Enforcement Officers patrolling in the area. Clare Lawrence stated that they were aware of the petition and that they had been working with local schools and the My Journey team to identify and resolve issues. She added that if Earley Town Council (or any other Town or Parish Council within the Borough) wanted more support with CPE that they were encouraged to contact the team and see whether more support could be available should they want to buy in to it. Clare stated that Earley had not been identified as an area which needed more support than other similar areas within the Borough.

Mike Haines asked as to the vast difference in penalties issued at Dinton Pastures compared to California Country Park. Geoff Hislop clarified that the car park at California

Country Park had been undergoing refurbishment and as a result many of the enforcement regulations had been suspended during this time.

Malcolm Richards asked as to the timeframe between ordering a new car parking ticket machine and it then being deployed. Geoff Hislop stated that it was a 12 week period between ordering the machine and it being received, and that the machine would then be installed alongside any others that had been ordered (in order to replace existing damaged and malfunctioning machines) on a rolling deployment plan.

Guy Grandison asked how many complaints regarding the process of enforcement were received regularly. Geoff Hislop stated that approximately 4 to 6 complaints were received per month, and that these usually focussed on the restrictions that were in place (or conversely, where people believed more restrictions should be put in place).

Clive Jones asked at which times of the day that the most penalties had been generally issued. Geoff Hislop stated that he would gather the data and circulate it to the Committee.

In response to a Member question regarding the number of cars compared to lorries that had received penalties, Geoff Hislop stated that he could gather a definitive list of issued penalties and would circulate it to the Committee.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) Clare Lawrence and Geoff Hislop be thanked for attending the meeting;
- 2) the update on Civil Parking Enforcement be noted;
- 3) information and data requested by the Committee be sent to Democratic Services and circulated to Committee Members.

34. MARKET PLACE REGENERATION INTERIM UPDATE

The Committee considered a report, set out in agenda pages 29 to 32, which gave an interim update on the Market Place Regeneration Project. The update detailed the timetable for the upcoming lessons learned report and the road safety audit.

Mark Cupit, Assistant Director, Delivery and Infrastructure, stated that there had been a delay in completing the lessons learned report and the road safety audit due to difficulty in procuring a contractor to undertake the work. He added that a suitable contractor had now been found and that the work had been commissioned, which should result in the reports being available for the January Committee. Mark added that the road safety audit could not be completed until the Peach Place parking restrictions were removed.

Rachel Burgess asked whether any additional safety measures had been considered for the pedestrian road crossing in the town centre. Mark Cupit stated that the safety issues were taken very seriously and that the square of Market Place had been designed with all users in mind. He added that there had been a substantial change in the behaviour of traffic in the square who were taking more time and were allowing people to cross even in areas without a designated crossing. Mark stated that there was also a duty on parents and all users of the square to take care and to familiarise themselves with the new layout.

In response to a Member question regarding safety concerns with shared spaces, Mark Cupit clarified that the Market Place square was not a shared space and that there were defined roadways and pavements.

In response to a Member question regarding any plans for a 20 miles per hour speed limit being introduced in the square, Mark Cupit stated that he felt there was no need to do so currently as many cars had been slowing down and driving responsibly during the 'settling in' period.

Clive Jones asked whether disability groups were consulted during the design stage of the project and if so what they were shown. Mark Cupit stated that several disability groups were invited into the consultation stage and that Guide Dogs for the Blind were amongst one of the groups that had attended sessions. He added that their views and opinions would have been used to shape the design of the public space. Mark stated that he did not have the information on hand as to exactly what these groups were shown, but that records of the meetings would have been kept. Mark informed Members that a workshop with the same disability groups was scheduled to take place on 16 November 2018 to discuss their impressions of the newly opened Market Place.

Clive Jones asked whether it was appropriate for the Executive Member for Regeneration to meet with the contractors with responsibility for completing the road safety audit and the lessons learned report. Mark Cupit stated that himself and Andrew Moulton (Assistant Director – Governance) had taken the lead on procurement of the contractor, and that they felt it appropriate to involve the Lead Member at a later stage in the procurement process.

In response to Member questions regarding delays to the completion of the Market Place Regeneration Project, Mark Cupit stated that work was asked to be halted during the festive period of 2017 and that this was not a planned break. He added that the biggest delays were due to unforeseen underground issues such as old tree roots, old foundations and cellars.

Rachel Burgess asked how many complaints had been received recently with regards to the Market Place. Mark Cupit stated that there had been no recent complaints and that the complaints that were received after the Market Place was re-opened were primarily focussed on safety concerns.

Guy Grandison stated that there was a need to focus the upcoming Town Centre Regeneration item at January's Committee on the Market Place and Peach Place Regeneration Projects, using the lessons learned report and the road safety audit to aid in formulating key lines of inquiry.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) Mark Cupit be thanked for attending the meeting;
- 2) the lessons learned report and the road safety audit be circulated to the Committee as soon as they are completed;
- 3) the Town Centre Regeneration item at January's Committee be focussed on the Market Place and Peach Place Regeneration Projects, using the lessons learned report and the road safety audit to aid in formulating key lines of inquiry;

- 4) Democratic Services contact various stakeholders and interested parties to engage at the January Committee meeting.

35. WORK PROGRAMME 2018/19

The Committee considered a report, set out in agenda pages 33 to 38, which gave details of its proposed work programme for 2018/19.

Members discussed undertaking an in depth review of the 2020/21 budget during the 2019/20 Committee programme. Clive Jones felt that WBC had been doing insufficient budget scrutiny in previous years and applauded the Chairman for wanting to change this for the 2019/20 municipal year with an in depth review of the budget process.

David Sleight stated that the Coppid Beech Park and Ride item should focus on whether there was a need for it to be developed and stated that there was no business case for it.

Guy Grandison requested that a draft of the Parking Strategy Policy be circulated to Members of the Committee.

Members discussed how best to fit the remaining items from the work programme in to the 2 scheduled meetings of the 2018/19 municipal year. Members felt that an Extraordinary meeting in February was required to allow for the remaining items to be reviewed in detail.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) the Committee aim to undertake a review of the budget setting process in the 2019/20 municipal year and that Democratic Services organise budget scrutiny training for Members;
- 2) an Extraordinary meeting be organised for February 2019 to include an item reviewing the proposed Coppid Beech park and ride and an item investigating the impact of changes to train services;
- 3) a draft of the Parking Strategy Policy be requested and circulated to Members of the Committee.

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