

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 2 SEPTEMBER 2019 FROM 7.00 PM TO 8.15 PM

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Ken Miall (Vice-Chairman, in the Chair), Paul Fishwick, Graham Howe, Clive Jones, Abdul Loyes and Barrie Patman

Other Councillors Present

Councillors: Pauline Jorgensen and Andrew Mickleburgh

Officers Present

Neil Carr (Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist), Andy Glencross (Assistant Director – Highways), Martin Heath (Traffic Management, Parking & Road Safety Team Manager), Geoff Hislop (Interim Parking Manager - Car Parks) and Callum Wernham (Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist)

11. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Guy Grandison and Shirley Boyt. Andy Croy was present as a substitute for Shirley Boyt.

12. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 17 June were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Vice Chairman in the Chair.

13. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

14. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

15. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Member questions.

16. CIVIL PARKING ENFORCEMENT

The Committee received and reviewed a report, set out in agenda pages 13 to 24, which gave details of Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) within the Wokingham Borough between June 2018 and June 2019.

Andy Glencross (Assistant Director – Highways), Geoff Hislop (Interim Parking Manager – Car Parks), Martin Heath (Senior Specialist - Traffic Management & Road Safety) and Pauline Jorgensen (Executive Member for Highways and Transport) attended the meeting to present the report and answer any Member questions.

The report outlined that CPE had assisted in improving traffic flow within the Borough by challenging drivers' previous parking behaviours and increasing awareness by way of warning notices. The service had maintained, as expected, a cost neutral operating model by means of income from penalty notices and parking fees covering the cost of service operation.

The report stated that further improvements to the service were being considered, including introduction of CCTV enforcement at School Keep Clear areas and increasing the number of Civil Enforcement Officers to increase coverage across the Borough.

Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) embarked on a full replacement programme of its ticket machines, which was now in its final stages. The expectation was that there would be a significant reduction in lost patrol hours as a direct result of the warranty and maintenance agreement in place.

Country parks management had welcomed the introduction of CPE at their sites as the income derived from their car parks ensured that they were self-sustainable and could continue to provide excellent amenity space for residents at little or no cost to WBC. Since the introduction of CPE, country parks had seen an increase in customers paying for car parking of approximately 20%.

During the ensuing discussions Members raised the following points and suggestions:

- Specifically, how had the objectives of CPE been met? Officer and Executive Member response – CPE had been requested by residents as the police were not able to continually enforce restrictions. The set of objectives was continually evolving in order combat problems as they occurred. A target of 8,000 penalty notices had been set for the service, and in the last year approximately 14,000 penalty notices had been issued, achieving a cost neutral service. Up to this point, the scope of CPE had been relatively small to achieve a proof of concept, and the expansion of the service including CCTV enforcement at schools was being investigated.
- When could the proposed CCTV enforcement at School Keep Clear areas be expected to go live? Officer response – Subject to approval, the traffic orders would take approximately 3 months to go live with additional time required to procure the necessary equipment. In total, CCTV installation could be expected approximately 3 to 6 months following approval. A key component of the scheme was that once compliance at one school was nearly at 100 percent, the equipment could be quickly moved and redeployed to different school location.
- Why had the number of Parking Charge Notices (PCNs) not decreased over time? Officer response – There were a small number of frequent repeat offenders within the Borough. In addition, Civil Enforcement Officers targeted areas until relative compliance had been reached, after they reduced patrols in an area non-compliance tended to begin to rise again.
- Was there a seasonal trend in PCNs issued? Officer response – There was no seasonal trend and PCNs were issued consistently all year round. The biggest factor in PCN variances came from Officer availability, for example, staff leave or sickness. An increase to Civil Enforcement Officer numbers would help to allow for more consistent patrols year round. Officers were looking into proposals to employ an additional 6 Civil Enforcement Officers on a cost neutral basis.
- Any surplus made from CPE could also be used to improve highways, in addition to being put back into the service. Officer response – This was correct.
- What were the figures for average PCNs issued at each school? Officer response – These figures would be collated and provided to Committee Members shortly.

- What plans were there for the schools with no registered patrols? Officer response – Additional Civil Enforcement Officers and the introduction of CCTV enforcement would provide greater patrol coverage at schools across the Borough. If there were concerns regarding a particular school, Members were welcomed to contact the Car Parking Manager directly to investigate.
- What were the nature of parking infringements at Dinton Pastures County Park, and were the majority of these infringements taking place during the evening? Officer response – Parking infringements at Dinton Pastures were not irregular, for example infringements included not having a ticket, parking outside of bays and parking within a disabled bay. The introduction of the new ‘check in, check out’ system had reduced ticketing for overstays. Activity groups such as the Scouts had been given season tickets for their leading staff, with spares available for parents to use in special circumstances. In addition, there was a 10 minute grace period for pick up and drop off times for parents. Data regarding season tickets would be collated and provided to the Committee Members shortly, and Officers would investigate what data regarding timings of PCNs issued at Dinton Pastures was available and feed back to Committee Members.
- Why was Rose Street being allowed to return to a paper permit system? Executive Member response – WBC were trying to discourage the use of paper permits as a paper system costed more, was open to fraud and resale. However, the team was conscious that moving to an online system created obstacles for some residents, which was why there was a call centre service which would do the computer administration for the customer over the phone. Rose Street was being allowed to return to the paper system due to a particular need and specific concerns made by residents.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) Andy Glencross, Geoff Hislop, Martin Heath and Pauline Jorgensen be thanked for attending the meeting;
- 2) data regarding PCNs issued at each school be circulated to Members of the Committee;
- 3) the Committee be kept updated on the progress of CCTV enforcement installation at schools;
- 4) data regarding season tickets for activity group leaders at Dinton Pastures be circulated to Members of the Committee;
- 5) officers investigate what data is available regarding timings of PCNs issued at Dinton Pastures, and feedback their findings to Members of the Committee;
- 6) an annual update on CPE be scheduled on the Committee’s 2020/21 work programme.

17. BUS NETWORK REVIEW

The Committee received and reviewed a report, set out in agenda pages 25 to 38, which gave an overview of Wokingham Borough Council's (WBC's) ongoing bus network review, bus strategy and current bus provision.

Andy Glencross (Assistant Director – Highways, Martin Heath (Senior Specialist - Traffic Management & Road Safety) and Pauline Jorgensen (Executive Member for Highways and Transport) attended the meeting to present the report and answer any Member questions.

The report outlined that the draft bus network review was due to be released in late September 2019. The review would include an assessment of local, regional and national planning policy, data analysis of the current bus services and consideration of school transport services with future contracted public bus services.

The South of M4 Bus Strategy (SoM4) was secured as part of the planning permissions associated with the South of M4 development area. £2 million was to be made available by the University of Reading (applicant), as and when required, for the implementation of the bus strategy for 10 years following the first occupation on an occupational trigger point method. Phase 2a was underway with phase 2b expected between September and Christmas 2019.

The report stated that the primary issue for bus services in the Borough was congestion which caused variability to journey times on a day by day basis. A possible solution to this was the use of GPS tracking and real time operating systems within the buses, which would coordinate with the traffic light signals to allow smooth passage of the buses, albeit to the detriment of queuing on other arms of the junction.

During the ensuing discussions Members raised the following points and suggestions:

- Please clarify what was being done in anticipation of new occupations at housing developments? Officer response – Officers were trying to anticipate where new residents would be likely to travel to, and a concerted effort was being made to promote public transport within the borough, both for new and existing residents. A baseline service was needed for day 1 occupation and further services would be added via applicant funding based on occupation trigger points.
- When in 2020 would the Wokingham Town Centre bus services be re-tendered? Officer response – These timings would be researched and circulated to Committee Members.
- How would new residents be informed about public transport services? Officer response – Information would be included as part of a 'welcome pack' to each new build occupier, The MyJourney team would also target new developments with further information to ensure a sustainable service and a strong take-up.
- Could an estimate be provided as to when phases 3 and 4 of the SoM4 would go live? Officer response – Officers will get an estimated expected timeframe and feedback to Members of the Committee.
- Would the Local Travel Plan 4 (LTP4) be consulted through means other than a strictly online consultation? Officer response – LTP4 was going through various stages of

consultation and feedback processes. Officers would look into advertising the consultation in areas such as libraries, newsletters and possibly bus stops.

- Could more clarity regarding the suggested GPS and real time operating signalling solution be provided? Officer response – Signal timings would be used to allow for easy transition of bus services across the borough. This would come at a significant cost, as WBC's signalling assets would need to be upgraded. This system would be cloud based and would allow WBC more control of public bus services and their timings within the Borough.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) Andy Glencross, Martin Heath and Pauline Jorgensen be thanked for attending the meeting;
- 2) information regarding Wokingham Town bus service tendering be provided to Members of the Committee;
- 3) officers would retrieve an estimated expected timeframe for phases 3 and 4 of the SoM4 bus strategy and feedback to Members of the Committee;
- 4) the Committee be kept informed about the development of the LTP4.

18. WORK PROGRAMME 2019/20

The Committee received and reviewed a report, set out in agenda pages 39 to 48, which outlined the Committee's work programme for the 2019/20 municipal year.

The Committee were updated on the structure of the upcoming budget scrutiny items, which would include business cases for specific service areas, with the relevant Director(s) and Executive Members(s) being in attendance to present their specific service area's spending.

Clive Jones suggested that an item related to Wokingham Borough Council's property purchase group be added to the Committee's work programme.

Andy Croy asked that an item relating to the Woodley Town Centre regeneration project be added to the Committee work programme.

It was suggested that items relating to the Police and Fire services and the Community Safety Partnership be moved to the March Committee meeting.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) an item related to Wokingham Borough Council's property purchase group be added to the Committee's work programme, with a view of taking the item to the 25 November Committee meeting;
- 2) an item relating to the Woodley Town Centre regeneration project be added to the Committee work programme;
- 3) items relating to the Police and Fire services and the Community Safety Partnership be moved to the March Committee meeting.

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