



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEETING : Monday, 6th January 2020

PRESENT : Cllrs. Coole (Chair), Ryall (Vice-Chair), Dee, Finnegan, Haigh, Hilton, Lewis, Organ, Patel, Pullen, Stephens, Taylor, Tracey and Walford

Others in Attendance

Cllr. Cook, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment

Mark Conaghan, Head of Commercial at Amey

Anthony Hunter, Operations Manager at Amey

Corporate Director and Monitoring Officer

Head of Policy and Resources

Head of Place

Waste, Recycling and Streetscene Manager

Democratic and Electoral Services Officer

APOLOGIES : Cllrs. Hyman and Toleman

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

2. DECLARATION OF PARTY WHIPPING

There were no declarations of party whipping.

3. MINUTES

3.1 **RESOLVED that:** The minutes of the meetings held on the 25th of November 2019 and the 2nd of December 2019 were approved and signed as a correct record by the Chair.

3.2 The Chair explained that the minutes of the Special MGL meeting held on the 19th of December 2019 would be circulated to Members once finalised.

4. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (15 MINUTES)

4.1 There were no public questions.

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5. PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS (15 MINUTES)

5.1 There were no petitions or deputations.

6. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME AND COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

6.1 The Committee considered the Work Programme and the Council Forward Plan.

6.2 Members stated that they would like to consider the Festivals and Events Programme report at the Committee's 3rd of February 2020 meeting. Furthermore, they requested that the Culture Trust Update be considered before the Committee at the 2nd of March 2020 meeting. Finally, Members asked that the climate change manifesto and a future MGL update be added to the work programme.

6.3 q **RESOLVED:** a.) that the Festivals and Events Programme report is added to the work programme for the 3rd of February 2020 meeting b.) that the Culture Trust Update be considered before the Committee at the 2nd of March 2020 meeting, c.) that the climate change manifesto and a future MGL update be added to the work programme.

7. WASTE AND STREET SCENE CONTRACT - AMEY

7.1 The Cabinet Member for the Environment presented the report and outlined key elements. In particular, he highlighted the benefits of the new Deed of Settlement, Release and Variation between Amey and the City Council. As an example, the new deed now passed some of the risk to Amey in relation to the quality of recyclates collected and included remedies for the Council should Amey 's performance fall below standard.

7.2 Councillor Wilson asked for clarification on the legal implications of the new deed. He pointed to paragraph 10 which sets out the potential risk that the deed would be regarded as sufficiently substantial to render the contract materially different to the original one. The Corporate Director advised that the Council 's lawyers OneLegal had outlined the risks for thoroughness, however they considered the risk of challenges to be insignificant. The deed was not a change of contract and had not been publicised as such.

7.3 Councillor Stephens questioned whether the risk register had been updated since the deed had been agreed. The Corporate Director responded to say that the risk register had not yet been updated, however that it would be updated in the next cycle which took place every 3 months.

7.4 Furthermore, Councillor Stephens asked whether the quarterly strategic meetings between Amey and the Council would resume. The Corporate Director explained that the meetings had been stopped during the dispute with Amey as it was considered that carrying on with the meetings would be

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counterproductive. However, as the dispute had now been resolved, the meetings would resume.

- 7.5 Councillor Stephens stated that whilst he welcomed the changes contained in the deed, he was concerned with the recycling which was left behind by the Amey crews where it had not been sorted properly by households. The Waste, Recycling and Streetscene Manager advised that progress was being made to improve this using all the available resources. Moreover, assistance was being provided to those who needed help with their recycling. As an example, on the 6th of January 2020, recycling had been collected at 11,400 properties, and only 220 properties or approximately 1.9% of properties had their recycling left behind because it had not been sorted out properly. The Corporate Director added that the Council had been discussing this issue with Amey and asking them, to take a pragmatic approach to this. Given that on average only about 2% of households were not sorting out their recycling properly, the crews should, in theory, have capacity to deal with any problems.
- 7.6 Councillor Hilton echoed Councillor Stephens' concerns. In particular, he suggested that certain areas within his ward such as Oxford Street and other terraced streets were hotspots for non-collection and issues with litter. The Waste, Recycling and Streetscene Manager stated that the Council was aware of issues around Oxford street and other terraced areas. The problems could be attributed to both the fact that these areas typically had a larger number of Households in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), and perhaps an enforcement issue with littering. Moreover, she added that Oxford Street had been cleared on Friday. Lastly, in relation to issues with non-collection, over 15,000 recycling boxes had been delivered to households in order to assist them with sorting out their recycling. Indeed, one of the new KPIs focused on getting any recycling boxes ordered by a customer to them within 10 days.
- 7.7 Councillor Hilton inquired whether information could be provided about how often the Kingsholm Ward was litter picked. Anthony Hunter, Operations Manager and Mark Conaghan, Head of Commercial at Amey explained that some areas had dedicated teams for litter picking, but otherwise, they operated on a fortnightly litter picking schedule following bin collection. The Waste, Recycling and Streetscene Manager added that only city centre areas were litter picked daily. This was because if all areas were to be litter picked everyday it would mean moving resources from elsewhere.
- 7.8 Councillor Hilton submitted that other areas which he considered to have the same characteristic and usage as City Centre areas would benefit from daily litter picking. The Waste, Recycling and Streetscene Manager reiterated that everyday litter picking could be extended to other areas, however, it was important to note that this would result in having to move resources from elsewhere.
- 7.9 Councillor Haigh asked for further details about the current regime of litter picking. The Waste, Recycling and Streetscene Manager stated that a schedule of litter picking for all the Gloucester City wards would be provided,

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including information on which areas fall under the 'City Centre' for the purposes of litter picking.

- 7.10 Pointing to the fact that it can be difficult to keep paper and cardboard dry, Councillor Pullen asked whether the plant is able to process wet or damp cardboard. Firstly, the Cabinet Member for the Environment advised that very little water can get into the blue bags for recycling paper and cardboard. Secondly, the Waste, Recycling and Streetscene Manager explained that paper and cardboard could have up to 10% moisture levels, otherwise money could be deducted by the plant if the paper/cardboard is not dry enough.
- 7.11 Councillor Pullen then questioned both Mr Hunter and Mr Conoghan whether they were confident that the new supervision process at Amey was sufficient at ensuring that crews were doing their job properly. They responded to say that they were confident in the new supervision process. Under the changes, crews were supervised between 4-6 hours in order to track progress, and there was also an app to track and inspect crews. Likewise, the Waste, Recycling and Streetscene Manager outlined that regular performance monitoring was also being carried out through the new KPIs. Finally, she explained that herself and Mr Hunter planned to carry out an audit of 1% of properties in order to monitor the crews' performance.
- 7.12 Councillor Finnegan commended the crews for their work, especially in what can be considered a 'thankless job'. She highlighted a recent incident whereby a crew member was verbally and physically abused by a member of the public. Moreover, Councillor Finnegan explained that through further discussions with crew members, she had been informed that they sometimes received abusive emails from the public. There was consensus amongst the Committee that the crew members must be commended for the work they do.
- 7.13 Councillor Haigh queried why the new Service Delivery Plan was launched around the Christmas period. Moreover, she was of the view that some of the communication about the changes lacked clarity. On the issue of the communication, she was advised that the changes were meant to provide clarity and be simpler for Residents. Furthermore, the decision to launch around the Christmas period was due to the fact that more recycling was done around Christmas than any other time of the year, thus making it the best time to introduce the changes. From a financial perspective it was also prudent. Whilst the costs of the initial leaflets came to £20,000, and the second and third leaflets were less than £1000,00, the Council would make savings in the long-term. Indeed, it was expected that the changes would save the council £20,000 each month, and £220,000 annually.
- 7.14 Councillor Haigh asked Mr Hunter and Mr Conoghan whether there were any vacancies at Amey, and furthermore whether Amey paid its staff the living wage. They informed her that they currently had 15 vacancies which were currently filled with agency staff, and that they did pay their staff the living wage.

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- 7.15 Drawing on recent communication with her constituents, Councillor Tracey suggested that the new changes were confusing for residents, particularly for the elderly and disabled. The Street Strategy Scene Officer reiterated her comments made earlier explaining that the changes were intended to provide clarity and be simpler for residents. Moreover, the Council was helping elderly and vulnerable people who may require additional support, for example through assisted collections.
- 7.16 Councillor Patel thought that the new deed was to be welcomed. He also commended the waste crews for the cleanliness at Kingsholm Road on Sunday the 5th of January, following a rugby match at Gloucester Rugby Club the previous day. Nonetheless, he questioned whether there would be more robust supervision around recycling collection. He stated that it was a particular issue in his ward, Barton and Tredworth. Finally, he asked whether Amey could provide reassurances that the storage area at the Amey depot was secure and that contents would not spill onto other sites.
- 7.17 Mr Hunter responded to Councillor Patel 's questions as follows. Firstly, he explained that crews were supervised between 4 - 6 hours a day both whilst out carrying out waste collection, and on return to the depot, with a three-strike policy carried out. Similarly, the Waste, Recycling and Streetscene Manager outlined that the new service delivery plan would mean that there was more capacity for supervision. Moreover, the KPIs which had potential financial penalties provided an added level of performance monitoring by the Council. In relation to the waste and recycling collection in Barton Tredworth, he explained that the ward had its own dedicated team for waste collection. Lastly, he advised that the spillage from the Amey storage site was specifically in relation to Bell Tools, and that this had been rectified after the erection of a 12-foot fence between the two sites.
- 7.18 Councillor Taylor queried whether residents could have an additional blue sack. The Waste, Recycling and Streetscene Manager informed him that whilst they had currently run of stock of the blue sacks, the Council was expecting a delivery of these soon for delivery to customers.
- 7.19 Noting that the Council 's contract with Amey would end in March 2022, Councillor Stephens asked whether a procurement process would start soon. He was informed that there were proposals for an options agreement to be presented after the May election.
- 7.20 Councillor Organ queried whether the enforcement process was sufficient, for example, in relation to fly tipping. The Cabinet Member for Environment stated that the employment of 3GS to assist with fly tipping had led to more positive outcomes with tackling fly tipping. He proposed that central government policy could be more far-reaching and the fines for fly-tipping could be heavier. He added that the Leader of the Swindon Borough Council had indicated that he would be approaching central government on this issue, and Councillor Cook stated that he would lend his support.

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- 7.21 Councillor Stephens further outlined that the Local Government Association (LGA) was proposing to launch a campaign on the issue of fly-tipping, and suggested that the Council could lend its support to this once launched.
- 7.22 Finally, Councillor Dee noted that there were inconsistencies in green belt areas across the City, and suggested that the City Council needed a policy on green belt areas. Councillor Cook responded to say that the City Council does not own all green areas in the City, with some owned by Gloucestershire County Council. Moreover, he was planning to have discussions with County Council on this topic, including how to make it more equitable in terms of costs.
- 7.2 **RESOLVED:** - the Overview and Scrutiny Committee asks Cabinet to respond to the following questions:
- 1.) Could all Members be provided with a litter picking schedule for all the Gloucester City wards and information on which areas fall under the 'City Centre' for the purposes of litter picking?
 - 2.) Could you please confirm whether Trier Way is included as a part of 'Gloucester Park' in the list of 'play area provision and nearest postcode' in Annex 4?
 - 3.) The Cabinet Member for Environment has indicated that he has been involved in lobbying Central government on the issue of fly tipping. Would he perhaps consider lending support to the LGA 's proposed campaign on Fly Tipping once it is launched? The campaign aims to lobby Central Government to review its guidance to the Courts to ensure the worst offenders face tougher sentences, and to ensure that Councils have the funding needed to investigate and prosecute fly tippers.

8. PERFORMANCE MONITORING QUARTER 1 AND 2

- 8.1 The Leader of the Council who was representing Councillor Norman, the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources, presented the report and outlined key elements. He expressed his thanks to the recently appointed Performance & Improvement Officer for the work involved in producing the report. Lastly, he opened the floor to questions from the Committee.
- 8.2 The Chair questioned the wording in the second paragraph of Performance Indicator CST8, where it is written that "we will guide staff to inform customers about the complaints escalation process without prompting level 2 or 3 complaints where issues have been resolved". They suggested that this could be interpreted to mean that the Council would discourage Customers from prompting level 2 or 3 complaints where issues have been resolved. The Corporate Director responded to say that this was a strict reading of what was written. Rather, a difference of emphasis in the words was required in order to understand what was stated here.

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- 8.3 Furthermore, the Chair asked whether statistics were available to highlight whether the 74.8 % drop in footfall in Key Performance Indicator (KPI) CST1 in Quarter 1 was due to customers contacting the Council through other channels, for example more digital methods, or whether this was due to customers not presenting themselves at all. The Head of Policy and Resources informed him that a written response would be circulated to Members.
- 8.4 Councillor Stephens queried why there were only 15 KPIs. Moreover, he expressed his concern with the Council's telephone waiting times and asked whether information could be provided highlighting average waiting times. The Head of Policy and Resources explained that there were currently only 15 KPIs as these were the key areas for assessing performance. However, there was no reason why these could not be changed in the future. In relation to telephone waiting times, he explained that the Council 's Contact Centre solution would be going live this month which would enable better reporting on waiting times. Councillor Stephens then asked whether there would be KPIs attached to this. The Corporate Director advised that there would be KPIs attached to this.
- 8.5 Pointing to KPI H23, Councillor Haigh asked whether statistics could be provided in relation to how many, if any, families were placed in temporary accommodation both out of city and out of county. The Head of Policy and Resources informed her that a written response would be circulated to Members.
- 8.6 Councillor Pullen suggested that the complaints procedure was difficult to find on the website and asked whether this could be made more prominent. He was informed that Cabinet and Officers would look at this and send a written response.
- 8.7 **RESOLVED:** - that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee asks Cabinet to respond to the following questions:
- 1.) In Performance Indicator CST1, it is shown that there was a drop 74.8% drop in footfall in Quarter 1. Could you please provide statistics on whether this fall was due to customers contacting the Council through other channels, for example more digital methods, or whether this is due to customers not presenting themselves at all?
 - 2.) In CST8, it is noted that the Council has "introduced a more focused way of handling complaints". However, some Members' experience has been that it is difficult to find the Council's complaint procedure on the City Council website. Thus, could the complaints procedure be made more prominent on the website?
 - 3.) In relation to H23, could statistics be provided about how many, if any families were placed in temporary accommodation both out of city and out of county?

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9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Time of commencement: 6:30pm

Time of conclusion: 20:00pm

Chair