

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

13 December 2023

Present: Councillor A Grimston (Chair)
Councillor F Ezeifedi (Vice-Chair)
Councillors S Ahmed, M Devonish, P Hill, A Khan, P Kloss,
L Nembhard and T Osborn

Also present: Councillor Kennedy Rodrigues, Portfolio Holder

Officers: Associate Director of Planning, Infrastructure and Economy
Associate Director of Customer and Corporate Services
Associate Director of Environment
Contract Manager - Parks and Streetcare
Homeless Prevention & Options Manager
Housing Strategy Manager
Senior Democratic Services Officer

56 **Apologies for Absence/Committee Membership**

There were no apologies for absence.

57 **Disclosure of interests (if any)**

There were no disclosures of interest.

58 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 November 2023 were submitted and signed.

59 **Other scrutiny meetings - minutes**

Councillor Khan provided an update on Finance Scrutiny Committee on 21 November noting that it was a productive meeting and included briefings on Croxley Business Park and the Property Investment Board. Members had discussed risks and the positive achievements. There had also been a useful consideration of the budget which would be reported to Cabinet.

The Housing Task Group had had a good session discussing damp and mould and repairs with Watford Community Housing. It had been a constructive and frank conversation.

60 **Call-in**

No call-in had been received.

61 **Performance and Progress Report - Q2 2023/24**

The committee received a report of Associate Director of Customer and Corporate Services, Delivery Support Lead and Intelligence, Performance and Improvement Lead.

The Associate Director of Customer and Corporate Services introduced the report and its components. It was a positive report with the vast majority of the deliverables and KPIs exceeding their targets.

Responding to a question about the carbon neutrality of the housing stock in Watford insofar as it related to the targets in the Environment Strategy; it was agreed that further information would be circulated.

Officers confirmed that the issues highlighted within decarbonisation project of the Town Hall Quarter programme were very minor in nature and would be addressed by the contractor.

RESOLVED –

that Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes the progress updates within this report relating to:

- the Council Plan 2022-26 and Delivery Plan 2022 -24 (Appendix A)
- the key performance indicator results for Quarter 1 of 2023/24 (Appendix B)
- the council's key corporate strategies (Appendix C)

62 **Spotlight on service delivery - street cleansing**

The Contract Manager (Parks and Street Cleansing) introduced the item noting that this was the tenth year of the contract with Veolia to deliver the council's street cleansing function, alongside a number of other services.

The committee received a presentation delivered by Nick Graham from Veolia. The presentation covered the surveying process, trends, challenges and initiatives.

Following the presentation, the committee discussed the following:

- Graffiti on private property which can be removed by the team with the landowner's permission, noting that certain incidences would require specialist contractors.
- The prioritisation of the 25 roads which underwent a deep clean each year. This was a partnership initiative with the county council and county councillors who contributed funding and engaged with ward councillors around suitable roads. Some roads were likely to require a deep clean at more frequent intervals than others.
- The cycle of road surveys of certain wards in each quarter. The process provided a snapshot of the overall cleanliness and the team used their local knowledge about when and where different issues arose. It also provided for ongoing benchmarking. Ten percent of the surveys were undertaken with the council and Veolia and the Portfolio Holder reported that it was an exacting process.
- The council's use of the former national N195 indicator as the basis of the KPI. The Office for Local Government would be bringing back some national performance indicators for the sector and this was a contractual KPI with a sound methodology which allowed for tracking performance over time. There were other indicators that were used elsewhere but this one worked well in Watford. It could be set to any standard and provided rigour in the system.
- Officers noted the suggestion around removing the high-speed roads from the KPI calculations given the number in the borough and the decision to reduce cleansing frequency. This had been considered but was being included for the time being to allow for benchmarking and with the comments reflecting the new service provision levels.
- Street cleansing hotspots were created through reporting issues which provided a heat map of identified issues. These were reviewed frequently by Veolia and used to inform schedules.
- Specific issues identified which were related to certain businesses were reported to the council's Environmental Health team who would raise concerns with them directly. It was noted that licensing reviews had been brought against offending licensed premises in the past.
- Veolia were cognizant of peaks in rubbish related to seasonal trends and activities in the parks and additional staff and larger bins were made available as required. Callowland Recreation Ground was being kept under review as usage was increasing.
- Veolia and the council agreed a communications plan and there were regular social media posts around litter and the availability of community litter

picking kits. Litter would feature more prominently in the next plan. The education team from Veolia who visited schools had an excellent programme and had been nominated for awards for their work.

- The nature of litter would change over the next few years with the introduction of deposit return schemes and extended producer responsibility as well as the ban on single-use plastics.

The committee agreed that they would support an increased focus on litter in the forthcoming communications plan.

RESOLVED –

1. that the committee supports the greater emphasis on messaging around litter.
2. that the presentation be noted.

63 **Executive Decision Progress Report**

The scrutiny committee was invited to review the current Executive Decision Progress Report for 2023-24 and consider whether any further information was required.

RESOLVED –

that the current 2023/24 Executive Decision Progress report be noted.

64 **Hertfordshire County Council's Health Scrutiny Committee**

The Chair, as the council's appointed representative on Hertfordshire County Council's Health Scrutiny Committee, was unable to attend the last meeting.

It was agreed that future dates for the Health Scrutiny Committee would be shared with the Vice Chair.

RESOLVED –

the update be noted.

65 **Work Programme**

Members were invited to review Overview and Scrutiny Committee's draft work programme for 2023/24.

The committee requested that a scope be drawn up for an item scrutinising the local water company.

RESOLVED –

That the Chair works with officers to incorporate members' suggestions into the committee's work programme.

66 **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting would be on Wednesday 31 January 2024.

Chair

The Meeting started at 7.00 pm
and finished at 8.05 pm