

OUTSOURCED SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL

24 FEBRUARY 2016

Present: Councillor K Crout (Chair)
Councillor S Counter (Vice-Chair)
Councillors A Joynes, S Silver, S Williams and A Rindl

Also present:

Officers: Transport and Infrastructure Section Head (Minutes 33 to 36)
Partnerships and Performance Section Head
Parking Services Manager (Minutes 33 to 36)
Deputy Parking Manager (Minutes 33 to 36)
Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer (AG)

33 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/ COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Apologies were received from Councillor J Dhindsa. Councillor A Rindl replaced Councillor R Martins.

34 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no disclosures of interest.

35 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2016 were submitted and signed.

36 PARKING SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT

The Parking Manager introduced the report. He explained that the style of the document had been revised this year so that the most salient information was more easy to extract. Previously, reports had been a little 'dry' and overly statistically focused. Members commented that the new lay out was impressive and a considerable improvement. The Parking Manager invited any questions from Members.

Councillor Joynes made reference to page 18 of the report asking whether numbers as well as percentages could be shown. The Parking Manager explained that the Traffic Demand Tribunal required that the figures be produced in this format. The Transport and Infrastructure Section Head explained that it

would be possible to put the relevant numbers in brackets as well as the information which was provided on a quarterly basis.

Councillor Silver said Controlled Parking Zones were a major issue in his ward. He asked, with reference to page 13 of the report, why there had been an increase this year in the number of parking permits issued. The Parking Manager explained that these had increased by 300 and that this was due to three new Controlled Parking Zones coming in to fruition in Watford. It was quite normal for the figures to fluctuate.

In response to a question from Councillor Joynes with reference to page 32 of the report and the review of short stay parking in St Albans Road; the Transport and Infrastructure Section Head explained that this would be put together following the forthcoming elections and issues would not be duplicated.

Councillor Joynes asked what wards were likely to be affected by the probable stimulus for parking controls emanating from the Croxley Rail Link development. The Transport and Infrastructure Section Head explained that this would likely include Vicarage and Holywell Wards and that the public would be made aware of the issues.

In response to a question from Councillor Silver in relation to enforcement; the Parking Manager explained that the report did not contain information on parking matters that could not be enforced – these, primarily, relating to footway and drop kerb parking. He outlined how the police had options to enforce obstruction offences in these type of circumstances and how there was a footway parking ban in London. He advised that where a vehicle was parked on a footway with a double yellow line, a fixed penalty notice could be issued by Council enforcement officers. The Transport and Infrastructure Section Head informed Members that where police assistance was required the '101' telephone number should be dialled.

Councillor Rindl made reference to pages 12 and 13 of the report - asking why there had been a 17 percent increase in penalty charge notices issued. The Parking Manager explained that this was primarily due to new Controlled Parking Zones and restrictions coming in to force; when it was expected that there would be a spike in notices issued before people got used to the new schemes and compliance was achieved. Furthermore, there had been an increase in enforcement operations in a number of areas. It was anticipated that the number of penalty charge notices would fall in the next two to three years.

Councillor Williams asked whether there was any information about registered mobility vehicles; as he was concerned that these might be unnecessarily charged due to the there being little parking for them. He also asked whether there was information on corporate vehicles causing obstructions.

The Parking Manager explained that it would not be possible to capture data on Blue Badge holders other than by examining notices individually. He advised that there were yellow lines with loading restrictions in King Street; so Blue Badge holders were not permitted to park in that location and may be issued with

penalties. However, they could park in pay and display bays in Zone 'E' – these also in King Street. With regard to corporate vehicles; the Council did not monitor matters relating to obstruction. The Transport and Infrastructure Section Head advised the Committee that the Blue Badge holders could park on yellow lines for three hours and that vehicles over 5.25 metres in length could not obtain parking permits for any zone.

Councillor Silver returned to the issue of enforcement, asking how it was decided where Controlled Parking Zones would be located. The Parking Manager explained that these would be determined following complaints from residents and sometimes from elected members. The issue would then be forwarded to the portfolio holder to determine whether further consultation was required. Businesses and residents would then be approached. Should the community want a zone, the formal traffic order process would be commenced. He provided clarification on this procedure.

ACTION – Transport and Infrastructure Section Head to provide a list of Controlled Parking Zone consultations to the Committee.

RESOLVED:

that the Panel note the report.

37

PERFORMANCE REPORT (QUARTER 3 2015/16)

The Partnerships and Performance Section Head introduced the report explaining why a number of targets in relation to waste and recycling and to street cleaning had not been met. She invited questions whilst going through the various sections of the report.

Councillor Joynes commented that there had been a large spike in fly tipping across the County and asked why this had not been mentioned in the report. The Partnerships and Performance Section Head explained that this was because the report dealt with outsourced services and fly tipping was a matter that was dealt with 'in house' by Environmental Health.

In response to a further question from councillor Joynes in relation to fly tipping, the Partnerships and Performance Section Head explained that the main issue in Watford was in relation to the depositing of black bin liners containing rubbish rather than more bulky waste or builders' rubble etc. As Veolia responded quickly and removed the items this could reduce the number of incidents reported. However, the matter had been addressed to ensure the accuracy of data. Councillor Counter commented that it seemed a little harsh classifying such incidents as fly tipping as black bags were not normally associated with the issue.

Councillor Counter asked how it was determined that waste had been contaminated – such as with small plastic bottles. The Partnerships and

Performance Section Head explained that there was likely to be some leniency in relation to such aspects and agreed to find out the process for the Committee.

ACTION – Partnerships and Performance Section Head

Councillor Rindl made reference to Items ES11 and ES12 in the report; commenting that the levels of graffiti and fly posting were off target (albeit the variances appeared high because of the small numbers involved in relation to the target and results). The Partnerships and Performance Section Head explained that graffiti tended to be a problem in alleyways rather than on the main highways. This was why the town's overall appearance did not seem to be impacted; and the Council was working with Veolia to focus on the alleyway areas. However, there was not a major problem in Watford around graffiti.

Councillor Rindl wondered whether the fly posting target was too severe. The Partnerships and Performance Section Head explained that there were sometimes problems in removing items once fly posting had been identified. However, as with fly tipping, fly posting was not a major issue in Watford. The target had been set up as part of the contract and was achievable.

Councillor Joynes made reference to Item ES14 in the report, asking how long it took to deal with complaints. The Partnerships and Performance Section Head explained that the complaints mentioned in the Report related to matters escalated to the Council that Veolia had been unable to resolve. She undertook to ask for information on the time taken to deal with complaints in future reports.

ACTION – Partnerships and Performance Section Head

Councillor Silver discussed a complaint in relation to a public park in his ward that had been resolved in a day by Veolia; commenting that this was an excellent service. He asked how long it should take to deal with incidents of fly posting. The Partnerships and Performance Section Head explained that this was 24 hours in relation to offensive graffiti but she undertook to find out the time in relation to fly posting.

ACTION – Partnerships and Performance Section Head

Councillor Silver made reference to Item RB2 in the report suggesting that the impact of the Christmas break upon the performance of Revenue and Benefits should have been predictable. The Partnerships and Performance Section Head explained that, whilst there was a skeleton staff on duty over Christmas, the issue was more related to problems with information technology (IT).

Councillor Joynes referred to Item LC11 in the report and the issue of complaints in relation to HQ Theatres. She asked whether these were a management issue or more related to the companies providing the services where there was less control. The Partnerships and Performance Section Head said that this may relate to the companies who put on the shows but she would investigate the matter and report back to the Committee.

ACTION – Partnership and Performance Section Head

Members discussed the topic further; with Councillor Williams suggesting that matters in relation to IT may also have an impact. He then referred to Item IT2 in the Report, commenting that he had recently had a number of problems with Outlook and suggested that there were hardware and software issues. Councillor Silver explained that he had experienced similar problems.

Councillor Joynes asked whether Members would be provided with an App for their mobile telephones under the new contract. The Partnerships and Performance Section Head explained that what was currently in existence would be stabilised first but she would look in to the matter and report back to the Committee.

ACTION – Partnerships and Performance Section Head

Councillor Williams asked whether there had been many companies bidding for the new ICT contract. The Partnership and Performance Section Head explained that services would be delivered by a mixture of internal and external providers. Councillor Williams asked who would deal with IT procurement issues in the future. The Partnerships and Performance Section Head explained that this would be managed 'in house'.

Councillor Joynes asked whether Members would be asked what their IT requirements were as part of the new ICT contract. The Partnerships and Performance Section Head explained that she would form part of the project team and would put out a communication to members seeking feedback.

ACTION – Partnerships and Performance Section Head

38 **UPDATE ON ACTIONS**

The Panel received a report of the Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer updating Members on outstanding actions from previous meetings. It was agreed that all of the actions could be signed off.

RESOLVED:

that the Panel note the actions.

The Chair concluded the meeting by thanking Councillor Counter for her contribution to the Committee over a number of years as this would be her last meeting as a Member of the Committee.

Chair

The Meeting started at 7.00 pm
and finished at 7.50 pm