

**ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE AND  
COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY  
PANEL  
23 OCTOBER 2012  
7.30 - 9.30 PM**



**Present:**

Councillors Finnie (Chairman), McLean (Vice-Chairman), Mrs Angell, Brossard, Ms Brown, Gbadebo, Ms Miller and Porter

**Executive Members:**

Councillors Brunel-Walker and Mrs Hayes

**Also Present:**

Phil Burke, Travel Plan Co-ordinator  
Andrea Carr, Policy Officer (Overview and Scrutiny)  
Mark Devon, Chief Officer: Leisure & Culture  
Bev Hindle, Chief Officer: Planning & Transport  
Steve Loudoun, Chief Officer: Environment & Public Protection  
Vincent Paliczka, Director of Environment, Culture & Communities  
Mark Stannard, Scottish and Southern Energy

**Apologies for absence were received from:**

Councillor Finch

**15. Minutes and Matters Arising**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel held on 17 July 2012 be approved as a correct record, and signed by the Chairman.

**16. Declarations of Interest and Party Whip**

There were no declarations of interest relating to any items on the agenda, nor any indications that members would be participating whilst under the party whip.

**17. Public Participation**

There were no submissions from members of the public in accordance with the Council's Public Participation Scheme for Overview and Scrutiny.

**18. Thames Valley Vision - Carbon Reduction**

Mark Stannard, Scottish and Southern Energy (SSE), gave a presentation in respect of the Thames Valley Vision for Carbon reduction which aimed to find new ways of managing the existing UK national electricity power grid in future.

SSE operated a network in northern Scotland and central southern England with 127,000km of overhead lines and underground cables and delivering electricity to 3.5

million homes, offices and businesses. SSE had a Regulated Asset Value of £3.21 billion.

Preparing for a low carbon future would involve achieving a 20% reduction in carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions and 20% of final energy consumption being from renewable sources by 2020. The UK Government had pledged to cut carbon emissions by 80% by 2050.

179 domestic customers had signed up to SSE carbon reduction scheme and another 71 were being sought for the initial tranche for the scheme. Twelve commercial buildings were signed up and another 18 were being sought for the initial tranche.

In response to Members' questions, the following comments were made:

- Letters had been sent to 15,000 households across the Borough inviting people to become involved with the SSE carbon reduction project. There had been press releases, information on their website, and an Advisory Centre was due to open on the High Street in Bracknell on Saturday 15 December 2012. It was a five year project and SSE were currently one year into the project.
- Certain clusters of customers were needed to make the project statistically significant but SSE would not turn customers away who were interested in being part of the project.
- The core responsibility of SSE was to keep the electricity network functional. The project was about how to manage the network more effectively. SSE would be happy to advise customers on how to reduce their consumption but the project was not aimed at reducing electricity bills specifically.
- Members of the Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel and of the Planning Committee would receive an invitation to Scottish and Southern Energy's Advisory Centre in Bracknell when it opened in December 2012.
- The Advisory Centre, once open, could advise people on where to obtain solar tiles which were more expensive than solar panels but looked better aesthetically.
- The map of residents who had registered for the project in Bracknell showed they were mostly based in South Bracknell at present. Letters had been sent to a wide range of residents in the Borough but the map showed the residents who had registered so far.
- A student had been learning about the project at SSE and would feed back to other students.
- SSE had visited Garth Hill College recently about the project, Edgbarrow School had signed up to the response agreement, and Bracknell and Wokingham College were interested in the project as well.
- 250 domestic customers in Bracknell were being sought for the short term target for the project.
- Being able to monitor electricity consumption by the minute and record consumption could help people to identify and reduce their consumption, thereby saving money on their electricity bill. New meters could track electricity usage.
- The Thames Valley Vision presentation would be circulated to members of the Panel.
- <http://www.thamesvalleyvision.co.uk/>

19. **Quarterly Service Report (QSR)**

The Panel considered the latest trends, priorities and pressures in terms of departmental performance as reported in the Quarterly Service Report (QSR) for the first quarter of 2012/13 (April to June) relating to Environment, Culture and Communities (ECC).

The Director of Environment, Culture and Communities gave a presentation in respect of the ECC Department's QSR and Service Plan. As the Environment, Culture and Communities Department was no longer overseeing the Housing function within the Borough Council, this had impacted on data in the QSR.

Major variances in revenue had occurred in relation to Waste Management Refuse Collection Contract, Waste Management Disposal, Car Parking Income, Development Control Income, Cemetery and Crematorium, Landscape Services Vehicles, Coral Reef Income, Primary Authority Income, and Licensing Income.

The amount of waste going to landfill was expensive, so the current decrease in waste going to landfill enabled significant savings to be made. The number of people using car parking in the Town Centre had decreased and less people were purchasing season tickets which was a concern. Coral Reef was still performing well. Figures in relation to staff turnover and staff sickness had decreased.

There had been resistance from some members of the public to car park charging at The Look Out and there had been a technical breakdown with the card payment system which was being investigated. The weather impacted on landscape services and golf club income had decreased.

A Recycling Incentive Scheme was being established and was due to be operational from April 2013. The Primary Authority scheme enabled companies to buy into added services, such as food and trading standards advice, and health and safety advice. Waitrose were the biggest company buying into this service from Bracknell Forest at present and were being given trading standards advice. It was thought that standards in general could be improved in this way.

In response to Members' questions, the following points were made:

- The recycling scheme would seek to increase participation as 25% of people were still not recycling, and would also seek less contamination of products for recycling. Not all plastics were recycled as some plastics had a low product value.
- The issue with the card payment system at The Look Out was being investigated by the companies responsible for the system and would be resolved as soon as possible.
- Members of the Panel would be provided with further information on the amount of revenue generated from car parking charges at The Look Out.
- Free parking at The Look Out was funded by the Crown Estate if a cycle permit was purchased as the cost of a cycle permit covered the cost of parking. There would be no cycle permits from April 2013 as people would then be able to cycle for free.
- Members of the Panel would be provided with clarification of staff annual sickness rates for 2010/11 and 2011/12 for the Environment, Culture and Communities Department.

- Reports regarding the Recycling Initiative Scheme would be considered by the Borough Council's Executive in November. There was a short time frame in which to make a bid for funding from Defra; a bid was made for £108,000 out of the £600,000 available funding for all of the UK and the bid was successful. This was the start of the process and there would be opportunities to consider the scheme over the next two years. It was a requirement of Defra to make sure that the scheme delivered against its targets. A progress update would be provided on the Recycling Incentive Scheme at the next Panel meeting on 22 January 2013.
- There were approximately 350 casual posts in Environment, Culture and Communities, some of which were students employed during the busier summer months.
- Panel members would be informed if any additional cycle paths had been established to and at The Look Out.
- Leaves were a landfill cost of approximately £25,000 annually and there was a pressure now to pay this. Defra and MPs had been contacted regarding this cost and possible alternatives.

## 20. Car Club Schemes

Phil Burke, Travel Plan Co-ordinator, gave a presentation on the Car Clubs Scheme.

Emerging Car Clubs:

- Peer to Peer car clubs involved renting your own car out or driving another person's car. Operators acted as facilitators and cars could be more local, but there was generally a need to meet with the owner to obtain the keys.
- One Way car clubs were emerging in Europe and Birmingham was trialling the first UK scheme Car2Go. Users did not need to pre-book, the nearest car could be collected and left anywhere within a geographical area (like the 'Boris Bikes' scheme). It was harder for operators to manage due to uncertainty in predicting where cars would be. There would not always be a car available when or where it was needed.

The pros and cons of Car Clubs:

- Car club cars were generally more modern and more fuel efficient than the average car;
- CityCar Club calculated that its cars emitted 37% less CO<sub>2</sub> than those they replaced;
- Car club members generally drove fewer miles than the average car owner;
- CarPlus estimated that one car club car replaced 24.5 private cars;
- One-Way car clubs could rival more sustainable travel modes such as bus, bicycle, or walking;
- Car clubs offered wider access to car use.

Car Club Membership in the UK:

- As of 1 January 2012, about 160,000 people were members of car clubs in the UK (as recently as 2005 this figure was just 5,000);
- These members were sharing just over 3,000 cars;
- There were commercial car clubs in Bath, Birmingham, Brighton, Bristol, Edinburgh, Cambridge, Cardiff, Glasgow, Huddersfield, Leeds, London, Manchester, Southampton, and York;
- Around 85% of car club members lived in London;

- Membership rates were increasing and one estimate suggested there could be two million members in ten years time.

The Effects of Car Clubs on other Modes of Transport:

- Traditional car clubs were generally believed to be complementary to public transport, and could even make public transport a more viable option for some journeys;
- One-way car clubs were more likely to take journeys away from public transport, but could also facilitate more public transport journeys in the first place;
- Future models could see integrated ticketing options, for example, a season ticket for railway journeys that included car club membership.

The Future of Car Clubs and Car Ownership:

- Membership of car clubs was predicted to continue increasing at double digit rates;
- The two biggest developments were the growth of peer-to-peer car clubs and one-way car clubs;
- Car manufacturers were producing cars specifically to suit the demands of the car club market such as Ford and GM, and some car manufacturers such as Daimler and Peugeot were setting up car clubs;
- On-street parking space would be at a premium;
- There would be integration with other transport modes, for example, integrated rail or car club ticketing and dedicated station parking;
- Allocation of road space would be a possibility, for example, for the Olympics or a school run.

In response to Members' questions, the following points were made:

- Insurance for the Peer to Peer car clubs was agreed through the two companies who operated to scheme.
- Car Club Schemes were likely to be a city solution in the first instance but would likely be used in smaller towns in the future as well. It was envisaged that new residential developments in the Borough in future could include small car clubs.

## 21. **Public Realm Services - Service Delivery Options for 2014**

The Panel considered a report on the work that had been undertaken to help inform how the Council should procure a range of council services, some of which were currently contracted to external partners and were due to expire in 2014. The Panel's comments were sought on the component parts of any contracts and outline agreement to length of contract and price / quality threshold. A detailed procurement plan was scheduled to be presented to the Borough Council's Executive in December.

A project group had considered the options. The Borough Council had met with four major suppliers and three councils to explore service delivery models. Highway Services were the biggest area of public realm services.

The drivers for the review were considered as follows:

- To continue to drive out inefficiencies to give Members a choice post 2014; current service level at reduced cost or improved service at current cost.

- Current strategy of investing in highways maintenance was unsustainable in that it was set to simply minimise the decline of Bracknell's highways network.
- Improving safety of the highway network was a national driver.
- An increasing public demand for better quality public realm.
- The impact of the Special Protection Area (SPA) on the borough's development.

Observations were included in the report. Flexibility would be built into contracts to reflect, for example, changes in technology over time. Efficiencies had been made in relation to landscape services. If contracts were committed to longer term, savings could be made, and seven years was considered to be the most efficient time frame for contracts. While a detailed methodology had yet to be developed, the award of a contract should be based on 60% price and 40% quality.

While there were several possible configurations possible, it was thought that the most effective combination would be to offer four bundles to the market with the possibility of combining Street Cleansing and Grounds Maintenance: (1) Highways maintenance/street lighting; (2a) Street cleansing; (2b) Grounds maintenance; (3) Highway consultancy. In addition to allowing a stand alone contract for landscape services, this option encouraged a joint bid to include street cleansing.

Bundle 1: Highways maintenance and improvement works/street lighting

Bundle 2a : Street Cleansing, with the option of combining with 2b

Bundle 2b: Grounds Maintenance, with the option of combining 2a

Bundle 3: Highway consultancy services

In response to Members' questions, the following points were made:

- Contracts were being procured in a competitive market.
- Street Cleansing, Landscape Services, and Parks and Countryside could not be merged to be managed together as they were completely separate and unrelated services. Open spaces needed to be managed and direct management of some sites retained. Landscape Services were a maintenance function.
- It was suggested that 5.25 of the report be referred to when the report was considered by the Borough Council's Executive. Larger contracts could enable better working relationships.
- Reference was made to the highway maintenance review previously undertaken by a working group of the Panel which had found that longer term contracts provided certainty, increased value for money and economies for both parties. Contracts could be awarded on a 7 year with a 7 year extension clause basis, based on performance.
- Council Staff would continue to be employed by a contractor if services transferred to a private contractor.
- Schemes were being delivered more quickly and efficiently. There could be possibly 10-15% savings, for example, with the purchase of tarmac over a longer term.
- Consultancy contracts were a maximum of four year due to a legal restriction.
- A 5 year contract with a 5 year extension clause was the previous Highway contract time frame.

The Panel:

- i. **NOTED** the research undertaken and highlighted in the report which informed the Officer conclusions primarily detailed in paragraphs 5.22 to 5.26, and 5.36 to 5.42;
- ii. **AGREED** that the matters and observations highlighted above be identified to the Executive meeting on 11 December 2012.

22. **Local Development Framework and Revised Local Development Scheme Update Report**

The Panel noted the documents that currently formed part of the Bracknell Forest Borough Local Development Framework (LDF) and the stage reached in the preparation of other documents that would eventually form part of the Bracknell Forest Borough LDF on adoption.

Panel members would be provided with an update on the Local Development Framework and Local Development Scheme at the next meeting of the Panel on 22 January 2013 to include the outcome of the SADPD examination hearings.

23. **Public Health Update**

The Panel noted the report on the emerging arrangements for the transfer of Public Health functions to Local Authorities in April 2013.

At its next meeting the Panel would be provided with a report on the role and responsibilities of the Environment, Culture and Communities Department and Overview and Scrutiny Panel in relation to the transfer of Public Health functions to Bracknell Forest Council in April 2013.

24. **Public Transport and Concessionary Fares Report and Working Group Update**

The Panel considered the draft report of the review of Public Transport and Concessionary Fares undertaken by a working group of the Panel. The report also included an update in respect of the other working groups of the Panel.

The Panel were invited to re-convene the working group to contribute towards the development of a Bus Strategy for the Borough.

Panel members involved in the working group were thanked for their hard work and contributions to the report.

The Panel:

- i. **AGREED** and adopted the report of the review of Public Transport and Concessionary Fares undertaken by one of its working group for sending formally to the relevant Executive Member;
- ii. would re-convene the above working group to contribute towards the development of a Bus Strategy for the Borough;
- iii. **NOTED** that the Public Transport and Concessionary Fares Working Group, the Highway Maintenance Working Group and the Commercial Sponsorship Member Reference Group had completed their work.

25. **Overview and Scrutiny Progress Report**

The Panel noted the bi-annual Progress Report of the Assistant Chief Executive on Overview and Scrutiny activity over the period March to August 2012 and local and national developments in Overview and Scrutiny.

26. **Executive Key and Non-Key Decisions**

The Panel noted the forthcoming Executive Key and Non-Key Decisions relating to Environment, Culture and Communities.

**CHAIRMAN**