

**ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE AND
COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
PANEL
9 JANUARY 2018
7.30 - 9.35 PM**



Present:

Councillors Angell (Chairman), Porter (Vice-Chairman), Mrs Angell, Brossard, Finnie, Mrs Ingham, Mrs McKenzie, Mrs Mattick and Leake (Substitute)

Executive Members:

Councillors Mrs Hayes MBE and Turrell

Also Present:

Councillors Virgo and Peacey

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillors Mrs McKenzie-Boyle

In Attendance:

Andrew Hunter, Chief Officer: Planning, Transport & Countryside
Damian James, Head of Performance and Resources
Steve Loudoun, Chief Officer: Environment & Public Protection
Vincent Paliczka, Director of Environment, Culture & Communities

178. Apologies for Absence/Substitute Members

179. Minutes and Matters Arising

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 19 September 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

180. Declarations of Interest and Party Whip

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

181. Urgent Items of Business

There were no urgent items of business.

182. Public Participation

No submissions had been made by members of the public under the Council's Public Participation Scheme for Overview and Scrutiny.

183. 2018/19 Draft Budget Proposals

The Panel was invited to consider its response to the Executive's draft budget proposals for 2018/19. It was being consulted as part of the statutory consultation

process which would conclude on 30 January 2018, after which it would consider the outcome of the consultation exercise at its meeting on 13 February 2018, before recommending the budget to Council.

Arising from questions and discussion the following points were made:

- Percentage increases were based on market pricing whilst ensuring residents could access services. As a guide most services were raised in line with RPI.
- Concerns were raised about a particularly high increase in the cost of applying for a Street Café and it was noted that prices had been suppressed whilst the Lexicon was being built to encourage new traders and prices now reflected the more prosperous town centre
- Increase in Sports Hire were a reflection of other local authorities cost for similar facilities and followed the councils policy to view competitor's pricing.
- For buildings with a size of over 100,000sqm, it was confirmed that the cost package would be bespoke.
- The affects of China no longer taking aluminium and plastics would have a minimal effect on addressing waste and recycling in the Borough.
- Traffic Survey data was being sold to third party consultants for commercial use and it was questioned whether the price could be increased.
- A range of feedback had been received from members of the public regarding the new LED lights and it was confirmed there would be enough budget to look at individual areas and make adjustments where necessary.
- Steve Loudoun would report back on the costs and capital gains as a result of the new LED lighting installed.
- The delivery of housing by Surrey Heath had been slower than anticipated which meant their requirement for SANG was also reduced. It was confirmed that the land could be returned to BFC for SANG use but was currently not needed.
- Steve Loudoun would report back on why there was 64.4% increase in cost to use the memorial chapel at the Crematorium
- The events charging policy at local libraries was as per council policy so a surplus would be made to cover both the speaker and additional money towards running costs.
- Concerns were raised about the increase in cost for the residents parking scheme as some residents struggled to afford the cost of the permits and consequently were parking just outside the permit zone. It was noted the full cost of the scheme was currently not being covered. Steve Loudoun would confirm what the cost would be to make it cost neutral.
- Concerns were raised about whether the cost savings proposed in the budget would impact services provided by the Council and it was confirmed that the savings were believed to be genuine efficiencies which may increase some risks but would not impact services.

184. **National Highways and Transport Network Survey Report 2017**

The Panel received and noted the findings of the 2017 National Highways & Transport Survey insofar as it related to Bracknell Forest from the Head of Transport Development, Neil Mathews. The panel was advised that:

- The overall satisfaction level had declined by 2 percentage points but remained above average and was the best of all Berkshire authorities.
- The borough retained the highest score for walking and cycling
- The 'Accessibility' theme had declined by 5 percentage points but this came after 2016 achieving the biggest improver award in this theme and Bracknell Forest remained equal with the national average.

- The 'Public Transport' theme had improved by 5 percentage points but remained marginally below the national average.
- Bracknell Forest maintained national top performer for the 'Walking & Cycling' theme despite a 2 percentage point decline in satisfaction.
- There had been a 5 percentage point decline in satisfaction of the 'Tackling Congestion' theme. This could be seen as a response to the increased road works activity in the months leading up to the opening of the Lexicon as well as the significant number of road works associated with all other development within the borough.
- The 'Road Safety' theme saw a 2 percentage point decline in satisfaction although Bracknell Forest remained joint top performers in the South East and joint third of all unitary authorities.
- The 'Highway Maintenance/Enforcement' theme also suffered a 2 percentage point decline although it remained second best performer in the South East and third of all unitary authorities.

Arising from questions and discussion the following points were made:

- The cost of the survey was between £7500 - £8000
- The report was not scientific but gives an overview of how transport is viewed within the borough and how BFC compare with other authorities.
- The department of transport were working with the borough to create more cycle lanes
- It was acknowledged that it was harder to put cycle lanes into rural areas compared to urban areas.
- The general satisfaction score for traffic was lower this year and was partly due to building works and increased traffic. It was hoped this would improve next year.

185. **Environment, Culture and Communities - Delivery of Highway Infrastructure**

The Panel received a presentation on highway infrastructure delivery from Andrew Hunter Chief Officer for Planning, Transport and Countryside.

It was reported that some of the infrastructure would be secured through development for example SANGs, Education and library contributions and others through combing works with other partners such as police and Superfast Broadband.

Some infrastructure was delivered though influencing and lobbying groups such as Rail, public transport and water routes and many were delivered through applications for additional funding.

Strategic growth was modelled through the Bracknell Forest Traffic model and looked at the Bracknell Forest as a whole and the impact of growth on the network.

The mitigation package was developed to inform the local plan and Regulation 123 list and would be delivered through planning permission.

Pictures of the new junctions delivered were shown.

Arising from questions and discussion the following points were made:

- When drafting the local plan, highway infrastructure was assessed by looking at key strategic corridors and the impact of development and then consider how journey time could be improved.
- It was suggested that junction plans were provided as part of the consultation, however the level of detail would not be available at that stage.

- Feedback from residents would be more positive if an indication of junction improvements could be given at consultation stage.
- The funding from infrastructure
- Any changes to infrastructure would include the holistic side and character of the area and this had already been implemented for the Coral Reef roundabout where new trees were planted.
- Following the development of an area, corridor journey times would return to levels before the development or better.
- The timescale for the work current Regulation 123 list would be completed over the next three years.
- A list of road improvements and locations was located in the infrastructure delivery plan. The Head of Planning would give members a list of highway junction improvements before the second consultation which would provide a more detailed analysis of junction improvements.

186. **Bracknell Forest Borough Local Plan Update**

The Panel received and noted a report on progress towards developing the new Bracknell Forest Local Plan. The report also outlined the programme for the plan to its adoption. The Panel was advised that the Plan was to be a single document in three parts. The first part would contain background and context, the second part, strategic matters, and the third part would cover Development Management policies.

The Panel noted the following key dates within the Plan programme:

- Draft Plan approved by Executive January 23rd 2018
- Draft Plan endorsed by Full Council 1 February 2018
- Draft Plan consultation 8 February – 26 March 2018
- Consider responses and prepare submission version April – August 2018
- Executive approve draft submission plan and authority to submit September 2018
- Full Council endorse Draft submission plan and authority to submit September 2018
- Publication (consultation for 6 weeks) October/November 2018
- Consideration of representations December 2018 - January 2019
- Submission February 2019
- Examination May – June 2019
- Inspectors Report September 2019
- Report to Council/Adoption October 2019

The Panel also noted that the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy SPD was to be updated with the main change being the inclusion of updated rates for the facilitation amounts to be charged from

new development which were to be increased to reflect a more commercial approach to the release of public land to enable development and identifying new SANG capacity in the Borough and providing more up to date information on the types of development requiring SPA mitigation.

A Joint Minerals and Waste Local Plan was also being produced with Reading Borough Council, Wokingham Borough Council, and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. Hampshire County Council has been selected to carry out the work.

187. 2018/19 Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme

The Panel received a report on the 2018/19 Overview & Scrutiny Work Programme inviting it to suggest possible topics to add to the current items which included Integrated Transport and Regulatory Services. The Panel was advised that both Overview & Scrutiny posts were vacant which would have an impact on the delivery of reviews for the immediate future including HMO's.

Cllr Brossard would circulate the presentation on the fire prevention from the fire service.

It was suggested that the fees and charges were re-examined by the commission in order to gain clarity on the percentage increases and how they related to both other local authorities and commercial charges.

188. Quarterly Service Report (QSR)

The Panel considered the latest trends, priorities and pressures in terms of departmental performance as reported in the QSR for the second quarter of 2017/18 (July to September 2017) relating to Environment, Culture and Communities. The report highlighted exceptional performance, remedial action being taken against under performance, changes in risk, customer feedback, staff data and financial information.

The Director of Environment, Culture and Communities highlighted a number of items from the report and presented an overview of the first quarter performance.

Arising from questions and discussion the following points were noted:

- The council was still getting value for money on the Coral Reef leisure contract despite increased sales as any risk had been transferred to the contractor and the contract would span over 10 years when sales would potentially drop.
- The bill of quantities was inaccurate for the building of Coral reef and this would be updated in the coming weeks.
- Recruitment of volunteers in libraries had been successful however the co-ordination could be difficult as staff often wanted 2-3 hour slots. This would continue to be looked at.
- The roll out of the new street lighting would not be slowed down as a result of complaints but localised adjustments would be made.

189. Executive Key and Non-Key Decisions

The Panel received and noted the list of forthcoming executive decisions relating to Environment, Culture & Communities.

190. **Next Meeting Date**

The next meeting would be held on **6 March 2018**

CHAIRMAN