

**ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE AND
COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
PANEL
24 JUNE 2014
7.30 - 6.50 PM**



Present:

Councillors Mrs Barnard, Brossard, Ms Brown, Finnie, Gbadebo, McLean and Porter

Co-opted Members:

Councillor Ian Leake

Executive Members:

Councillors Mrs Hayes

Also Present:

Max Baker, Head of Spatial Policy

Andrea Carr, Policy Officer (Overview and Scrutiny)

Mark Devon, Chief Officer: Leisure & Culture

Bev Hindle, Chief Officer: Planning & Transport

Damian James, Head of Performance and Resources, ECC

Steve Loudoun, Chief Officer: Environment & Public Protection

Neil Mathews, Transport Development Manager

Vincent Paliczka, Director of Environment, Culture & Communities

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillors Ms Miller

1. Election of Chairman

RESOLVED that Councillor Finnie be elected Chairman of the Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel for the 2014/15 Municipal Year.

2. Appointment of Vice Chairman

RESOLVED that Councillor McLean be appointed as Vice Chairman of the Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel for the 2014/15 Municipal Year.

3. Apologies for Absence/Substitute Members

An apology for lateness was received from Councillor Turrell. There were no substitute Members for the meeting.

4. Minutes and Matters Arising

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel held on 18 March 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

5. 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.

6. Urgent Items of Business

There were no urgent items of business.

7. Public Participation

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

8. 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 for the fourth quarter in 2013/14 (January to March 2014) relating to Environment, Culture and Communities (ECC).

It was noted that the budget position remained strong. There were concerns with waste disposal as there was now an upward trend of landfill items being disposed of in the last two quarters. The Council were looking at ways to reverse this trend. Three public realm contracts had been awarded during the period, the Site Allocation Plan had been agreed, and improvement work was progressing well at the Twin Bridges roundabout where the completion of the works was expected in August 2014. The redevelopment of the town centre continued. SITA, the Council's waste collection contractor, had won a Health and Safety award for no lost time incidents in 2013 as well as winning a top award in their company for the best Customer Survey results. During the severe weather in January and February 2014 a range of mutual aid support had been provided to neighbouring Berkshire authorities.

The Director of Environment, Culture and Communities reported that all his departmental staff had moved into their long term office locations in Time Square and all sections of the department were now on one site.

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

- The use of Bracknell Town Library had dropped, due to reduced footfall in the town centre during the redevelopment works. A new IT library management system for the libraries had been introduced.
- The Priestwood Community Centre was outside of the public realm contracts and was part of Corporate Services and concerns regarding the car park and grounds would be raised by Members with that department.
- With regard to complaints, comments and compliments, complaints and comments were regularly assessed and lessons learnt. Compliments were not analysed at the moment although it was suggested that this should happen in future.
- Staff sickness numbers referred to full time equivalent posts and part time posts were not recorded separately.

- Extra funding of £200,000 had been secured for the repair of potholes. Further funding would be sourced. A plan would be prepared that would indicate the conditions of the roads in the Borough, risk assessment and how best to utilise the funding received.
- The Coral Reef expansion proposals would be prepared in the autumn 2014.
- The maintenance of footpaths was within the highway budget.

The Panel thanked the officers for the full report for Quarter 4 – January to March 2014.

9. **Service Plan 2014/15 - Revised Key Actions and Indicators**

The Panel received and noted the revised key actions and indicators which were included in the departmental Environment, Culture and Communities Service Plan 2014/15.

The planning application determination targets had been relaxed to allow for applications to be reviewed and processed fully at the first application stage rather than the same applicant being invited to resubmit the application, if further information was required. In customer care terms this meant that the applications were processed within a shorter overall timescale than if the applicant needed to reapply for whatever reason.

Arising from the Panel's questions and comments the following points were noted:

- Household waste was measured in kilograms per household.
- The number of library visits was counted per visitor footfall. The numbers of members of the public accessing the wifi/logins was not recorded separately at the present time.
- The number of E+ cards issued or reissued in the year was 7,000 to 8,000.
- Planning enforcement targets were being considered and measurement of any targets was being currently assessed.
- The progress of the Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan was a requirement of both the Service Plan and the Local Plan. Currently evidence was being gathered to prepare detailed timelines.
- There was a seven to ten year plan in energy consumption terms for the replacement of LED street lighting. Street lamps were not routinely replaced as and when they failed rather an area was considered for update.
- The transfer of land into public ownership was on-going.

10. **Crown Estate and Forestry Commission Land**

This item was deferred to the next meeting of the Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

11. **Residents' Parking Scheme - Formal Consultation Outcome and Final Scheme Proposals**

The Panel received an overview of the statutory consultation results on the proposed Residents Parking Schemes in streets surrounding Bracknell town centre. As the town centre redevelopment continued the Council would plan for the changes for demand for sufficient parking spaces. The residents' parking scheme covered six areas around the town centre. As part of the consultation, 2,250 letters had been delivered to affected properties, and advertisements placed in the local press. 30 objections had been received, which was 1.3% of the properties consulted. These objections had been considered by the Executive Member. The proposal was to continue with the Residents' Parking Scheme as advertised with the following two exemptions:

- Remove the proposal to revoke the existing prohibition of waiting (Monday to Saturday 8.00 am to 6.00 pm) restriction in Daventry Court.
- Remove the proposal to revoke the existing prohibition of waiting (double yellow lines) in Old Bracknell Lane East.

Arising from the Panel's questions and comments the following points were noted:

- The introduction of the parking scheme was anticipated in October 2014 with a built in amnesty period to 'go live' in November 2014.
- The associated Traffic Regulation Order would give an exemption to delivery vehicles and tradesman working in the area.
- The scheme would be a two year pilot project with no commitment to permanently introduce the scheme. The scheme would be monitored throughout the two year period and within the phases of the town centre redevelopment. A consultation process would commence at the end of the pilot scheme.
- The possible introduction of charges for the scheme could be considered as part of the monitoring process.
- Bracknell and Wokingham College had been consulted both formally and informally regarding the scheme and had made no response..
- The parking restrictions at Coopers Hill Community Centre would remain and were not part of the Residents' Parking Scheme.

The Panel thanked the officers for the update on this scheme.

12. **Draft Obligation Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)**

The Panel received and noted the draft Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The SPD replaced the earlier plan that had been approved in 2007; and included the introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL); the intention being that charges for CIL would be affective from 1 April 2014.

Arising from the Panel's questions and comments the following points were noted:

- Contributions towards a range of individual infrastructure would be robust, in particular with regard to waste management and the provision of adequate recycling facilities.

- The adoption of the SPD was an Executive function and the Panel could be kept up to date with progress.
- The level of CIL levy was a matter for local discretion and based on the latest data. Although lower than some nearby local authorities' levels, the Bracknell Forest CIL was in the higher range nationally.
- The Council would continue to seek additional funding including securing grant money to support the programme.

The Panel noted the report.

13. Bracknell Forest Borough Local Plan Update

The Panel received and noted a progress report in respect of the Bracknell Forest Borough Local Plan. The three key development plan documents proposed within the three year period of the plan was the Development Local Plan, a Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan and a new comprehensive Local Plan. Following a question the Panel noted that the development of the Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan would continue throughout the year.

14. Public Realm - Progress with Mobilisation

The Panel received and noted a report giving an update on the progress with mobilisation of new public realm contracts relating to highway and engineering works, street lighting, street cleansing and ground maintenance services due to commence from 1 October 2014.

15. Working Group Update Report

The Panel received the Working Group's Update Report in respect of the review of the Council's cultural services offering

16. Executive Key and Non-Key Decisions

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

17. Chairman's Remarks

Councillor Finnie, on behalf of the Panel, thanked Bev Hindle, Chief Officer: Planning and Transport, for support he had given the Panel and wished him well for the future. The next meeting of the Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel would be held on Tuesday 23 September 2014.

CHAIRMAN

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