

**ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE AND
COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
PANEL
7 JULY 2015
7.30 - 9.35 PM**



Present:

Councillors Angell (Chairman), Porter (Vice-Chairman), Mrs Angell, Brossard, Mrs Ingham, King OBE, Leake and Mrs McKenzie

Executive Member:

Councillor Mrs Hayes MBE

Also Present:

Councillor Peacey

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillors Mrs McKenzie-Boyle and Mrs Mattick

In Attendance:

Richard Beaumont, Head of Overview & Scrutiny
Andrea Carr, Policy Officer (Overview and Scrutiny)
Mark Devon, Chief Officer: Leisure & Culture
Andrew Hunter, Chief Officer: Planning & Transport
Damian James, Head of Performance and Resources
Steve Loudoun, Chief Officer: Environment & Public Protection
Jim Naylor, Highways Engineer
Vincent Paliczka, Director of Environment, Culture & Communities
Anthony Radford-Foley, Head of Highways Asset Management

55. Election of Chairman

RESOLVED that Councillor Angell be unanimously elected Chairman of the Panel for the 2015/16 municipal year.

56. Appointment of Vice Chairman

RESOLVED that Councillor Porter be unanimously elected Vice-Chairman of the Panel for the 2015/16 municipal year.

57. Apologies for Absence/Substitute Members

The Panel noted that Councillor King was substituting for Councillor Mrs Mattick and Councillor Leake was substituting for Councillor Mrs McKenzie-Boyle.

58. Minutes and Matters Arising

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 17th March 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Matters Arising:

Residents Parking Fines – a paper had been circulated to Members after the last meeting. The scheme was not self-financing and would be reviewed after the 2 year trial period.

Solar Panels – a report had been circulated to Members after the last meeting which indicated that associated costs would be met by schools.

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

There no declarations of interest or any indication the Members would be participating under the party whip.

60. **Urgent Items of Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

61. **Public Participation**

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

62. **Director's Introductory Briefing & Service Plan 2015/16**

Mr Paliczka informed Members that he and his team were looking forward to working with the new Panel. Mr Paliczka gave a presentation summarising the Quarterly Service Report and drawing Members' attention to some of the variances detailed in the report.

Income for the department was just under £19 million and there was a variance of about £304,000. The variance was due to issues such as:

- The Community Infrastructure Levy being introduced on April 2015 instead of April 2014 as originally planned by Government.
- More people claiming concessionary fares and the method of calculation by bus companies changing.
- Savings made in public realm contracts.
- Staffing budgets starting at -3% with the department having to fund the shortfall.
- Residents' street parking costing more than anticipated.

The capital programme was £15,843,500. About half would be carried forward. This was due to variables like planning permission being granted and access to bridges. Capital budgets over £50,000 which were being carried forward were highlighted in the report.

The staff vacancy factor in the department was 7.82% and staff sickness was at 5.7% at the year end. The department had been successful at managing absence.

Looking forward the department would be working on:

- Coral Reef refurbishment
- Town Centre regeneration
- Bus Station redevelopment
- Harmans Water Library
- Leisure Management System

- Coral Reef – roundabout works
- Jennett’s Park – roundabout works
- Budgets
- Town Centre
- Comprehensive Local Plan
- Jennett’s Park land transfer
- Commercial sponsorship tendering

A 6 month service plan linked to key council objectives was highlighted in the report.

A Member asked about the feasibility of a wind turbine and low levels solar panels being installed in the borough. Mr Palinczka responded that there was only 1 site in the borough with enough wind flow for a wind turbine. However, there would be too much disruption to the area to make it viable. A suitable site for low level solar panels was at the London Road landfill. However, the environmental condition of the site meant it was not possible at present.

A Member queried the lack of risk analysis in the report. Mr Paliczka responded that a department risk register existed separately and information could be included in future reports.

Officers were congratulated on the doubling of the number of compliments received compared with the previous quarter.

Members were updated on Re3 waste disposal contract on page 16 of the QSR. There had been no 3rd adjudication and the Council was in negotiation with the contractor.

Members queried the predicted costs of the Coral Reef refurbishment against savings made on the project. Mr Paliczka explained that the budget had been set 3 years ago and whilst some savings had been made in some areas, other costs such as building were rising by 7% compared to 3 years ago.

Members noted that the existing street lighting was being replaced with LED lighting. In response to a question, Members were advised that estate roads were inspected once a year under the Highways Maintenance Plan which identified intervention levels for road repairs.

63. Quarterly Service Report (QSR)

The Quarterly Service Report was discussed as part of the Director’s introductory briefing, dealt with in the previous minute.

64. Bracknell Forest Borough Local Plan Update

Andrew Hunter presented the Bracknell Forest Local Plan Update report and explained that the Comprehensive Local Plan would run until 2035. The Comprehensive Local Plan brought together Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Development Plan Documents.

In response to a Member’s question, the Panel was advised that it was possible to control the mix of affordable homes and house size through a housing mix policy.

The Panel indicated that it would like to continue to receive Local Plan Update reports.

RESOLVED that the documents that currently form part of the Bracknell Forest Borough Local Plan and timetable for future preparation be noted.

65. **Highway Maintenance Modelling System**

Mr Radford-Foley and Mr Naylor gave an overview of the current road maintenance system. Mr Radford-Foley explained that the estimated net worth of the highways as an asset was about £750 million and the council budget for highways maintenance was £6,055,208. This equated to less than 1% of the estimated net value.

Mr Naylor gave a live demonstration of the Horizons software used by highways engineers to model that condition of the roads. The surface of A, B, and C roads was scanned once a year and the footage was loaded into the software. The software analysed cracks and deterioration in the road surface. Using this information the highways engineers could model future work on the highways. Half of the unclassified roads were visually inspected each year enabling visual inspection data to be updated every two years for these roads. Unadopted roads were not inspected as they remained the responsibility of the developer. Overlays of accident dates, pothole complaints and skidding resistance could be added to the model. The footway network was also inspected. Red, green and amber designation was applied to signify the condition of roads.

Following questions from the Panel on the presentation, the meeting was advised that:

- Ward Members were consulted on annual winter service plans for estate roads.
- Traffic volumes would be checked and a revised statement which accurately reflected the status of road traffic growth would be included in the Service Plan.
- Re-surfacing materials and work quality were guaranteed and defects were enforced.

The presentation was very well received by Members and copies would be circulated.

66. **2015/16 Work Programme Review Topics**

The Chairman, on behalf of the Panel, put forward 3 review items for the 2015/16 work programme, subject to the approval of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission:

- Parks and Open Spaces
- Planning processes and procedures to include Section 106 and planning enforcement.
- Houses in multiple occupation in terms of the Council's involvement.

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

Mr Paliczka informed the Panel that the Local Enforcement Plan would be considered by the Executive on 22nd September 2015.

CHAIRMAN