

Overview and Scrutiny Committee



St Edmundsbury
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held on **Wednesday 11 November 2015** at **4.00 pm** at the **Conference Chamber, West Suffolk House, Western Way, Bury St Edmunds IP33 3YU**

Present: **Councillors**

Chairman Diane Hind
Vice Chairman Jeremy Farthing

Terry Buckle
Susan Glossop
Paul Hopfensperger
Tim Marks
Richard Rout
Angela Rushen

Andrew Speed
Clive Springett
Jim Thorndyke
Frank Warby
John Burns

Substitutes attending:
Patricia Warby

By Invitation:
Tony Brown, Peter Stevens, Robert Everitt, Ian Houlder and
Clive Pollington
Peter Stevens, Cabinet Member for Operations

43. **Substitutes**

The following substitution was declared:

Councillor Patricia Warby for Councillor Wayne Hailstone.

44. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Wayne Hailstone.

45. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meetings held on 22 July 2015 and 15 October 2015 were confirmed as correct records and signed by the Chairman.

46. **Public Participation**

There were no questions/statements from members of the public.

47. **Presentation by Streetkleen Bio Limited**

The Chairman welcomed Gary Downie (Managing Director) from Streetkleen Bio Limited who had been invited to the meeting to give a short presentation outlining the PooPrints Dog DNA programme and to answer questions from the Committee.

The presentation covered the following areas:

- What is PooPrint
- Rationale for Dog DNA Registration
- A Blueprint of overall service
- Communication of the proposition
- Engaging with key stakeholders (RSPCA/Local authorities)
- Timeline and recommended next steps.

Mr Downie explained that the PooPrints DNA programme was available world wide. The United States and other countries had experienced reductions in dog fouling by as much as 90% after introducing the programme, which was now available in the United Kingdom (UK) and worked within the framework of existing UK legislation.

Barking and Dagenham Borough Council was set to become the first UK local authority to introduce PooPrints to help achieve their corporate priorities of civic pride and social responsibility. It was estimated that there were 18,000 dogs in the borough Barking and Dagenham and that 50% of dogs would be registered in the first year.

DNA analysis was an affordable solution in tackling anti-social dog ownership. The cost involved a £30 registration fee to register the dog, and £70 for carrying out a DNA matching, which could be recouped from the irresponsible dog owner with a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO) could also be created and enforced to require owners to have their dogs registered to use any protected areas. Registered owners could then walk their dogs in protected spaces as normal and provide evidence of dog DNA registration to wardens, if required.

PooPrints UK was asking local authorities to consider creating a benefit led message approach and DNA testing. DNA registration was a permanent, long term solution to eradicate dog waste for aspirational communities. Enforcement was the driver, but there needed to be effective measures in place to challenge irresponsible behaviour dog owners.

Members discussed the presentation in detail and asked a number of questions of Gary Downie, to which comprehensive responses were provided. In particular discussions were held on the DNA registration process and costs.

Members agreed that DNA registration was a good idea, but it needed to be made compulsory as it was felt that irresponsible dog owners would not register their dog(s).

Members also discussed the cost solution and sampling versus prosecutions.

The Chairman on behalf of the Committee thanked Gary Downie for an informative presentation, and summarised that until Central Government helped by making it law for owners to DNA register their dogs, there were limitations with the scheme.

There being no decision required, the Committee **noted** the presentation.

48. **Presentation by the Cabinet Member for Operations**

As set out in the Council's Constitution, at every ordinary Overview and Scrutiny meeting at least one Cabinet Member would be invited to attend to give an account of his or her portfolio and answer questions from the Committee. Therefore, to carry out this constitutional requirement, members were asked to consider the responsibilities of the Cabinet Member for Operations, who had been invited to the meeting.

Report No: OAS/SE/15/015, set out the overall responsibilities of the Cabinet Member for Operations, which were:

- Car parking
- CCTV
- Cemeteries
- Fleet management
- Ground maintenance
- Land drainage
- Markets (delivery)
- Operations
- Property services and estate management
- Public conveniences
- Refuse/recycling
- Street scene
- Tourism (operations)

Councillor Peter Stevens, Cabinet Member for Operations opened his presentation by thanking the Committee for the invitation. He then set out the areas of responsibility; structure; key facts; and current major projects. There were three broad services areas with split Portfolio responsibility for the West Suffolk service with Forest Heath District Council:

- Waste and street scene (Cllr Stevens and Cllr David Bowman)
- Property services (Cllr Stevens and Cllr David Bowman)
- Leisure, cultural services (Cllr Jo Rayner and Cllr Andy Drummond)

A breakdown of operational costs was provided for waste and property only, and total operations including leisure for St Edmundsbury; Forest Heath and West Suffolk.

A number of statistics and major projects covering waste and property services were included, such as for West Suffolk:

- 5.7 million bins emptied each year containing 64,000 tonnes of material;
- Maintaining a fleet of 200 vehicles covering 1 million miles each year;
- West Suffolk Operational Hub
- Bartec (back office system and in-cab technology)
- Owning 410 varied property assets;
- CCTV control room dealt with over 1,600 incidents each year (mostly unreported) and new CCTV control room
- Car parking reviews

Members discussed the presentation in detail and asked a number of questions of the Cabinet Member and officers to which comprehensive responses were provided. In particular discussions were held on the following:

- (1) Street lighting – the Council was looking to reduce the operational cost of street lights by upgrading the Borough owned street lights so that the majority of them could be transferred to Suffolk County Council Highways and those remaining with the Borough would be cheaper to run.
- (2) Waste transfer stations - The Council currently used three waste transfer stations (Thetford; Red Lodge and Haverhill). As and when the West Suffolk Operational Hub was operational, one transfer station would be located in the Bury area with the intention of retaining the Haverhill site.
- (3) A14 cleansing – It was acknowledged this was an issue. The service continued to maintain a full team clearing the A14 and A11, and continues to seek to work more closely with the Highways Agency in co-ordinating cleansing when road closures were in place.
- (4) CCTV - A member tour was being organised to enable members to look at the new CCTV set-up at West Suffolk House.
- (5) Tree ownership - Officers confirmed there was a definitive map available showing who owned what trees. The Council also had a tree maintenance programme.
- (6) Late grass cutting - The Council had a policy on late grass cutting and officers agreed to provide a written response on further grass cutting scheduled in 2015.

The Chairman thanked the Cabinet Member for Operations for his informative presentation.

There being no decision required, the Committee **noted** the presentation by the Cabinet Member for Operations.

49. **Christmas Fayre Review**

(Councillor Paul Hopfensperger declared a non-pecuniary interest as owning a business in Bury St Edmunds town centre, and remained in the meeting).

Councillor Andrew Speed declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of Our Bury St Edmunds and owning a business in Bury St Edmunds town centre, and remained in the meeting).

On 10 June 2015, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee resolved to establish a Task and Finish Group to complete a review of the Bury St Edmunds Christmas Fayre and to adopt a five-year operational plan for the event. The prompt for the review came from the Council's acknowledgement that the Christmas Fayre had grown to be a nationally recognised event and that a review of the current principles and arrangements was therefore opportune.

Report No: OAS/SE/15/016, summarised the review of the Bury St Edmunds Christmas Fayre and presented a draft five-year operational plan for taking forward the recommendations from the Christmas Fayre Task and Finish Group.

The report included the background to the review; the current position of the Christmas Fayre, statistics; venues and stalls; timings; health and safety; marketing; entertainment; employment; finance; Christmas Fayre Working Group; traffic management and car parks. Also attached to the report were a number of appendices, namely:

- Appendix A: analysis of Christmas Fayre stalls;
- Appendix B: Christmas Fayre stakeholders review and reporting structure;
- Appendix C: Christmas Fayre impact survey.
- Appendix D: five-year operational plan.

The Christmas Fayre review covered a wide range of areas of the planning and management of the Fayre. The recommendations in the report were based on findings from discussions with Fayre stakeholders; desk research and an online survey. All the recommendations that the Task and Finish Group had agreed on in response to the findings of the review were brought together into a five-year operational plan, attached as Appendix D.

The Committee was asked to consider the Christmas Fayre Review Report and supporting five-year operational plan prior to being presented to Cabinet on 8 December 2015.

The Committee considered the report in detail and asked a number of questions to which responses were provided. In particular discussions were held on the following:

- (1) Stall holders – 76% of stall holders came from East Anglia. The plan going forward was to look at a pricing structure to future benefit local businesses.

- (2) Neutral cost – Members wished to see the event make a small profit margin. Officers confirmed that the aspiration was to make a small profit.
- (3) Format of the market – Members discussed the format of Christmas Markets abroad, which lasted for a whole month. Officers advised that changing the current format and dates of the Christmas Fayre could be looked at as a longer term aspiration and would be a major review.
- (4) Transport – The Council was working closely with transport providers to advertise the availability and frequency of bus and train services to the fayre and had started to promote a campaign to encourage people to walk, cycle or use public transport.

The Market Development Officer informed the Committee that there would be stalls in the Cathedral court year which was new for this year, and that the Christmas Market evolved around what people wanted.

The Cabinet Member for Families and Communities thanked the Task and Finish Group for a well considered review of the current Christmas Fayre.

With the vote being unanimous, it was

RECOMMENDED

That the Christmas Fayre Review, Report No: OAS/SE/15/16 and the five-year operational plan, attached as Appendix D, be approved.

50. Car Parking Task and Finish Review Group - Final Report

(Councillor Paul Hopfensperger declared a non-pecuniary interest as owning a business in Bury St Edmunds town centre, and remained in the meeting).

(Councillors Terry Buckle, Frank Warby and Patricia Warby left the meeting at 6.20pm during the consideration of this item, and prior to voting).

Councillor Jeremy Farthing left the meeting at 6.25pm during the consideration of this item, and prior to voting.

Councillor Clive Springett left the meeting at 6.27pm during the consideration of this item, and prior to voting

Councillor Angela Rushen left the meeting at 6.35pm during the consideration of this item, and prior to voting).

In 2012, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee undertook an extensive review of car parking provision and charging in St Edmundsbury. A significant number of recommendations were endorsed by Cabinet on 12 December 2012. This included the need for a full periodic review of car parking across the Borough every 3-4 years.

A Task and Finish Review Group was therefore established by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 22 July 2015 to undertake this review, including the setting of tariffs and the consideration of pay on exist/Automated Number Plate Recognition operating systems.

In commencing the review, the Task and Finish Group undertook extensive consultation with car park users; key stakeholders and local businesses. In addition, specialist advice was sought from an independent consultant, Alpha Parking on existing and future capacity of car parks across Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill.

Councillor Jim Thorndyke, Chairman of the Task and Finish Group presented Report No: OAS/SE/15/017, which included the Task and Finish Groups conclusions and fifteen recommendations, which addressed the issue of capacity; service delivery and proposed investment in the delivery of the car parking service, as follows:

Recommendation 1	That the Council promotes: (i) That all tariffs remain highly competitive in comparison to similar towns. (ii) The location of the car parks through directional signage (iii) The flexible cashless, pay by phone option – RingGo (iv) Online permits/season tickets.
Recommendation 2	The purchase and installation of two further Electric Car Charging Points in Bury St Edmunds and two new Electric Car Charging Points in Haverhill.
Recommendation 3	The Council reviews all signage in the car parks with a view to making information easy to understand and more visible, including tariff boards and disability parking bays.
Recommendation 4	Charges to car parking and season ticket charges across the Borough are detailed in Appendix E.
Bury St Edmunds	
Recommendation 5	To transfer long stay car parking at weekends from Parkway MSCP to Ram Meadow by: (i) Improve signage to Ram Meadow Car Park from the highway. (ii) Investigate improvements to the pedestrian route into the town centre from Ram Meadow and quality of infrastructure/signage in the car

	<p>park</p> <p>(iii) Rebranding of Ram Meadow Car Park as the Visitor and Long Stay Car Park</p> <p>(iv) No change to Ram Meadow Charges</p> <p>(v) Parking at Parkway Multi Storey should be limited to a 4 hour maximum at the weekend, with the exemption of weekly and season ticket holders.</p>
Recommendation 6	The Car Parking Task and Finish Review Group feel that it is imperative that Cabinet set up a formal review to identify additional car parking provision across Bury St Edmunds. This review should consider future growth proposals and opportunities and urge that this process is completed no later than 2017.
Recommendation 7	As a matter of priority, the Borough Council seeks discussions with businesses and developers in the south of Bury St Edmunds with a view to finding additional public car parking in the area.
Recommendation 8	It is recommended that additional capacity of 30 spaces can be found in Hardwick Heath Car Park.
Recommendation 9	The Council promotes the availability of free parking at weekends at Olding Road.
Recommendation 10	To investigate a phased upgrade of car parking machines with a view to replacing all machines with car readers and contactless payments features over the next two to three years.
Recommendation 11	<p>It is recommended that occupancy levels across the town centre car parks must decrease to below 95% occupancy before Pay on Exit can:</p> <p>(i) Accommodate users extending the length of the car parking stay; and</p> <p>(ii) Avoid significant congestion on the highway.</p>
Recommendation 12	That the Borough Council works with Suffolk County Council and key stakeholders in the development of a Transport Strategy for Bury St Edmunds which promotes sustainable transport and help addresses the capacity challenges for off street car parks.
Haverhill	
Recommendation 13	It is recommended that Haverhill Leisure Centre

	car park be limited to a maximum stay of 3 hours.
Recommendation 14	To implement up to 4 hours and All Day parking restrictions on the Rose and Crown Car Park in Haverhill.
Recommendation 15	To provide an additional 15 hours off-street car parks enforcement each week by the parking services team in Haverhill.

Also attached to the report were the following appendices:

- Appendix A – Car Parking Capacity and Management Study 2015
- Appendix B - Tariff Comparison and other Towns
- Appendix C - Consultation responses from User Questionnaires
- Appendix D – Summary of business survey respondents in Haverhill
- Appendix E – Proposed changes to car parking and season ticket charges across the Borough from 1 April 2016.

The Committee was asked to comment on the report and the fifteen recommendations, as set out in Section 9 of Appendix 1, prior to being presented to Cabinet on 8 December 2015.

The Committee considered the report and the recommendations in detail and asked a number of questions to which officers provided comprehensive responses. In particular discussions were held on the following:

- (1) Parkway multi-storey – It was noted this was a popular car park because it was cheap and was prime retail parking.
- (2) Car park tariffs – Some members felt that the Council should not be afraid to put costs up. Prices would not deter people parking in the centre of town even though cheaper or even free options were available just a little further away.
- (3) Ram Meadow – It was agreed that the Council needed to encourage more people to use the Ram Meadow Car Park, but felt more lighting was needed.
- (4) Pay-on-exit – The Task and Finish Group had considered a trial. However, the trial would have cost an estimated £200k to install the barriers, the back office operation and a 24-7 service to respond to malfunctions; damage or driver error causing the blocking of exit routes. Pay-on-exit had not been ruled out, and it was envisaged that pay-on-exit would be installed when establishing new car parks particularly.
- (5) West Suffolk College – The College had not responded to the Task and Finish Group’s review on car parking. The Committee felt the College should take some further ownership of their own parking issues.

The Cabinet Member for Operations informed the Committee that the Alpha Report was good and the Task and Finish Group's recommendations were excellent. What needed to be addressed were future car parking problems, and the Master Plans would help with the issue.

With the vote being unanimous, it was

RECOMMENDED

That the fifteen recommendations of the Car Parking Task and Finish Review Group, as set out in Section 9, of Appendix 1 to Report No: OAS/SE/15/17, be approved.

51. **Directed Surveillance Authorised Applications (Quarter 2)**

The Regulation of Investigatory Powers (Directed Surveillance and Covert Human Intelligence Sources) Order 2010 required that Members should scrutinise the authority's use of its surveillance powers on a quarterly basis. The Monitoring Officer had advised that in Quarter 2, no such surveillance had been authorised. There being no decision required, the Committee **noted** the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act, Quarter 2 update.

52. **Decisions Plan: November 2015 to May 2016**

The Committee received Report No: OAS/SE/15/018, which requested that Members peruse the Cabinet Decisions Plan for the period November 2015 to May 2016, for which it would like further information on or which might benefit from the Committee's involvement. The Committee considered the Decisions Plan, and there being no decision required, the Committee **noted** the contents of the Decisions Plan.

53. **Work Programme Update**

The Committee received Report No OAS/SE/15/019, which updated Members on the current status of its rolling work programme of items for scrutiny during 2015-2016 (Appendix 1). Members were reminded to complete the Work Programme Suggestion Form when submitting future items for potential scrutiny (Appendix 2). This enabled suggestions received to be considered by the Committee at each meeting.

The Committee considered its rolling work programme, and there being no decision required, **noted** the items expected to be presented to the Committee during 2016.

The Meeting concluded at 6.46pm

Signed by:

Chairman