

Overview and Scrutiny Committee



St Edmundsbury
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Title of Report:	Annual Presentation by the Cabinet Member for Operations	
Report No:	OAS/SE/18/025	
Report to and date:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	12 September 2018
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Peter Stevens Cabinet Member for Operations Tel: 01787 280284 Email: peter.stevens@stedsbc.gov.uk	
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Purpose of report:	<p>As part of the "Challenge" role, Overview and Scrutiny are asked to consider the roles and responsibilities of Cabinet Members. It is part of the Scrutiny role to "challenge" in the form of questions.</p> <p>Therefore, to carry out this constitutional requirement, at every ordinary Overview and Scrutiny meeting at least one Cabinet Member shall attend to give an account of his or her portfolio and answer questions from the Committee.</p>	

Recommendation:	<p>Members of the Committee are asked to question the Cabinet Member for Operations on his portfolio responsibilities, and having considered the information, the Committee may wish to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Operations for his consideration; 2) Request further information and / or receive a future update. 3) Take any other appropriate action as necessary. 		
Key Decision: <i>(Check the appropriate box and delete all those that do not apply.)</i>	<p><i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i> Yes, it is a Key Decision - <input type="checkbox"/> No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>		
Consultation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A 		
Alternative option(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A 		
Implications:			
<i>Are there any financial implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<i>Are there any staffing implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<i>Are there any ICT implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<i>Are there any legal and/or policy implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<i>Are there any equality implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Risk/opportunity assessment:		<i>(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)</i>	
Risk area	Inherent level of risk (before controls)	Controls	Residual risk (after controls)
	Low/Medium/ High*		Low/Medium/ High*
None			
Wards affected:		All	
Background papers:		None	
Documents attached:		None	

1. Key issues and reasons for recommendation(s)

1.1 Background

1.1.1 As part of its "Challenge" role, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider the roles and responsibilities of Cabinet Members. To carry out this constitutional requirement, at every ordinary Overview and Scrutiny meeting at least one Cabinet Member shall be invited to give an account of his or her portfolio and to answer questions from the Committee.

1.1.2 Last year, on 8 November 2017, Councillor Peter Stevens, Cabinet Member for Operations attended this committee and presented a report which summarised the areas of responsibility covered under his portfolio.

1.2 Scrutiny Focus

1.2.1 The scope of this report differs from that of last year as the Cabinet Member has been asked to prepare a report which answers the following specific question(s) identified by the committee members as being relevant to the operations portfolio:

1) Operations: Members have requested an update on the West Suffolk Operational Hub and possible opening date.

2) Operations: In the longer term, the Haverhill Waste Transfer Station is not included in the West Suffolk Operational Hub, but the contract for the Haverhill Waste Transfer Station is up for renewal, and questions whether there are any contingency plans in place?

3) Operations:

i) Several children's play areas had to wait up to a year or more for new play equipment to be installed. The manufacturer changed location of factories which lead to delays both with production and delivery, in many cases parts were missing which lead to further delays. One of the play areas most affected was in Severn Road. The private sector would not have accepted such poor supply and certainly not without penalty. Have we sought or did we obtain financial recompense from Hags? They will say they moved their factory but that was their choice and they should have ensured that there was no disruption.

ii) Will the Council be more "stern" with suppliers in the future as we seek to behave more commercially? Unjustifiable delays should not be accepted.

4) Operations: (*Brown Bin EU Regulations on what can and cannot be put in the brown bins*). There were to be some new regulations, so how does the Council stand on the new regulations and Brexit?

5) Operations: Are there to be any changes to the regulations for Blue and Black Bins?

- 6) Operations:** (Black Bins). What is the % increase in waste since the introduction of the £40 charge for Brown bins?
- 7) Car parking:** What is the latest position on Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE), following the failure of the Minister for Transport to sign the Order to give CPE to Suffolk Council's?
- 8) Cemeteries:** How many years space have we got left for burials and are we taking into account the high % of the ageing population, and what plans have we got to find more burial ground in the local development plan?
- 9) Fleet management:** How soon will the council be introducing electric vehicles?

1.3 **Response to Key Questions Set out in the Scrutiny Focus**

1.3.1 **Operations: Request an update on the West Suffolk Operational Hub and possible opening date?**

Following a period in April and early May which included site enabling works (including archaeology and site establishment) and the discharge of pre-start planning conditions, Morgan Sindall formerly started construction work on site at Hollow Road Farm on Monday 21 May 2018.

An official ground breaking ceremony took place on site on the 3 July 2018.

The long spell of recent dry weather has enabled Morgan Sindall to make the best possible start on initial ground works (removing topsoil, forming levels, constructing drains and retaining walls). These ground works hold some of the highest risk for the construction phase of the project so it is good that the contractor is making such a positive start. Morgan Sindall are currently on programme with scheduled completion in late 2019.

More recent activities have included the piling of building foundations and the forming of the various roadways on the site.

Morgan Sindall and SCC Archaeologists organised an archaeology coffee morning for the project at Gt Barton Village Hall on Monday 16 July 2018 which was well attended.

Morgan Sindall have launched a microsite for the project to advise the local community about the project during the construction phase - <http://www.wsoproject.co.uk/about-the-project/>

The next Community Liaison Group meeting has been scheduled for Friday 28 September 2018 and will include discussions on the plans for offsite water supply, drainage and highways work.

There have so far been no complaints from the community about activities on site.

Our attention is now turning to preparing ourselves for relocating waste, street scene and fleet operations to the new facility and a long list of projects and tasks to enable this to happen efficiently. This will include formulating a detailed plan with our partners, Suffolk County Council, for occupation of the site which is likely to take place in phases from late 2019 into early 2020.

1.3.2 **Operations:** In the longer term, the Haverhill Waste Transfer Station is not included in the West Suffolk Operational Hub, but the contract for the Haverhill Waste Transfer Station is up for renewal, and questions whether there are any contingency plans in place?

The West Suffolk Operational Hub (WSOH) has been designed to have capacity to handle all of West Suffolk's waste, including that from Haverhill and surrounding villages. Capacity has also been designed to take account of projected housing growth for the foreseeable future.

The decision on the future use of the Haverhill Waste Transfer Station is one for Suffolk County Council in consultation with the West Suffolk councils. This decision will be made on the basis of a procurement to determine future waste transfer costs at Haverhill. Once established, these would then need to be considered alongside the cost impact to waste collection in the event that transfer facilities in Haverhill were withdrawn. This 'whole system' approach across both tiers of waste management will ensure that whatever is decided offers the best overall value to the taxpayer.

1.3.3 **Operations: Play areas (delays in new play equipment being installed)**

i) Have we sought or did we obtain financial recompense from Hags?

The play areas are built and are being well used, albeit their delivery was delayed. Under the terms of the contract we had with the supplier there was no recompense owed for the delay in delivery of the new play facilities.

The Council's disappointment at the suppliers delay in delivery was conveyed and the supplier did write to apologise and as a gesture of goodwill provided a number of value added works at no additional cost. These included:

- At Oakes road they re-turfed the site and installed a new bench.
- At Severn Road they installed new gates, a bench and again re-turfed rather than re-seeded the site.

ii) Will the Council be more "stern" with suppliers in the future as we seek to behave more commercial?

We have for some years been utilising a nationally recognised framework for play equipment supply and installation. This procurement model had, until last year run very smoothly and had proven to be a very efficient and effective means of progressing our play area refurbishment programme.

When awarding contracts for play area renewals a significant weighting is given to technical suitability of play equipment (which includes issues such as availability of spare parts and warranties) and user's preference (i.e. what users want to see installed). The chosen supplier had scored highest in both of those fields.

Last year's problems were exacerbated by the fact that the one supplier had won multiple refurbishments Lots in West Suffolk and that supplier then decided to move their manufacturing base which resulted in the delay we experienced.

A framework contract was again used this year for replacements at Strasbourg Square, Tayfen Meadow and York Road all of which were delivered in a timely manner.

There is a finite number of play equipment suppliers. The framework contract route is an effective and efficient means of procurement. The suppliers value their reputation and don't like disappointing customers. There is a strong likelihood that if we introduce penalties for late delivery suppliers will want to cover this risk/liability by increasing their costs which will ultimately be passed on to us as the customer. We have introduced more stringent questions relating to delivery timescales at the procurement stage to reinforce our wish for schemes to be delivered when we want them delivered.

1.3.4 **Operations:** (Brown Bin EU Regulations on what can and cannot be put in the brown bins). There were to be some new regulations, so how does the Council stand on the new regulations and Brexit?

The composting of material which includes any kitchen or catering waste has to comply with the Animal By-Products Regulation (ABPR). This requires that the composting system must meet very strict time, particle size and temperature requirements which require a system of either in-vessel composting or anaerobic digestion. Before processing, this material also needs to be transported and stored under cover.

Garden waste is not suitable for anaerobic digestion but can be in-vessel composted in conjunction with food waste. However, this process is expensive and commands a high processing cost for co-mingled material which is mainly made up of garden waste and has a low food / kitchen waste content.

Pure garden waste can be composted by the much simpler and less expensive 'open windrow' method in the open air. This is effectively a process of storing and turning compostable material on concrete pads whilst it breaks down to form compost.

The current gate fee to open windrow our garden waste is less than £25 / tonne. The median UK gate fee for in-vessel composting in 2017 was £46 / tonne (WRAP Gate Fees Report 2017). We currently collect around 11,000 tonnes of garden waste from cross West Suffolk.

1.3.5 **Operations:** Are there to be any changes to the regulations for Blue and Black Bins?

Recent regulation that will impact on waste collection and disposal is the EU Circular Economy package which became binding on member states from 4 July 2018. Even though the UK is to leave the European Union, the government has already said it is set to adopt the Circular Economy measures into UK law and retain them.

The package of legislation aims to move the treatment of waste further up the waste hierarchy where the value of products, materials and resources is maintained in the economy for as long as possible.

The UK, along with EU member states, will need to meet recycling targets for municipal waste of 55% by 2025 and 65% by 2035. This compares to a target of 50% by 2020 that the UK government and local authorities are currently working to. It is unclear whether these targets will be applied directly on councils or the nation state as is currently the case.

In December, Defra is due to publish a Resources and Waste Strategy which will outline further detail on how the UK government proposes that the requirements of the Circular Economy package will be met. This is likely to include details on food waste, separate collections of textiles and measures to extend Producer Responsibility, whereby the companies that manufacture the items that become waste have a greater responsibility for paying for its collection, reprocessing and disposal.

1.3.6 **Operations:** (Black bins). What is the % increase in waste since the introduction of the £40 charge for Brown bins?

The quantity of residual waste disposed of has increased by approximately 3,800 tonnes (just under 12%). Just under 2% of this increase is attributable to the annual increase due to growth that we experience so the net increase is approximately 10%. This figure is within the estimates made before the introduction of the scheme based upon evidence from other councils moving to a subscription service.

An Overview and Scrutiny Committee Task and Finish Group is currently undertaking a detailed review of the Garden Waste Collection Service and is due to report to respective committees in November.

1.3.7 **Car parking:** What is the latest position on Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE), following the failure of the Minister for Transport to sign the Order to give CPE to Suffolk Council's?

The Department for Transport (DfT) has confirmed that they will not be processing the application to transfer Civil Parking Enforcement responsibilities to Local Authorities in Suffolk in 2018 and as such, a bill will not be laid before Parliament before 1 April 2019. Therefore the transfer of Civil Parking Enforcement responsibilities from the Police Authority to West Suffolk will not happen for the foreseeable future. The DfT will not confirm when the application will be processed as the legislative timetable over the coming years is very likely to change

depending on a number of Brexit circumstances and scenarios. They have suggested that we contact them in the new year for an update. In the meantime, West Suffolk and our partners are considering our response to the DfT, the implications to our on-going implementation plans and to review the resourcing for on-street enforcement in next financial year.

1.3.8 **Cemeteries:** How many years space have we got left for burials and are we taking into account the high % of the ageing population, and what plans have we got to find more burial ground in the local development plan?

St Edmundsbury Borough Council owns and operates two cemeteries: Borough Cemetery (Bury St Edmunds) and Haverhill Cemetery (Haverhill).

Borough Cemetery

Although there are still burials taking place in the pre-purchased grave spaces in Borough Cemetery it is closed to new burials (burials in new graves). Burial provision in the Bury St Edmunds area is currently provided for at Risby Crematorium and has been since 2004.

Haverhill Cemetery

There is an estimated 10 years' worth of burial provision remaining at Haverhill Cemetery. The need to identify a suitable site for future burial provision is referenced in the Haverhill 2031 plan and some initial work to identify potentially suitable sites has been progressed.

1.3.9 **Fleet management:** How soon will the council be introducing electric vehicles?

A very similar question to this was asked and answered at last year's annual presentation by the Cabinet Member for Operations at Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Report No: [OAS/SE/17/029](#) dated 8 November 2017). The situation and response remains very similar to that from a year ago.

Fleet Management has, for several years, been exploring the potential for 'alternative fuels' and technology designed to make vehicles less damaging to the environment.

Over the years several electric vehicles (EV) have been trialled (cars and vans) and, whilst they have all been satisfactory in service, some delivered insufficient travel distance range to suit our needs. However, all have proven to be at a cost which would not give us a rate of return to justify the purchase/lease. Models trialled have included: Nissan Leaf; Smart FourTwo; Toyota Prius; Renault Zoe, Nissan eNV200 (Van).

The council has worked with several companies to explore the potential for hybrid technology fitted to our larger vehicles. This has included Hydraulic Regenerative Braking and technology to provide a 'stop-start' system for refuse trucks. Sadly, to date, none of these technologies have come to market in a viable form but we continue to monitor the development of

this technology for future use and are prepared and willing to trial vehicles that come to the market.

On the light commercial fleet we have in the past invested in two systems. The first was the Connaught Hybrid+ Drive system. This was fitted to one vehicle in 2008 but, sadly, failed in service and the company which provided it folded before it could be sorted.

We later purchased four vehicles (Ford Transit) fitted with the Ashwood Hybrid+ technology. This was a slightly more successful but again did not perform for more than a couple of years without requiring high levels of maintenance. The systems were therefore removed. The company which provided them discontinued the product due to ongoing vehicle design changes which necessitated major re-tooling for their product.

We have trialled a small EV truck which sadly has not given us the performance required to be useful.

The heavy commercial market is still developing with many 'concept' ideas in the pipeline alongside some proven, but prohibitively expensive, 'alternative' fuel systems such as CNG Compressed Natural Gas), LNG (Liquefied Natural Gas), Biomethane etc. Going forward, these will be considered subject to the infrastructure being available to take advantage and ensuring that the investment will provide a return on investment (ROI) for the operation.

It needs to be considered that the average annual mileage for the Councils' light vehicles is around 5,000 which of course means that any cost benefit of new technology has to be quite high to ensure the public finances are not compromised.

For our larger HGV collection vehicles it should be noted that potential EV of hybrid technologies come with a payload penalty. The weight of any batteries or accumulators reduces the amount of waste that can be collected (payload), potentially increasing waste miles, and the number of vehicles, staff and fuel. This continues to present a significant challenge in introducing EV, hybrid or alternative fuel technology for these types of vehicles compared to other HGV vehicles (e.g. buses) where payload is not such a significant factor.

An example of costs for an EV car compared to currently used small car is:-

Make/Model	Fuel type	Purchase price	Fuel/Battery
Renault Zoe Dynamique Nav 5 door Auto	Electric	£14,830*	£900 per year battery rental + electricity charge costs
Ford Fiesta 1.5 TDCi Zetec 5 door	Diesel	£10,233*	£480.00 p.a. (Average)
Skoda Fabia 1.4 TDI SE 5 door	Diesel	£9,606*	£480.00 p.a. (Average)

*Note that purchase prices are based upon buying through a national public sector framework contract.

Based on a projected three year life and assuming a residual value of 50% of purchase price, the above cars would cost:-

Make/Model	Fuel type	Cost per annum
Renault Zoe Dynamique Nav 5 door	Electric	£10,115
Ford Fiesta 1.5 TDCi Zetec 5 door	Diesel	£6,556
Skoda Fabia 1.4 TDI SE 5 door	Diesel	£6,243

1.4 **Proposals**

- 1.4.1 That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee ask follow-up questions of the Cabinet Member following his update.