

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY SAFETY SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON WEDNESDAY 21ST DECEMBER 2016 (BUDGET)

PRESENT:

Councillors: Makbule Gunes (Chair), Barbara Blake, Clive Carter, Bob Hare and Anne Stennett

Co-opted Member: Ian Sygrave (Haringey Association of Neighbourhood Watches)

15. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Stephen Mann.

16. ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None.

17. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

18. DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/PRESENTATIONS/QUESTIONS

None.

19. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2017/18 - 2021/22

The Panel considered the proposals relating to Priority 3 within the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) as follows:

3.1 Charging for Green Waste - Income Generation

Stephen McDonnell, the Assistant Director of Commercial and Operations, reported that the proposal was intended to raise £750,000 per annum in income. However, there was no guarantee that residents would opt into the scheme. A 20% participation rate had been achieved in Brent though. The level of income anticipated had been based on a similar rate being achieved in Haringey and was equivalent to 12,000 homes. There was a risk that residents would put green waste in residual bins instead. It was therefore proposed that home composting bins be offered to residents at cost price. A major communications campaign was planned to promote the change. 40% of London boroughs currently charged for collecting green waste.

The Panel noted that there was lower demand for green recycling in the east of the borough, where people tended to have smaller gardens. It was also intended to offer pre paid sacks to residents. The rate of £75 per year was around the median of what London boroughs charged and worked out at just over £1 per week. The £75 was for a green wheelie bin whilst the sacks could be paid for at customer service centres. Collection was universal at the moment and it was arguable that those who did not use it were subsidising those who did. Houses that had opted into the scheme would be identified by having the green bins.

3.2; Charging for Bulky Household Waste

Mr McDonnell reported that the intention was to raise £400,000 in income through this. It would cost £25 for four items plus £10 for every additional item. The envisaged income was based on 11,500 collections per year. It was not felt that it would impact significantly on recycling levels. There was a risk that the proposals would lead to an increase in fly tipping and reduce the levels of resident satisfaction. However, experience from elsewhere had shown only minor impacts on levels of fly tipping. There would also be an extensive communications campaign to promote the change.

Concern was expressed by the Panel that the proposal would increase the level of fly tipping, which was felt to present a high risk. In addition, items that were fly tipped were normally removed quickly which might make paid collection of items less attractive. In addition, it was felt that the projected increase in income of £400,000 might be difficult to achieve.

The Panel noted there had been extensive discussion with Veolia regarding this proposal and they would be taking on the financial risks associated with this proposal. Their perception was that the level of risk was low. It was considered that the proposals would not make a significant difference to those people who were inclined to fly tip. In addition, it was frequently found that when collection vehicles currently visited addresses to collect bulky items, they had not been put out.

AGREED:

That concern be expressed at the potential for the proposal to lead to an increase in fly tipping and the achievability of the additional income specified and, in the light of this, the following take place:

- A communications campaign with emphasis on the current penalty of £400 for fly tipping;
- Consideration of an increase in the level of the penalty; and
- Quarterly monitoring of the impact, benchmarked from the date of implementation of the proposal and, in addition, a full review after a year.

3.3; Charging for Replacement Wheelie Bins

Mr McDonnell reported that the Council currently replaced 8,000 wheelie bins per year. The intention was to cut this by 50%. There was a risk that the proposals would lead to an increase in the number of stolen bins but there was a mitigation plan to reduce any issues that might arise. In answer to a question, he stated that people

normally requested replacement bins due to them being damaged or missing. It was felt that if bins had no value, they were less likely to be looked after by residents.

Panel Members raised the issue of bins that were damaged during collection by either refuse vehicles or refuse collectors. Mr McDonnell accepted that this might be an issue. However, there were currently no controls on the replacement of bins.

AGREED:

1. That data be circulated to the Panel on the impact of charging in other boroughs;
2. That there be discretion to waive the charge if there is evidence of bins being damaged during collection;
3. That bins be made more clearly identifiable as being from Haringey;
4. That the potential for the proposal to impact adversely on income levels be noted; and
5. That the impact on the number of replacement bins requested be monitored.

3.4; Charging for recycling bins and increasing residual bins for RSLs, Managing Agents, Developers etc...

The Panel noted this proposal.

3.5; Flats Above Shops – Provision of bags: Service reduction

Mr McDonnell reported that it was aimed to save £120,000 per year from no longer delivering refuse bags to flats above shops. A communication plan would be developed to support the changes.

Panel Members were of the view that the delivery of bags had not resolved littering problems arising from flats above shops. They requested that the option of posting bags out to flats also be explored in order to assist those people who might have difficulty in getting to a library or a customer services centre.

AGREED:

That consideration be given to posting out of refuse bags to residents.

3.6; Reduce Outreach/ Education team

Mr McDonnell reported that the proposal involved reducing the number of staff in the outreach team by four. There would be a need to focus the work of remaining staff on areas that would have the greatest impact. In answer to a question regarding whether this would affect work with problem properties, he stated that action would still be taken but possibly using other methods. Not all action that out been taken by the team had proven to be successful and, in particular, it was felt that a focus on licensing might prove to be a more effective way of addressing issues related to houses in multiple occupation (HMOs).

Panel Members felt that the Outreach Team could be very effective and expressed concern that the reduction in size might be a retrograde step.

3.7; Closure of Park View Road R&R - Service reduction

Mr McDonnell reported that Western Road R&R site could be used as an alternative to Park Road when it closed and was big enough to accommodate the additional demand. In addition, there were a number of other R&R sites in neighbouring boroughs that were nearby and a new site was due to open in Edmonton in 2021. There would be a communications campaign to support the change.

The Panel noted that North London Waste Authority (NLWA) policy aimed to ensure that 95% of North London residents lived within 2 miles of an R&R facility. The current coverage within this radius was around 76%. NWLA undertook a survey at each site so see where items were coming from. A number of residents from other boroughs currently used Haringey's facilities.

Concern was expressed by the Panel at the potential for the proposal to lead to an increase in fly tipping, especially when combined with the proposal to charge for the collection of bulky household waste. It was felt that the success of the proposal would be very dependent on the effectiveness of the communications campaign.

The Panel noted that those people who were likely to fly tip were not likely to be influenced by the proximity of R&R facilities. Fly tipping was currently an issue in the area close to Park View Road. The communications campaign would include fliers and information in Haringey People. Although there had also been reductions in the Council's Communications Team, there was also capacity within Veolia.

AGREED:

1. That statistics for comparative customer numbers and tonnage of waste collected at both R&R sites be circulated to Panel Members; and
2. That the impact of closure be monitored closely for any impact on the level of fly tipping.

3.8; Veolia Operational Efficiencies

Mr McDonnell reported that a number of efficiency savings had been identified. The service would still nevertheless seek to deliver existing operational and performance outputs. Each proposal would be trialled over a set period. In respect of the proposals regarding graffiti removal, the service would become more reactive in nature. There would be no change in arrangements for the removal of offensive or racist graffiti, which would continue to be removed within 24 hours.

In respect of the proposals regarding the commercial waste portfolio, the Panel requested details of how many additional customers would be required to generate the income specified.

Panel Members felt that the graffiti service was excellent and that their proactive work was a major part of this. They were therefore concerned that the proposal might have an impact on the levels of graffiti. It was noted that problems with graffiti were an issue across the borough and, in particular, had been an issue in the west.

AGREED:

1. That figures for the increase in Council/Veolia customers anticipated in the proposal to increase the commercial waste portfolio be circulated to the Panel; and
2. The some capacity be maintained for proactive work by the graffiti service.

Street Cleansing Waste, Recycling – Overall

AGREED:

That the Panel express its concern at the potential cumulative impact of the range of proposed changes to street cleansing, waste and recycling.

3.9; Rationalisation of Parking Visitor Permits

Ms Cunningham reported that it was proposed to increase visitor permit charges from 35p to 80p per hour. This was in line with the amount charged in other boroughs. In addition, it was intended to rationalise concessionary rates, which would make administration simpler. Permits were bought in high volumes and it was possible that they were being sold onwards. It was hoped that the increase would reduce any instances of them being sold onwards.

Panel Members felt that it was unfortunate that the increases had not be introduced in a graduated way. It was noted that there was provision for carers to buy permits at a reduced rate as well as a traders permit. Concern was expressed that the age for the concessionary rate had been set at 75, which was felt to be too high. The Panel also requested further information on for sales of permits broken down by controlled parking zone (CPZ).

AGREED:

1. That figures be provided for sale of permits, broken down by CPZ;
2. That the age for the concessionary rate be reduced from 75 to 65; and
3. That future increases in price be staged.

3.10; New Parking Operating Model

Ms Cunningham reported that the parking enforcement function in most boroughs had been out sourced and it had been estimated that savings of £920,000 could be made if Haringey did the same. However, there was a risk that income levels could be affected adversely during the transition period. Mr McDonnell stated that Enforcement Officers in Haringey typically earned around £30,000 per annum whilst the salaries offered by some private companies were around £17 – 20,000. There were also savings to be made in respect of terms and conditions.

The Panel noted that TUPE would apply at transfer but the new provider would probably look to review terms and conditions in due course. The proposal was currently that the market be tested in order to determine the potential benefits of adopting a new model of provision. The issue would be discussed with relevant trade unions. There was currently a need for additional enforcement officers. The Council would insist that any new provider paid staff the London Living Wage. Consideration of the issue was at an early stage. A decision on the procurement would need to be made in due course by Cabinet, following consideration of all of the relevant issues.

The Panel expressed concern that the proposal, if implemented, would lead eventually to a two tier workforce. This could carry the risk of legal challenge on equal pay grounds. In answer to a question, Ms Cunningham stated that there were challenges to providing the service in-house and these could limit its potential for growth.

AGREED:

That concern be expressed about the proposal and that a full report on the issue, including an equalities impact assessment, be submitted to overview and scrutiny once market testing has taken place and before a decision is taken on procurement by Cabinet.

3.11; Relocation of Parking/CCTV Processes and Appeals

Ms Cunningham reported that the proposal was to re-locate the administration of 1st stage appeals outside of London. The 2nd stage would remain in-house. It had proven difficult to recruit staff locally. There were a number of potential models and Islington Council had continued to directly employ staff despite them being based in Manchester. It was hoped that the proposal would lead to a more efficient and better service. The intention was to test the market before a decision was made on whether or not to proceed with the procurement.

The Panel expressed concern that staff were being placed in the position of having to choose between moving away from their community or losing their job.

AGREED:

That concern be expressed about the proposal and that a full report on the issue, including an equalities impact assessment, be submitted to overview and scrutiny once market testing has taken place and before a decision is taken on procurement by Cabinet.

3.12; Cashless Parking Payments

The Panel noted that the majority of local authorities were moving to cashless payments. However, there would still be back up provision for cash.

3.13 – 3.14; Online Parking Permit Applications & Visitor Permits & Parking New IT Platform

Concern was expressed by the Panel at the implications for people without access to IT equipment or who were unable to use it. Mr McDonnell stated that they would still be able to access the service and agreed to provide details of the proposed pathway.

AGREED:

That details of service provision for residents without access to IT facilities be circulated to the Panel.

3.15; Increase in CO2 Parking Permit Charge

Anne Cunningham, Head of Traffic Management, reported that it was intended that the proposal would raise additional income of £400,000. It was based on the DVLA model and was consistent with Council policies. The charges would be higher for properties with two or more cars. It was acknowledged that the proposals were not going to be popular. They would also require changes to the Council's IT systems. It was difficult to compare it with the current scheme as the banding system was different.

CHAIR: Councillor Makbule Gunes

Signed by Chair

Date