

Scrutiny Streets, Environment & Homes Sub-Committee

Meeting of held on Tuesday, 7 November 2017 at 6.30 pm in Council Chamber, Town Hall,
Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Sean Fitzsimons (Chair);
Councillor Jan Buttinger (Vice-Chair);
Councillors Joy Prince and Sue Winborn

Also Present: Councillor Stuart Collins

Apologies: Councillor Pat Clouder, Patricia Hay-Justice and Donald Speakman

PART A

39/17 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2017 were agreed as an accurate record.

40/17 Disclosure of Interests

There were none.

41/17 Urgent Business (if any)

There were no items of urgent business.

42/17 Cabinet Member Question Time - Cabinet Member for Clean Green Croydon

The Cabinet Member for Clean Green Croydon gave the Sub-Committee a presentation on his portfolio, which can be found in the Presentations supplement, and stated that it was the ambition for Croydon is lead the way on innovation, service delivery and enforcement.

While it was noted that there were more reported flytips through the app it was stressed that it did not mean that flytipping was more prevalent, rather that people were reporting them. Furthermore the Cabinet Member informed the Committee that 82% of reports flytips were cleared within 48 hours and the new waste contract would require them to be cleared within 24 hours.

The Cabinet Member noted the importance of community involvement and informed the Sub-Committee that there had been over 120 Don't Mess With Croydon clean up events and there were 300 Street Champions.

The priorities for the portfolio were stated to be ensuring that the new waste contract through the South London Waste Partnership (SLWP) contract was successful and further developing the IT systems and the app. The Council would continue to work with the SLWP and review the work of other councils to introduce further good practice.

The Cabinet Member informed Members that he had spoken to a number of residents associations across the borough regarding the new contract and had received positive responses. While financial pressures continued it was stressed that it was important that there was a strong enforcement team, and that the SLWP efficiency savings were being directed into improved services.

In response to Member questions the Cabinet Member stated that maps had been drawn up of the flytipping hotspots and covert surveillance had been started to try to catch those committing the crime. It was anticipated that it would take around 18 months to completed surveillance in each ward, and Members were advised that if they had areas they thought were a hotspot that they should inform the Director of Safety.

Members queried the communication around bulky item collection and whether assisted collections could be provided to the elderly. The Cabinet Member assured the Sub-Committee that if the resident informed the Council then Veolia would assist in collecting bulky items. Whilst the information on the website was considered to be clear, particularly when booking a collection, it was suggested that a line should be added to any leaflets to make the distinction between the cost and volume of items for bulky items and white goods.

The Cabinet Member, in response to Member concerns, stated there were stickers for shops to advertise that they were responsible however officers would visit traders to discuss their responsibilities in keeping the area clean. Furthermore the Cabinet Member committed to put Kenley on the list of centres for a deep street clean.

In response to Member questions the Cabinet Member stated that flytipping was necessarily the governments or the council's fault and that it was wrong to use it as 'political football'. The Keep Britain Tidy campaign was noted as a charity, and not a government campaign, and it was suggested that a national campaign similar to the Drink Driving campaign was required. The Cabinet Member suggested that more resources needed to be given to local councils, or money should be ring-fenced for environmental services to provide a minimum statutory service.

Officers confirmed they would provide Members with the timetable of when the street vacuums would be introduced but confirmed that they would not be used as a leafing resource but as a street cleansing resource.

Members queried whether there was a correlation between flytipping and areas of high private rented properties, particularly at the beginning of the month when tenancies changed. The Cabinet Member confirmed that officers were working with the Housing department and did contact landlords through the Landlord Licensing Scheme regarding responsible disposal of waste. Members were further informed that residents often contacted the Council when neighbours were moving out and were leaving waste, such as old mattresses, and officers would speak to those who had flytipped. The Director of Safety stated it was difficult to catch people in the act and so education was important alongside enforcement.

Members queried the statement that using the number of reported flytips was not a helpful assessment and were informed that in future it should be helpful, and that from 2016/17 figures there had been a 4% decrease in reports.

In response to Member questions officers confirmed the Council had responded to the Mayor's strategy and agreed with making a circular economy and deigning out waste, such as less packaging.

The Director of Streets, in response to questions, stated that as part of the procurement strategy for the new waste contract the option on bringing it in house was reviewed but it did not stack up economically. The Cabinet Member stressed the importance of Veolia instilling the pride for working for Croydon for their staff also.

Veolia representatives confirmed that they were looking to reduce agency staff which would reduce the issue of missed collections. Furthermore tablets had been installed in each vehicle which learnt the route used by crews and required assisted collections to be confirmed as having taken place.

The Sub-Committee were informed that the flytipping hotspots were based on the statistics received and were often found in places where there was little overlooking. The Director of Safety stated that the majority of flytipping was domestic waste rather than commercial waste and was often found in high population density areas with a high turnover of tenancies. Officers were identifying roads where there were issues and not only considered enforcement, but also education and ensured the right provisions were available for people to appropriately dispose their waste.

In response to Member questions officers confirmed the new waste contract would provide those with limited waste storage space with different coloured bags which would also help distinguish domestic waste from flytips in black bags. The coloured bags would also distinguish residential waste from commercial waste and vehicles would have cameras on them to enable officers to review data on areas with a large number of black waste bags.

Veolia representatives stated that cardboard was a valuable resource and they would be looking to actively promoting the recycling of cardboard to customers.

The Director of Streets stated that while the IT system had helped there was a need for further integration and part of the new service would introduce further integration with two-way communication between the Council and Veolia being key. The Director of Safety also confirmed that improvements to creating automated feedback to customers was necessary, and that further development work on the app for enforcement was being undertaken. The Sub-Committee were informed that the enforcement team were due to have new devices in the new year. Officers confirmed that they were confident that the IT integration improvements would be in place for the start of the contract.

In reaching its recommendations, the Committee made the following

CONCLUSIONS:

- That work had been ongoing for two years to improve and integrate the IT system;
- That further work needed to be undertaken to ensure residents received notifications following reporting of flytips; and
- The new waste contract would introduce a number of service improvements and was welcomed.

The Committee **RESOLVED** to recommend to Cabinet that:

1. Leaflets on the bulky waste collections be clarified to include an additional line regarding the cost of white goods collection;
2. Members be informed when the integration of ICT systems across enforcement functions has been completed; and
3. An update be provided to Members as to the issues experienced on IT integration and notifications to the public.

43/17 South London Waste Partnership - Looking to the new contract in 2018

The Sub-Committee received a presentation from officers which can be found in the Presentations supplement.

The Veolia representatives stressed that the issues experienced in the London Borough of Sutton were due to it being a large scale change taking place on a single day; including the transfer of 330 staff, new vehicles and new technology being introduced. Members were assured that lessons had been learnt and that the contractor would not attempt such a large scale change in one day.

Members were informed that the new vehicles would be arriving in Croydon three months early and would be introduced one at a time so that any faults could be identified and rectified. Furthermore, the street cleaning kit would be delivered ahead of the contract start date.

The Sub-Committee were informed that Veolia were working to have flat waste collections on the same day which would not be day with bank holidays, and that work was underway to review the communications that were to be sent to residents so it was more descriptive.

While it was acknowledged there had been issues with the introduction of new technology in Sutton, the Echo system had been used by the teams in Croydon for some time. Additionally, Veolia had all the data on waste collections as it had been shared by the Council and that performance monitoring had already been undertaken. While it was acknowledged by Veolia that there would be challenges with the roll out of the new contract it was noted that performance in Sutton had been higher than expected after three months.

Members queried whether Christmas trees would be collected from the kerbside this season and were informed by the Director of Streets that discussions were taking place with Veolia as to whether the introduction could be brought forward. However, the community collection points would be in place if the kerbside collection could not be introduced.

The Sub-Committee were informed that there were a number of KPIs with the new contract including; flytips to be cleared within 24 hours, no more than 30 missed collection per 100,000, and streets to be cleaned to a grade A and maintained to be grade B. The Director of Streets agreed to share the KPIs within the redacted contract with Members.

In response to Member questions officers stated that the Council had made a recent investment of new equipment which would be used by Veolia, however the payback had been the improvements to the service including additional afternoon collections and improved street cleaning. Members were assured that the equipment had not been bought for the benefit of the boroughs within the South London Waste Partnership, and that a decision had been made across the Partnership to invest in new kit.

Officers noted that the literature and communication of the new street cleaning standard would be important as residents were used to a frequency service and the new service would be concentrated on the standard of street cleanliness. As such it was felt that pictures showing the expected level of cleanliness would be integral to the communication. The Sub-Committee were assured that officers would work with Veolia to monitor the level of deterioration of street cleanliness and that there was some flexibility within the contract to provide more resourcing, if required. While officers would review the cleanliness through visits and spot checks, feedback from the public and councillors would also assist in ensuring the standard was met.

Veolia representatives stated that when a leaf lost its structure and shape it became litter and that the leafing plan was not deployed until as late as possible so as to make best use of resources. Members were informed that there was a separate resource that was deployed for ten weeks to deal with leaves.

Members queried how the new contract would resolve the issue of plastic and bottles being scattered down the road due to box lids being lost and were informed that the additional bin for paper would free up another box that could

be used for plastics. Furthermore Veolia were looking at alternative containers for those who had limited space for bin storage. The Sub-Committee were also informed that if the teams collecting the bins caused a spillage then they were expected to clear it, however if they found spillage on the road then they were expected to call in the street cleaners.

The Sub-Committee were informed that there would be the introduction of battery collections within the new contract and that residents would need to present them on top of their bin in a clearly marked, or clear, bag.

Communication was recognised as being an important aspect of ensuring the new contract was a success and would be rolled out in the new year. It was intended that the literature would be more picture tutorial rather than having leaflets in a number of languages as it had been found to be more successful in other boroughs.

Recycling and waste collections in flats was discussed and officers stated that having different coloured bags for those without communal bins would assist. The bags would be delivered annually through Amazon to ensure that they were signed for and could not be stolen, and would include literature on which bags to use and when to present the bags. Discussions were being had on how to manage requests for further bags.

Members noted that often the bin storage areas in flats were extremely dirty and that put residents off from properly recycling. Veolia stated that if the dirt was created by them then they would clear it up, however it was not their responsibility to clean general dirt rather it was the responsibility of the property managers. Veolia would, however, work with the properties to identify which residents were causing the issue and would engage with them. While it was noted that many residents did not like touching the lids of the large euro bins and would often put their bags beside the bins there was not currently an alternative bin available to roll out but it would be reviewed. The Sub-Committee were also informed that food waste containers would be cleaned as part of the contract.

In reaching its recommendations, the Sub-Committee made the following

CONCLUSIONS:

- That the new waste contract was welcomed;
- That the communication strategy was integral in ensuring the successful delivery of the new contract; and
- That lessons had been learnt from the challenges experienced in the London Borough of Sutton.

The Sub-Committee **RESOLVED** to recommend to Cabinet that:

1. A further update on the contract delivery be brought to the Sub-Committee in twelve months;
2. The communications strategy be carefully planned for the new bin collections and street cleaning; and
3. The KPIs for the contract be available to Members so they are aware of the expected standards.

44/17 Responses from Cabinet

The Sub-Committee noted the responses from Cabinet following the recommendations made at the meetings held on 28 February 2017 and 28 March 2017.

The Director of Streets informed the Sub-Committee that a capital investment of £180,000 per annum for four years had been achieved which would concentrate on replanting trees in empty pits and where there was high air pollution. Furthermore officers were looking to procure a single asset based system for the management of trees in the borough. The Sub-Committee were informed that the reason vacant tree pits were being prioritised was that it cost ten times more to plant trees in new pits due to the investigative work that needed to be undertaken in regards to utility lines.

The Chair requested that at the meeting on 20 February 2018 the Cabinet Member provided more information on the responses to the crossover recommendations following the meeting on 28 February 2017.

The Sub-Committee **NOTED** the responses from Cabinet.

45/17 Work Programme

The Chair noted that the meeting scheduled for 20 February 2018 would be focussed on transport and environment and so requested updates on the impact of the scrutiny deep dives on the Air Quality Action Plan, Vision Zero and the Cycling Strategy.

The Sub-Committee **NOTED** the work programme for the 2017/18 municipal year.

46/17 Exclusion of the Press and Public

This item was not required.

The meeting ended at 9.05 pm

Signed:

Date:

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