

Environmental Services Cabinet Committee

Tuesday, 12 February 2019

7.30 pm

Present:

Cllr John Knight (Chair)

Councillors: Gurdip Ram Bungar
 John Loughlin
 Peter Rayner
 Alan Ridgers
 Lenny Rolles
 Harold Craske

Stuart Alford Assistant Director (Environment)
Daniel Killian Assistant Director (Operations)
Mark Cordingley Technical Manager (Housing Repairs)
Lauren Wallis Committee Services Officer (Minutes)

76. Apologies

An apology for absence was received from Cllr Sandra Garside. Cllr Harold Craske attended as her substitute.

An apology for absence was also received from Cllr Bronwen McGarrity.

77. To sign the minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 19 November 2018 were signed by the Chair.

78. To declare any interests Members may have in the items contained on this agenda. When declaring an interest Members should state what their interest is.

No declarations of interest were made.

79. Corporate Performance Update - Quarter Three 2018-19

Members were presented with an update against the Performance Management Framework as set out in the Council's Corporate Plan 2015-19, for quarter 3 2018/19.

The Committee considered each page in turn and the following was highlighted:

Recycling

- Members' attention was drawn to the fact that less than 2% of Gravesham's waste was being sent to landfill and this also applied to Kent as a whole. The rest of the waste was either recycled or incinerated to generate energy from waste.
- The Committee was advised that a digital system was being introduced which would include an in-cab unit on refuse freighters which would allow operatives to record problems such as bins not being put out in time for collection or problems with contamination as and when they arose. The new system would also allow residents to search their address on the Gravesham website which would then inform them of their next collection day for example, at Christmas and New Year.
- The issue of contaminated bins was raised and how the operatives check for this. The Committee was advised that a quick check for contamination was undertaken when the bin collected before it was emptied into the collection vehicle. Educational stickers were also applied to bins found to be contaminated. Where the reports highlighted a repeat offender, then an officer makes a visit to the household in question.

Litter

- A request was made that officers check that Checkatrade insisted on a valid waste carrier licence before companies could advertise on the site. The Assistant Director (Environment) agreed to look into this.

Post meeting note from the Assistant Director (Environment) - Check-a-Trade was contacted in March 2018 about this matter and they confirmed that as part of their vetting checks, they ask for a Waste Carriers Licence to be provided which was then verified upon expiry to make sure the Licence had been renewed.

- The possible increase of disposal fees at Pepperhill Household Waste Recycling Centre on 1 April 2019 was raised and whether officers intended to put anything in place to mitigate potential issues that might arise. The Assistant Director (Environment) advised a review of the situation would take place after 12 months had elapsed. Statistics on flytipping and whether it had increased would be considered. Kent County Council had been asked to undertake a householder education campaign and a meeting with the County Council on this subject would take place in the next few weeks.
- The impact of areas outside of the County such as neighbouring London Boroughs, Surrey and East Sussex would also have to be taken into account as their fees and charges had already been increased. Members were informed that the Kent Resource Partnership funded an Intelligence Officer at Kent County Council who collected all information on flytipping across the County to put together stronger cases against offenders.
- A comment was made that commercial illegal flytippers were easier to identify. However it was more difficult to identify household level illegal flytippers. Members were advised of the SCRAP Campaign which sought to educate householders to be wary of people who offered to dispose of waste and to request to see a valid waste carrier licence before allowing their waste to be removed and to ask for a receipt for disposal work undertaken

Community Wardens

- Following a question of the use of Community Wardens in the town centre, Members were advised that the Community Wardens came about as a result of the Public Place Protection Order and whilst there may be a possibility of an extension to other areas in the Borough, the town centre was the only place where the Order was enforceable.

Housing Repair

- The Committee requested that congratulations be passed to the Housing Repairs teams for their excellent efforts.

Recycling for flats and Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)

- Following a question with regard to research into whether recycling bags could be provided to flats and Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), the officer stated that other events had taken precedence such as the extreme weather and the fire at the Pepperhill Household Waste Recycling Centre during 2018. However it was now intended to push on with this initiative.

Waste Collection

- The Committee was informed that the use of a small waste collection vehicle in narrow roads and lanes of the Borough was being investigated. Officers would be visiting Decorum Borough Council who had implemented this system in an effort to improve the service.
- It was noted that excellent job had been done regarding the communications to residents and businesses over the Christmas period on recycling and waste collections.

The Committee noted the information provided within the report.

80. Sole Supplier Procurement - Oral Update

The Assistant Director (Operations) advised that over past three years, DSO Building Management undertaken a programme of significant change and a number of big projects had been completed such as the salary review, introduction of a new job scheduling system, new policies and procedures and more recently, the agreement to recruit 25 additional craft workers over two phases to enable the completion of more work in-house. From the start of the transformation it had been clear that the way in which the supply of materials and stock was managed would need to be reviewed.

The Technical Manager (Housing Repairs) advised that towards the end of 2018, Cabinet had agreed that a procurement exercise be undertaken to appoint a sole supplier to supply the materials and goods needed to repair and maintain council housing. Historically, the ordering, storage and allocation of materials for repair jobs had been managed locally and, whilst the team had done a great job over the last few years, there were better and more efficient ways of working which included allowing GBC and a sole suppliers system to digitalise the process with some automation of ordering. Using the Procurement for Housing Framework, a mini competition had been carried out and this had been evaluated in December 2018. Grafton's had been the first ranked tenderer.

Since December 2018, officers had been working with Grafton's to decide the working relationship going forward and following the initial meeting it had been agreed that the Council should replicate a successful operation the company had with neighbouring organisations such as MHS Homes and the Council's current contractor, Breyer. Commencing 1 April 2019, Grafton would work in partnership with GBC and would occupy a section of the current stores area at Brookvale. They would fully manage the supply of materials in their dedicated area and the systems would be linked to ensure all materials and stock purchased was fully auditable and could be linked to an actual job.

Front line craft workers such as electricians, plumbers etc. would be allocated stock which would be replenished after the completion of the job via the Oneserve system which would be linked to the automated ordering system at Grafton's. Workers would replenish their stock from a stand-alone locker located at the Brookvale Depot. If stock was not available there would be an internal trade counter located in the stores. This way of working was not only more efficient, it also allowed GBC the opportunity to reduce the risk of holding stock, reduce overheads and improve service to the customers.

The following points were raised:

- The addition of 25 new employees had been mentioned by officers. Following a question in relation to the Apprenticeship Levy paid by the Council as a major employer, the Assistant Director (Operations) advised that none of the new employees would be apprentices. However, apprentices were already employed elsewhere within the service which included an apprentice electrician, apprentice plumber and apprentice carpenter.
- Following a question with regard to value for money, Members were advised Grafton's had been selected following a mini competition through the Procurement for Housing Framework. Members had been consulted on this decision via a report to this Cabinet Committee, Overview Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet. In addition, the Chair of the Committee, as Portfolio Holder, had been briefed on a number of occasions.
- Members were advised that if an item of stock was not available, Grafton's had undertaken to source and supply it to the Depot within 24 hours. It was also noted that the service would continue to work with a small number of independent suppliers when Grafton's could not match the price, for example UPVC windows and doors.
- The Chair highlighted that the new efficiency model made the jobs and repairs more seamless and also increased the Council's buying power and enabled economies of scale.

The Committee noted the information provided within the report.

81. Play Site Improvement Programme

The Committee was informed of proposed improvements to the Borough's Council-owned play sites. The Assistant Director (Environment) advised that this was a good new story as nothing had been done in relation to the maintenance of play sites since the award of Lottery Funding in the 2000s. An open space study had been undertaken together with a review of play sites and available funding. The report set out improvements that had already been

made to certain sites, play site improvements planned for 2019/20 and next steps for the future which would include a review of Camer Park and other sites. Specific improvements on Council owned sites that were required would be confirmed and funding from the Housing Revenue Account for these works would need to be established. Currently an initial £80,000 had been provided for improvements to HRA funded sites.

The following comments were made:

- The question of the inclusion of disabled facilities including sensory aspects was raised. The Assistant Director (Environment) confirmed that the inclusion of such equipment would be investigated but highlighted the need not to limit the equipment was part of the procurement process for any new site and all the recently improved sites had such equipment.
- In respect of Park Place which currently had three separate play spaces which were each designed for different age group, the officer commented that age requirements would be considered if the site was merged into one large site. It was noted that pre-teens did not need as much adult supervision as younger children. Officer would look at residents' views on the play parks near blocks of flats were as these had a greater impact on the local community.

The Chair thanked officers for a comprehensive report.

The Committee noted the information provided within the report.

82. Any other business which by reason of special circumstances the Chair is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency.

Close of meeting

The meeting ended at 8.19 pm