

Operational Services Cabinet Committee

Monday, 8 June 2020

7.30 pm

Present:

Cllr Lee Croxton (Chair)
Cllr Gurbax Singh (Vice-Chair)

Councillors: Conrad Broadley
Dakota Dibben
Gary Harding
Nirmal Khabra
Leslie Pearton
Peter Scollard
Steve Thompson
Frank Wardle

Nick Brown	Director (Housing & Operations)
Stuart Alford	Assistant Director (Operations)
Elizabeth Thornton	Service Manager (Property & Regulatory Services)
Mark Lees	Regulatory Services Manager
Joel Simmons	Waste Projects & Compliance Officer
Clive Boorman	Technical Services Support Officer
Charlie Simmonds	Committee Services Manager

1. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2020 were signed by the Chair.

2. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

3. Coronavirus - Cabinet Portfolio Impact

The Committee was presented with a report which provided an overview of the impact of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic upon the practical delivery of the services within the Operational Services Cabinet portfolio.

The Assistant Director (Operations) apprised Members of the operational steps, as detailed in the report, which had been introduced in order to maintain the services within Waste Management; Cemeteries; and Horticultural.

The Regulatory Services Manager apprised Members of the operational steps, as detailed in the report, which had been introduced in order to maintain the services within Environmental Health and Licensing.

The Committee thanked everyone at the Council and within Operational Services Cabinet portfolio who had worked hard to step up to the challenges brought by the lockdown

particularly the Waste Collection Team for continuing to deliver an exceptional Waste Collection and Recycling Service.

The Committee considered the report and highlighted the following:-

- What will the strategy be for the reopening of Council owned play grounds, will the Council be following Government guidance. The Assistant Director (Operations) advised that the Council will be following Government guidance and will also be undertaking its own risk assessments. The play grounds will remain closed pending updated Government guidance.
- Consideration be given to resuming the delivery of recycling sacks.
- In relation to the measures introduced at the Civic Centre and Brookvale such as limited interaction, supply of PPE etc., had those measures also been applied to the Waste Collection Team. The Assistant Director (Operations) confirmed that appropriate measures had been put in place for the Waste Collection Team and there continued to be regular communication with the Team. The Team was also aware of the process to be followed should they experience any symptoms of Covid-19. Members were informed that there had been no positive test results to date.
- What had the additional cost been to procure PPE and had a variety of suppliers been used. The Assistant Director (Operations) advised that he would circulate this information outside of the meeting.
- As there had now been an increase in people cycling and walking, consideration be given to the Waste Collection Team keeping the pavements as clear as practicable when emptying and returning kerbside bins.
- Concern was expressed regarding the decision to close the cemeteries for casual usage. The Assistant Director (Operations) explained that measures had been taken for health and safety reasons and the updated Government guidance had been implemented.
- The Recycling Centre at Morrisons, Gravesend was now in need of a clean up.
- It was requested that the contact details for the Licensing Team be sent to Members. The Regulatory Services Manager advised that he would circulate details outside of the meeting.

The Committee noted the report.

4. Bin contamination Policy

The Committee was presented with the proposed Bin Contamination Policy which detailed how the Council will plan to deal with recycling contamination.

The contamination of recycling bins had increased in the last couple of years within Gravesham.

The Waste Projects & Compliance Officer advised that contamination affects the quality of the materials collected for reprocessing and that most forms of contamination were due to resident confusion or error. The proposed policy will allow the Council to educate and work with residents to ensure that the Council collects good quality recycling.

The proposed policy was one of a number of planned actions to educate and encourage residents to recycle as much as possible. There will also be:-

- A recycling communications campaign which will take place through the Council's corporate social media channels.
- All residents moving in to housing developments will be provided with a new 'Recycling & Waste Services' leaflet which will also be made available to landlords and management agents to issue.
- The Street Champions will also be equipped with a version of the leaflet to enable them to give appropriate advice about recycling.

The proposed policy will introduce a "four strikes" procedure whereby recycling bins will ultimately be removed from households that contaminate the respective bins on four occasions within a rolling six month period having failed to respond to advice, information and support from Officers in the Waste Management Team. Section 2.8 of the report detailed the "four strikes" procedure.

The Waste Projects & Compliance Officer informed Members that by utilising the contamination data already collected to target those properties that had been highlighted, the fourth stage would very rarely be reached.

The Committee was informed that there would be a different procedure in place for communal bins and section 3.2 of the report detailed that procedure.

The Committee considered the report and highlighted the following:-

- In relation to communal bins, what was classed as moderate contamination, an explanation should be included within the policy.
- Consideration be given to introducing fines for contamination.
- Consideration be given to the collection of glass.
- As Gravesham is a multi-cultural community, consideration be given to producing the letters, leaflets etc. in different formats, languages etc.
- If vulnerable residents were identified through the process then those residents must be reported to relevant agencies in order for appropriate support to be provided.
- There was currently limited information available on the Council's website therefore it should be reviewed and updated.

The Waste Projects & Compliance Officer also provided the Committee with an update on the Street Champions. The intention was to launch a 'Street Champions' campaign in March alongside the Great British Spring Clean however due to Covid-19 this was postponed. There were currently 140 volunteers and 130 streets, alleyways, parks etc. had been adopted by Street Champions.

The Committee noted the report.

5. Annual Review of the Licensing Shared Service

The Committee was presented with a copy of the annual review that had been conducted in respect of the Licensing Shared Service with Medway Council.

The shared service had been in place with Medway Council since 1 January 2019.

The Regulatory Services Manager drew Members' attention to appendix two of the report which detailed the following objectives that had been identified for the shared service and were currently being met:-

- Efficiency savings. Realising actual financial savings across the two sites but maintaining delivery of the service.
- Added resilience across the two authorities. There will be a larger pool of officers covering both authorities providing additional resilience to cover sickness absence/vacancies or increased workload should this be required.
- Availability of specialist skills across both authorities leading to increased efficiency; potential for a reduced requirement for external support from contractors etc.
- Sharing of best practice in the delivery of the Licensing Service.
- Expansion of knowledge base of individual officers.

The Committee expressed concern regarding the issues detailed in section three of appendix two in relation to IT infrastructure and requested that the Chair draws this to the attention of the Cabinet so that the issues can be expedited. The Chair advised that he would liaise with the Regulatory Services Manager outside of the meeting.

The Committee thanked the Licensing Team for the hard work that had been undertaken to date.

The Committee noted the report.

Close of meeting

The meeting ended at 9.09 pm