

LEISURE, PARKS & WASTE MANAGEMENT (OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY) COMMITTEE

18 NOVEMBER 2019

PRESENT:

Councillors Matthews (Chairman), Banevicius (Vice-Chair), Silvester-Hall (Vice-Chair), Baker, Barnett, L Ennis, Westwood and B Yeates.

(In accordance with Council Procedure Rule No.17 Councillors attended the meeting).

14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Ray and M. Wilcox.

15 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interests.

16 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting were signed as a correct record.

17 JOINT WASTE SERVICE FIT FOR THE FUTURE REVIEW

The Committee received a report on the findings and recommendations following a fundamental review of the Joint Waste Service (JWS) which is delivered with Tamworth Borough Council. The Committee welcomed Cherie Whiteman and Bob Couth from Frith Resource Management Ltd who carried out the review.

The Committee then received a presentation on the review and the key findings. It was reported that after benchmarking analysis, the JWS was considered to be of average to good performance with low service costs. It was noted that there was a higher than average use of agency staff.

Different service delivery models were presented to the Committee including Local Authority Trading Company (LATC) either Teckal exempt or as a joint venture and fully outsourced. It was then reported that after evaluating the service delivery options against costs, control of service and risks, there was insufficient evidence to show one model would achieve significantly greater performance.

Other considerations for improving performance of the service as it is were then reported which included the current high use of agency staff. It was noted that there was a national shortage of drivers as well as difficulty to retain and so it was suggested to consider the employment package offered to see if this could help. It was noted that the pay rates offered were comparative to other authorities but not the private sector. It was also suggested that hours and the number of drivers per round could be considered and reduced to ease pressures however it was reported that this was already happening.

The emerging Government's Resources and Waste Strategy was discussed and the implications of delivering some of the changes proposed including food waste and free garden waste collections. It was reported there were differing levels of change that could be made but there was not much difference in the additional cost to the JWS.

It was then discussed if a change or additional depot location could be beneficial as it could allow for less wasted travel time for vehicles and allow for housing growth and potential for more vehicles if food waste collection was introduced. It was noted it had been investigated that there would be an unlikely saving from the number of vehicles required if the depot was relocated due to need. When asked, it was reported that no other locations had been considered and would not be until after the national Strategy had been released and fully comprehended. It was reminded that the depot also was the location for street cleansing and other services.

The Committee then asked questions and there was a lot of discussion regarding the use of agency staff and the shortage of drivers. It was noted that the terms and conditions of employment were good however pay was considerably lower than what was offered in the private sector. It was also asked whether the location of the depot was also contributing to shortage of staff and it was reported that it was unknown but should be further considered. It was also suggested that engagement with the national training body could be useful.

It was reported that sickness levels were high but similar to the other authorities benchmarked with. Members did note that the nature of the work undertaken was very physical and so the risk of sickness was not to be unexpected.

There was then discussions regarding how to undertake food waste collection if required and it was asked if vessel composting could be reintroduced and it was reported that there was now a trend to move to anaerobic digestion as it could create energy. It was noted that it had been collected in brown bins in the past however the national Strategy was most likely require that green and food waste be collected separately.

When asked, it was noted that the £345k additional overheads were to cover officer input. It was also noted that capital costs for any service change including new bins and liners had been annualised but would most likely be an initial cost. It was also noted that although the government had reported that there would be funding to aid these set up costs, there had been some scepticism from the industry.

It was felt that the review, how the JWS would be delivered in the future and the Committee's observations of this could be a response to climate change and environmental impact.

The Committee wished to congratulate all that worked with the JWS team as the review had proved that the service they provided was very good and valued by residents.

RESOLVED: (1) That the approach taken during the fundamental review of the Joint Waste Service and its key findings be endorsed;

(2) That the proposal to continue providing the Joint Waste Service using the current in house arrangements and delay any decision on the future provision of the service until the implications of the Government's Resources and Waste Strategy are fully known be endorsed; and

(3) That the proposals to undertake an appraisal of options for the future disposal of dry recyclate and identify measures to address the issue of over reliance on agency staff be endorsed.

18 DEPARTURE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PLACE & COMMUNITY

The Committee requested to record their thanks to the Director of Place & Community, Mr Richard King for all his work and support to the Members and District Council and wished him well for the future.

(The Meeting closed at 7.02 pm)

CHAIRMAN