

OVERVIEW SELECT COMMITTEE

22 May 2018 at 6.00 p.m.

Present: - Councillors Dingemans (Chairman), Mrs Bence, Blampied, Elkins, Hughes, Mrs Oakley, Oliver-Redgate, Warren and Wheal.

Councillors; Bence, Mrs Brown, Clayden, Charles, Wensley and Wotherspoon were also present for all or part of the meeting.

27. WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed Members, Officers and members of the press to the first meeting of the new Municipal Year.

28. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors; English, Edwards and Miss Rhodes. In the absence of Councillor English Councillor Hughes undertook the role of Vice-Chairman for the duration of the meeting.

Apologies had also been received from the Cabinet Member for Technical Services, Councillor Haymes.

29. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of Interest.

30. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Overview Select Meeting held on 20 March 2018, as previously circulated, were approved by the Committee as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

31. START TIMES

The Committee

RESOLVED

That its start times for meetings during 2018/2019 be 6.00 pm.

Overview Select  
Committee – 22.05.18

32. REVIEW OF THE COMBINED CLEANSING SERVICES CONTRACT PERFORMANCE

In introducing this report, the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services welcomed the Environmental Services & Strategy Manager, the Interim Cleansing Operations Manager and Laura Parker, Biffa’s Business Manager, to the meeting. The report, presented to the Committee, provided an overview of the scope of operations delivered by Biffa, how these were managed and explored contractual performance over the first year of the contract.

The Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services reminded Members that Arun District Council’s three year Combined Cleansing Services Contract commenced on 1 February 2017, having been awarded to Biffa Municipal Ltd. In December Cabinet agreed a further three year extension of the contract up to 2023. It was reported that this extension would allow the Council to retain a cost effective and high performing service as well as being able to fully explore service delivery before the next competitive tender process.

The Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services outlined the key services that the Combined Cleansing Services Contract provided as:

- Weekly refuse collection
- Bi-weekly recycling collection
- Bi-Weekly garden waste collection
- Street Cleansing (including the removal of fly tipping)
- Emptying and cleaning of 612 Litter Bins and 450 Dog Waste Bins
- Cleansing Service for all of the Council’s public conveniences
- Small waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) weekly collection
- Weekly clinical waste collection (carried out by Medisort who are based in Littlehampton)
- Bulky waste collection (chargeable, on demand service)

With respect to Contract Management, the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services explained that this was managed by the Council’s Cleansing Team with rigorous monitoring and regular performance reviews. The Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services praised the high standards achieved by the service and the Cleansing Team who worked hard in partnership with the Contractor to maintain high service standards.

In terms of performance Members attention was drawn to the Council’s Corporate Plan and Service Delivery Plan Performance Indicators 2017/18 which measured contractual operations. The household waste target for

recycling and composting was set at 40% and this had been met with performance measured at 40.9%. The Residual waste target was noted as 466kg with actual performance as 450.089kg. The missed bins per refuse per 100,000 collections was recorded as 33.92 which was high performing and well within contract parameters. The Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services praised the contract which was working efficiently and the good performance that had been achieved.

Laura Parker, Biffa Business Manager, then provided the Committee with a presentation that outlined the service structure in place to deliver the Arun contract. It was explained that whilst there was a contractual relationship between the Council and Biffa it was seen as important that both organisations work in partnership to promote services and celebrate their positive delivery.

Following the presentation a number of questions were asked. Key points raised were:

- It was confirmed that the Council’s responsibility for removal of fly tipping only extended to public land but the Council did work with private landowners where necessary. It was explained that it was difficult to gather the evidence necessary to prosecute those that chose to fly tip but the Council’s Enforcement Officer had dealt with, prosecuted and deterred fly tippers in the past.
- It was suggested that long grass on verges was cut after Biffa undertook litter picking. The Interim Cleansing Operations Manager confirmed that Arun District Council and Biffa were working with West Sussex County Council Highways exploring the possibility of litter picking being carried out by the highways contractor before grass is cut and the potential for improved joined up working.
- Members discussed the materials that were appropriate for recycling and the Environmental Services & Strategy Manager explained that the Council’s educational advice on this subject helped to maximise recycling rates. It was reported that the low contamination rates and therefore quality of materials being sent for recycling in West Sussex were some of the best in the Country.
- Biffa were aware that dog bins could become fuller in the Summer months, along coastal areas, and steps were being taken to ensure extra collections at this time. Due to the possibility of sea water contamination Southern Water were looking to provide bigger and better dog waste bins.
- Opinion was expressed that although a 40.9% performance rate against a household target waste of 40% sent for recycling and composting was commendable it was suggested that the

Overview Select  
Committee – 22.05.18

Council should consider increasing the target percentage. The Environmental Services & Strategy Manager explained to members that as a Council we should aim as high as possible, but to achieve significantly higher rates, the Council would need to look at how it delivered its core waste services.

In general, Members were very happy with the service Biffa provided and reported the positive response that had been received from residents in their wards in terms of customer satisfaction. It was noted that the Committee would receive customer satisfaction reports for 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018 at their next meeting on 10 July 2018 and this would provide an opportunity to assess lower performing areas and look at possible solutions. This data would also be scrutinised by the Environmental Services & Strategy Manager and the Cleansing Operations Manager in order to identify key areas and priorities for the service.

The Chairman thanked the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services, the Environmental Services & Strategy Manager, the Interim Cleansing Operations Manager and Laura Parker, Biffa’s Business Manager for their informative report and presentation and was pleased to note the high standards and efficient service that had been achieved.

33. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) – UPDATE AND REVIEW OF PLAN SINCE ITS ADOPTION BY FULL COUNCIL IN SEPTEMBER

The Cabinet Member and Group Head of Residential Services provided the Committee with a presentation that updated Members on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

Members were reminded that in April 2012, the Localism Act 2011 introduced a new financial regime for local authority housing. A new self-financing system replaced the previous subsidy system giving Councils more freedom to borrow money and spend the income received in rents. To achieve this it was noted that Arun District Council made a substantial single payment of £70.9 million to the Government which was financed by loans from the Public Works Loans Board. The Group Head of Residential Services stated that self-financing allowed the Council more freedom and flexibility which, in turn, allowed for long term planning.

The Group Head of Residential Services went on to explain that the HRA Business a plan that focused on the core business of managing and investing in the Council’s residential properties and garages. It set out how the Council would deliver its key Housing objectives, within the resources available.

It was noted that the Council owned and managed:

- 3,338 rented homes
- 472 Leasehold properties
- 32 Shared Ownership homes
- 834 garages

It was explained that these were financed through the HRA (rents and service charges) which was separate from the rest of the Council’s finances and was ring fenced.

The HRA Business Plan priorities were noted as:

- 1) Increasing Housing Stock – the aim was to meet housing need. It was reported that annual needs amounted to 1300 cases and lettings per year were 400 so there was an identifiable gap between need and available housing. To increase housing stock the Council had adopted a New Homes Strategy with the aim of providing 250 new homes over a 10 year period. This would be achieved by using existing properties, purchase from developers by bidding on Section 106 schemes or by building on land owned by the HRA. It was reported that the Council had recently acquired 9 new homes in Barnham as Social Rents and had built two 4 bedroom homes on the Glenlogie site.
- 2) Ensuring assets are ‘Fit for Purpose’ – the second priority was to ensure existing Council property was fit for purpose providing the best possible homes for residents. In February 2017 a Stock Condition Survey was commissioned and this was due for completion at the end of 2018. This would provide evidence for a well-informed maintenance programme into the future. It was reported that amongst improvement works during 2017/18 the Council had installed 85 new kitchens and 115 new bathrooms. 260 new boilers had been fitted with upgrades to Central Heating. Health and Safety was also being reviewed to ensure the Council was compliant.
- 3) Maximising Income and making best use of Resources – Members were reminded that the Government announced a 1% reduction in the rents a local authority could charge in 2015. This meant a cumulative deficit of £4.7 million by 2020. The Council had introduced a Rent Setting Policy 2018/2019. The Group Head of Residential Services reported that the Council had achieved an above average rate of rent collection at 98% due to proactive and robust collection work. The new Rent Setting Policy ensured that the Council was in line with formula

Overview Select  
Committee – 22.05.18

rents and ensured that some properties could charge affordable rents. It was noted that the Council was reviewing service charges to ensure residents received value for money and ensured transparency. It was reported that the Council appointed a Housing Fraud Officer in January 2017 which helped maximise income by ensuring properties were utilised only by those in need. It was estimated that each case of housing fraud prevention in the Arun District equated to £93k so the post holder had saved the Council £26 million.

The Group Head of Residential Services concluded her presentation by outlining future challenges which mainly centred on the expected impact of Universal Credit upon its introduction in July 2018.

In discussing this update Members were pleased to note the Council’s proactive approach. The Cabinet Member for Residential Services outlined some of the property bids that the Council was currently working on in order to meet the target of 250 new Council properties over the next ten years.

The Cabinet Member for Residential Services referred to the Stock Condition Report which was half way through completion. He praised this initiative which would help inform Council budgets and provide a way to constructively meet maintenance and repair needs.

Discussion also took place on Housing Waiting lists and the need for the Council to proactively reduce those waiting on the register.

A question was raised on the normal turnaround time for a property that required disability adaptation. The Group Head of Residential Services responded that the referral process formed part of the time line and that she would investigate and respond outside of the meeting.

The Chairman then thanked the Group Head of Residential Services and the Cabinet Member of Residential Services for their informative updates.

34. FEEDBACK FROM THE MEETING OF THE SUSSEX POLICE AND CRIME PANEL HELD ON 27 APRIL 2018

The Committee received and noted the feedback report received from the Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing, Councillor Clayden, following his attendance at the meeting of the Sussex Police and Crime Panel held on 27 April 2018.

In presenting his report, the Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing referred the Committee to the link provided to the Sussex Police

Transformation Strategy 2018-22 and encouraged all Members to read this informative document.

35. CABINET MEMBER QUESTIONS AND UPDATES

The Chairman asked the Cabinet Member for Planning how much the Local Plan had cost Arun District Council to date. The response given was a total of 2 million, 82,000 thousand and 321 pounds.

Councillor Hughes asked the Cabinet Member for Planning if, in the light of numerous proposed housing developments in the Barnham, Eastergate and Westergate parishes, assurances could be given to these parishes that Section 106 payments would be given for the benefit of these local villages. In response, the Cabinet Member for Planning outlined the purpose of Section 106 financial contributions which was to address harm caused by new development. It was explained that exactly what form that harm was and how it might be mitigated was something which needed to be discussed on a case by case basis. He explained that this was the reason the Council had established six advisory groups, across the district, to enable the ward members and local councils to sit down and discuss with developers how any harm might be identified and addressed.

Following a supplementary question put to the Cabinet Member for Planning it was confirmed that the Council was not collecting Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) as the Local Plan had not been adopted. There was some question as to why the Council was not collecting CIL and the Cabinet Member for Planning stated that he would investigate this for the Committee.

By way of e-mail, circulated at the meeting, the Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing responded to the following question put forward by the Chairman as follows:

Question - ‘In the budget for Sussex police an extra £12 or may be £14 per household was added to the Police precept stating that it was to increase numbers by 200 a year for four years. How does this compare with the retirement rate and will it just maintain the present number or will it restore numbers to what they were before the PSCOs were starting to disappear. We have more people living in our area and this will continue to increase and as the police numbers do not increase the ratio of police/inhabitants goes the wrong way. Similarly there are more cars on the road and the number of traffic police is half what it was years ago and the number of traffic bases has dropped from 9 to 2. In face of the above can we have any confidence that the promise of more Community Policing will in fact happen.’

Response – the full response was circulated at the meeting, in writing, as Members were directed to the 2018-22 Sussex Police Transformation

Overview Select  
Committee – 22.05.18

Strategy document provided on the Sussex Police Website

[https://sussex.police.uk/media/8394/sussex-police-transformation-strategy\\_7-rev-web.pdf](https://sussex.police.uk/media/8394/sussex-police-transformation-strategy_7-rev-web.pdf)

Members were informed that this Strategy focused on strengthening policing with an additional 200 Police Officers. These new posts were in addition to protecting the 500 Police Officer and staff posts that had been at risk as part of a savings plan. It was noted that Sussex Police had dealt with significant challenges created by financial constraints so that some areas of policing had been stretched. A more positive financial position had created an opportunity to strengthen areas where it was most needed. The Sussex Police Transformation Strategy document provided details of the prioritised needs. The Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing encouraged all Members to read the Strategy.

Following further questions it was confirmed that Chief Superintendent, Jerry Westerman, the newly appointed West Sussex Divisional Commander had been invited to a future meeting of the Committee with respect to the Sussex Police Transformation Strategy 2018-22.

The Chairman asked a question on affordable housing availability in Arun directed to the Cabinet Member for Residential Services. It was asked how many affordable homes were occupied by people who were resident in Arun when they applied and how many lived outside Arun when they applied and were successful. The Cabinet Member for Residential Services responded that under the Housing Allocation Scheme this information was not recorded by the Council. It was explained that the Council operated a qualifying criteria policy on all Housing Applications and the Cabinet Member for Residential services was satisfied that this asked the correct questions to assess qualification.

### 36. WORK PROGRAMME 2018/2019

The Group Head of Policy reminded Members that at the last meeting of the Committee, a draft version of the Committee’s Work Programme 2018/19 had been circulated for discussion and to allow further work to take place to finalise it for tonight’s meeting. Members were reminded that the Council’s Constitution required it to report annually on its future work programme to Full Council.

In discussing the work programme, it was suggested that the Committee heard from residents on the impact of Council Services. The Group Head of Policy agreed this could be done with a specific focus on a particular service.

The need to not lose sight of joint scrutiny between the Audit & Governance and this Committee was raised as there were times when joint scrutiny on some subjects was important.

Following further discussion on the content of the work programme it was noted and agreed.

The Committee then

RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL – That

- (1) the Overview Select Committee’s work programme for 2018/19, as developed at the meeting be approved; and
- (2) the Chairman and Vice-Chairman continue to monitor any changes needed to the work programme and report these to the Committee as required.

(The meeting concluded at 8pm)