

MINUTES of a meeting of the POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Coalville on WEDNESDAY, 8 JANUARY 2014

Present: Councillor J G Coxon (Chairman)

Councillors N Clarke, J Cotterill, D Everitt, J Geary, V Richichi, A C Saffell, S Sheahan and M Specht

In Attendance: Councillors D De Lacy, R Johnson and T Neilson

Officers: Mr P Coates, Mr D Hughes, Mr J Richardson and Mrs R Wallace

16. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor N Smith.

17. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

18. PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

There were no questions received.

19. MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 2 October 2013.

It was moved by Councillor M Specht, seconded by Councillor J Geary and

RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 October 2013 be approved and signed as a correct record.

20. CALL-IN OF CABINET DECISION OF 19 NOVEMBER 2013 ENTITLED 'WASTE MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE PROCUREMENT'

The Head of Community Services presented the report to Members.

The Chairman reminded Members that there would be no discussion regarding charging for the collection of green waste as the topic did not form part of the report. He also stated that he would take discussion under each of the call-in grounds in turn for clarity.

Call-in ground one:

Councillor S Sheahan stated that the report was much better than the one considered by Cabinet as it contained more detailed information. He added that he was happy with the proposed savings and that it would pay for itself within three years, he now believed it was efficient.

Councillor J Geary referred to the financial summary within the report, in which it stated that the proposals would improve the customer experience by getting the right information first time. Councillor J Geary asked what that information was. The Waste Services Team Manager explained that currently the customer had more information than the collection crews so resolving the matter sometimes became difficult. He gave an example that if a collection crew was running late on their round then a customer may call in to

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report a missed bin when it actually had not yet been collected. When the collection crew finally collected the bin, unless the office had been informed by the customer, it would remain as a missed bin and an extra collection would be arranged even though it was not required. This would improve under the new system.

Councillor J Geary referred to the comment within the report that stated that there would be a reduction of green waste rounds in the winter months; he asked if that meant a reduction in the service. The Head of Community Services explained that as there would not be as much green waste in the winter months the number of collection crews sent out would be less not the number of collections to households.

Councillor N Clarke asked for clarity on how the missed bins would be recorded. The Waste Services Team Manager explained that the crew would input data using a touch screen device within the cab of the vehicles and the data would then be sent immediately to the office for staff to use. Customers would also be able to view on line when collections had been made in their area, which would inform them if their bin had been missed or not yet collected.

In response to a question from Councillor N Clarke, The Waste Services Team Manager explained that although it would add to the driver's workload, the process and service would be improved. He also assured Councillor N Clarke that they would be strict on claims of missed bins and if the system indicated that a bin was not presented, the collection crews would not return for a bin due to a report of it being missed.

In response to further questions from Councillor N Clarke, the Head of Community Services confirmed that the implementation cost did include staff training. Also the system would help identify the areas in which recycling was low; this would assist in targeting those areas to make improvements. The Head of Community Services added that over time the number of missed bins would reduce and then the focus would move to recycling.

Councillor M Specht was happy with the proposal and believed it would improve the service, especially in the cases where customers were reporting missed bins when in fact they had not presented their bins.

In response to a question from Councillor D Everitt, the Waste Services Team Manager explained that the system would be able to identify when recycling boxes had been contaminated with the wrong type of waste; this would help to target those households to prevent it.

Call-in ground two:

Councillor S Sheahan began to comment on the proposed charge for the collection of green waste and the Chairman reminded him that the issue was not for debate and stopped the discussion.

In response to a number of questions from Councillor S Sheahan, the Head of Community Services and the Waste Services Team manager gave the following responses:

- Even though there would be a reduction in the amount of green waste being collected under the proposed scheme, the Council would still receive recycling credit to cover the cost which would be topped up by the proposed household charge.
- Research into other Local Authorities that charge for the collection of green waste indicated that there was no increase in fly tipping as a result of the charge.
- Any cost savings would go directly into the general budget as savings, not towards a particular service.

Councillor S Sheahan stated that he believed that the introduction of the green waste collection charge would be penalising the residents that want to recycle and the reduction in the amount of green waste collected would affect the Council's recycling targets.

In response to a question from Councillor N Clarke, the Head of Community Services confirmed that the proposed new system was self funding and none of the income from the proposed green waste collection charge would be used to help fund it. He also explained that the IT system would contribute to the administration of the collection of green waste, currently the service used a number of different systems and the plan was to bring them all together.

Councillor N Clarke asked when the current GPS system used in the refuse vehicles was installed and how much it had cost. The Waste Services Team Manager stated that it was installed in May 2011 to assist with the route efficiencies and it cost approximately £25,000. He believed it was not a waste of money as the proposed system was not available at that time and the current system was a large part in the optimization of the collection routes.

Councillor J Geary asked if there were any plans to charge for the collection of normal household waste as was indicated within the report. The Head of Community Services said that it was not the case and the report refers to possible charges in the future for trade waste and street cleansing. He agreed that the report was not clear on that point.

Councillor J Geary commented that if the cost of each household collection was £12.50 and the proposed charges were £30 per household, it was obvious that a profit was being made. The Waste Services Team Manager explained that the figure of £12.50 per household was a calculation for every household in the District. As it was predicted that the number of collections would be less, the charge would have to be higher to cover the costs.

For clarity, the Waste Services Team Manager pointed out that within paragraph 3.10 of the report the reference to paragraph 2.24 should have been paragraph 2.25.

In response to a question from Councillor J Geary, the Waste Services Team Manager reported that there would be a contingency plan in place in case of any problems accessing the IT system; a paper based system could be used as other authorities have done.

Call-in ground 3:

There were no comments made.

Councillor M Specht moved that no further action be taken and it was seconded by Councillor J Cotterill.

Councillor S Sheahan commented that he did not agree with the proposed motion as he believed that it needed further political debate and asked Members to consider a possible amendment. He added that it would have been beneficial if the Portfolio Holder or Leader of the Council had been present. Councillor M Specht informed the Members that the Portfolio Holder was recovering at home after a recent stay in hospital but would have attended if it was possible.

Councillor S Sheahan expressed the following concerns with the proposals:

- There was an inconsistency with the charging regime for the collection of green waste which meant that the service was unfair.
- The risk of fly tipping had not been addressed.
- The introduction of the charge penalised people who recycle.

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- The people who chose not to pay the green waste collection charge would receive a reduced service with no reduction in their Council Tax.

Councillor M Specht stated that other Councils were introducing green waste collection charges and in these tough financial times it was important that this Council was not left behind.

Councillor A C Saffell commented that the green waste collection charge was a secondary issue to that of the IT system and Members needed to assess whether it would be money well spent. Therefore, he felt that the meeting was not to debate the collection of green waste but the proposal of a £95,000 investment.

At this point the Chairman referred Members to the motion in front of them and moved to the vote.

RESOLVED THAT:

No further action be taken.

21. UPDATE ON INVESTMENT IN COALVILLE INDOOR MARKET

The Head of Regeneration and Planning presented the report to Members.

Councillor N Clarke asked what had happened with the proposals to tender for the improvements required. The Head of Regeneration and Planning responded that there had been no interest from the private sector and therefore other options were being considered as outlined within the report.

Councillor J Geary explained that he had requested this report as he was acquainted with many of the traders and they had concerns. The main concerns were the site of the proposed toilets as they were being moved and the lack of consultation on the proposals. The Head of Regeneration and Planning explained that Members raised concerns regarding the original proposed site of the toilets due to the possibility of anti social behaviour and he believed the new proposal addressed that concern. Regarding the consultation process, the Head of Regeneration and Planning confirmed that he met with traders each week but unfortunately attendance was low. He also confirmed that the traders he did meet with regularly were happy with the proposals. Councillor J Geary commented that he was now confident that consultation was taking place and he would promote the weekly meetings.

The Head of Regeneration and Planning explained that the proposed external works included ceiling repairs, bin storage and other minor works, the main focus was on the access and appearance.

In response to a question from Councillor J Geary, the Head of Regeneration and Planning stated that he did have drawings of the planned new toilets which were still a work in progress and that he was happy to share them with Councillor J Geary but they were not for public viewing at the moment.

In response to a further question from Councillor J Geary, the Head of Community Services confirmed that the posts for staffing the toilets would be reviewed and that was currently underway.

In response to a question from Councillor M Specht, the Head of Regeneration and Planning confirmed that the works on the market were due to commence in February.

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Councillor M Specht commented that the toilets were currently run very well and were always very clean, he asked if the new toilets would be maintained to the same standard. The Head of Community Services reported that there would be a mixture of cleaning schedules and there would be more cleaning required on market days.

In response to a question from Councillor D Everitt, the Head of Community Services stated that the charge for the use of the new toilets had not yet been discussed.

In response to a question from Councillor V Richichi, the Head of Community Services reported that the current cost of running the toilets was approximately £50,000 a year.

RESOLVED THAT:

- a) The report be noted.
- b) The progress for investments in Coalville Indoor Market be noted.

22. ITEMS FOR INCLUSION IN THE FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

The Head of Community Services circulated a report which was being considered by Cabinet at its next meeting regarding the Armed Forces Community Covenant. He explained that Cabinet would be requesting that the Policy Development Group set up a Task and Finish Group, and the report was to give Members further information when considering nominations.

Councillor S Sheahan asked for a report at the next meeting on the budget proposals which were detailed on Cabinet's plan of forthcoming decisions within the agenda. The Head of Community Services explained that the next scheduled meeting of the Policy Development Group was after the consideration of the budget proposals by Council and therefore would not be possible. Councillor S Sheahan requested an additional meeting be held to look at the budget proposals before consideration at Council. The Chairman agreed to put the request to Officers.

Councillor A C Saffell asked that the Group look into the current Planning process. He explained that many decisions had been made in recent years both good and bad, and he felt that by looking into those decisions, lessons could be learnt. The Head of Regeneration and Planning reported that the Chief Executive was currently reviewing the Planning process and he agreed that the scrutiny of the Group could feed into the review.

Councillor J Geary also requested that the delegations for Planning also be scrutinised as in the last 28 days there had been two examples in which bad decisions had been made. He added that the Director of Services had recommended that this topic be brought to the Group.

RESOLVED THAT:

The following items be included on the work plan for a future meeting:

- a) A report on the review of the Planning process.
- b) A report to consider the current Planning delegations.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 7.55 pm

Chairman's signature