

Minutes of the meeting of the **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held at the Council Offices, Whitfield on Monday, 24 May 2021 at 6.00 pm.

Present:

Chairman: Councillor C D Zosseder

Councillors: S H Beer (as substitute for Councillor P M Brivio)  
M Bates  
T A Bond  
S C Manion  
M Rose  
R S Walkden  
P Walker  
H M Williams

Also Present: David Fitzgerald (General Manager - Veolia)  
Gary Morison (Senior Contract Manager - Veolia)

Officers: Strategic Director (Corporate Resources)  
Strategic Director (Operations and Commercial)  
Head of Commercial Services  
Head of Housing  
Environmental Crime Team Leader  
Democratic and Corporate Services Manager  
Democratic Services Officer

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P M Brivio and J Rose.

2 APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

It was noted that in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4, Councillor S H Beer had been appointed as substitute member for Councillor P M Brivio.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made by Members.

4 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 8 March 2021 and 19 April 2021 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

5 DECISIONS OF THE CABINET RELATING TO RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The decisions of the Cabinet relating to recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting held on 7 June 2021 were noted.

6 ISSUES REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE BY COUNCIL, CABINET, OR ANOTHER COMMITTEE

The Democratic and Corporate Services Manager advised that there were no issues referred to the Committee by Council, Cabinet or another Committee.

7      NOTICE OF FORTHCOMING KEY DECISIONS

The Democratic and Corporate Services Manager presented the Notice of Forthcoming Key Decisions to the Committee for its consideration.

RESOLVED: That the Notice of Forthcoming Key Decisions be noted.

8      SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Democratic and Corporate Services Manager presented the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme to the Committee for its consideration.

Members identified the following items for inclusion in the work programme:

- Update from the Cabinet on progress resolving the flooding issues in Deal with Southern Water

RESOLVED: That the Work Programme be noted, subject to the inclusion of the update on flooding in Deal.

9      PUBLIC SPEAKING

The Democratic and Corporate Services Manager advised that one member of the public (Ms H Charlton) had registered to speak on items on the agenda to which the public speaking protocol applied.

10     VARIATION TO AGENDA ORDER

The Chairman advised in the absence of any objections that the order of business would be varied to take the litter element of the Dover District Household Waste and Recycling Collection and Litter item as the next item of business.

11     DOVER DISTRICT HOUSEHOLD WASTE AND RECYCLING COLLECTION AND LITTER

The Environmental Crime Team Leader gave a presentation on the Council's participation in the Great British Spring Clean, a campaign led by Keep Britain Tidy. The Great British Spring Clean ran from 28 May 2021 to 13 June 2021.

As part of the Great British Spring Clean, the Council would:

- 5 x 2-minute beach cleaning stations that would be looked after by local businesses;
- 9 x Free bag dispensers to enable people to take litter home;
- 2 x cigarette litter voting stations (1 in Deal and 1 in Dover); and
- 1,250 cigarette butt litter pouches to be distributed

For the future the Council would be recruiting an Environmental Enforcement Officer to fill the current vacancy and tendering for a contractor to bolster litter and dog

fouling enforcement. The Littering from Vehicles Outside London Regulations 2018 also provided a tool for enforcement.

The Council also intended to introduce environmental awards next year to recognise the work of local individuals, organisations and community groups.

Members raised the following points:

- That more needed to be done to tackle the issue of littering in parks.
- That there needed to be an officer with overall responsibility for litter rather than the current arrangements where it was split between education/enforcement (Regulatory Services) and cleansing (Waste Services). In response the Environmental Crime Team Leader pointed out that the two teams worked closely together to tackle issues.
- That the working practices of Kent County Council Highways needed improvement with recent verge clearing works resulting in shredded litter being left on the road. In response the Environmental Crime Team advised that the Dover District Council had no direct control over Kent County Council's working practices.
- That the review of litter bin provision needed to be completed so that the installation of new bins could be considered.

(Councillor S C Manion left the meeting at the conclusion of this item of business)

## 12 DOVER DISTRICT COUNCIL HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY 2020-2024

The Head of Housing presented the report on the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2024. Members were informed that the Council had a statutory duty to review its housing strategy at least every five years. The Cabinet in January 2021 had approved going to consultation on a new draft Strategy and following that process the final version of the Strategy was being reported back for approval and adoption.

The focus of the draft strategy was on homelessness prevention and the scope of the strategy and its key objectives were developed following early stage consultation with key stakeholders. The strategy set out overarching strategic objectives and priorities and incorporated an action plan to deliver outcomes linked to the priorities.

Members were assured that where the Council had a duty to house people it would do so.

The action plan was broken down into the following areas:

- Tackling Homelessness Together
- Enhanced Accommodation Options
- Using Resources Effectively
- Improving Options for Homeless Households
- End Rough Sleeping

Members discussed the importance of the Council developing its own high standard temporary accommodation and the need to have permanent accommodation options for households to move on to in due course. As the need for permanent

accommodation exceeded the Council's available supply this would include working with private landlords to provide accommodation and taking ensuring affordable rents.

In respect of rough sleepers the Council had found accommodation for 6 of the 7 found during the last count. The Council worked with groups such as Porchlight to ensure support was provided those in need of it.

Members discussed the 6 week national legal standard on homeless families with children staying in bed and breakfast and the Head of Housing advised that homeless families rarely reached that limit in practice.

It was moved by Councillor S H Beer, duly seconded and

RESOLVED: That it be recommended to Cabinet that paragraph 2.1 of the Action Plan be amended to set the maximum duration for stay in bed and breakfast accommodation for families with children, and 16-17 year olds, from a maximum of 6 weeks to either a maximum of 6 days or to an achievable significant reduction on 6 weeks.

### 13 PERFORMANCE REPORT - FOURTH QUARTER 2020/21

Members received the Performance Report Quarter 4, 2020/21. There were 19 Green Status Performance Indicators (70%), 3 Amber (11%) and 5 Red (19%) for Quarter 4, 2020/21.

The red performance indicators were as followed:

- HOU001 (Average time taken to re-let council dwellings)
- HOU010a (Number of households living in Temporary Accommodation including B&B)
- HOU010b (Number of households in bed & breakfast)
- LIC005 (The percentage of licensed premises inspections completed by target date)
- MUS002 (The number of visits to the museum in person per 1,000 population)

Members were advised that the performance in respect of LIC005 and MUS002 had been adversely impacted by Coronavirus restrictions.

The Head of Housing advised that HOU001 had been improving since the Council had taken the housing service back in-house in October and that the length of time taken to relate council dwellings was improving although Coronavirus restrictions had affected the time it took for works to be undertaken as well as the viewing of lets.

Councillor M Bates raised the issue of the stability of the planning portal and the committee was advised that this would be investigated.

### 14 DOVER DISTRICT HOUSEHOLD WASTE AND RECYCLING COLLECTION AND LITTER

The Chairman welcomed David Fitzgerald (General Manager) and Gary Morison (Senior Contract Manager) of Veolia to the meeting.

Mr Fitzgerald apologised on behalf of Veolia to Members in respect of the disruption affecting the waste service over the last six weeks. He advised that he thought the service had been improving over the last week.

The representatives from Veolia gave a presentation to Members covering the following points:

#### Background

- That the collection routes had been changed to enable more balanced rounds with an even workload for the crews
- That the new systems allowed managers to have greater monitoring potential
- That the streamlined rounds allowed for easy issue rectification (in the case of misses and vehicle breakdowns) and a better customer experience
- The new Euro 6 vehicles were more environmentally friendly with electric bin lifts
- The provision of electric vehicles for the Veolia management team and electric cage vehicles
- The maintenance of the same alternate-weekly service for kerbside properties

#### Collection Methodology

- That 17% of properties (7,990 kerbside properties) would not see a change as a result of the changes
- That 14.5% of properties (6,815 kerbside properties) would only be affected by a change in collection day only
- That 34.3% of properties (16,074 kerbside properties) would be affected by a change in collection week only
- That 34.3% of properties (16,121 kerbside properties) would be affected by a day and week change
- That 9,459 properties would wait more than three additional days between refuse collections
- The new rounds would allow for ease of returning to deal with missed collections and the Thursday round would be heaviest as it was closest to the disposal point.
- That the new rounds were similar to those at other authorities such as Tendring and Telford and Wrekin

#### New Collection Round Roll Out

- That there had been close working between the Council and Veolia prior to the changes.
- That fortnightly transition meetings had been held.
- That the risks of each option were analysed and the input of experienced crews with local knowledge had been sought out. All crews were training about new routes, vehicles and devices.
- The average number of properties collected per day was 1,305.

- That it had not been possible to test different collection days prior to informing residents of the change and that the new vehicles were not available prior to the change anyway.
- Veolia had 20 Euro 6 vehicles and 8 electric vehicles as part of the Dover fleet with smaller vehicles for rural and narrow access roads. There had been a small reduction in the number of vehicles under the new service.
- The new food waste collection arrangements had dedicated vehicles for food waste to ensure greater efficiency and a higher quality of material.
- The number of staff on the new service was the same as the previous service due to the additional rounds being operated. However, once the new service was established there would be a reduction in 5 drivers (22 drivers under the new service compared to 27 before) and 8 operatives (33 operatives under the new service compared to 41 before).
- A letter had been delivered to residents by Veolia 4-5 weeks before the service changed explaining the changes and 1-3 weeks before the service change a new collection calendar had been sent out

Members raised the following points:

- Councillor P Walker advised that he had received in excess of 50 complaints from residents in his ward in respect of waste and recycling and had struggled to get hold of staff to resolve these matters. He also criticised the first leaflet and calendar sent out by Veolia as being ambiguous and poorly written and asked for assurances that the viewpoint of the end user would be considered in future.

In response officers accepted the points raised and acknowledged that the service had been overwhelmed for a time.

- Councillor M Bates advised that some residents had not had a collection for over six weeks yet when they checked the website it said that their waste had been collected. There were concerns raised over the potential for vermin to spread and the lack of resolution to complaints when raised.

In response officers advised that reporting via Veolia's ECHO system had been subject to problems and Veolia acknowledged that training issues had been identified for resolution.

- Councillor T A Bond expressed concern that the Council was getting less waste vehicles for more cost as part of the new contract and that he could not understand how a new contract with the same contractor (Veolia) had gone so wrong. The issue of waste crews stopping for breaks on rounds was raised and he also recounted his own problems in using the system to report issues.

In response officers advised that Veolia would look into the issue of crew breaks during rounds. In respect of the contract price, Veolia advised that it had been expected that sufficient resources were available to provide the service it was apparent that this had not been the case and additional resources had been deployed. These additional resources would be kept in place until Veolia felt that they could efficiently manage the service.

Issues in respect of some of the rural waste rounds and narrow streets were also highlighted by Veolia.

The Strategic Director (Operations and Commercial) advised Members that the team had been overwhelmed by the volume of calls and that Civica's performance figures would also reflect this. He felt that some of the problems had been resolved but that there were still some systemic issues to resolve.

- Councillor S H Beer welcomed the presentation and suggested that the information should be made available to the residents. She raised concerns as to whether the Council had sufficient resources to resolve the problems.

In response officers advised that 2 extra members of staff had been employed to assist the waste services team. The importance of triaging calls to ensure that they were dealt with effectively was also emphasised.

Veolia advised that the improvements in the fleet and the new rounds would have a positive impact on CO2 emissions.

- Councillor H M Williams asked for performance data to be provided to demonstrate the improvements in performance that had been reported to the Committee.

Officers advised that they would investigate the data that they held to see what could be shared with Members.

- Councillor R S Walkden advised that the issues he had reported from residents had been resolved by the waste services team.
- Councillor M Rose advised that residents needed an apology and an explanation from Veolia for the disruption to their waste and recycling. He also expressed concern that Veolia had decided to implement new routes and a new computer system at the same time.

In response Veolia acknowledged that staggering the implementation of new routes and a new computer system in Folkestone and Hythe had resulted in less issues.

- Councillor C D Zosseder advised that residents needed to be contacted via all forms of media, including a letter as some did not have online access. She also asked for a dedicated way for councillors to raise their issues with the waste services team.

In response officers advised that they were looking into a dedicated contact route for Members to raise issues.

Members thanked Veolia and officers for attending the meeting.

The meeting ended at 9.15 pm.