

IMPROVING PLACES SELECT COMMISSION
Wednesday, 20th January, 2016

Present:- Councillor Beck (in the Chair); Councillors Atkin, Cutts, Godfrey, Jepson, McNeely, Pickering, Sims, Whelbourn and Whysall together with Mrs. L. Shears and Mr. B. Walker.

Also in attendance:- Councillor Sims, Advisory Cabinet Member.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Buckley, Reeder, C. Vines and Wyatt.

33. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest made at this meeting.

34. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

There were no questions from members of the public or the press.

35. COMMUNICATIONS

There were no communications to report.

36. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 25TH NOVEMBER, 2015

Resolved:- That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Improving Places Select Commission, held on 25th November, 2015, be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

37. REPORT FROM TASK AND FINISH GROUP 1 - WASTE MANAGEMENT

Councillor Godfrey, Chair of the Task and Finish Group, gave the following presentation on the findings of the review:-

Scope of the Review

- To explore the current provision of Household Waste Recycling Centres and special household waste collections (green waste and bulky collections)
- Examine options for future provisions identifying potential areas for savings and/or income generation
- Explore options for increasing recycling rates and introducing re-use into the Waste Collection Service

Legal and Policy Drivers

- Environmental Protection Act 1990, Controlled Waste Regulations 2012 and Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2011

- Collection of household waste including at least four types of recyclable waste must be free of charge
- Must provide HWRCs for depositing household waste free of charge open at all reasonable times; Legislation does not stipulate the number of sites or opening hours
- The Council can charge for green waste, non-household waste (such as DIY wastes, hardcore, rubble) and commercial waste
- RMBC's Waste Strategy covers the period 2005-2020 but it does require review; this is in progress of production with BDR partners

Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC)

- Four centres in Rotherham all of limited size
- Managed and operated by FCC Environmental under BDR contract due for renewal in 2018
- No business waste is accepted
- All Centres closed one day per week with deferred decision to close for additional day in 2013
- Some impact from closure felt in terms of increased congestion, traffic queues and customer service
- One day closure has not led to any significant increase in flytipping although there have been isolated incidents at the entrance to sites

HWRC'S Charging for Non-Household Waste

- Examined successful scheme in North Yorkshire
- Kier runs the scheme and takes the income; North Yorkshire Council benefits through avoiding haulage and disposal costs
- Extensive consultation prior to introduction
- 73% reduction of deposited waste but no discernible increase in flytipping; increased use of skips
- Scheme also available to small businesses
- Task and Finish Group recommends the Council to explore introduction of charging for non-household wastes – FCC supportive

HWRC's – Introduction of Re-use Service

- No current provision on any of our HWRCs
- FCC introducing limited re-use in conjunction with WEEE Service provider and Doncaster refurbish. Reluctant to scale up within existing contract
- British Heart Foundation keen to establish re-use on HWRCs
- Task and Finish Group recommend establishment of re-use on HWRCs as part of new contract

HWRCs – Joint BDR Contract

- Work should commence now by BDR for contract renewal in 2018
- Benefits of HWRC provision being considered as a whole across the partnership – greater economies of scale
- Investigate longer term options for providing larger sites with greater scope to accept commercial waste, enhance recycling and re-use

provision

Bulky Goods Collection

- Statutory requirement but can make a reasonable charge
- Price sensitive and operates at small loss
- Some goods recycled but no current re-use
- Potential to partner with a charity such as British Heart Foundation on jointly provided or complete outsourcing basis
- Task and Finish Group recommend further discussions with British Heart Foundation to commission such a service

Textile/Small Electricals Kerbside Collection

- Elmbridge Council – British Heart Foundation run schemes alongside normal kerbside collection service three times a year at no cost to the Council
- Elmbridge were very happy with the scheme – recommend pilot in first instance
- Tangible benefits in reducing waste; income for the British Heart Foundation and job creation and synergy with Heart Town status

Green Waste Collection

- Summer service only at cost of £1M
- Pressure to introduce charges – Sheffield already do and Doncaster considering
- Charging unpopular with residents and low take up likely (only 3% in Sheffield) but other authorities have a much higher take up rate
- Increased flytipping likely and green waste in black bin could have contract implications for BDR waste facility at Manvers
- Home composting should be encouraged – look at cost/benefit of free/subsidised compost bins
- Recommend BDR examine benefits of combined contract to save costs and maintain service

Commercial Waste Collection

- Currently serve 12% of market with net budget contribution of £190K
- Charges significantly higher than neighbouring authorities
- Scope to expand this service threefold by taking advantage of available headroom in favourable price category within BDR Manvers contract
- Discussions with Nottingham City Council which runs commercial waste collection as part of wider facilities management service for businesses
- Nottingham City Council have large market share and generate surplus of £1.8M annually
- RMBC would need to invest in establishment of a tailored team to significantly expand its customer base and potentially offer additional Council services
- Task and Finish Group recommend production of a fully costed business plan with the option of a combined service throughout the

BDR partnership to maximise scale and profitability

The Review Group's recommendations were:-

Short Term (within the 2015/15 financial year)

1. Consider the ways in which home composting may be promoted in Rotherham including the cost/benefit of offering free/subsidised compost bins to residents.
2. Continue the discussions with the British Heart Foundation with a view to commissioning:-
 - (a) A joint approach to the provision of bulky waste collection service to all householders in RMBC which enables greater reuse of unwanted furniture
 - (b) The establishment of a textile/bric-a-brac/small electrical goods household collection service
3. Negotiate with FCC and a third sector/not for profit organisation to introduce a smalls scale re-use facility on one or more of the HWRCs as a means of encouraging re-use and raising awareness of the opportunities for re-use of household bric-a-brac and other small items.
4. Explore with FCC the scope for introducing a charge for non-household waste at HWRCs during 2016/17 for the remainder of the contract period at all RMBC HWRCs for all items of non-household waste that the Council may legitimately make a charge for. Evaluate the benefits to the Council as well as the likely impact on user satisfaction and any perverse consequences such as increases in fly tipping.

Medium Term (from 2016/17 onwards)

5. Given that RMBC works collectively across a range of waste services with Barnsley and Doncaster and there is an effective governance arrangement already in place through the Joint Waste Partnership Board:-
 - (a) That work begins early in 2016/17 with BDR partners to jointly review the most cost effective way of commissioning HWRC services across the three Boroughs and scope a service specification that will ensure income is maximised and costs are minimised while maintaining a service level that will be acceptable to residents.
 - (b) That careful consideration be given to the establishment of re-use facilities at HWRCs either as part of a new joint contract through the BDR arrangements or as a RMBC sole commissioned service.

(c) That BDR examines the opportunities and benefits of a combined contract for the collection of green waste across the three Boroughs during the growing season thus maintaining a valued service to residents, increasing recycling rates and potentially saving money not excluding the possibility that a charge may need to be made for this service.

(d) That a fully costed business plan be produced for a substantial expansion of the commercial waste collection service throughout the Borough and potentially beyond the Borough boundaries including the option of a combined service through the BDR waste partnership to maximise scale and profitability.

Discussion ensued with the following issues raised/clarified:-

- Kerbside Collection was subject to a full Service review that was currently underway
- The Waste Strategy required a refresh due to changes in Legislation etc. Work was taking place with Barnsley, Doncaster and Sheffield to develop an overarching strategy within which each of the individual authorities would have the ability to form a service to suit their local needs. It was hoped to bring a report to Members by the end of the financial year for initial consideration and then go out for wider consultation
- The issue of Rotherham residents not being able to use a Barnsley/Doncaster HWRC and vice versa needed to change. When the BDR contract was due for renewal an improved co-ordinated approach should be sought
- The Commercial Waste market was very well developed with a number of key national players. However, Rotherham's market share was less than others locally. A proposal was being developed to focus on smaller companies who may not have Commercial Waste agreements in place and possible alignment with enforcement services
- Possible use of resources to market the services
- City Region – it was believed that there was scope probably with the need for substantial investment in disposal facilities but there was an opportunity to create facilities which would enable the Authority to review the way in which it collected. Discussions had commenced with the other South Yorkshire authorities to ascertain what the implications would be with work commissioned as to the differences between the different collection arrangements and what the Authority would need to do to align them

- There was a joint steering group of Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham officers which initially met to discuss the Waste PFI but the remit now extended to encompass all matters of mutual interest
- The Task and Finish Group had looked at charging for certain types of waste which may increase income/reduce costs and enable consideration to be given to reversing previous decisions to close sites

The Select Commission thanked Councillor Godfrey, Diane Thomas (Centre for Public Scrutiny) and Christine Majer (Scrutiny Officer) for the work they had done.

Resolved:- (1) That the report be received and forwarded to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board for consideration.

(2) That a progress report on the Task and Finish Group's recommendations be submitted to this Select Commission in January, 2017, particularly in respect of commercialisation of the Service.

38. TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN

Simeon Leach, Economic Development Manager, reported that the draft Masterplan had been received the previous day. Due to the size of the document it was not possible to e-mail but a link would be provided to Members to access it online.

The final draft of the document would be submitted to the Advisory Cabinet on 15th February, 2016 and this Select Commission on 24th February before consultation began on 1st March, 2016.

The broad headlines of the draft Masterplan were as follows:-

Background

- Town Centre Renaissance Programme initially produced in 2005
- 25 year plan
- Funded by Yorkshire Forward
- Progress slowed down after recession, public sector funding squeeze and the winding up of Yorkshire Forward
- Revision of Masterplan agreed on the back of Rotherham's Economic Growth Plan

Progress to Date

- Delivered a number of projects:-
 - Westgate Demonstrator
 - Tesco Superstore
 - New Council offices
 - Redevelopment rail station

Main Issues in Draft Masterplan

- Gold routes to best connect parts of the Town Centre (i.e. Clifton Park to High Street)
- Enhanced gateways to the Town centre (i.e. Sheffield Road)
- Better utilise the River/Canal
- Re-model markets to provide a smaller better quality offer
- Freeing up development space
- Increase the residential offer

Forge Island

- Cinema-led leisure development (potential for residential element)
- Improve linkages to rest of the town and station
- Developments on Weirside/Corporation Street
- Utilise riverfront location

Next Steps

- Sign off of Masterplan by Advisory Cabinet
- Widespread consultation with stakeholders
- Adoption of Supplementary Planning Document
- Implementation overseen by sub-group of Business Growth Board

Discussion ensued with the following issues raised/clarified:-

- When the consultation commenced it would be made clear that it was a vision of what was hoped to be delivered subject to funding being available
- British Waterways would be fully involved in the consultation as the waterways were a vital part of the redevelopment
- There were difficult market conditions and the consultants would look at the possibilities of funding. Discussions had been taking place with the City Region and the Authority had been requested to put forward its priorities one of which would be the need to get more money for urban renaissance
- A development such as a cinema would hopefully bring custom into the town centre which would then have a knock-on effect. Town centres were changing with smaller retail cores
- The Masterplan would be used as a prospectus for investors
- A recent visit by DCLG had revealed interest in potentially two pilot housing projects

Resolved:- That the presentation be noted and a further report submitted to the 24th February, 2016, meeting of this Select Commission.

39. TASK AND FINISH GROUP 2 - LITTER AND FLYTIPPING

Councillor Atkin, Chair of the Task and Finish Group, reported that the report was now being finalised and would be presented to the 24th February meeting of this Select Commission.

It was noted that representatives from the Parish Council Joint Working Group would be invited for that item.

Resolved:- That the Task and Finish Group's draft report be submitted to the 24th February, 2016, Improving Places Select Commission.