

**IMPROVING PLACES SELECT COMMISSION
18th April, 2019**

Present:- Councillor Mallinder (in the Chair); Councillors Birch, B. Cutts, Elliot, Fenwick-Green, Jones, Khan, McNeely, Reeder, Sansome, Mrs. L. Shears, Vjestica, Walsh and Wyatt and Mrs. W. Birch and Mrs. L. Shears (Co-opted Members).

Councillor Hoddinott, Cabinet Member of Waste, Roads and Community Safety, was in attendance at the invitation of the Chair.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Atkin, Buckley, Jepson, Sheppard and Whysall.

The webcast of the Council Meeting can be viewed at:-
<https://rotherham.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

50. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest made at the meeting.

51. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

A member of the public raised concerns regarding household waste and flytipping that was taking place in certain areas of the Borough, particularly Ferham, which was having an impact on other householders and their ability to put their own dustbins out for collection. He felt that community skips would help alleviate these problems.

Councillor Hoddinott, Cabinet Member for Waste, Roads and Community Safety, reported that the member of the public had raised similar issues at the recent Cabinet meeting. Councillor Allen, Cabinet Member for Cleaner, Greener Communities, had offered to visit Ferham to look at the specific issues.

52. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS HELD ON 14TH FEBRUARY AND 7TH MARCH, 2019

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meetings held on 14th February and 7th March, 2019.

14th February, 2019

Arising from Minute No. Minute No. 42 (Agreement between Dignity Funerals Ltd. and Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council), it was queried whether the issue of lighting on the East Herringthorpe driveway had been resolved.

Councillor Hoddinott, Cabinet Member for Waste, Roads and Community Safety, reported that the feedback was that it had never worked despite it being in place for some time. Currently the issue was with the Community

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Safety and Street Scene Service to look at the requirements and costs to get it working. A report back would be submitted to Dignity.

With regard to the proposed periodic meetings, a meeting of the Funeral Directors Forum had been scheduled for 25th March. However, the funeral directors had stated that they would prefer 1:1 meetings. A series of meeting would commence next month.

The Memorial Masons Registration Scheme had been discussed at a recent Project Liaison meeting. Due to the current Scheme being very out of date, work was taking place on an updated Scheme which would be submitted to the next Project Liaison meeting for discussion. It would include the cleaning of stones on site and environmental aspects with regard to the chemicals used during the cleaning process.

The outcome of the negotiations with regard to the national issue relating to Terms and Conditions of the Coroner's Office was not known. Councillor Hoddinott would endeavour to get a response.

7th March, 2019

Arising from Minute No. 48 (Update on the Rotherham Community Infrastructure Levy, the following clerical correction:-

“Catcliffe Parish Council's precept would be impacted on with the new Waverley Parish Council. Could the funds due to them from CIL support their revenue to help *mitigate the consequences of their loss in the short term*” instead of “maximise their loss” as stated.

It was also queried where/who the fine would go if developers did not notify the Council within the specified time frame. An answer would be sought and fed back to the Select Commission.

Resolved:- (1) That the minutes of the meeting of the Improving Places Select Commission held on Thursday, 14th February, 2019, be approved as a correct record.

(2) That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Improving Places Select Commission held on Thursday, 7th March, 2019, be approved subject to the clerical correction set out above.

53. ROTHER VALLEY CARAVAN PARK

The Chair reported that a briefing had been received on the recently opened Caravan Park which included that the Camp Management Booking System which was now in operation. The system had been “road tested” and found to be customer friendly and easy to navigate.

A full report would be submitted in September/October on bookings and the effects of traffic on the nearby properties

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Discussion ensued with the following issues raised:-

- The report should contain customer reviews/experience of the site
- Disappointment that there were only 3 pitches for motor homes when it was becoming more popular
- The update should also include how many potential customers had had to be turned away due there not being the appropriate pitch for their needs
- How could a system be classed as “successfully implemented” when the second part of the system i.e. the actual bookings turning up until the season had been completed?

Resolved:- (1) That the introduction of the Camp Management Booking System be noted.

(2) That a further report be submitted in September, 2019.

54. IMMOBILISATION POLICY

Tom Smith, Assistant Director, Community Safety and Street Scene, reported that the Council had made a decision whereby the Authority could immobilise vehicles of persistent evaders and those who had not paid parking tickets. Where they were subject to 6 or more unpaid PCNs the Authority could now clamp the vehicle and call for assistance in terms of vehicle removal and impound the vehicle. It was much safer for staff and also meant that there was a much stronger enforcement process.

There had been a number of successes since it had been in place and enabled the Service to be much more robust for repeat evaders. There had been a number of people who had been subject to 6 PCNs and paid the fine and not been in same situation again.

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board had recommended that it be reduced from 6 PCNs to 3. An analysis had been carried out and very shortly there would be a delegated decision to reduce the number down to 4. It was felt that reducing it to 3 PCNs would vastly increase the number of evaders and there would not be the confidence of resource availability to ensure robust enforcement of the policy.

Martin Beard, Parking Services Manager, was in attendance to assist with any questions.

Discussion ensued with the following issues raised/clarified:-

- Monitoring was already taking place. It was the intention that people got the message that they could not avoid paying with the ultimate message that hopefully people had parked properly. It was known how many people fit the categories and would like to see the numbers fall in those categories. It was also known how many people paid and something that was monitored very closely

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- The Traffic Management Act clearly set out that an Authority could not hold someone's vehicle to ransom. The Act stated that they had to pay the release fee of £105 plus the PCN that had been issued on the day. The Authority did not let anyone do that until there was absolute certainty as to their identity and address. If every piece of documentation requested could not be provided, the vehicle would not be released and they then incurred storage charges
- A vehicle was stored in the compound for up to 35 days. If a vehicle was not claimed within that time and, if there was a registered keeper, they would be written to giving them 7 days to collect or the vehicle would be disposed of
- It was not known if a person would be allowed to buy the vehicle back if it went to auction and an answer would be sought. The initial reaction was that it could not be prevented
- 2 of the first 8 vehicles that had been removed and impounded had belonged to the same person. The process now gave the Authority a fair and better chance and had already seen a decrease in the number of cases of persistent evaders
- Data could be provided to support the decision to reduce to 4 PCNs and not 3. Limited benchmarking had been carried out due to Rotherham being at the forefront of this approach with others waiting to see how successful it was. There was some information from the British Parking Association but was limited due to the small numbers taking the action
- The removed vehicles were taken to the contractor's compound at Maltby
- It is so successful it has generated income, it may be possible to extend the scheme and reduce to 3 PCNs but there was a need to ensure there was the officer time to do so. Part of the success of the Policy was hopefully that there was less indiscriminate parking and therefore no income generated
- An unpaid parking fine was only unpaid at the point when the full process finished. If someone had appealed a ticket it would not be part of the numbers until the appeal process had finished and proven that the ticket was issued correctly
- The possibility of the services being provided inhouse had not currently been explored. However, it was felt that the constraints of it being a relatively specialist job, having the appropriate kit to remove vehicles and it being relatively sporadic would be cost prohibitive. Whilst there were a number of people who committed repeat offences

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there was probably not enough on a daily basis to employ a team or vehicles just on removing vehicles off the street. Since the Authority had started clamping vehicles in January 2019 it had collected approximately £3,000 in release and PCN fees; the cost of the contractor involved in those lifts had been £1,365

- A very specialist vehicle was required to remove vehicles from the highway
- 35 vehicles had been impounded since September 2016-2019, 17 from January 2019 to date

Resolved:- That the update be noted.

55. EMERGENCY PLANNING

Councillor Wyatt gave a verbal update on the Emergency Planning arrangements for the Authority.

The Improving Places Select Commission had undertaken a Scrutiny Review of the arrangements in 2016/17 concluding with 15 recommendations the response to which was reported to the Select Commission in November 2017.

There had been a commitment in the work programme to keep an ongoing overview of the Major Incident Plan and arrangements and progress of the recommendations.

A meeting had taken place with the key officers last month but there were still some gaps but the progress so far was as follows:-

Recommendations

- 1. That the Major Incident Plan is reviewed bi-annually by a group of Members from the IPSC and this work forms part of the work programme for that year, however the document is to be reviewed by officers on a continual basis.**

A date has been provisionally agreed at the end of September/beginning of October 2019 for the final draft of the refreshed Major Incident Plan. The proposal was that a few Members from this Select Commission got together to carry out a desktop look at the final draft before it was submitted for approval.

- 2. Mandatory training is to be provided to all Members about the Major Incident Plan to increase their awareness and involvement in any major incident.**

There had been a couple of training sessions and also flagged up the fact that it was an all-out election in 2020 and that needed to be included for potential new Members.

- 3. Training relating to the Major Incident Plan should be mandatory to ensure all staff who volunteered are confident in the role they play in the management of the incident.**

There was regular training and reports to the Strategic Leadership Team around that performance.

- 4. An “out of hours” training exercise to take place once all volunteers have been trained. Full training exercises then take place on a regular basis.**

Exercise Thunderbird took place in 2019 involving a test scenario around a rail crash and included all elements of the Major Incident Plan. There had also been a cold call exercise which involved testing the availability of people to be able to respond to a Major Incident to ascertain their availability. In some respects that probably was of little value because it was done during working hours. At the end of the month the contact lists would be updated as scheduled.

- 5. A targeted approach to recruitment from employees who can be “job matched” to appropriate roles in the operation of the Major Incident Plan.**

There was confidence that there was a good team of Forward Liaison Officers (8 at the moment) and Borough Emergency Co-ordinators that were filled by Strategic Directors. Only permanent contract employees were included.

- 6. There are sufficient volunteers to staff the EP for at least two shift changes.**

The recruitment was ongoing.

- 7. A protocol to be developed to ensure that the partner organisations in the Major Incident Plan are notified as a matter of course when significant incidents occur in the borough and through the Local Resilience Forum, ways are to be identified and carried out on building relationships between partner organisations involved in the Emergency Plan – in particular to the turnover in staff.**

There was a lot of joint working taking place with the South Yorkshire Resilience Forum which would hopefully ensure that organisations were keeping each other in the communications loop.

- 8. A facilitated meeting/away day involving the emergency services and RMBC major incident staff on the ground to promote team working.**

Again reference to South Yorkshire Resilience Forum. There was a scheduled Gold Symposium, no date as yet for it taking place.

- 9. An on-going programme of training sessions for Parish Council members should be arranged to ensure any new members receive training on the subject.**

Some work has been carried out with Parish Councils but somewhat piecemeal. Some Parish Councils were more engaged than others. Work in progress.

- 10. A representative from Procurement to be involved in the Borough Emergency Operations Room to facilitate timely ordering of goods/services and to provide information if the Belwin Fund becomes operational.**

There was confidence that, because of the representations from Finance and Customer Services, everything could be properly recorded i.e. spend, orders etc. Even though representation from Procurement was not in the room there were ties in under the arrangements. This was very important because if there were any subsequent claims through the Belwin Scheme there had to be proof of what the money had been spent on. It was very important that this was covered.

- 11. Through the Shared Service Agreement funding is secured for a Community Resilience Worker.**

Still being looked at and conscious that a positive response was down to funding.

- 12. The Corporate Risk Manager is involved in the role of a “critical friend” any amendments of the Major Incident Plan**

That has happened.

- 13. A flow chart to be designed detailing the Major Incident Process and highlighting how and when Members are to be involved in the process.**

Assurance that this was completely included in the Major Incident Plan. Ward Members and Cabinet Members should flow from that notification.

- 14. The Chief Executive/Leader of the Council to inform counterparts in Sheffield of their concerns over the lack of meetings in relation to the Joint Service Agreement.**

There were still no regular meetings being held. There needed to be the right people together from Sheffield and Rotherham in terms of governance. The outcome of the forthcoming election in Sheffield was awaited and what the structures in place would be.

- 15. The situation relating to the unsupported IT systems is rectified.**

The Emergency Planning Information System (EPIS) has been moved to a newer platform which was a safe and supported system but had some difficulties with regard to updating the information. Luke Sayers, Assistant Director, Customer, Information & Digital Services, was involved.

Resolved:- (1) That the update be noted.

(2) That a small group of Members attend a one-off meeting to carry out a desk top review of the final draft of the renewed Major Incident Plan with relevant officers prior submission to Cabinet.

(3) That an email be sent seeking volunteers for (2) above once a date has been set.

56. REFUSE AND RECYCLING COLLECTIONS SERVICE CHANGES UPDATE

Councillor Hoddinott, Cabinet Member for Waste, Roads and Community Safety, together with Tom Smith, Assistant Director Community Safety and Street Scene, and Martin Raper, Head of Street Scene Services, presented an update on the implementation of the new waste and recycling services across Rotherham.

A video was shown to the Commission - "Household Bin Collection in Rotherham" which was available at www.rotherham.gov.uk/bins.

Since October 2018, the residents of Rotherham had experienced big changes in terms of their bin collections. It had been a huge undertaking to introduce the new garden waste collection and the new black (pink lid) service.

Councillor Hoddinott expressed her thanks to the staff who had worked long hours in making this happen and also to the residents for working through it as well.

Attention was drawn to:-

- Rotherham was one of the lower quartile councils for recycling
- Initial figures were very encouraging - how do we ensure the level of recycling was sustained
- Approximate 27% increase in paper and cardboard collection
- Garden Waste Collection – seeing a rise in subscriptions at the moment. Approximately 35,000 households that had subscribed
- Black bin (pink lid) – reduced the size of the main bin – general waste had reduced by 7%
- Black bins – increased by 50%
- Numerous requests for green and black bins for people to be able to recycle

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- Flytipping – there had not been a marked increase. The Authority would continue to pursue and prosecute anyone flytipping
- The next big challenge for the Service was flats. Everyone should have the opportunity to recycle. Although keen to keep to the same system as those in houses it was known that some variances would be required to accommodate some premises. Work had taken place, together with Housing Services, to map all the sites and proposals for each. There would be a Member drop-in on 24th May to enable Members to see what the proposals were for premises in their area before it went out to residents
- It had not just been about the delivery or collection of bins; there had been a new treatment contract to procure, negotiate with existing general waste contractor, purchase of 16 new collection refuse vehicles and a huge amount of communication and engagement work
- The call centre had been under resourced initially but that had been recognised and additional resources put in
- How do we engage further? How do we increase recycling?

Discussion ensued with the following issues raised/clarified:-

- It was still early days in terms of any indicators of the level of contamination of waste:-
Paper and cardboard – this has been running the longest. The type of contamination seen has been the continuation of garden waste in the bottom with paper on the top. Initially the contamination rate had been quite high but more recently 12% which was getting towards the acceptable level. A lot of work had taken place with the company that took the paper with daily monitoring on the site looking at how they did sampling and processing of the contamination levels. Photographs of any contamination that came through were taken and discussed with the crew and the engagement team targeting the area

Plastic, cans and glass – it was very early at present. There were higher levels than would have liked, above 15%, and would like to try and improve that. Some of the key items going into the bin had already been identified e.g. film, carrier bags and hard plastic and that was being dealt with that. Areas where the problems were coming from would be identified and target engagement in those particular areas and work with the crews. It was very difficult for staff because it had been easier to see contamination when the waste had been in a blue box

- The figures for increases in recycling had had the levels of contamination taken off them

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- There had been a spike in calls to the call centre and it had taken far too long for them to be answered. However, additional resources had been put into the call centre to deal with the increased demand. Details could be provided on the calls as the Head of Service received a weekly update. The last phase of the roll out had seen a peak in calls about middle of February where calls had increased as expected. Since then it had reduced and now running at a similar level of calls at the first week of the programme
- There was a large proportion of people signing up for the Garden Waste online rather than by telephone. Discussions were continuing on how some of the simple waste requests could be available online for members of the public to complete themselves
- Regular events to promote recycling and continued reminding of the public of the importance of recycling. It was important to maintain the momentum that had been introduced through the introduction of the bins
- When a vehicle went into the site for processing, they actually took a load and dissected it so they got an understanding of what was in the load; the percentage of contamination was based on that analysis. A whole load was not contaminated. Not every load was examined; there was a programme for each of the recycling streams that the contractors followed. They took out the contaminants leaving the Service with the recyclable material and then analysed the material giving a full list of the data quantities for the records. The Service used that data to try and understand how it could improve the recycling rates in the future
- Officers had done the analysis before and knew those areas that did not recycle as much. Those areas had been seen targeted action by engagement staff going door to door when the rollout had been taking place
- In terms of complaints, the number could be provided. However, the perception of not being able to manage with a smaller pink lidded bin had been unfounded. The Service was working with a number of households that had more than 5 people in them and those with medical needs that had previously received additional bins
- A lot of engagement work had taken place in some areas. 8-10 places across the Borough had been identified where some additional intensive engagement work had been put in on the ground
- A session had been held with the Complaints Team and Customer Services to look at the complaints that had been received and what issues had been raised. A number had been upheld which were worth looking at as a comparison to give an idea of what was happening. However, the number of complaints received was lower

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than expected. Those complaints that were upheld were mostly around missed bin collection

- One of the biggest problems for recycling around flats, maisonettes and complexes was the security of some of the community collection sites and how to protect them. The previous trial in flats had seen a huge increase in recycling particularly in those places that had not had the opportunity to recycle previously. Lessons had been learnt from that. Joint work was/had taken place with Housing staff to engage during the changeover, look at every area and ascertain what was needed to be in place with some requiring proper secure bin storage built in. Members were encouraged to attend the drop-in session to find out the proposals for their area
- The biggest spike of flytipping was between December 2018/January 2019 and was clearly linked to the Christmas period and disposal of large items
- There were vulnerable people out there that required additional support in terms of the service. There were engagement resources available if people needed that support during the transition. There had been discussion with regard to putting a purple flower on bins for Dementia/Alzheimer sufferers and braille for the blind/visually impaired. The idea of the purple flower had not been progressed but a knock system on the bins for the visually impaired so they could tell which bin was which had been explored and the kit ordered. Anyone who was blind or partially sighted could have their bins marked
- There was also the ability for those suffering with Dementia and unable to cope with multiple bins to contact the Service who would attempt to tailor a solution for that individual family
- A recycling challenge would be the chute disposal system which was installed in medium to high rise blocks of flats. It was appreciated that some areas would be more successful than others. Those properties with the chute system in place would be given a communal arrangement for recycling which would be positioned somewhere near to the entrance/car park to where residents would be passing. It was an area of discussion with Housing about how recycling was introduced to see how successful it was with a small number initially. It would be monitored as it progressed.
- During the rollout there had been extremely high winds. The original 240 litre bins had blown over as well as the new smaller lighter pink lidded bins. Crews had been encouraged to place the bins during the rollout somewhere safer i.e. front doors or behind walls but unfortunately they could not be taken down people's paths due to time constraints. Crews would be requested to be considerate in adverse weather conditions

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- During the consultation one of the key issues for members of the public was to reuse existing bins so the Authority was not investing too heavily in new bins. As the majority of the Borough already had green bins it had seemed logical to use them for the new paper/card collection service as not everyone would subscribe to the new Garden Collection Service. The re-use of the greens bins had meant the Authority had not had to buy 70,000 additional bins at a cost of £10-15 per bin
- However, there were questions moving forward with regard to the National Consultation which talked about standardisation of colours on bins – what happened to the different bins used by authorities at the present time?
- There was a national conversation and challenge to manufacturers/retailers about the amount of packaging they used some of which were easier to recycle than others
- Would a visit to the Waste Disposal Centre be useful?
- Would be nice to see in the complaints report a “you said we did” section
- If there was a particular issue with the position a bin had been left e.g. preventing someone in a wheelchair from leaving their property, it should be reported to the Service. Most residents who were in need of support signed up to the Assisted Collection Service
- Information could be provided in terms of what could and could not be allowed to be burnt. Domestic household waste which would be classed as a nuisance if it was causing problems to neighbours. The issue of bonfires was not something that had been seen as an issue but it was reliant upon it being reported. There was very clear Legislation to deal with that statutory nuisance from an Environmental Health perspective. There were very strict regulations as to what could and could not be burnt. <https://www.gov.uk/garden-bonfires-rules>
- Was the inclusion of a purple flower on a bin not giving a sign to say there was a vulnerable person? It had been suggested that it was put inside the bin lid
- The brown bin continued to be owned by the Authority. If someone decided they no longer wished to subscribe to the Garden Waste Collection Service, the Service would look to recover the bin and keep it for future use/replacements
- The whole of Rotherham was a Smoke Control Area. You could not and should not be burning waste in your garden

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- The law would say that you could not burn garden waste

Resolved:- (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That a visit be arranged for all Members to the Manvers Waste Disposal Centre.

57. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING:-

Resolved:- That a further meeting be held on Thursday, 6th June, 2019, commencing at 1.30 p.m.