

Waste & Street Scene Policy Committee

Meeting held 21 June 2023

PRESENT: Councillors Joe Otten (Chair), Mark Jones (Deputy Chair), Christine Gilligan Kubo, Tim Huggan, Dianne Hurst, Barbara Masters (Substitute Member), Ruth Mersereau (Substitute Member), Mike Chaplin (Substitute Member) and Sioned-Mair Richards

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Alexi Dimond, Councillor Sue Alston and Councillor Garry Weatherall. Councillor Ruth Mersereau, Councillor Barbara Masters and Councillor Mike Chaplin attended as substitute members.

2. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

2.1 No items were identified where resolutions may be moved to exclude the press and public.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3.1 There were no declarations of interest.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

4.1 The Minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 22 March and 17 May 2023 were approved as a correct record.

5. APPOINTMENTS TO URGENCY SUB-COMMITTEE

5.1 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That Waste and Street Scene Policy Committee:-

1. Agrees to appoint Councillor Sioned Mair-Richards to serve on the Waste and Street Scene Urgency Sub-Committee; and
2. As respects the appointment of Members to serve on the Urgency Sub-Committee or any other Sub-Committee of the Waste and Street Scene Policy Committee, where vacancies exist or in cases of urgency to ensure quoracy or representation, the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the relevant political group whip, be authorised to appoint Members to serve on such Sub-Committees, as necessary, on the understanding that details of such appointments will be reported to the next or subsequent meetings of the Waste and Street Scene Policy Committee.

6. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

6.1 A question had been submitted from James Martin regarding the changes to the

Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licence Policy. James Martin was unable to attend the meeting and would be provided with a written response.

7. WORK PROGRAMME

- 7.1 The Principal Democratic Services Officer submitted a report containing the Committee's Work Programme which detailed all known, substantive agenda items for forthcoming meetings of the Committee to enable this Committee, other Committees, officers, partners and the public to plan their work with and for the Committee.
- 7.2 It was requested that the delays in bringing the Parking Enforcement Policy to the Committee be noted.
- 7.3 Members asked how the public were able to engage with reviews, particularly the review of the district energy network and glyphosate trials; officers agreed to look at how public engagement was carried out on these reviews.
- 7.4 Members proposed a number of additional items for the work programme including the kennelling project, actions from the response to the Street Tree Inquiry report, fly tipping and graffiti, the 'Team around the place' project, Stannington water leak and a public engagement session.
- 7.5 Members discussed the review of Amey scheduled for the Committee meeting in September and requested that the views of all Members be sought prior to the meeting to give Members a full picture of the experiences across all the wards.
- 7.6 Officers agreed to seek clarification that the items on Hostile Vehicle Mitigation measures and the District Energy Network fell under the remit of this Committee.
- 7.7 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That Waste and Street Scene Policy Committee:-
1. Agrees the Committee's work programme, as set out in Appendix 1, including the additions and amendments identified in Part 1;
 2. Considers the further additions or adjustments to the work programme presented in Part 2 of Appendix 1; and
 3. Agrees the following items to be added to Part 2 of Appendix 1 of the next work programme report:
 - a. Kennelling project update;
 - b. Progress update and plan for delivering the actions referred to the Waste and Street Scene Policy Committee by the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee on 19 June 2023, as detailed in Annex A of the 'Learning from the past and moving ahead: Response to the Sheffield Street Tree Inquiry' report;
 - c. Briefing on fly tipping and graffiti;
 - d. Briefing on the 'Team around the place' project;

- e. Review of the emergency planning response to the Stannington water leak; and
- f. Public engagement session, topic(s) to be confirmed.

7.8 **Reasons for Decision**

- 7.8.1 To give the committee members an opportunity to consider the direction of the work programme, align it with their key priorities and create a manageable workload for the committee.

7.9 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

- 7.9.1 It was determined that the work programme presented by officers did not meet member priorities and required further consideration in terms of the workload of the committee.

8. **REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - MONTH 12**

- 8.1 The Head of Accounting introduced the report which brought the Committee up to date with the Council's final revenue outturn position for 2022/23.

- 8.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That Waste and Street Scene Policy Committee note the updated information and management actions provided by this report on the 2022/23 Revenue Budget Outturn.

8.3 **Reasons for Decision**

- 8.3.1 To formally record changes to the Revenue Budget.

8.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

- 8.4.1 The Council is required to both set a balance budget and to ensure that in-year income and expenditure are balanced. No other alternatives were considered.

9. **HACKNEY CARRIAGE VEHICLE LICENCE POLICY**

- 9.1 The Licensing Strategy and Policy Officer submitted a report seeking approval for an amendment to a technical element of the Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licence Policy, specifically part 9 – Hackney Carriage Vehicle Specification. The amendment would provide clearer information and guidance for applicants on applications, decision-making and enforcement.

- 9.2 Members requested that the Licensing Officers meet with James Martin to discuss the concerns raised in his public question.

- 9.3 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That Waste and Street Scene Policy Committee approves the proposed amendment to the Hackney Carriage Vehicle Specification

at Appendix A to this report to come into force with immediate effect.

9.4 **Reasons for Decision**

9.4.1 It is recommended that Members approve the amendments to the Hackney Carriage Vehicle Specification in order to allow the licensing of rear-loading vehicles as intended.

9.5 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

9.5.1 There are no alternative options under consideration.

10. **FOOD SAFETY PLAN**

10.1 The Head of Environmental Regulation and Licensing presented a report seeking approval for a risk-based Service Plan for 2023/24 with respect to Food Safety and Food Standards interventions. As a statutory body in respect of delivering food controls, Sheffield City Council is required to follow guidance from the Food Standards Agency (FSA) with respect to Food Hygiene and Standards. The guidance requires the Council to deliver a Service Plan that includes a programme of inspection of food businesses for 2023/24.

10.2 During the covid pandemic, there were periods when routine work was suspended and many businesses closed; this, along with the national shortages of qualified staff, had adversely impacted many of the Councils' inspection programmes. The Service Plan set out proposals for fulfilling the Council's Hygiene and Standards responsibilities over the next year, including how it was proposed to respond to the backlog in food visits that remained.

10.3 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That Waste and Street Scene Policy Committee:-

- a) Approve the Service Plan including the risk-based food programme proposals in the attached report concerning Food Safety and Standards; and,
- b) Note the necessary overspend in this area to enable statutory duties to be met and the backlog to be reduced which will be mitigated by savings achieved elsewhere in Street Scene and Regulation in 23/24.

10.4 **Reasons for Decision**

10.4.1 We are required to produce a Service Plan setting out amongst other things how we will meet our obligations in terms of activities such as inspections.

10.4.2 Previously, we made full use of the flexibilities given us by the FSA during the pandemic and have met most of the recovery plan milestones in the FSA plan. However, the return to regular inspection programmes and frequency this year requires us to deliver an unprecedented number of inspections at a time when

there are reduced qualified staff nationally. As such we will continue to take a risk-based approach and do all we can to reduce risk to public health. To deliver the programme, will inevitably mean an overspend. A risk-based approach to tackling the large number of inspections will be taken. To deliver the large number of visits we will need to take on additional staff to meet these statutory guidelines.

- 10.4.3 We believe these proposals meet the requirements to produce a statutory food plan:

'The plan must cover all areas of food law the Competent Authority has a duty to enforce, be documented in accordance with Chapter 2 of the Practice Guidance and the Framework Agreement. It must set out how the Competent Authority intends to deliver and resource official food controls and other official activities in its area and address any variance in meeting the outcomes of the previous service plan. A performance review must be carried out at least once per year and be documented. The plan must be submitted for approval by a relevant member forum or relevant senior officer' (Food Law Code of Practice (England) (issued March 2021).'

10.5 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

- 10.5.1 As part of a wider structural review, we are reviewing the organisation of Food Standards and Hygiene delivery to ensure best value and the most efficient use of resources. This is also required to minimise the overall regulatory burdens on businesses. A combined hygiene and standards visit would reduce standards backlogs but would reduce the number of hygiene visits – the cost benefits will be shared with members in June.
- 10.5.2 We could choose to not follow the Food Law Code of Practice guidance, however, as highlighted above the FSA would be likely to directly intervene to ensure the requirements of the Code were followed. This would be a reputational risk and would not be in the best interests of our residents.
- 10.5.3 Previous Project Management studies have reviewed the cost benefits of the use of Contract staff versus in house staff and concluded that the hybrid model provides best value for money. However, given current problems we need to recruit additional inhouse staff.
- 10.5.4 If our Contractor is unable to provide additional resource during the plan, we will inevitably carry forward at least 1100 medium to low-risk interventions which we are required to complete by statute. Employing additional 'food competent' officers to concentrate on medium to low-risk interventions, would allow us to clear the backlogs and be in a safer position by 2024/25 so that is what we propose to do. It is proving difficult to recruit temporary staff due to national shortages of contractors hence the need to take on additional permanent staff.
- 10.5.5 Flexibilities in the Current Code of Practice allow us to use alternative means of conducting the lowest risk interventions which we will do.

11. PEST CONTROL AND CLEARANCE CHARGES 2023/24

11.1 The Head of Environmental Regulation and Licensing introduced a report which set out proposals to increase the current fees and charges structure for pest control.

11.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That Waste and Street Scene Policy Committee approves the changes to the fees and charges set out in the appendices to this report.

11.3 Reasons for Decision

11.3.1 We believe these proposals will allow the service to cover the cost increases it is facing on materials, salaries, and transport. The service also has to cover the cost of free, subsidised and statutory obligations.

Appendix 1 shows current proposal for Fees and Income uplift.

Appendix 2 shows fees and charges from previous year.

Appendix 3 shows the full year income was £908k, the estimated income at approximately 10% increase over a full year is £998k.

11.4 Alternatives Considered and Rejected

11.4.1 This continues a principle of subsidised public health significant pest control for people on low income, however SCC is not obliged to offer that. However without some subsidised pest control and or a major increase in enforcement, it is hard to see how SCC can meet its equalities, public health and cost of living ambitions.

11.4.2 These proposals continue to provide some concession to allow short or long term tenants to proactively request and pay for where required some pest services. An alternative approach could be to put the onus back on landowners to keep their land free of public health significant pests like rodents, cockroaches, and bedbugs and if the land or property is rented there is no concession available as there is an income for the owner for the land which should help pay for the treatment.

11.4.3 We will bring proposals on the cost benefits of such a proposal to a future committee in 2023. Such proposals would also consider the cost benefits of whether an entirely free service should be maintained and whether some contribution should be expected even for concessionary rat treatment which is currently free.

11.4.4 Previous project reviews have considered the cost benefits of the use of inhouse v contracted out pest control services and concluded that the inhouse model provides best value for money in that a well run inhouse commercial service can help reduce the cost of subsidised / free services and reduce enforcement costs.

12. REVIEW OF CRYSTAL PEAKS MARKET SERVICE CHARGE

- 12.1 The Interim Operations Manager City Centre Maintenance and Sheffield Markets introduced a report reviewing the service charge paid by traders at Crystal Peaks Market Place. There had not been an increase passed on to traders in several years despite the operational cost of the market increasing. The report set out the impact of under-recovery and proposed options in relation to service charges going forward.
- 12.2 Members raised concerns that the proposed service charge increase would have a detrimental impact on the number of market traders and negatively impact footfall to the market. Members requested that a report be submitted to the Committee meeting in September that provided proposals on how to improve the performance of the market and a longer-term plan for increasing the service charge.
- 12.3 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That Waste and Street Scene Policy Committee requests that the report comes back to a future meeting of the Committee to enable the Committee to review the service charge paid by traders alongside consideration of future plans to improve the performance of the markets.
- 12.4 **Reasons for Decision**
- 12.4.1 The Committee rejected the officer recommendations due to concerns that increasing the service charge would have an adverse impact on the occupancy levels of the market and footfall. The Committee requested that a review be undertaken of the options for improving the performance of the market in conjunction with a review of the service charge; this would enable the Committee to consider the options for setting the service charge and the implications that an increase would have on traders and customers.
- 12.5 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**
- 12.5.1 The alternative options that were considered were outlined in paragraphs 1.6.1 to 1.6.3 of the report. The option to do nothing (1.6.1) had been rejected due to the unsustainable nature of the increasing subsidy required on operational costs.
- 12.5.2 The option to move straight to full cost recovery (1.6.3) would be too much of an impact on the tenants. It was likely to create significant cost pressures that were too large to pass straight on to customers and may increase the markets vacancy rate, which would negatively financially impact the budgets for service charges and rents. Overall, it could undermine the financial position rather than improve it.
- 12.5.3 The Committee rejected the recommended option of an increase of 50% (1.6.2) so that a review of the plans to improve the performance of the market could be undertaken prior to a decision on the service charge.

(NOTE: During the discussion of the above item, the Committee agreed, in

accordance with Council Procedure rules, that, as the meeting was approaching the 2 hours and 30 minutes time limit, the meeting a) should be extended by a period of 30 minutes and b) should be extended by a further period of 30 minutes.)

(NOTE: Councillors Christine Gilligan Kubo, Sioned Mair-Richards and Ruth Mersereau left the meeting during the discussion on the above item.)