

# SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

## Economic and Environmental Wellbeing Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee

Meeting held 10 December 2014

**PRESENT:** Councillors Cate McDonald (Chair), Ian Auckland (Deputy Chair),  
Neale Gibson, Ibrar Hussain, Steve Jones, Helen Mirfin-Boukouris,  
Robert Murphy, Martin Smith, Steve Wilson and Paul Wood

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### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

1.1 No apologies for absence were received

### **2. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

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

### **3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

3.1 The Chair (Councillor Cate McDonald) declared a personal interest in item 7 (Sheffield's Library Services – Update) as she had assisted the community group running Newfield Green Library.

3.2 Councillor Steve Jones declared a personal interest in item 7 (Sheffield's Library Services – Update) as he had assisted the community group running Newfield Green Library.

3.3 Councillor Neil Gibson declared a personal interest in item 7 (Sheffield's Library Services – Update) as he had assisted the community group running Upperthorpe and Walkley Library.

3.4 Councillor Martin Smith declared a personal interest in item 7 (Sheffield's Library Services – Update) as he had assisted the community group running Totley Library.

### **4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

4.1 The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2014, were approved as a correct record and, arising therefrom, the Chair stated that, in connection with item 6 – The Future Role of the City Centre, she had drafted a letter, and would be sending it shortly to Councillor Leigh Bramall, Cabinet Member for Business, Skills and Development, informing him of the summary of the discussion at the meeting, and to raise the key points.

### **5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS**

- 5.1 Jennie Van Tinteren, Chair of the Stannington and District Library Group (STAND), requested that the Council give consideration to removing the obstacles in respect of the Library's 25-year lease. She stated that if the voluntary libraries were to survive beyond three years, they needed to be sustainable and innovative, and with funding for running and capital costs. At the present time, the Property and Facilities Management Service was indicating that library groups could only obtain 25-year leases, at its discretion, which meant that the groups could not apply to funding bodies without the leases and security of tenure. This placed the groups in a 'Catch 22' situation, and Ms Van Tinteren stated that STAND wanted to apply for, and be granted, a 25-year lease at their discretion, at the time the Group needed the lease.
- 5.2 Councillor Mazher Iqbal, Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Health, stated that it had always been the intention to make it as easy as possible for the voluntary groups to run the libraries, and to remove any unnecessary bureaucracy and burden. It had been considered that granting a 25-year lease would be the most suitable option in terms of ensuring that the voluntary groups were sustainable. It was accepted, however, that this arrangement may not be suitable for all the voluntary groups and for this reason, officers were meeting with the groups to discuss the most suitable arrangements which would enable them to be able to proceed on a sustainable basis. Cllr Iqbal added that he would be happy to provide letters of support to those groups bidding for funding.
- 5.3 The Chair stated that the arrangement would be determined based on the individual merits of each case, with every effort being made to support the voluntary groups. She added that the Authority would also provide assistance to the Groups in terms of bids for funding.

## **6. SHEFFIELD'S LIBRARY SERVICES - UPDATE**

- 6.1 The Committee received a presentation from Dawn Shaw, Head of Libraries and Community Services, and Nick Partridge, Libraries, Archives and Information Service Manager, Communities Portfolio, providing an update on Sheffield's Library Services following the implementation of the new operation model for the City's community libraries, approved by the Cabinet in February 2014.
- 6.2 The presentation included a recap of the recommendations set out in the Cabinet report in February 2014, the progress of action taken since that date, details of the associate and co-delivered libraries, liaison and correspondence with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, details of the City Council-run hub libraries, other achievements since February 2014, and future plans.

6.3 Members of the Committee raised questions and the following responses were provided:-

- As referred to previously in the meeting, the Property and Facilities Management Service was currently liaising with the voluntary groups in terms of the leases, which were presently being drafted. The options being offered were a five-year lease as standard for all groups, plus an option for up to a 25-year lease, with a letter of intent, with determinations being made based on the individual requirements of each group. The timing of the discussions was based on the groups' availability, although it was accepted that there was a need to undertake such discussions at the earliest possible opportunity.
- In the light of the amount and level of work undertaken by officers, working with the voluntary groups to ensure that their Business Plans were robust and sustainable, officers did not envisage any major problems, although they were mindful of potential adverse effects following the recent Government budget announcements.
- Some of the voluntary groups expressed a wish to have a five-year licence as opposed to a 25-year lease. Officers had given all voluntary groups a commitment that the issue regarding the leases would be resolved as soon as possible.
- The continuing work with the voluntary groups was progressing very well, with representatives from the groups meeting on a fortnightly basis to raise any issues of concern and to provide help and advice to other groups. A Volunteer Co-ordinator had been appointed to work with the associate libraries to provide advice and any assistance in terms of training and funding opportunities.
- All voluntary groups had been required to include details of their safeguarding policies as part of their Business Plan submissions.

6.4 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) notes the information reported as part of the presentation, together with the responses provided to the questions raised; and
- (b) requests that:-
  - (i) its thanks and appreciation be conveyed to all Council officers and volunteers involved in the operation of the new Library Service; and
  - (ii) the necessary steps be taken to ensure that the issues

regarding the leases is progressed at the earliest possible opportunity, with both the interests of the City Council and the voluntary groups being taken into consideration, and that an update on the progress made with regard to this issue be provided at the next meeting of the Committee in February 2015.

## **7. WASTE STRATEGY - UPDATE**

- 7.1 The Committee received a presentation from Gillian Charters, Head of Waste Management, on an update on the Waste Management Strategy. The Committee had received a report on an update on the Council's Waste Strategy 2009-2020 at its meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2014, and had requested a further update, prior to the consideration of the Strategy by the Cabinet, on the observations and suggestions made at that meeting, financial costings and best practice.
- 7.2 Ms Charters reported on the objectives of the revised Waste Strategy to 2020, which included plans to reduce Sheffield's waste and help residents and businesses to recycle and minimise waste that goes to landfill. Specific reference was made to possible changes to the recycling collection options and the 50% European target for recycling.
- 7.3 Members of the Committee raised questions and the following responses were provided:-
- The introduction of the alternate weekly recycling collections had resulted in a slight increase in recycling rates. The collection of the black bin being made less frequent had made people think more about recycling.
  - Generally, there was little electrical equipment found in the black bins, as such equipment was generally resold, recycled or taken back by companies. However, there was a growing waste stream as mobile/tablet technology was updated regularly.
  - The recycling collection options, as detailed as part of the presentation, were there for Members to comment on, and put forward any views in terms of what they considered to be the most suitable option for the City.
  - It may take up to 30 years to recover the costs in terms of the initial outlay for smaller black bins to be provided.
  - Food waste could be sent for anaerobic digestion, but this method would cost more in terms of the capital costs of setting up the necessary plant, and then an additional revenue cost for separate collection.

- It was accepted that there was a need to stop food waste at source, but the Council had very little influence over this. Considerable work was being undertaken under the Waste Resources Action Programme (WRAP), with supermarkets, on this issue.
- The size of residents' black waste bins was based on the number of occupants in the household.
- Sheffield adopted best practice in terms of the amount of waste produced per person (lower amount being good). Reducing the size of the black bin would allow further improvement in performance as shown in other areas, such as Bristol.
- Based on current operational methods and feedback from residents, the preferred change in terms of the recycling collection options was to replace the current box with a new bin, resulting in all households having the existing black waste and blue recycling bins (for paper and card) and an additional, different coloured bin for mixed glass, cans and plastic. The black waste bin would be collected once every two weeks, with the other coloured bins being collected once every four weeks. This option was also the most suitable based on TEEP guidance (Technically, Environmentally and Economically Practicable). The single bin option, for all recyclables to be collected together, would cost significantly more due to the capital costs involved, whereas, if the option was for the three bins, the Council could use the existing infrastructure. Feedback from residents had indicated that there was a preference for the single bin option.
- Whilst the Council provided a facility for the recycling of garden waste, the most cost effective and efficient method of treating this waste stream was for people to compost their garden waste themselves.
- It was accepted that there was still a level of confusion in terms of the different types of recyclable plastics, despite the Council providing advice leaflets on this issue to all households. There was a market in terms of the recycling of plastic bottles, whereas there was less demand for the other plastics, such as yogurt cartons and meat trays.
- Whilst it was accepted that recycling rates for paper and card could be reducing due to a decrease in the level of printed material in general, following advances in technology, there had been an increase in levels of packaging relating to goods and food.

- Whilst there was a 50% European target for recycling, there was no legal requirement on local authorities to achieve this rate and, it was not envisaged that introducing either of the two recycling collection options would result in the Council reaching a 50% rate. In order to achieve this rate, the Council would have to invest in other waste streams, as well as collecting food waste.
- The cost for rolling out a new bin for each household would be approximately £4-£5 million.
- It had been identified that there was a need for investment in terms of the City's household waste recycling centres, which could possibly involve the closing of all the existing centres, and opening one or more new, purpose-built sites, with improved facilities. The option of charging in terms of trade waste was also being investigated. Whilst there were already issues in terms of travel times in respect of the existing centres, particular consideration would have to be given to this issue if the number of sites was reduced. Another option being pursued was the provision of a number of smaller, community recycling sites, with the introduction of charges in terms of their use.
- One of the key considerations in connection with introducing a 'pay as you go' system for traders was the issue of affordability. If the charge was not affordable or reasonable, it could encourage flytipping. Despite the best efforts of the Council, it was very difficult to stop flytipping.
- No consideration had been given to opening a donation recycling centre for electrical goods in the City. The plan was to continue to use the existing infrastructure in this regard. It was accepted that there was a need to provide residents with as much help and advice as possible in terms of the various options for disposing of unwanted electrical goods.
- In the light of changing patterns regarding service delivery, there was always likely to be a need to change the terms of the Council's 35-year contract with Veolia.

7.4 Members made the following comments in connection with the recycling collection options now reported, as follows:-

- Consideration should be given to having different types and sizes of bins, both waste and recycling, for different households. This would include having larger bins, for sharing, for residents in terraced houses. Consideration should be given to local solutions for different types of housing in the City.
- Consideration needs to be given to the fact that several

households in the City do not have adequate storage space for their waste and recycling bins.

- There was a need for the Council to work with other partners to look at how recycling rates could be increased.
- Consideration needs to be given to the number and location of household waste recycling centres, specifically with regard to travel times as this could be inconvenient for some residents.
- Any changes to the household waste recycling centres could have the potential for increasing levels of flytipping. The issue of enforcement needs to be considered alongside any such changes.
- Members were keen to see that any future proposed changes to the Waste Strategy were sustainable and needed to be future-proofed.
- Consideration needs to be given to cross-border agreements with other towns and cities in terms of landfill arrangements.

7.5 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) notes the information now reported as part of the presentation, together with the responses to the questions raised; and
- (b) requests the Head of Waste Management to consider the comments now made in connection with the recycling collection options, as part of any proposed changes to the City's Waste Strategy.

## **8. WORK PROGRAMME 2014/15**

8.1 RESOLVED: That the Committee notes and approves the report of the Policy and Improvement Officer, Matthew Borland, now submitted, setting out its Work Programme for 2014/15.

## **9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

9.1 It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on Wednesday, 18<sup>th</sup> February 2015, at 4.30 pm, in the Town Hall.