

**Economic and Environmental Wellbeing Scrutiny and Policy Development
Committee**

Meeting held 30 September 2015

PRESENT: Councillors Bob Johnson (Chair), Ian Auckland (Deputy Chair), Lewis Dagnall, Gill Furniss, Neale Gibson, Julie Gledhill, Ibrar Hussain, Helen Mirfin-Boukouris, Roy Munn, Robert Murphy, Joe Otten, Ray Satur, Martin Smith, Steve Wilson and Pat Midgley (Substitute Member)

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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 An apology for absence was received from Councillor Paul Wood, with Councillor Pat Midgley attending as his substitute.

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 There were no declarations of interest.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

4.1 The minutes of (a) the special meeting of the Committee held on 24th June 2015, and (b) the meeting of the Committee held on 29th July 2015, were approved as correct records.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

5.1 There were no public questions raised or petitions submitted by members of the public.

6. WASTE MANAGEMENT - ASSISTED COLLECTION POLICY REVIEW

6.1 The Director of Business Strategy and Regulation submitted a report on proposed changes to the assisted collection eligibility criteria following the identification of a number of limitations to the existing criteria and a review of services provided by other local authorities.

6.2 In addition to the report, the Committee received a presentation from Gillian Charters, Head of Waste Management, on the proposed changes to the eligibility criteria. Also in attendance for this item were Councillor Terry Fox (Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport), Councillor Tony Downing (Cabinet Advisor for Environment and Transport) and Neil Townrow (Waste Management Officer).

6.3 Ms Charters reported on the present assisted collection service provided by the Authority, the present service criteria, the limitations with the current approach, the approach taken by a number of other local authorities, the proposed revisions to the criteria and consultation arrangements.

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

- In terms of transitions arrangements, those people who met the current criteria, but would not meet the criteria if and when the proposed changes were agreed, would be entitled to assisted collections up until the date of the next scheduled review.
- The Waste Management Service did not have any statistics in terms of those areas of the City having the highest and lowest demand for the assisted collection service, but this information could be obtained from the Geographical Information System and provided to Members.
- In terms of the financial implications, for those people registered under the scheme, the Council paid Veolia an increased cost in terms of the collection of their black and blue bins and blue boxes, based on the size of their black bins. On average, this cost amounted to £10 a year.
- There was no reference to weather conditions, as part of the eligibility criteria, as it was considered that if people were not physically able, or would struggle to move their bins, weather conditions would not make any difference. There was also an issue of flexibility in terms of adding this in, and dealing with this issue, as part of the eligibility criteria. Although, as part of the criteria, the Council offered temporary assisted collections for a set period of time of up to six months, for example, due to illness, pregnancy or recovery from an operation, it was considered that it would be too difficult to instruct Veolia to undertake assisted collections during periods of inclement weather. Officers were not aware of any other local authorities who adopted this approach. However, officers would talk to Veolia to discuss the possibility of undertaking assisted collections during periods of inclement weather, to assess the practical arrangements required and to determine if any financial savings could be made.
- Statistics in terms of how many people would be eligible for assisted collections under the revised criteria were not available at the present time. However, based on the fact that approximately 7% of people in the City were over 75 and approximately 5% of the City's population were disabled, and that the Council was presently providing the service to approximately one-third of these two groups of people, it would mean around 4% of people in Sheffield would be in receipt of the service.
- In those circumstances where people used shared container bins, for both waste and recycling, such as in multi-storey flats, the Council provided the

assisted collections automatically, regardless of the occupants' age or physical condition.

- It was accepted that not everyone would have the ability, or facilities, to photocopy or scan the documentation required, as proof, in terms of the eligibility criteria, so the Council was looking to arrange a data-share with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and, if this was not possible, officers would make arrangements to cross-check the information with the DWP.

6.5 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) notes the contents of the report now submitted, together with the information reported as part of the presentation and the responses provided to the questions raised;
- (b) approves the proposed changes to the eligibility criteria regarding the Council's Assisted Collection Policy, as set out in the report now submitted; and
- (c) requests the Head of Waste Management to look into the implications of the suggestion now made, that inclusion of the Council's Electoral Register be added to the eligibility criteria in terms of entitlement to assisted collections, including liaising with colleagues in Nottingham, who currently adopt that approach, and ensuring that appropriate safeguards are in place.

7. STREETS AHEAD PROJECT - WINTER REVIEW

- 7.1 Steve Robinson, Head of Highway Maintenance, gave a presentation on the review of the winter maintenance arrangements in terms of the 2014/15 winter season under the Streets Ahead Project. Mr Robinson referred to the consultation held in June and July 2014, in connection with the proposed reduction of the gritting network and the number of highway grit bins, and the changes made following such consultation. He reported on the present gritting route network and the current fleet used to undertake the work, as well as referring to the lessons learnt from operations in previous years. Mr Robinson also circulated a paper containing details relating to the gritting of the road network, grit bins, snow wardens and other issues, including City resilience, the position of the South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (SYPTe) and bus companies, and communications, with regard to (a) the position prior to changes agreed at the Cabinet Highways Committee meeting in August 2014, (b) the position regarding the period up to December 2014, (c) the latest position following the actions implemented as part of the Winter Review, (d) the operation as compared with other local authorities and (e) the budget position.
- 7.2 Mr Robinson expressed his thanks and appreciation to Amey and local farmers for their service during winter.
- 7.3 He recommended the following, subject to the approval of the Cabinet Highways Committee:-

- Gritting routes to remain as they were after December 2014
- Future gritting requests to be assessed using the criteria agreed at the Cabinet Highways Committee meeting in August 2014
- Number of grit bins to be capped at current total
- 158 grit bins on roads that had gritting removed, but now reinstated, should be collected and relocated to 155 locations requested by the public, and that met the grit bin criteria
- Further snow shovels and reflective jackets be made available to volunteer Snow Wardens
- Work to continue with the voluntary sector to establish co-ordination with community volunteers
- Consideration be given to provide community volunteers with grit bags at key locations
- A multi-agency City-wide winter resilience plan be developed in 2016

7.4 Also in attendance for this item were Councillors Terry Fox (Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport) and Tony Downing (Cabinet Adviser for Environment and Transport).

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

- Whilst there had been delays in the plans to introduce a new innovative multi-agency City winter resilience approach, which would include the Council working even more closely with a number of partners, including the National Health Service, emergency services, South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (SYPTTE), bus companies, Veolia and Adult Social Care teams, plans had been delayed as a result of staff being forced to deal with other Streets Ahead issues. However, such an approach was viewed as a positive way forward, and every effort would be made to ensure such plans were introduced during 2016/17.
- Following concerns raised in connection with the previous Snow Warden scheme whereby the wardens had been provided with a one tonne bag of grit for use in their neighbourhoods, mainly regarding pavements or drives being blocked by the large bags and the contents leaking onto pavements, there were plans to provide community groups with smaller bags of grit, which could be stored more conveniently.
- Amey always encouraged members of the public to let them know when grit bins were close to being empty, with the Company making every effort to refill the bins within three days although, through improved communication methods, such as Twitter, in 2014/15, the bins had been refilled within 24 hours. To assist members of the public, there were plans for there to be a telephone number and an individual number for each grit bin. There were also plans to include a 'QR' code, which would enable people with smart phones to scan a code and send a message directly to Amey.

- The Council paid Amey a set monthly fee in terms of all its services, including winter maintenance services in the City, regardless of how bad the weather was.
- There was no change in the quality of the grit from when Amey took over the contract from Street Force, as Amey used the same suppliers. The caveat to this was that grit stored in the bins comprised a combination of salt and sand.
- In the event of particularly adverse weather conditions, the Council could call on staff of the Parks and Countryside Service to assist with clearing and gritting around schools and heavily pedestrianized areas.
- The wider snow ploughs were used in the first instance, rather than the narrow ploughs, on the grounds that they had the ability to clear the whole road, which would enable buses and other traffic to use the roads.
- Previously, there had been no criteria used to select which roads were gritted. In August 2014, the Cabinet Highways Committee agreed criteria for the gritting of Priority 2 routes. The criteria included SYPTTE bus routes, access to school and GP surgeries, traffic flow of more than 3000 vehicles a day and the road having a gradient steeper than 1 in 10.
- The reason why 100% of roads were gritted in some rural areas, such as Bradfield, was because that was the service they had received for many years, rather than the roads meeting the agreed gritting criteria.
- Whilst the Council and Amey had an excellent relationship with the Police and other emergency services with regard to winter maintenance, the Police did not attend the meeting arranged to discuss the introduction of a multi-agency approach, in May 2015. Every effort would be made to include them in the plans to introduce the approach in 2016/17.
- Any network changes, including new housing developments, such as the new housing development in Stocksbridge, or changes to bus routes, would be taken into consideration in terms of winter maintenance planning.
- The Council would continually review the location of grit bins across the City in order to ensure that they were in locations that achieved the most benefit. There were plans to undertake a usage survey during the coming winter, and those not being used would be removed and relocated to other areas.
- The Snow Code was available on the Met Office/Department for Transport website, as well as on the Council's website. This information clearly explained that people clearing snow from pavements could not be sued or prosecuted and that the Council encouraged residents to support its services.
- The Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport (Councillor Terry Fox) would invite all Members of the Council to the Streets Ahead event on Winter Preparedness to be held on Tuesday, 3rd November, 2015, at Barker's Pool.

7.6 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) notes the information reported as part of the presentation, the contents of the paper now circulated and the responses to the questions raised;
- (b) thanks Steve Robinson for attending the meeting and responding to the questions raised; and
- (c) agrees that the minutes of this meeting be referred to the Cabinet Highways Committee, for consideration alongside the report on the review of the winter maintenance service to be considered at its meeting to be held on 8th October 2015.

8. WORK PROGRAMME 2015/16

8.1 The Policy and Improvement Officer submitted a report attaching the draft Work Programme for 2015/16. The draft Programme set out the details of a number of topics which the Committee was requested to prioritise in terms of their consideration at future meetings. The Programme also contained details of written briefings which would be submitted to the Committee for information only.

8.2 Matthew Borland, Policy and Improvement Officer, reported that the issue regarding library services, following the recent changes, should be added to the Work Programme.

8.3 Members suggested the following changes:-

- (a) addition of a written briefing on enforcement action taken in respect of litter dropping across the City;
- (b) upgrade the issue with regard to the update following discussion of the Streets Ahead Action Plan on Street Lighting from a written briefing to a main item at a future meeting; and
- (c) requests that three of the other written briefings listed in the Programme, be submitted to the meeting to be held in October 2015.

8.4 RESOLVED: That subject to the above suggested amendments, to be confirmed by the Chair and Deputy Chair, in consultation with the Policy and Improvement Officer, approval be given to the draft Work Programme for 2015/16 now submitted.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

9.1 It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee was to be re-arranged and that Members would be informed accordingly.