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Minutes of the meeting of the STRATEGIC PLACEMAKING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held on WEDNESDAY 14 OCTOBER at 7.00 PM

**Present:** Councillor P Geary (Chair)  
Councillors Bint, K Bradburn, Crooks, Gilbert, Legg, Long, McPake and Petchey

**Apologies:** Councillor Priestley

**Officers:** S Proffitt (Director Environment and Property), N Hannon (Head of Environment and Waste), D Proctor (Waste Services Client Manager), R Trowse (Commissioning Programme Manager) and R Tidman (Overview and Scrutiny Officer)

**Also present:** Councillor Darlington

**SP09 DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST**

Councillor K Bradburn advised that she was a member of the Waste Working Group. Councillor Crooks advised that he was a Trustee of the Parks Trust. Councillors P Geary, Long, Legg and Petchey advised that they were parish councillors on parishes that had responsibility for landscaping.

**SP10 MINUTES**

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Strategic Placemaking Scrutiny Committee held on 9 July 2020 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

**SP11 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

There were no questions from members of the public.

**COMMISSIONING 2023 UPDATE**

**Witnesses: Cllr Darlington (Cabinet member for Public Realm),  
S Proffitt (Director Environment and Property),  
N Hannon (Head of Environment and Waste),  
D Proctor (Waste Services Client Manager)**

The Cabinet member for Public Realm introduced the item. She noted that there had been a significant amount of work to review and align the existing public realm contracts and now was the time to start making decisions on this flagship programme of work for the Council. The Head of Environment and Waste then went through the presentation that had been circulated in advance to the Committee.

In response to questions the Committee noted that:

- (a) The current recycling rate was 58% and the ambition of the Council was to increase this to 70% including increasing quantity and improving quality of the material recycled. As part of increasing recycling this could include incorporating ideas such as pedestrian access to any new recycling centres;
- (b) This work was driven by how best we deliver for our residents. Including, how do we combat climate change and achieve our ambition to be the greenest city whilst providing long term value for money. This was a flagship project for the Council which was buying into a vision to become the greenest city;
- (c) It was critical the Council understood what residents wanted or expected from these services. There was a need for greater engagement with residents to understand their priorities;
- (d) Communication had improved internally with for example ward Councillors but external communication still needed to improve. This included informing residents of changes that needed to be made to individual lifestyles;
- (e) When recycling was first introduced in Milton Keynes all three parties were totally committed to deliver that project and this approach needed to take place with this programme of work as well;
- (f) They would not like to see Milton Keynes taking in landfill waste from other local authorities unless that was to generate electricity;
- (g) It was important to be in the right place in adopting these changes - not an early adopter or late adopter but also the Council should not be an expensive innovator and there

should be confidence in the reliability of the technology that would be introduced;

- (h) More work needed to be done to avoid creating waste in the first place for example changing behaviour when it comes to packaging. This needed to take account of the role of the Council and the role of Government to bring about these changes;
- (i) The 'Street Scene' approach was welcomed but there was concern about partnerships or whether it might lead to a patchwork situation of service delivery across the borough;
- (j) The Councils biodiversity and landscaping aspirations needed to be linked to ensure that both aspects complemented each other rather than had competing aims;
- (k) Parish Councils generally wanted to be involved in this work but at different levels and the Parks Trust were also a large part of these discussions as well. A way forward to develop the right arrangement to achieve the aims was required. For example, taking account of critical mass and expertise. It was key to create an environment where all organisations worked together and learnt from each other;
- (l) Those residents that lived on unadopted streets still felt entitled to have their streets looked after the same as others across the borough and might not understand why there would be a difference in level of service provided;
- (m) Some work around developing an 'MK Standard' was encouraged by the Committee to map out what there was across the borough and consider a universal standard alongside tailoring and topping up services for parishes;
- (n) New residential areas are being handed over for example to resident management companies and more work to liaise with these contacts to move towards creating equity in provision of services was needed;
- (o) A vision was needed for a 'Great Forest' for Milton Keynes and the opportunity for public engagement to create this flagship project;
- (p) A better solution for food and garden waste was required;
- (q) Some work had been done to review options for waste collections in new estates. However, to make some of these ideas work a much higher density of dwellings was needed; and

- (r) The waste collection trial was a trial to see whether wheelie bins and boxes were part of the solution or not that could be used to help the Council achieve its waste ambitions.

RESOLVED –

1. That the Cabinet member and officers be thanked for their presentation and the work that they are undertaking on this significant programme.
2. That Committee members note the timescales that officers are working to on this programme.
3. That the Cabinet member and Director Environment and Property be asked to ensure that they take account of the comments made by this Committee at the relevant decision-making stages.

**SP13**

### **WASTE AND RECYLING COLLECTION CONSULTATION**

**Witnesses: Cllr Darlington (Cabinet member for Public Realm),  
S Proffitt (Director Environment and Property),  
N Hannon (Head of Environment and Waste),  
R Trowse (Commissioning Programme Manager)**

The Cabinet member for Public Realm introduced the item including expressing her thanks for the cross-party support for this project and the constructive contribution of all those involved. The Commissioning Programme Manager then provided a summary of the plans to carry out the Waste and Recycling Collection consultation.

In response to questions the Committee noted that:

- (a) It was important that there was a good response rate for this consultation and it was acknowledged that the service area was looking at many different options to engage with residents and not just relying on social media; and
- (b) The Council should also look to highlight and benchmark against good practice in other comparable authorities that have introduced wheelie bins including, where relevant, London boroughs.

RESOLVED –

1. That officers be thanked for their presentation and their work on this topic.

2. That all ward councillors be reminded to engage with this important consultation and to promote it within their local community.

**SP14 THE NEW NORMAL**

The Chair introduced this item, which would be discussed in detail at the next Committee meeting. The purpose of this meeting would be to consider how Covid-19 had changed things for the services that fall under the remit of this Committee and how they might have to adapt in the future.

RESOLVED –

1. That all Committee members be asked to consider, prior to the next meeting, the implications of the Covid-19 pandemic on the services covered by this Committee.
2. That Committee members forward to the Committee Services Manager any contact details for experts or academics who might act as potential witnesses on this topic.

**SP15 2020/21 WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee received and noted the proposed Work Programme for 2020/21. There was a brief discussion about the Call-In on the decision to implement Demand Responsive Transport in Milton Keynes and whether to hold an additional meeting on this issue. Councillors also highlighted the potential to link the items on the East West Arc and the New Local Plan along with ensuring that enforcement was part of a wider item on parking.

RESOLVED –

1. That the 2020/21 Work Programme be noted.
2. That the Planning Group be asked to consider the addition of an item to the Work Programme on the introduction of a Demand Responsive Transport scheme in Milton Keynes.
3. That Scrutiny Management Committee be requested to agree to an additional meeting of this Committee to allow, if necessary, the scrutiny of the introduction of a Demand Responsive Transport scheme in Milton Keynes.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 9.56 PM

The recording of this meeting is available to view on the Council's YouTube Channel at: <https://www.youtube.com/user/MiltonKeynesCouncil/videos>