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Minutes of the meeting of the STRATEGIC PLACEMAKING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held on WEDNESDAY 3 MARCH 2021 at 7.00 PM

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

**Apologies:** Councillor McPake (substituted by Councillor R Bradburn)

**Officers:** S Proffitt (Director of Environment & Property), N Hannon (Head of Environment & Waste), P Fletcher (Community Engagement Manager), D Proctor (Waste Services Client Manager), R Trowse (Commissioning Programme Manager) and R Tidman (Committee Services Manager)

**Also present:** Councillor Darlington and one member of the public

**SP23 DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST**

Councillor K Bradburn advised the Committee, in respect of Item 5, that she was a member of the Waste Working Group but she did not consider that she was precluded from taking part in any discussions or votes the Committee might have on the matter.

**SP24 MINUTES**

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Strategic Placemaking Scrutiny Committee held on 13 January 2021 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

**WASTE COLLECTION SYSTEM**

**Witnesses: Cllr Darlington (Cabinet member for Public Realm),  
S Proffitt (Director, Environment & Property),  
N Hannon (Head of Environment & Waste),  
P Fletcher (Community Engagement Manager),  
D Proctor (Waste Services Client Manager) and  
R Trowse (Commissioning Programme Manager)**

The Cabinet member for Public Realm introduced the item including stating her thanks to the cross-party working group on waste and the openness and challenge that they had provided to the development of this work. The Committee then received a presentation on the waste consultation and the waste collection pilot.

The Committee made a number of comments seeking to clarify the information in the presentation including:

- (a) There was a need to mitigate the issues or difficulties that people had who did not support having wheeled bins. These could include those with mobility issues, assisted collections, concerns around the impact on the street scene and where it was thought that a bin would be too heavy for them to move;
- (b) It was positive that the pilot had showed an improvement in reducing the amount of contaminated waste that was being collected and the expectation that less than 10% contamination would be very good and under 15% would be a good result – although it should be noted that the Council is aiming for zero percent contamination;
- (c) There had been no reported injuries during the pilot;
- (d) It was noted that using wheeled bins was ‘a bit slower’ and there was a need for a time and motion study to consider the impact on productivity, affordability and the areas where there could be savings and where there could be additional costs;
- (e) Officers had worked closely with residents in sample rural areas to manage expectations in terms of where the bins would be collected from and there was a need to work out what was best for the bin crew and residents;
- (f) Bins would be made with the highest recycled content possible (grey) and would have different coloured lids stamped with the relevant information;
- (g) A better side waste policy needed to be developed to ensure that this was not a problem going forward;

- (h) There was no change in the demand for assisted collection between wheeled bins and sacks;
- (i) How much control we would have over which material could be recycled would depend on the markets the Council would be able to access, as close to home as possible and it would be a challenge to increase the types of materials able to be recycled; and
- (j) It was estimated that around 10-13% of properties in Milton Keynes would not be able to accommodate wheeled bins and further learning would be required to find the best waste solution for those properties.

The Committee heard from one member of the public who stated that while they fully supported plans to increase recycling and reduce contamination, there was a problem that in areas of terraced housing, the wheeled bins caused footpath obstructions. It was requested that the Committee recommend that in areas of terraced housing, residents should be given the option of boxes rather than wheeled bins.

The Committee in response to questions noted:

- (a) That there would be a Delegated Decision on the 23 March for the Cabinet Member to decide whether to adopt the new waste collection system and whether to extend the pilot or not. After the election a decision would need to be made as to the preferred way to deliver the waste collection service;
- (b) A solution for terraced housing needed to be found as issues around this were concerning;
- (c) The increase in collection time was very striking and there was a need to understand the impact of this extra time;
- (d) There may be confusion for residents with the different boxes needing to be put out on different weeks and communication and engagement would require a considerable ongoing resource;
- (e) Concern was expressed about how long it would take to procure and mobilise the contract and officers should put together a timeline showing decision making, contracting and mobilisation;
- (f) There was a need for a clear understanding of what would be done in terms of those with disabilities or other mobility issues;

- (g) It needed to be acknowledged that 30% of those residents who responded to the survey were dissatisfied with the pilot. Therefore, there should be a report back on the issues that were of concern and how they would be resolved or mitigated;
- (h) There were issues with narrow streets and shared surfaces so for future the planning department needed to take on board the development issues that would be raised by the changes in the waste collection service;
- (i) There needed to be benchmarking of how wheeled bins operate successfully in other areas with terraced housing for example in the London boroughs or other innovative solutions from around the country and even the world;
- (j) In the pilot areas there was initially around 180 people who were not happy about having the wheeled bins. However, they were asked to try the system for four weeks and after that time less than ten people asked to swap what they were using;
- (k) Communication with residents would be ongoing and this needed to be future proofed; and
- (l) The decision on whether the service was competitively tendered or whether it was insourced would impact on the procurement and mobilisation timeframe.

RESOLVED –

1. That the Cabinet member and officers be thanked for their contribution to the scrutiny of this item and the work that they are undertaking on what is a significant programme for the Council.
2. That the Committee welcomed the direction of travel towards the implementation of wheeled bins across Milton Keynes.
3. That the Cabinet member for Public Realm and the Director of Environment and Property be asked to ensure that they take account of the following recommendations, at the relevant decision-making stages.
  - i. That residents should not be forced to accept a wheeled bin if they had a good reason not to.
  - ii. The importance of ongoing communication and engagement with residents to ensure the appropriate changes in behaviour.

- iii. That the impact of any service change on those with mobility or disability issues were addressed.
  - iv. That clarity was provided as to what will happen with side waste.
4. That the Cabinet member for Public Realm and the Director of Environment & Property be asked to ensure that they have explored all innovative schemes from around the UK and wider that may have provided solutions to some of the issues raised as part of the consultation and pilot.
5. That the Director of Environment & Property be asked to provide the Planning Group with a timeline for procurement and mobilisation, including any key decision dates.
6. That prior to the Delegated Decision being taken, that the Director of Environment & Property be asked to circulate to the Committee the Cost Benefit Analysis for the proposal to introduce wheeled bins across Milton Keynes.
7. That the Interim Director of Planning, Strategic Transport & Placemaking be asked to give consideration to the need to develop planning policies that will take account of the introduction of wheeled bins.

## **SP26**

### **2021/22 WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee received and noted the proposed Work Programme for 2020/21.

RESOLVED –

1. That the draft Work Programme for 2021/22 be noted.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 9.06 PM

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