

STRATEGIC OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

THURSDAY 24 OCTOBER 2019
GIPPING ROOM, GRAFTON HOUSE
6.00 PM

Present: Councillors C Allen, S Gage, J Gibbs, T Grant, S Handley, D Heaps, C Shaw, C Smart, J Smith, E Harsant, R Pope and T Lockington

15. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Maguire.

16. Minutes of Previous Meeting

It was RESOLVED:

that the minutes of the meeting held on 3 October 2019 be signed as a true record.

17. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

18. To Confirm or Vary the Order of Business

18.1 Councillor Harsant noted that Highways England had been unable to provide the report on the Wind Speed Survey and so Agenda Item 6 (OS/19/05 Highways England - Orwell Bridge including Wind Speed Survey Results) would not be considered.

It was RESOLVED:

that, subject to agenda item 6 not being considered, the Order of Business be as printed on the agenda.

19. Park & Ride Update

- 19.1 Steve Wickers, Managing Director of First Eastern Counties Buses Ltd explained that the Park and Ride Service continued to perform well, although passenger numbers were static. Key points made by Mr Wickers were:
- Traffic congestion delayed buses and made them a less attractive travel option, although punctuality was only marginally lower than the previous year at 91%;
 - Increased parking provision in the Town Centre made the service less attractive;
 - The number of Suffolk County Council employees using the service had dropped but the number of Ipswich Borough Council employees using it had risen;
 - Mobile ticketing had been introduced and cheaper tickets were now available electronically;
 - Various promotions and advertising campaigns continued, with late night Christmas shopping buses operating on Thursdays and cheaper fares in the afternoon and on Saturdays;
 - The extension to Rendlesham had been discontinued to improve reliability, whilst the evening services to London Road had been withdrawn as they were poorly used.
 - First Eastern Counties Ltd were working with Suffolk One to provide off peak services to the college with good value pricing.
- 19.2 Councillor Harsant asked where the key areas of congestion were which affected the Park and Ride service. Mr Wickers explained that these were St Helens Street to Major's Corner, the area around the Crown Court and the approaches to the Buttermarket Car Park in the run up to Christmas. Suffolk County Councillor West noted that Highways had carried out schemes to alleviate congestion on the Park and Ride route including at Beech Road, and West End Road.
- 19.3 Councillor Gage asked whether the income from the Suffolk County Council car park on Constantine Road was still used to subsidise staff park and ride fares. Suffolk County Councillor West confirmed that this money remained available. Mr Wickers noted that whilst the total number had fallen, there were still large numbers of Suffolk County Council staff using the Park and Ride Service.
- 19.4 Councillor Gage asked when timetables would be placed in bus stops by First Eastern Counties following the transfer of responsibility from Suffolk County Council to bus operators. Mr Wickers confirmed that these would be put into place in the next few weeks.
- 19.5 Councillor T Lockington asked whether consideration was being given to reducing the availability of free on-street parking in streets such as Constitution Hill. Suffolk County Councillor West explained that residents parking schemes needed to have support from residents as they caused disruption, especially to visitors and commented that he would prefer to make using bus services more attractive.

- 19.6 Councillor Allen noted that Police were used to manage congestion caused by Christmas parking at the Buttermarket and asked whether First Eastern Counties Ltd contributed to the cost of this. Mr Wickers confirmed that First Eastern Counties Ltd, Suffolk County Council and Ipswich Borough Council all contributed to traffic management efforts in relation to the Buttermarket car park.
- 19.7 Councillor Allen asked whether First Eastern Counties Ltd still intended to offer reduced fares to Ipswich Hospital staff. Mr Wickers explained that talks were still ongoing but that the hospital management had been focussed on its merger with the Colchester Hospital and so progress had been slower than he had hoped.
- 19.8 Councillor Pope asked whether the service remained financially sustainable. Mr Wickers confirmed that the Park and Ride service was sustainable.
- 19.9 Councillor Harsant asked who was responsible for the screens at bus stops which displayed information on the next services. Suffolk County Councillor West explained that the signs were provided by Suffolk County Council and that real time information was provided by operators.
- 19.10 Councillor Harsant asked whether the subsidised number 4 buses which operated on Sundays were sustainable. Mr Wickers confirmed that with the subsidy these services were financially sustainable.
- 19.11 Councillor Harsant thanked First Eastern Counties Ltd and Suffolk County Council for attending the meeting and their helpful contributions to the discussion.

20. OS/19/05 Highways England - Orwell Bridge including Wind Speed Survey Results

This item was withdrawn as the results of the wind speed survey had not been received from Highways England.

21. OS/19/06 Annual Portfolio Holder Update - Environment and Climate Change

- 21.1 Councillor P Smart introduced the Annual Update on the Property and Development portfolio. Key points made were:
- Service 4 had been subsidised to run on Sundays with the support of Area Committee funding and County Councillors' Locality Budgets;
 - Ipswich Borough Council had been asked to enforce Civil Parking offences in Babergh and Mid-Suffolk; accepting this proposal would enable the Council to retain income from Cromwell Square car park;
 - A report was being prepared by the Plastics Project Manager on what the Council could do to reduce its use of plastic;
 - Ipswich was one of the least polluting local authority areas, with just 3.02 tonnes of Carbon Dioxide emissions per person compared to a UK average of 5.7 tonnes. An officer was to be employed to help the Council to plan further reductions in Carbon emissions;

- Significant investment had been made in parks, with new play equipment installed at Maple Park, Bourne Park and St Augustine's Recreation Ground. It was hoped that the Council's financial position would allow for further investment in 2020/21;
 - The Ed Sheeran concerts in Chantry Park had been a great success and 40% of those attending had used public transport to get to the event;
 - 6 new refuse collection vehicles had been delivered, and 5 more were expected by April 2020 which would improve reliability.
- 21.2 Councillor Gage asked how the Council's new electric Pool Cars were performing. Councillor P Smart explained that they had not been in use for long enough for an accurate picture to be given, however, a report to Executive reviewing the scheme was planned and he hoped that this would include the number of litres of fuel avoided.
- 21.3 Councillor Gage noted that there had been a reduction in the take up of allotments and asked how this was to be addressed. The Operations Manager for Parks and Bereavement explained that the Council still had good take up at most of its allotment sites but that a social media campaign was planned to increase the number of allotment holders. Community plots were also being introduced with community groups taking on plots which would enable people to try out working on an allotment without taking on the full responsibility for its maintenance.
- 21.4 Councillor Harsant asked whether the changes to the allotment rules had been significant. The Operations Manager for Parks and Bereavement confirmed that the changes had been relatively minor, although the clarification of plot sizes and the number of plots allowed had affected a small number of people.
- 21.5 Councillor Pope noted that the amount of waste per resident thrown away in black bins had exceeded the target again and asked what the reason for this was. Councillor P Smart explained that there was unfortunately a national trend for increasing amounts of black bin waste, although there were also local issues with contamination on some rounds being so bad that recycling was disposed of as if it were black bin waste. Councillor P Smart also explained that whilst the proportion of waste being sent for recycling was reducing, this was largely because of a reduction in the weight of packaging and the number of newspapers being disposed of.
- 21.6 Councillor Pope noted that residents could no longer put fruit and vegetable peelings in their brown bins and asked whether this had contributed to the increase in black bin tonnages and if any composting schemes had been promoted as an alternative. Councillor P Smart explained that the figures included in the report were to the end of March 2019 and so would not reflect the change to what could be put in brown bins. Councillor P Smart confirmed that a number of composting initiatives were run by the Suffolk Waste Partnership, including discounted compost bins being available to residents. In response to a request for clarification by Councillor Shaw, Councillor P Smart confirmed that 'hot' compost bins were also available via this scheme.

- 21.7 Councillor Pope asked whether kerbside glass collections could be introduced in Ipswich. Councillor P Smart explained that the Suffolk Waste Partnership had considered kerbside glass collections but had determined that it was not economically viable. Councillor P Smart noted that the Government had consulted on national recycling standards which might include glass collections and commented that such a scheme would need to be funded.
- 21.8 Councillor Harsant noted that there were red glass bins in the town centre. The Interim Operations Manager for Waste and Fleet explained that these were arranged on a commercial basis.
- 21.9 Councillor T Lockington commented that it would be useful to get more information about how targets were set. Councillor P Smart noted that most targets were based on national indicators which had been discontinued, and that the lack of comparable data made benchmarking difficult.
- 21.10 Councillor C Smart asked whether pumpkins which were left over after Halloween celebrations could be disposed of in brown bins. The Interim Operations Manager for Waste and Fleet explained that nothing which had been exposed to a risk of cross contamination by preparation in a kitchen could be placed in a brown bin. The Operations Manager for Parks and Bereavement explained that a campaign was being run to encourage residents to use the insides of their pumpkins rather than throwing them away.
- 21.11 Councillor Allen asked what measures the Council took to get residents to move their vehicles to enable street cleansing to take place. Councillor Harsant noted that previously letters had been sent to all residents in a road. The Interim Operations Manager for Waste and Fleet explained that it was difficult to sweep some roads as a result of parked cars, and whilst letters had been tried on some occasions, these were not always effective due to people being on holiday or not wanting or being able to move their vehicle for some reason.
- 21.12 Councillor Grant asked whether contamination was a significant issue for Ipswich. Councillor P Smart explained that the Council was penalised for loads which exceeded the contamination threshold and that these penalties were avoided by sending heavily contaminated loads to be incinerated rather than recycled.
- 21.13 Councillor Heaps asked when a new target would be set for LI197 (the proportion of local sites where positive conservation management took place). Councillor P Smart explained that the present indicator included sites which were not controlled by Ipswich Borough Council and which could therefore not be actively managed by the Council. It was anticipated that a new indicator would be available for the 2020/21 reporting period.
- 21.14 Councillor Harsant asked for information on cemeteries and cremations. The Operations Manager for Parks and Bereavement explained that a number of improvements were being made to the planting of the cemeteries, with a new conservation orchard where ashes could be scattered being planted. The Council's services would be promoted both directly to potential customers and

via Funeral Directors, amongst whom a survey was being undertaken to help identify potential improvements to services.

21.15 Councillor Harsant thanked Councillor P Smart and the Operations Managers for Waste and Fleet and Parks and Bereavement for their time and contribution to the discussion.

22. OS/19/07 Work Programme 2019/20

22.1 Councillor Harsant explained that a Cross Authority Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Group had been convened by Babergh and Mid-Suffolk District Councils to consider Citizens Advice services across Suffolk following the cuts to funding made by Suffolk County Council. Councillor Harsant and Councillor Gage had attended a scoping meeting and proposed that they attend future meetings on behalf of Ipswich Borough Council's Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

22.2 Councillor Gage commented that it was important that Highways England be invited to attend the Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Committee as soon as possible.

It was RESOLVED:

- a) that Councillors Harsant and Gage attend future meetings of the Cross Authority Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Group.**
- b) that Highways England be invited back to the Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Committee as soon as possible, preferably in January 2020.**

The meeting closed at 7.20 pm

Chair