

Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Monday 16th March 2020

Present: Councillor Khonat (Chair) in the Chair, Councillors Gunn, Hardman, Marrow, McGurk, Batan, Rawat.

- **Welcome and Apologies**

The Chair welcomed members present to the meeting and submitted apologies from Councillor Sidat

- **Minutes of the Meeting held on 13th January 2020 and 16th September 2019**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 13th January 2020 and 16th September 2019 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3. Winter Weather and the Council response.

The Committee were informed of the issues that the Council had faced during the recent winter. The issues had been mainly confined to dealing with the recent storms with exceptional levels of rainfall. The Committee looked at how the council works with the partner agencies such as United Utilities and the Environment Agency and how this had worked to reduce incidents of flooding in the borough over recent years. Members discussed the planning regulations and how these were being amended to ensure that measures to prevent flooding were appropriate in this changing climate.

RESOLVED- That the presentation and report be noted and that the Committee recognise the outstanding way that the Council's services continued to seek to meet the challenges they faced.

4. Waste Disposal Contract, Kerbside Recycling and Government Consultation on Waste Strategy.

The Committee were reminded that they had agreed that the work programme for the year would be to look at the key corporate priorities. One of the key issues facing the Council had been identified as waste and the issues relating to collection and disposal.

The Committee had been informed of the key issues facing the waste disposal contract, kerbside recycling and Government consultation on waste strategy at its meeting in September and had asked to be kept informed of progress on the contract retendering and future developments.

The current contract with BIFFA commenced in 2010, and the Committee were reminded that they provide a kerbside collection across the Borough as well as the sorting, haulage and processing of the recycled materials collected. This contract was due to end on 30th April 2020. As Members will be aware, from 1 May 2020, the Council would be delivering the kerbside collection of the household recycling materials. A procurement process had been initiated to secure a contractor for the sorting, haulage and subsequent processing of the collected recycling materials. As a Waste Disposal Authority (WDA), the Council had a legal duty to

arrange for disposal of municipal waste and recycling from the Borough, and hence this contract was required.

Market conditions had changed since 2010 and during the soft market testing, waste management companies all expressed the same view that they are no longer able to accept market risk on commodity prices for recyclables. They also required the Council to take the risk on the disposal costs arising from non-recyclable items placed in recycling bins by residents. Reflecting this current and likely ongoing market uncertainty, the Council decided to procure a shorter three-year contract, with an option to extend the contract for up to a further three years. The successful contractor would be required to take delivery of the kerbside collected recyclables and arrange for the subsequent haulage, sorting and end market reprocessing of the treated materials. The soft market testing also indicated that the Council would benefit from lower contract costs if an option were included where the Council collected paper and card separately from glass, tins and plastics. The recycle processing companies are demanding cleaner paper and cardboard; our current mixed collections do not lend themselves to achieving this as our paper and cardboard are often contaminated with food and drink carton residue, as well as glass shards from broken glass; currently there is a cost to having our paper and cardboard processed, due to its poor quality.

The tender exercise for processing the recyclates collected within the Borough has seen the winning bidder offer a significant cost reduction for the separation of paper and cardboard from our current mixed collections. A capital investment of up to £1.5million for the purchase and delivery of a new bin for paper and cardboard will enable the Council to deliver annual revenue savings of £0.8 million. The new contract also incentivises the Council to reduce the contamination in the recycling bin, as the cost of the service will reduce if contamination of the recycling bins is minimised.

The Committee were informed that the introduction of the new blue bin for paper and cardboard had been approved at Finance Council on 24th February 2020. The cost of buying and delivering a blue bin for all households is £1.5m – this includes the marketing and delivery of the new calendars. The Council would realise significant savings of over £800k per year when we introduce a blue bin for paper and cardboard so the initial investment will be repaid in less than two years. Work on the procurement and delivery of blue bins and bags and the marketing of the service change had commenced. A communications plan for the roll out was being developed with the Council's communications team. The service change could be implemented by 1 July at the earliest, this date could move, dependent upon manufacturing and delivery dates for the bins. The paper and cardboard will be much better quality if it is separated out from plastics, glass and tins and having a separate bin for paper and cardboard brings us into line with Government policy about recycling.

If a household does not have the space for a 240 litre blue bin, the Council can provide a 140 litre blue bin or a recycling sack for paper and cardboard. The Council will continue to provide a weekly collection for residents.

The Committee were further updated on the Environment Bill which had been introduced in October 2019 and had two readings, before progress was stopped, by the calling of a general election. It was re-introduced on 30 January 2020 and so far, has only had one reading in the House of Commons. It is still comprehensive and runs to 244 pages. It covers a wide range of environmental issues including water, air pollution, biodiversity and conservation as well as resource and waste management.

The Committee were updated on the monitoring and diversion rate of residual waste away from landfill and to waste to energy plants across the country via our contractor Suez UK. Every month the diversion rate varies as it is subject to the available capacity at Waste to Energy sites across the UK plants to take our waste. Virtually no waste went to landfill in January 2020, with everything going to the waste to energy plants at Ferry bridge, West Yorkshire. The diversion rate from April 2019 to December 2019 was 55% of waste to Waste to Energy plants and 45% of waste to landfill. However, after including the diversion rate achieved in January 2020, we now have a diversion rate of 59% of waste diverted from landfill. If the performance achieved in January is repeated in February and March, we will have achieved a diversion rate of 65% away from landfill in 2019/2020.

The Council's new waste disposal contract commenced on 1 April 2020. The new contract, with Suez UK, contains a diversion rate target of 70% of our waste away from landfill to Waste to Energy plants. If Suez UK fail to meet this diversion target, they will face significant financial penalties.

One of the key areas that the Committee looked at in September was the role of education the public. The Committee were informed that an Environmental Education Officer had started and had undertaken a significant amount of outreach work with schools and community groups. She has also worked along side and supported the Keep Blackburn Tidy and Keep Darwen Tidy volunteer groups.

RESOLVED- 1 That the Committee be kept informed of the progress of the recycling and kerbside collections with an updated position being reported to the next meeting.

2 That the Committee be kept informed of the progress of the Government's strategy for waste and the effects that this would have on the Council's services.

3. That the Council's monitoring of the amount sent to landfill be submitted to the Committee for information.

4. That the re-introduction of the education and advice role in to improve recycling rates be supported and that the rates of recycling be monitored at future meetings of the Committee.

4. Work Programme for the Year

The Committee were reminded that the key area of the work programme was to look at corporate performance and how portfolios were achieving corporate targets. A report on performance to date from the Environment Portfolio was submitted to the Committee. The Committee also received a presentation on the work of the Executive Member for Adults and Prevention on the areas of the service in the remit of this Committee.

RESOLVED- That the progress on the Key areas of performance for the Adults and Preventions and Environment Portfolio be noted.

That the Executive Member for Adults and Prevention be thanked for his attendance and informative presentation.

Signed.....

Date.....

Chair at the meeting where the minutes were confirmed.