

DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

WEDNESDAY, 28TH NOVEMBER, 2018

A MEETING of the COMMUNITIES AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL was held at the COUNCIL CHAMBER - CIVIC OFFICE on WEDNESDAY, 28TH NOVEMBER, 2018, at 3.00 pm.

PRESENT:

Chair - Councillor Jane Kidd
Vice-Chair - Councillor Jane Cox

Councillors Mick Cooper, George Derx, Ian Pearson, Tosh McDonald and Tina Reid

APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Nigel Cannings and David Hughes

- 1 To consider the extent, if any, to which the public and press are to be excluded from the meeting.

The Chair confirmed that appendix 1 to Item 5, Waste Collection Contract contained exempt information, as defined in paragraph 3 (information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person, including the Authority holding that information) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972, as amended), therefore the press and public would need to leave the meeting during any discussion relating to this information.

- 2 Declarations of Interest, if any.

Councillor M Cooper declared an interest in item 6, Tree Policy and Tree Risk Management Plan for Doncaster Council's Trees and Woodlands.

3. Public Statements

- a) Kate Needham, a Doncaster Resident, stated the following:

"I feel that Doncaster is looking lovely with the number of trees it has and would like to say my father worked on a youth scheme many years ago planting some of the trees we have today. I would like to read the following from the Tree Policy document at page B.2.6:

"We will not normally prune or fell a tree in Council ownership to prevent interference with TV or satellite, telephone or broadband reception as there is no legal right to TV, satellite, telephone or broadband reception. A site inspection will not normally be made for the above reason.

However there may be certain circumstances in which this might change and we may consider pruning or felling a Council-owned tree to improve signal reception of a

telecommunications mast where it will bring about significant public benefit and no alternative solution is available.”

I am concerned with the roll out of 5G and the impact that it could have. I have had a look at the Local Plan information and there was no reference to 5G. I am concerned there is no reference to it in the Plan and wish for clarification on what does statement B.2.6 mean trees will have to be felled if 5G comes to Doncaster and will the public have any recourse? Could there be any loopholes and wished for the statement to be made clearer to protect our trees.”

b) Mr D Wright a Doncaster Resident

The Chair accepted an emailed statement from Mr Wright as he was unable to attend the meeting, she highlighted that it was along the same lines as highlighted in the statement from Kate Needham and read the following:

“Item 6 Tree Policy Appendix Page 26 B 2.6 Trees affecting reception. We would not normally prune or fell a tree to prevent interference with TV or satellite, telephone or broadband reception. However there may be certain circumstances in which this might change and we may consider pruning or felling a tree to improve reception of telecommunication mast where it will bring about significant public benefit and no alternative scheme is available. I am concerned that there is no mention in the report of 5G, which will, if implemented in Doncaster significantly affect our trees. When 5G is introduced in Doncaster, could or will this mean trees will be cut down to improve reception for 5G?”

The chair thanked Kate Needham for attending the meeting and making her statement which would be taken into account when the issue was discussed later on the agenda of this meeting.

4 Waste Collection Contract - Update

The Panel gave consideration to a report relating to the mobilisation and transformation of the new waste and recycling contract which commenced on 5th March which saw major operational changes introduced on the first day of the contract, being operated by SUEZ, including:

- The change to a fortnightly blue bin recycling service;
- The change to 4 day working week – Tuesday to Friday - 10 hour days;
- New routes based on ward boundaries for all services;
- The implementation of in-cab technology to replace paper based round information sheets; and
- New vehicles for all services.

The following areas were addressed by Members:

Missed collections – In response to queries relating to Appendix 3, it was explained that the increase in missed collections in March 2018 related to initial teething problems following the introduction of new ways of working, new collection days and re-routing collection rounds. It was also stressed that the country suffered severe weather with the “Beast from the East” which arrived on the Wednesday before the new contract was due to start on the following Monday. It was noted that waste

collection vehicles would always struggle in snowy and icy conditions particularly causing health and safety implications for both staff and vehicles.

It was explained, in response to a Member's concern that if they were aware of, for example the green boxes not being collected at the same time of the blue bin but being left, then this should be reported as a missed bin.

Performance targets - The Panel was made aware that there were set targets within the contract and deductions could be made for certain issues unless they were outside the contractor's control.

Saturday collections – these were classed as dropped days, for example, missed work moved to the next day.

New vehicles and technology – had been provided for all services, with an integrated IT system. There were a number of vehicle breakdowns within the first 8 to 9 weeks of the new contract, but the early teething problems had been resolved. Again, these two factors had an impact on the number of missed bins and dropped day collections.

Pull out service – it was acknowledged that there had been an issue with the new IT system which had created a conflict of information, therefore, a manual check on information required for the service was being undertaken.

Blue Bins – with regard to the loss and damage to the blue bin lids, it was Members opinion that it was the pins holding the bin lid to the bin body that were breaking, thus creating the problem. It was noted that crews were reporting where new lids were required and staff were raising orders and replacing lids as quickly as possible. Unfortunately the bin collection operatives did not have the time to repair the recycling bins during their rounds.

Toby bins – it was explained that steps were being taken to try to reduce the use of black sacks as much as possible. It was noted that it was not guaranteed that the Toby Bin system could completely be removed due to, for example, areas in the borough that have steep hillsides. The contractors were working to the Council's instructions and investigating how to alleviate the problem.

Unfortunately, some residents had been leaving black sacks on open space areas rather than in their round bin (with no wheels) due to lack of space. Therefore this was unfortunately classed as fly tipping and residents had received letters explaining that their black waste sacks were to be left on their property curtilage but not obstructing the pavement, ready for collection.

High rise flats – It was noted that waste from some flats in intake. had not been collected and it was noted that there had been a collection error but a weekly collection should now be in place. A Member reported that in one area, due to where the bins were sited passers-by were using them and placing contaminated items in the recycling bins. With regard to this example, it was stressed that the flat's caretaker had been really proactive and helped residents as much as possible to dispose of waste and recycling in the appropriate way.

Education – it was stressed that some residents required further education with what could and could not be recycled, for example, no vegetable type waste could be placed in the garden waste as this could contaminate the whole load. Members were

reminded that clear recycling information was available on the leaflets delivered to all properties and on the Council's website.

Alleygates – Members reported that there had been a number of issues relating to alleygates being left unlocked for a full day when collections were due, however the collection crews were closing the gates, as was required. The officers confirmed that they would investigate this issue.

Collection routes – It was noted that they had been amended and were being regularly tweaked and rerouted if required. The Council and contract management have been involved with regularly engagement with the crews.

The Panel wished to thank the officers for responding to Members questions and queries.

RESOLVED: that the discussion and position with the waste collection contract be noted.

5. Tree Policy and Tree Risk Management Plan for Doncaster Council's Trees and Woodlands

The Panel was provided with a copy of the Tree Policy and Trees Risk Management Plan for Doncaster Council's Trees which supports that work that was undertaken by the Local Authority and would take account of emerging issues.

The Team had taken a more proactive approach to the service to drive the health and safety of tree maintenance including plotting all trees in the borough onto a database.

The Chair reminded the Panel of the statements from the Members of the public which they may wish to take into account during discussions. The Panel's main concern with regard to the possible 5G issues, was many trees could be lost if communication operators had the right to remove trees if they wished.

It was explained that the Street Scene Team was currently seeking legal advice with regard to issues relating to 5G and the statements made by the members of the public had been noted.

Canopy cover – the team was identifying areas that were deficient where trees could be planted for example, old tip sites, and would welcome any suggestions from communities. It was stressed that community groups, for example "Friend of" groups were able to access funding in ways that the Council could not and this could be used to increase the green space network.

Siting of trees – the pro's and con's of planting trees at the roadside was address including suggestions they were a danger to motorcyclists if there was a road accident but on the positive they have the benefit of reducing traffic speed and removing pollutants from the air and are often one of the few planting sites in urban areas.

Members expressed concern that in some areas tree roots grew across and damaged pavements but it was explained that the Highways team always advised if there were health and safety concerns which would be addressed either by undertaking root pruning or raising tarmac levels.

Members asked if consideration could be given to asking local authority schools and Academies if there could be increased tree planting, where appropriate. Their concern arose from ensuring that children had areas of shade to play under in the increasing hot summer months. However schools are not under the direct remit of the Local Authority and the Street Scene team.

St Leger Homes – Members were of the opinion that the planting of inappropriate trees on St Leger Homes property without authority had a massive impact on the asset register and the costs if they required pruning or removing would also need to be met. It was noted that St Leger Homes property was currently being surveyed and they were working with the authority on this project.

Tree Preservation Orders (TPO's) – it was noted that the Green Infrastructure Policy covered TPO principles and procedures but was not part of this Policy. This Policy covered Street Scene management of municipal trees. Each TPO case would be assessed on its own merits by the Planning Department.

The Panel thanked the officers for presenting the information and making Members aware of the current position and answering their questions.

RESOLVED that:

- a) The report be noted;
- b) The Panel is pleased the 5G issue has been recognised and would be considered in the future; and
- c) A further report be provided to a future meeting.

6. Scrutiny Work Plan November 2018

The Governance Officer presented the Scrutiny Work Plan report for the period November 2018 including the Council's Forward Plan of Key Decisions.

RESOLVED that: no amendments be made to the work plan and the work plan be noted.

CHAIR: _____

DATE: _____