



**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SUSTAINABLE GROWTH AND ENVIRONMENT  
CAPITAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
HELD IN THE BOURGES/VIERSEN ROOMS, TOWN HALL  
ON 14 JULY 2016**

**Present:** Councillors Peach (Chairman), C Harper (Vice Chairman), R Brown, M Cereste, M Sims, S Allen, A Ellis, N Khan MBE, M Jamil, N Sandford, JA Fox

**Also Present:** Councillor Elsey, Cabinet Member for Waste and Street Scene  
Jim Daughton, Business Director, Skanska  
Amanda Best, Serco Partnership Director  
Mark Sandhu, Head of Customer & Transactional Services, Serco

**Officers Present:** Andy Tatt, Head of Peterborough Highway Services  
James Collingridge, Amey Partnership Manager  
Vicky Palazon, Head of Finance (Business Operations & Development)  
Paulina Ford, Senior Democratic Services Officer

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Councillor King and Councillor Allen attended as substitute.

**2. Declarations of Interest and Whipping Declarations**

There were no declarations of interest or whipping declarations.

**3. Minutes of Meetings held on 23 March 2016**

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2016 were approved as an accurate record.

**4. Call in of any Cabinet, Cabinet Member or Key Officer Decisions**

There were no requests for call-in to consider.

**5. Amey, Serco and Skanska Annual KPI Report and Proposed Street Cleansing Task and Finish Group**

**Amey Annual Partnership Report**

The Cabinet Member for Waste and Street Scene introduced the section of the report which provided the Committee with an overview of the performance of Amey's contractual KPI's over the past financial year.

Discussions took place around the following areas:

- Transport
- Street Cleansing

- Fly Tipping
- Waste Collection
- Recycling

The Cabinet Member and Officers in attendance responded to comments and questions raised by Members. A summary of responses included:

- A lot of work was being done to boost recycling rates which included stickers on black bins which said no to recycling and food waste, education through attending school assemblies and roadshows to engage more with the public. Amey would also be employing a full time Education Officer to boost recycling across the city and part of the role would be to understand how best to communicate the information to different communities across the city.
- Recycling had been more successful in the first six months of the current year.
- There had been a continued reduction in missed bin collections and an increase in food waste tonnage collected in comparison with the same period last year.
- A penalty of up to £56,000 per annum had been included in the contract should Amey fail to meet their recycling targets. Also included in the contract were improvement notices and step-in clauses should failure to meet the target persist.
- Current Government legislation dictated the collection of partially sorted waste from householders. There were other types of technology available to collect partially sorted waste from black bins and the Cabinet Member advised that this could be investigated.
- Larger capacity recycling bins were being introduced to encourage more recycling and there was also the option to have a second green bin should householders require one.
- It was noted that the Citizens Panel Survey previously used to assess customer satisfaction regarding street cleansing was no longer in use. An online survey was now conducted instead but only 90 people had taken part which was too small to give an accurate representation of the population of the city.
- Fly tipping continued to be a problem and was on the increase nationally. Bulky waste collection was being reviewed and various initiatives were being looked into like implementation of community skips and removing the charge for bulky waste. Additional Gluttons had been purchased to allow for street cleansing around parked cars. People who had been caught fly tipping had been taken to court and fined. The courts had the power to give out fines of up to £50,000 however the actual fines given out were low.
- There had not been a marked increase in fly tipping since the brown bin and bulk waste charges were introduced as those who fly tip at the roadside were unlikely to use a skip or public recycling centres, much of which was trade waste. Permits for waste disposal were currently issued at Bayard Place and had to be collected. Alternative ways of issuing the permits were being considered to make obtaining a permit easier.
- Literature had been produced in various languages with pictures to educate people on how they should deal with their household waste.
- Members were concerned at the quality of street cleansing across the city and the reporting process. It was therefore proposed that a Task and Finish Group be established to review the street cleansing part of the Amey contract.
- The garden waste service had proved to be more successful in the first six weeks of the current year compared to the first three months of last year. More people had signed up to the service and additional bins had also been requested.
- An extensive survey of the tree stock had been carried out across Peterborough. Most trees had been planted at the same time and were of the same species which had meant that they had all matured at the same time. New trees were being planted all the time.
- A Cabinet Member Decision Notice was currently going through the approval process to increase grass cutting from 3 to 8 times per year which exceeded many other authorities regimes. This had been done in response to public request.

- The weeding regime on central reservations was different to the grass cutting regime. This required a lane closure which had to be booked in advance to ensure safety whilst work was in progress. Amey followed the Health and Safety Executive's advice with regard to the use of herbicides for weed control. The substance currently used had not been banned for use in the UK or Europe. If other cost effective methods were suggested Amey would investigate the use of these.

### **Serco Annual Partnership Report**

The report provided the Committee with an update on the performance of Serco during 2015/16. Discussion took place around the following areas:

- Call Centre
- Council Tax Collection

Officers in attendance responded to comments and questions raised by Members. A summary of responses included:

- Achievement of the in-year Council Tax and business rates collection rate targets were noted as being "Within Tolerance". The targets had been increased this year and collections were profiled each month to anticipate the amount to be collected. The council have provided additional funding to recruit 4 extra staff to assist with the collection of council tax this year. It was therefore anticipated that an improvement would be noticed by adopting a policy of supporting the "can't payers" and targeting the "won't payers".
- When phoning the call centre customers have to make a selection from various choices before reaching an operator. This was to ensure that the customer went through to the most appropriate operator with the correct skill set to assist with their enquiry. The initial message may seem long but it did provide options for the customer including signposting to the website for self-service rather than waiting in a queue.
- Historically all services in the call centre were open until 6.00pm but call centre opening hours had reduced for some services to closure at 5:30pm in line with demand. For essential services there was a message which directed the caller to a duty team. Any increase in opening hours would be subject to a cost benefit analysis.
- The business rate collection rate target had remained the same as last year at 97.8%.
- The annual indicator for the in-year Council Tax collection rate target had been revised down to 95.8%. The reduction in target was due to changes in Government Legislation in 2013 which affected approximately 11,000 families when the Council Tax Support Scheme was introduced. This affected working age customers who were in receipt of Council Tax benefit as it meant they would have to pay 30% of the Council Tax themselves.

### **ACTIONS AGREED**

The Committee noted the report and requested that the Head of Customer & Transactional Services provide the Committee with the council tax collection figures for the last three years.

### **Skanska Annual Partnership Report**

The Head of Peterborough Highway Services introduced the report which provided the Committee with the Peterborough Highway Services Annual Report for 2015/2016. Discussions took place around the following areas:

- Street Lighting
- Tree Damage
- CCTV

- KPIs
- Re-assessment of Targets throughout Projects
- Carbon Emissions Targets
- Litter
- Skips
- Staff Employment
- Highway Maintenance

The Head of Peterborough Highways and the Business Director, Skanska who was also in attendance responded to comments and questions raised by Members. A summary of responses included:

- 6,000 of the 24,000 street lights in the city had now been replaced with LED lighting. The next phase was a three year plan commencing in September beginning in the Central Ward and using the latest lighting technology. The replacement lighting in residential areas could be Wi-Fi enabled and the use of this technology was currently being investigated. There was also the capability of adding air quality measuring equipment at a later date.
- It was acknowledged that trees were considered an important feature of the city. Issues had arisen with some tree roots breaking up the pavement and making the surface uneven and becoming a trip hazard. Skanska worked closely with Amey on this aspect to provide a safe surface. Many existing trees were shallow rooted and when replacement became necessary they were replaced with deeper rooted trees. An alternative surface around the base of the tree itself was being trialled. This was an innovative product made from recycled tyres and was therefore more flexible than the traditional asphalt used. The most hazardous areas were being tackled first and Members were invited to propose streets they felt should be addressed.
- Members commented that there was a Council Trees and Woodland Strategy in place stating trees should only be removed in the interests of health and safety and this should be adhered to.
- The dead trees in Bourges Boulevard had already been identified as requiring replacement and a press release was due out shortly.
- KPI reference OP13, Defined cost within +/- 10% of target cost per scheme. The red indicators shown for September 2016 onwards did not mean that the target was failing. The way a contract and target was set was to agree a cost to complete the project. If the job was then brought in below cost then this was shown as outperforming the target. Should the specification change whilst the project was in progress the target was revisited to be more reflective of the work carried out.
- Carbon emissions continue to be targeted to achieve a saving of 5% year on year but the data illustrated within the report on pages 48/49 indicated that the previous year's performance appeared to show that carbon emissions were on the increase. These were manual calculations and it was anticipated that the new GIS equipment fitted to vehicles would remove the need for manual calculations and provide more accurate readings for future analysis. As activities increase by default so will the carbon emissions and the target would need to be adjusted to reflect this.
- It was not cost effective to fully re surface every road. The treatment used to resurface areas of road was to lay a very thin veneer over the top of the existing road surface to prolong the use of the carriageway and this had a life span of 5 – 10 years. Any defects in the dressing were usually evident within the first 12 months in which case the contractor was recalled to take remedial action. Decisions to use top dressing was an economical one based on the best use of resources. There were alternative repair solutions however these were more expensive and could not be used within the existing cost structure.
- Concrete roads still existed across the city laid in the 1930s and 1950s which were very expensive to repair and were the most problematic of roads in the city. To remove the concrete was extremely costly and also caused major disruption to residents. Repairs

continue to maintain safety levels and the contraction and expansion of joints were often needing repair, however as the road surface moved the concrete slabs settle. These were monitored and repaired as necessary.

- The staff employment targets mentioned on page 53 illustrates the targets that were prepared at tender submission. The recruitment strategy was currently being reviewed for the coming year in line with current commitments to avoid over staffing.
- In the last two years the budget set aside for repair of potholes in residential areas had been reduced. This priority was to maintain safety rather than to leave a tidy job which might mean the repair looks unsightly. This was being monitored and any feedback on the quality of repair was welcome. Classified roads were assessed and repaired using capital funding.

The Chairman sought approval from the Committee to the formation of a Task and Finish Group to review the Amey contract for street cleansing services. The Committee unanimously agreed.

The Chairman sought nominations to the Task and Finish Group and the following Councillors put their names forward: Councillor Khan, Councillor Judy Fox and Councillor Peach. The Senior Democratic Services Officer advised the Committee that she would write to Group Secretaries to seek further nominations.

## **ACTIONS**

The Committee noted the report.

The Committee also requested that the Head of Peterborough Highways research the use of new technology with regard to street light columns and in particular the use of Wi-Fi and find out how this is being used across the country in other authorities. The Head of Peterborough Highways to report back to the Committee with his findings at a future meeting.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Committee recommend that:

1. A cross party Task and Finish Group be established to review the Amey contract for street cleansing services and that the Senior Democratic Services Officer write to Group Secretaries to seek nominations to the group.
2. That Amey note the concern of the Committee regarding the lack of prosecutions for fly tipping and the general street litter in Peterborough. The Committee recommends that Amey pay particular attention to this and where evidence can be gathered take appropriate action to prosecute and report back to this Scrutiny Committee on what action has been taken at a future meeting.
3. That Amey revisit the use of communal skips to alleviate fly tipping and consider other appropriate remedies.

## **6. Review of 2015/2016 and Work Programme for 2016/2017**

The Senior Democratic Services Officer introduced the report which provided the Committee with a review of work undertaken during 2015/16 and sought approval of the draft work programme for 2016/2017.

## **ACTIONS AGREED**

The Committee noted the review of last year and agreed the work programme for 2016/2017.

The Senior Democratic Services Officer advised the Members that there had been a request from Officers to change the date of the November meeting so that reports brought to the Committee could feed into the November Cabinet meeting. The Committee therefore agreed to change the date of the November meeting to Tuesday 25 October 2016.

### **7. Forward Plan of Executive Decisions**

The Committee received the latest version of the Council's Forward Plan of Executive Decisions containing key decisions that the Leader of the Council anticipated the Cabinet or individual Cabinet Members would make during the course of the forthcoming month. Members were invited to comment on the Plan and, where appropriate, identify any relevant areas for inclusion in the Committee's work programme.

## **ACTIONS AGREED**

The Committee noted the Forward Plan of Executive Decisions and requested further information regarding the following Executive Decision:

- Market Position Statement – KEY/08AUG16/01

### **8. Date of Next Meeting**

Date of next meeting Thursday 8 September 2016.

The meeting began at 7.00pm and ended at 8.55pm

CHAIRMAN