

Minutes of: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 30 July 2014

Present: Councillor I Gartside(in the Chair);
Councillors S Carter; A J Cummings; J Daly; T Holt; S
Nuttall; E O'Brien and T Tariq

Public in attendance: 22 members of the public were present at the meeting.

Also in attendance: Councillor Isherwood (Cabinet Member for Environment)
Councillor Southworth (Deputy Cabinet Member for Environment)
Mr D Taylor -Greater Manchester Waste Disposal Authority (GMWDA)

Apologies for absence: Councillors D Cassidy; M James and J Smith

OSC.191 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Cummings declared a personal interest in Minute OSC.193, Call in of Cabinet Decision – Zero Waste Strategy and Sustainable Waste Collection Service, as the Council's Spokesperson for Greater Manchester Waste Disposal Authority.

OSC.192 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Chair, Councillor Gartside, invited questions from members of the public present at the meeting and the following issues were raised:

- A number of residents raised concerns in relation to potential health hazards from flies, maggots and vermin as a result of the proposal to empty grey bins every 3 weeks.

Councillor Isherwood, Cabinet Member for Environment, stated that he did not anticipate any increase in flies, maggots and vermin as a result of the new collection arrangements and explained that no food waste should be going into the grey bin. All food waste would be collected fortnightly through the brown bin collection round.

- In response to a number of questions relating to difficulties faced by large families the Cabinet Member explained that the overall bin space across all four bins would not reduce and highlighted that green and blue bins would be emptied more frequently. For large families who are recycling as much as possible but still struggle with capacity a waste audit can be arranged and an extra grey bin provided if necessary.

- With regard to a question concerning the assumptions and business case on which the proposals were based the Cabinet Member explained that this information was set out in the Zero Waste Strategy. The Cabinet Member reported that evidence shows that restricting residual waste collections has a positive impact on rates of recycling and referred to the increase in Bury from 28% to 47% following the switch to fortnightly collections.
- In response to a question concerning the recent campaign to encourage people to take smaller 140 litre grey bins, the Cabinet Member reported that residents wishing to upsize to a 240 litre bin could do so at no cost.
- Alison Moses enquired if the proposals were driven by financial reasons or the need to increase recycling rates. The Cabinet Member referred to the budget cuts faced by the Council and reported that the proposals would achieve savings and increase recycling rates.
- Councillor Walker highlighted the change of policy from encouraging the use of smaller grey bins. Councillor Southworth, Deputy Cabinet Member for the Environment, explained that many of the residents who took up the offer of a 140 litre bin were single person households and it is hoped that they would be able to manage with 3 weekly collections. The Deputy Cabinet Member re-iterated that those who need to upsize could do so free of charge.
- Councillor Wright stated that the decision had been taken in a non transparent way with no public consultation.
- In response to a question from Councillor Gunther concerning the cost of disposing of green waste, the Cabinet Member reported that although there was an associated cost of disposal of £61 per tonne, this was still a large saving when set against the £284 per tonne of disposing of residual waste.
- In response to a request from Councillor Shori, the Cabinet Member confirmed that he was happy for a steering group to be set up with the Sedgley community and senior officers.
- With regard to the issue of non recyclable plastics such as margarine and yoghurt pots, the Cabinet Member stated that the Council were urging GMWDA to look at this issue. Mr David Taylor from GMWDA explained that the Authority was seeking sustainable markets for these lower grade materials.
- In response to concerns raised by Councillor Hussain in relation to fly tipping, the Deputy Cabinet Member stated that she believed there was no reason this would increase as a result of the proposals. Where fly tipping does occur the Deputy Cabinet Member stressed that the council would continue to take robust enforcement action.

OSC.193 CALL IN OF CABINET DECISION – ZERO WASTE STRATEGY AND SUSTAINABLE WASTE COLLECTION SERVICE

The Scrutiny Commission considered a called-in decision of the Cabinet meeting held on 16 July 2014 in accordance with the Council Constitution.

The Cabinet had made the following decision:

1. That approval be given to adopt Bury Council's Zero Waste Strategy, including the 10 Strategic Objectives as detailed in the report submitted.
2. That approval be given to the proposed changes to the waste collection service.
3. That approval be given to an 'invest to save' initiative to include a capital spend of up to £213,400 and one-off implementation costs of £189,700 to introduce the changes. These costs will ultimately be self-financing, but initially are to be funded from loan and reserves as detailed in Section 4 of the report submitted.

A Call-In Notice had been submitted by Councillor Gartside, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, setting out the reasons for the Call-In of the decision. A summary of the reasons is set out below:

- Inadequate consultation
- Adverse public reaction
- Potential health hazards
- Arrangements for Christmas and New Year
- Request for further clarification over provision of extra grey bins
- Assurances sought in relation to whether staff resources were in place to deliver the new regime
- Suggestion for phased roll out
- Further negotiation required with GMWDA to expand range of recyclables collected
- Level of consultation with Government

Councillor Gartside invited questions and comments from the Members of the Committee and the following issues were raised :-

- In response to a question from Councillor Tariq, the Cabinet Member confirmed that savings to the Council as a result of the previous switch to fortnightly collections had resulted in annual savings of £4m.
- With regard to the issue of nappies, the Deputy Cabinet Member stated that these should be wrapped up and sealed before being placed in the grey bin. Where parents were struggling, individual cases would be looked at and an extra bin provided if necessary.
- Councillor Nuttall raised the issue of properties currently without a brown bin. The Cabinet Member reported that solutions were being sought for approximately 600 properties in rural areas of the borough and stressed that 3 weekly collections would not be introduced to these residents until the issue is resolved.
- In response to a question from Councillor O'Brien concerning flats, the Cabinet Member explained that the vast majority of such properties with communal bins would remain on fortnightly refuse collections.

- The Deputy Cabinet Member highlighted the issue of supermarket packaging and stressed the need for regional lobbying on this issue.
- Councillor Daly highlighted the rise in recycling rates since 2011 and suggested that if this level of increase was maintained, along with the anticipated rise as a result of the work of the education awareness team, the Council could still achieve its recycling targets. The Cabinet Member explained that the rate of recycling had levelled off at about 47% and to achieve its aim of 60% by March 2016 further measures were required.
- Councillor O'Brien highlighted the importance of education in relation to recycling and stressed the need to engage with school children and hard to reach areas of the community.
- Councillor Daly enquired whether the Council had considered adopting the model used by Trafford which provided smaller grey bins which were collected fortnightly. The Cabinet Member confirmed that this scheme had been considered but capital costs to purchase the bins and implementation costs equated to approximately £1.5m.
- Councillor Daly further referred to the fact that Trafford collect brown bins weekly and offer extra bins to larger families of 4 or 5 people. Councillor Isherwood highlighted the additional cost implications of these measures but confirmed that all proposals would continue to be looked at going forward.
- In response to a question from the Chair, Councillor Gartside, the Cabinet Member stated that extra resource would be put in during the initial implementation of the changes and stated he was confident the Council could deliver the changes effectively.
- The Chair, Councillor Gartside highlighted the lack of public consultation and enquired about evidence that suggested there was unlikely to be an increase in vermin as a result of the proposals. The Cabinet Member stressed that all food waste would continue to be removed on a fortnightly basis.
- In response to questions from the Chair and Councillor Daly in respect of incentive schemes for recycling, the Cabinet Member reported that all schemes continued to be looked at but stressed that restricting the capacity for residual waste offered the most effective means of increasing recycling rates.
- Councillor Gartside highlighted a lack of consultation with the Department for Communities and Local Government who were supportive of weekly collections. The Cabinet Member stressed that residents would continue to have a weekly collection, but stressed that reducing the collection of residual waste offered the best way of increasing recycling.
- In response to a question from Councillor Nuttall the Cabinet Member confirmed that the proposals were not a precursor to four weekly collections.
- With regard to the issue of enforcement the Cabinet Member confirmed that powers already existed but stressed that education was the chosen route to deal with persistent offenders.

- The Deputy Cabinet Member addressed the issue of extra waste at Christmas time and highlighted that much of the extra waste generated would be recyclable.
- In response to a question from Councillor Daly, Mr David Taylor from GMWDA reported on the work done by the organisation to rationalise waste recycling centres and reduce the amount of waste going into landfill which would result in £1.6 m being saved across 9 Authorities, including Bury, during the next year.

Delegated decision:

That, having considered the points raised in the Notice of Call-in, this Committee does not offer any comments to the Cabinet in respect of Minute CA.135 Zero Waste Strategy and Sustainable Waste Collection Service.

(**Note:** Councillors Daly, Gartside and Nuttall requested that it be recorded that they voted against the decision on the above item.)

(**Note:** Councillors Carter, Cummings, Holt, O'Brien and Tariq requested that it be recorded that they voted for the decision on the above item.)

COUNCILLOR I B GARTSIDE
Chair

(Note: The meeting started at 7pm and ended at 8.50 pm)