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SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL 11 OCTOBER 2017

(7.15 pm - 9.40 pm)

PRESENT: Councillors Councillor Abigail Jones (in the Chair),
Councillor Daniel Holden, Councillor Stan Anderson,
Councillor Kelly Braund, Councillor Michael Bull,
Councillor David Chung, Councillor John Sargeant and
Councillor Dennis Pearce

ALSO PRESENT: Chris Lee, Director for Environment and Regeneration, Graeme Kane, Assistant Director for Public Space Contracting and Commissioning, Doug Napier Leisure and Culture Greenspaces Greenspaces Manager, Mitre Dubet, Future Merton Commissioning Manager, John Hill, Assistant Director Public Protection, Paul Walshe Head of Parking and CCTV Services, Stella Akintan, Scrutiny Officer.

Councillors Martin Whelton Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Environment and Housing, Councillor Nick Draper, Cabinet Member for Community and Culture, Councillor Ross Garrod Cabinet Member for Street Cleanliness and Parking.
Councillor Oonagh Moulton and Councillor James Holmes

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

None

2 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST (Agenda Item 2)

None

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Agenda Item 3)

The Chair reported that she will present the reference to Cabinet on the 16th October.

The Chair clarified that recommendation 12 of the Housing Supply task group will be reviewed rather than removed as previously thought.

4 CALL-IN: PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVING PARKING FACILITIES IN SELECTED BOROUGH PARKS (Agenda Item 4)

Councillor Oonagh Moulton reported that she will speak on behalf of Wimbledon Park; there had been one decision in relation to the four parks but individual decisions would have been more appropriate. Overall residents were not aware of the proposals as the consultation was poor and councillors resorted to sending out ward letters about the plans. There are two car parks in Wimbledon Park the officer report did not state why only one will be subject to parking charges. Also there was no consultation on the proposed times for the parking restrictions.

The Wimbledon Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) is in place between 11am to 3pm, which does not align with the parking charges time of 8am to 4pm. Residents are concerned that this will result in cars being displaced to other busy roads and will not deter commuters. Timings should be shorter and aligned with the CPZ time.

There is also an equalities issue; as the parking charges may have an effect on people with disabilities and those with buggies and heavy sports equipment who are essential users of the car park but are not addressed in report.

Councillor Holmes said he is speaking on behalf of Haydons Road recreation ground which does not have a commuter parking issue. The car park is near to a parade of shops and is used by shoppers. Cabinet members should balance use of park and support for local businesses.

Councillor Holmes expressed concern that the proposals will not achieve the desired purpose, it will impact local business impact sports clubs and those with disabilities. We should not deter those participating in sports as this could have a negative effect on our public health agenda. Councillor Holmes suggested the impact of the proposals are reviewed in 12 months time, to look at the issues raised and ensure the changes are effective.

Panel members were given the opportunity to ask questions of Councillor Moulton and Councillor Holmes.

A panel member highlighted that people with disabilities can make use of designated bays. Councillor Moulton highlighted this is a problem if the car park is busy. Councillor Holmes said that people may have mobility issues but are not registered disabled and these measures should not discourage them.

A panel member asked for a suggested recommendation on preferred hours. Councillor Moulton suggested 11-3pm in line with the CPZ hours.

Hayley Morris, representative from Colliers Wood Bowling Club asked the Panel for further details about the proposals and how it will benefit the Club. Ms Morris said she was unsure about the details but not against the idea of charging for the use of the car park.

Councillor Guy Humphries, London Borough of Wandsworth reported to the Panel that Wimbledon Park has a borough boundary with Wandsworth. The lack of consultation was extraordinary, with only one sign on the gate of the park. Parking measures should be introduced to both Wimbledon parks and it is not clear why this

is not the case. Hours for the parking charges need to be adjusted. Cllr Humphries expressed support for a 12 months review.

Panel members asked about preferred hours for parking charges and reason for the preference for charges in both Wimbledon Park car parks. Councillor Humphries reported that it doesn't need to be longer than one hour. A one hour CPZ is in place in Wandsworth and it is enough to deter commuters.

Hilary Morris from Battles Area Residents Association sought clarification about a typographical error in the report. Cllr Martin Whelton clarified; Item e: should be 8am-4pm. The second charging period should not have been included and was referring to the initial proposal to include Saturday charges which is no longer going ahead.

Dr Dave Dawson spoke on behalf of Friends of Wimbledon Park and various residents associations. Dr Dawson reported that consultations needs to be longer and better notice given when they begin. They are in support of charging parks but current proposals will not solve worst problems as the charge is too low so it will not deter people. The biggest problems are on holiday weekends.

Jane Stone, a representative from Tamworth Recreation Centre said she would like the parking charges to be implemented as soon as possible and feels they have been waiting too long. The car parks are currently being used by commuters and this should deter them.

Cllr Martin Whelton thanked speakers for their contributions. It was noted that people agree the with principle of charges, however there are different views about the hours and the Panel will decide if further recommendations need to be made.

Councillor Nick Draper welcomed the range of representation and highlighted that we currently have no control over car parks, as a result there are untaxed and abandoned vehicles in the park. These proposals will regulate some of those problems. It gives residents the chance to use the car park as they wish.

Councillor Draper added that the council cannot implement charges in the second car park, it is not a made up car park and it needs to be tarmacked. There is a cost implication to make the required changes. As this is a pilot, the Cabinet Member welcomed Councillor Holmes suggestion that it is reviewed after a year.

The Assistant Director for Public Space Contracting & Commissioning welcomed this opportunity to listen to the views of the community. There has been informal consultation over many years which informed the initial proposals. The statutory consultation was carried out in accordance with all the guidelines. All ward councillors were also informed and he is pleased that they were able to cascade the information. The Council are learning and listening organisation and will seek to continuously improve.

A panel member asked for clarification about the cost of making up the car park and said installing meters before the consultation ended gave a poor message to residents which we need to reflect upon.

Councillor Draper reported that will cost £6,000.00 which is a significant portion of the Greenspaces budget. It is hoped that this work will be carried out in the future. Councillor Draper also reported that only four car parks went forward with the parking charges. It was decided not to charge in Sir Joseph Hood Memorial Playing Fields and the machines will be removed.

Panel members asked about the rationale for the decision on parks being taken as a whole and what were the benefits.

Councillor Whelton reported that considering all parks simultaneously had an administrative benefit. Alternatively it would have meant preparing a report in relation to each park which would have significant impact on officer time.

Councillor Holden moved a motion asking Panel to agree that the Cabinet member revise the hours for the parking charges in line with the current CPZ hours. This was seconded by Councillor Bull and was defeated by five votes to three.

The panel unanimously agreed to ask the Cabinet member to review the proposals in 12 months time.

RESOLVED

The Panel resolved to accept all proposals within the report and ask the Cabinet member to conduct a review in 12 months time to ensure the changes are delivering the intended outcomes.

5 UPDATE REPORT: CHRISTMAS PARKING (Agenda Item 5)

The Assistant Director of Public Protection reported that discussions between Parking Services and Love Wimbledon had taken place. At those discussions it was confirmed by Love Wimbledon that there was no evidence emerging from the business community which could demonstrate that the current Christmas parking concessions were having an adverse effect on the local economy. In the absence of such evidence the Assistant Director confirmed that the council will continue with the current scheme.

A panel member suggested that it must be possible to obtain evidence of the success of the scheme. The Head of Parking and CCTV Services reported that it would be costly to run consultation to find evidence. It would cost £14,000 to compare figures between two Christmas periods. The parking scheme does bring footfall, however this is a loss in parking revenue.

Some Panel members expressed concern that we are losing money on the scheme. It was reported that the scheme costs £60,000 a year.

A Panel member suggested that the scheme is reconsidered as part of future budget rounds

RESOLVED

The update report was noted.

6 PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY: LOCAL PLAN (Agenda Item 6)

The deputy Future Merton Manager reported that the team wants to publish short consultation to discuss areas for protection and development in the local area

Panel members sought clarification that it would fit in with existing plans such as the Estates Plan and London Plan and asked for assurance that the consultation will meet resident's expectations and comply with best practice.

The Deputy Future Merton Manager reported that the Local plan makes reference to other plans and the consultation would be carried out to the highest standard.

RESOLVED

The Panel agreed the recommendations set out in the report.

7 UPDATE REPORT: EASTERN ELECTRIC EVENT PERFORMANCE (Agenda Item 7)

The Assistant Director for Public Space Contracting & Commissioning reported that it is first event of its kind and hope to continue to provide future events which can bring an income and residents will enjoy. Feedback from residents indicates that noise was not a great cause for concern and there were limited incidences of anti-social behaviour. Local businesses, especially food outlets, benefitted from the event with increased custom.

Panel members reported that the event was reasonably well received by many local residents.

RESOLVED

Officers were thanked for their work in making the event successful.

8 PERFORMANCE MONITORING (Agenda Item 8)

The Director of Environment and Regeneration highlighted three main issues from the performance data

For the target "Parking Services Estimated Revenue" there is significant income above estimate, this is due to Automatic Number Plate Recognition which highlights the effectiveness of the moving traffic system.

In waste and street cleaning we cannot report links between the council and Veolia system, we hope this will be completed by the end of the year. We are working closely with Veolia to implement contract and seek improvements.

Within development control and enforcement there are, a number of vacancies filling them at the moment successful in recruiting , process of this ongoing performance

will improve. We can increase planning fees by the promised 20% by the end of the year.

A panel member queried SP:318 “No of outdoor events in parks” and if this should now be related to level of income. The Director of Environment and Regeneration reported that this could be looked at it in the service plan 2018/19.

A panel member asked if data can be provided on the age of enforcement cases and if they can be resolved. The Director of Environment and Regeneration said this information can be provided.

A panel member asked if indicator:

SP 282 – Partnership numbers (Libraries) can be replaced with one that is more challenging. The Director of Environment and Regeneration said it is not within his portfolio but will discuss it with the Director of Community and Housing.

RESOLVED

The report was noted

9 WORK PROGRAMME (Agenda Item 9)

Work programme

The Chair reported that the next meeting will focus on the first budget round and the Veolia contract.

RESOLVED

The work programme was noted