

Economy and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Panel

Tuesday 19th July 2022 at 1.00pm

Present:

Councillor Yusra Hussain (Chair)
Councillor Matthew McLoughlin
Councillor Tyler Hawkins
Councillor Aafaq Butt

Co-optees:

Jonathan Milner (Co-optee)
Jane Emery (Co-optee)

In Attendance:

Councillor Will Simpson, Cabinet Member for Culture and Greener Kirklees
Will Acornley, Head of Operational Services, Highways and Street Scene
Graham West, Service Director, Highways and Street Scene
Rachel Palmer, Project Manager

Apologies:

Councillor Martyn Bolt
Councillor John Taylor
Chris Friend (Co-optee)

1. Membership of the Committee

Apologies were received from Councillor John Taylor, Councillor Martyn Bolt and Chris Friend (Co-optee)

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 7th April 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

3. Interests

No Interests were declared.

4. Admission of the Public

All items were considered in the public session.

5. Deputations/Petitions

No deputation or petitions were received.

6. Public Question Time

No questions were received from the public.

7. Waste Strategy Capital Update

The Panel considered the Waste Strategy Capital Update presented by Will Acornley, Head of Operational Services, Highways and Street Scene and Rachel Palmer, Project Manager. Councillor Will Simpson, Cabinet Member for Culture and Greener Kirklees and Graham West, Service Director – Highways and Streetscene were also in attendance.

Will Acornley explained that a report was to be submitted to Cabinet on the 9th August 2022 to agree delegated authority to draw on funding (approximately 3 million) to allow the implementation and delivery of 7 key initiatives associated with the recently adopted Resources and Waste Strategy.

Rachel Palmer shared the presentation and provided an overview of each of these initiatives as follows:

- The Community Reward Scheme:
 - Was an initiative about giving back to communities to enrich their economy, environment, and wellbeing.
 - The funds would be used for the development of a 'Community Chest'.
 - Small grants would be allocated to communities/local groups for practical items to support reuse and waste minimisation initiatives.
 - This was in the early planning stages, and there were several different ideas about how to take the approach forward.
 - The approach would ensure that each ward would be represented equally in terms of the funds available.
 - Grants may also be allocated through an application process determined by a Panel.
 - Rewards could also be used as an incentive to encourage local change, such as improving the use of communal bins or reducing contamination.
 - Rewards may be in the form of vouchers or the allocation of a community asset.
- The Reuse Shop:
 - The first phases of delivery were underway with 2 ReUse containers being placed at local household waste sites.
 - There was currently 1 ReUse container at a site in Huddersfield and 1 at a site in Dewsbury.
 - The second phase of delivery was the opening of a ReUse Shop in Huddersfield.
 - If this was successful a long term, a self-sustaining solution may be developed in Huddersfield and Dewsbury.
- Improved Litter Facilities:
 - There would be investment in the Street Cleansing Resource and litter bins were a key resident facing aspects of this service.
 - Phase 1 was underway, which was the comprehensive auditing of all litter bins.
 - The audit would be used to build a database of the location and condition of all litter bins across the borough.

- As a part of the replacement planning, ward level discussions would be held as local knowledge was key to understanding how bins were used.
- This feedback would be used to create the litter bin replacement programme which was planned to take place over 2-3 years.
- Phase 2 of delivery would include introducing on-street recycling bins.
- Trials would take place in selected locations such as schools to enhance education about recycling in schools.
- Investment in Innovative Technology to Target Environmental Enforcement:
 - The initiative was in a very early stage of research and information gathering.
 - Research was taking place into Automated Camera and AI technology to help tackle environmental crime more efficiently.
- The Glass Collection Trial.
 - Included trialling different types of bins and vehicles across all types of Kirklees communities.
 - The findings would be compiled into recommendations for an authority wide roll out taking a place-based approach.
- Bulky Collections – Third Sector Reuse Partner:
 - A fully automated booking system for Bulky Collections had been introduced.
 - The next step was to look at a way of collecting bulky items such as furniture which could be reused.
 - Ideas to be researched included an in house run bulky collection which would deliver to a partner organisation.
 - Or a trial partnership with a third sector reuse specialist to collect and distribute previously loved items to Kirklees communities most in need.
 - The partnership approach would be supported through asset provision such as vehicles.
- Depot Review:
 - The site in the north, George Street, was at maximum capacity and additional space in the South, Vine Street, was also required.
 - Additional depot space would be needed to collect glass and other recycling waste initiatives
 - Funds were required at this stage for early feasibility studies and site surveys to locate a suitable space for an expanded depot facility.

Will Acornley further highlighted to the Panel that all the initiatives were in the early stages of development and that there would be further engagement held with Councillors, the member reference group and scrutiny as the plans developed.

The Panel noted the presentation and the Chair invited questions from members. In the discussion to follow the Panel highlighted that the use of cameras as part of enforcing littering would be beneficial but noted challenges may arise around power supply for those cameras.

Responding to a question from the Panel about the potential timelines for research into emerging AI and enforcement technologies, Will Acornley advised that the next trial was forecast to take place in the next 12 months and would be used to inform the business case. He also added that research into self-powering cameras was to be undertaken to overcome the challenges around power supply.

Graham West, Service Director - Highways and Streetscene, added that he had oversight of the overarching Council CCTV Strategy and work has been undertaken to review best practice in relation to the use of CCTV as well as making sure that the Council wide approach was aligned with guidance. This would include any cameras used for enforcement purposes.

The Panel asked if there was potential within the Community Reward Scheme to reward individual businesses to recognise those companies who were demonstrating good litter disposal and recycling practices. In response Will Acornley advised that it was an idea to be taken on and considered when developing the future approach.

The Panel questioned whether the Bulky Waste Collection and Reuse shop could be joined up noting similarities between the projects. Rachel Palmer responded to agree that this was the vision which would begin with trialling small items with the reuse shops with a view to include bulky items in the long-term.

Will Acornley added that if trials were successful that the long-term plan would include working with multiple charities and local groups to set up a reuse network across the district, making sure everyone had equal opportunity to. This 'umbrella network' would also help to provide other social benefits including, upskilling, and training opportunities, as well as supporting other services such as homes and neighbourhoods to provide residents with reused furniture. The view was for this to become a properly procured and managed partnership, highlighting the success of this approach in Leeds.

Responding to a question about the use of the funding and costings around improving litter facilities, Will Acornley advised that the cost was for capital investment in new equipment and containers, following the outcomes of the audit which was to understand what type of container and how many was needed where. The second phase trials were to inform other data such as collection frequency, new compaction, and technology to be more cost effective and economic. This would be followed by ward level discussions where the results of the audit were presented.

Responding to a question about the timeline for the glass collection, Will Acornley advised glass collections were initially removed due to a need to balance a reduced budget following reductions in funding. The ambition was to reinstate glass collections, but the previous model used was unsustainable and caused significant operational issues. Following engagement, it was found that preferences differed significantly across wards suggesting that a place-based approach would be required when reintroducing glass collections. Implementation would require significant funding, and so it was important to ensure clarity about application for funding prior to deciding the approach.

The Panel acknowledged that lack of clarity around policy and supply chain issues were causing delays in the timeline. The Panel further asked if the ReUse shop could be expanded to other towns across the district. Will Acornley responded to agree with the Panel's comments about the importance of including other towns and advised that the plan going forward was to make the reuse initiative available borough wide if trials were successful.

Graham West added that comments from the Panel were well received. He added that a key benefit of taking a district wide approach to bulky waste and ReUse would help to support residents during the cost-of-living crisis. In respect of glass collection trials, it was important to make sure all resources were used in the best way to ensure value for money. A central approach was needed to be taken in response to the implementation of the glass collections noting risks in moving forward in one direction too early or too late.

The Panel welcomed the update highlighting those opportunities to uplift were key during the cost-of living crisis. Cllr Will Simpson added thanks to the presenting officers and the wider team highlighting the benefits of the schemes.

RESOLVED:

That the Panel noted the update and thanked officers and Cabinet Members involved in the process. It was also agreed that:

1. The idea of rewarding individual businesses be considered in the development of the Community Reward Scheme.
2. A joined up and borough wide approach be taken to the reuse shop and bulky waste initiatives in later stages of development.

8. Work Programme 2022/23

The Panel considered the draft work programme for the 2022/23 municipal year.

It was noted the Panel met informally on the 23rd June 2022 to produce the draft work programme. This had now been submitted to the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee for approval.

RESOLVED:

That the draft work programme for the 2022/23 municipal year be noted.