

Minutes



Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

Date: 16 November 2017

Time: 10.00 am

Present: Councillors J Guy (Chair), M Al-Nuaimi, C Evans, M Evans, C Ferris, P Hourahine, J Hughes and M Spencer

Liz Blayney (Senior Overview and Scrutiny Officer)

In Attendance:

Apologies: Councillors I Hayat

1 **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Phil Hourahine – Board Member of Newport Transport
Councillor Mark Spencer – Board Member of Newport Transport
Councillor Charles Ferris – Board Member of Newport Transport

2 **Minutes of 28 September 2017**

The minutes were approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

3 **Decriminalised Parking / Civil Parking Enforcement**

The Senior Strategy Manager presented a '*Newport Civil Enforcement Feasibility Study*' to the Committee summarising the report and highlighting key aspects of the adoption of Civil Parking Enforcement. Members discussed the need to address the parking issues within Newport, without parking being used as a revenue generator or unnecessarily adding to the financial hardship being faced by many of the public. There were concerns about the use of bailiffs in other areas, which could result in disproportionate increase in the total amount owed.

It was explained that the figures had been conservatively calculated based on the maximum work required; the actual figures were likely to be much less. The initial outlay of £1.39 million is made up of between £800,000 and £900,000 of work ensuring that the cities lines and signs are at a standard where the Welsh Assembly Government would be confident that the Council was in a position to take over CPE. It was anticipated that not all of the signs and lines will need to be replaced and as such the cost could lower. With regards to how success in the scheme is measured, Members were advised that this would not relate to the revenue or the number of tickets issued, but would be reflected in whether there was an improvement in the current issues with parking.

Members acknowledged the current problem with illegal parking in Newport had been well documents and discussed at numerous meetings. Member discussed the role of the police and the impact of the potential withdrawal of the police in the enforcement of parking.

Members were disappointed that a representative from the Police could be present to answer specific questions.

Members were disappointed that alternative options, such as paying the police to employ more staff to undertake the parking enforcement in Newport, had not been explored within the report. It was also commented that the disadvantages of the Council taking on CPE had not been included within the report. The Officers explained that this option had been discussed with the Police a number of years ago and they had indicated that this was not an option that they would consider. It was also explained that this option would result in a continued financial outlay for the Council, and any revenue gained from fines issued by the police would be returned to the Central Government.

Some of Committee commented on the lack of background information within the report, to outline other options that had been considered and the process that had been taken to date to give context to what the Committee were being asked to consider.

Members discussed the impact of tighter enforcement of parking in the city centre and whether this would negatively impact upon surrounding areas. Members were advised that currently the Council Car parks in the City Centre were usually at 35 to 40% capacity meaning that there were sufficient additional spaces for people to park. Members requested more information on what other Local Authorities had done in relation to parking enforcement, including which of the Welsh LA's had implemented CPE, whether it had been successful and whether there was any differences to how this had been implemented that the Council could learn from.

The Committee discussed the statutory role of the Traffic Manager within local government, and questioned the role of this role within addressing underlying causes of illegal parking (e.g. correct signage, congestion on roads). Members were advised that the Traffic Managers role was to manage Newport's road network to reduce congestion and disruption. In Newport this function was within the Senior Strategy Managers role. The number of staff required to be employed was discussed in relation to the anticipated numbers of tickets issued. Outside of the City Centre, the Officer state they would anticipate issuing one and three quarter tickets per eight hour period and in the City Centre the Officers estimated they would be issuing seven tickets per eight hour period. The Officers explained that these figures were what they anticipated they will be issuing in 18 months after adopting CPE and reflects a change in behaviour after the initial implementation period. Members were advised that the intention was to cover costs to make the service sustainable, rather than to accrue revenue, and the figures quoted were conservative estimates at the lower end of the scale to ensure that the revenue was not over predicted. The Committee queried how the CPE would be able to contact and report certain issues that were beyond their jurisdiction, for instance if someone is parked on zig-zag lines outside of a school or zebra crossing. In those instances the CPE staff member would be able to issue a ticket and could inform the Police. The times where the CPE staff would not be able to get involved would be if the vehicle was causing a hazard to other road users, causing a major blockage and required to be moved.

The Committee asked for assurances the income generated from CPE would be ring-fenced in the budget for parking. The Officer stated that the money raised from CPE had to be ring fenced for use in parking related areas and this is set out in Welsh Assembly Government legislation.

The Committee sought reassurance that the Council would not employ a private company to run the CPE in Newport. The Officer stated that it was the recommendation of this report that that NCC operates CPE and does not use a third party.

The Committee discussed the financial set up required to establish CPE, and the Assistant Head of Finance explained that the loan to set up for CPE in Newport would be internal and

would be paid back over a specified period of time. During this time any surplus money gained during that period would be ring fenced.

The Members discussed the demands of processing Penalty Notices and asked how the Officers planned to deal with this. Working in partnership with the other Gwent Local Authorities who are deciding whether to undertake CPE there might be an opportunity to establish a more cost effective way of running CPE. This again will impact on the overall implementation costs of CPE and would be explored should the Council agree to proceed.

The Members queried whether the City Centre Ambassadors could be utilised as a support mechanism for CPE. The Officer explained that due to the nature of the role traffic enforcement staff had to be completely employed by the Council to undertake that role.

Conclusion

The Committee debated whether or not it was in a position to make a recommendation to the Cabinet Member and the Council on this matter. Some Members expressed the view that the Committee should recommend that the Council proceed with CPE in principle and there was sufficient information within the report to base a decision upon. Other Members argued that more detail was needed before the Committee was in a position to make a recommendation. More information was requested on the following:

- Analysis of
 - Alternative models / options;
 - Information on what similar Authorities have implemented and enforced the scheme;
 - Whether there were more cost effective options available to address the problem;
 - Implementation issues that the Council might face;
 - Impact on CPE on parking issues – i.e. numbers of available parking in the city; centre displacement to other areas from the city centre;
 - The benefits and the disadvantages to taking on the scheme;

The Committee agreed to take a vote on the matter. The motion was put to the meeting to defer making a recommendation on this item, pending holding an additional meeting of the Committee to consider further information from officers and to discuss with matter with the police. The motion was declared carried unanimously by 8 votes to 0.

4 Waste Strategy Policy Review Group - Final Report

The Senior Overview and Scrutiny Officer outlined the process taken by the Policy Review Group to reach their recommendations. The Officer explained that the Strategy was broken down into three separate areas which were Trade Waste, Household Waste Recycling Centre and Three Weekly Collections. The Officer highlighted summary of the Group's recommendations contained within the final report.

The Committee thanked the Group for the extensive report, which reflected the amount of work the group and officers had undertaken. The Committee's two representatives on the Policy Review Group highlighted the key areas of the final report for the Committee's consideration. The Committee were advised that three weekly collections had been put forward by the report and supported by Officers. However the Review group could not support this approach at this time. They explained that they had been of the opinion that there were too many issues with engagement with the current system that would make three weekly difficult to implement in certain areas, in particular urban areas with little storage and communal buildings. They continued to say that they felt educating the residents of Newport was a very important element to achieving the target set by the WG. The Officer replied by

explaining even though education was vital it would only produce around a one percent increase, which would not enable the Council to meet the WG targets and avoid the fine.

The Committee discussed the targets and associated fines from WG for recycling rates, and queried how the Council had avoided the fines on two occasions. The Officer explained that we had not been fined in the past as we were working on implementing an action plan which would allow the Council to reach the targets in the future. This was set out by the Wales Audit Office and agreed by the Council. This was unlikely to be the case in the future should the Council fail to reach the targets.

The Committee queried whether other options for flats had been considered by the officers, such as the communal bins used in Europe. The Head of Streetscene and City Services explained that unlike in Wales, the community bins on the continent require the users to pay each use which limited the amount that was collected. The Officer continued to say that if the flats all started recycling at a suitable level it would only provide half to one percent, which would not be sufficient to meet the WG target and avoid the fine. The refuse trucks are currently weighed before and after visiting flats to ensure they capture the amount of refuse collected.

The Head of Streetscene explained that the report had highlighted that the only way for the Council to achieve the target set out by WG were to restrict the amount of refuse a household could put out. There were alternative options to how this could be achieved, for example through using bags and restricting residents to two black bags on a fortnightly basis, or through issuing smaller bins.

The Committee queried whether Council buildings were maximising recycling. The Officer explained that the majority of kitchen spaces now had food waste bins, and they were looking at increasing the number of other types of recycling bins throughout the offices.

The Committee discussed trade waste, and enquired why the Council was not able to compete with private waste collection services, with no legal requirement for private companies to recycle. The Committee were concerned that private companies did not offer recycling, were cheaper and as such would be a more attractive offering to businesses as they would not have to sort their waste. The Head of Streetscene commented that there was a limit to what the Council could charge for Trade waste as it could not subsidise the costs. Trade waste accounted for 5000 tonnes of waste whereas household waste is 60,000 tonnes, which would not significantly contribute to the Council's overall recycling rate.

Members discussed the purpose of the site visit to Conwy, and were advised that Conwy was chosen as it was an example of an authority that had successfully implemented three weekly collections and had a similar composition of waste to Newport.

The Committee discussed the current system for disposing of waste and discussed the feasibility of Newport having its own facilities to recycle rather than exporting to other areas. The Head of Streetscene outlined the current system and noted that Newport having its own facilities was not feasible. With regards to recyclables like glass, paper and plastic you have to reach a critical mass to make processing financially viable. The Cardiff incinerator was a regional initiative that the Council agreed to sign up to for 25 years.

Fly tipping was discussed and the potential for three weekly collection to exacerbate this problem. The Officer outlined the new powers from WG which will allow the Council to increase fines for fly tipping. The Officer continues saying that the level of fly tipping in Newport is good compared to other areas of Wales, and that the instances were not usually relating to excess refuse, but larger bulkier items. As such, the evidence suggested that changes to the frequency of household collections did not impact upon the levels of fly tipping. The Council have looked at using CCTV in fly tipping hotspots but this was deemed to be too expensive for the returns it would generate.

Conclusion

The Chair thanked the Policy Review Group and the Officers for their contributions to the discussion, and highlighted the summary of the recommendations of the review group within the final report. The Committee agreed to support the findings of the Review group and forward the final report to the Cabinet Member. The Committee supported the continuation of the review group to input into the development and implementation of the Waste Strategy as appropriate.

5 Forward Work Programme

The Senior Overview and Scrutiny Officer provided the group with a summary of the Committee's work programme with specific reference to the reports due to be considered at the next two meeting.

It was confirmed that there would be an additional meeting scheduled to consider the additional information requested in relation to Civil Parking Enforcement and to discuss the matter with the police prior to making a recommendation.

Members discussed the availability of the agenda prior to the Committee's meetings. The Senior Overview and Scrutiny Officer advised the Committee that that agendas were published a minimum of 3 clear working days prior to the meeting in line with legislation. Where possible, agendas were published before this, however it was dependant on when reports were finalised.

The meeting terminated at 12:50