

Northampton Borough Council- NORTHAMPTON PENSIONERS' FORUM

THURSDAY, 27 SEPTEMBER 2018

The Jeffery Room, The Guildhall, St Giles' Street, NN1 1DE.

1. WELCOMES, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES

Attendance: Cllr Brian Oldham (BO, Co-Chair), Roger Rumsey (RR, Co-Chair), Tony Mallard (TM, ERA & NFRA), Christiana Owusu-Akuffo (CO, Individual), Chris Carvell (CC, NBC), Brian Nichols (BN, Individual), Veronica Male (VM, Tollers & Dementia Action Alliance), Tony Birch (TB, Individual), Cllr Stephen Hibbert (SH, NBC), Stewart Quelch (SQ, Individual), Norman Sharp (NS, Individual).

Apologies: Geoff Simms, John Rawlings, Mike Hallam, Mike Hill, Jeanette Pidgen, Dave Hewitt, Ann Timson.

2. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

Actions and mins – PCC and Ruth Austen requested for future forums.

Andy Leighton is not coming. Why was he coming?

To talk about rerouting in the town centre, Derrick Simpson would be good to have him joining too.

Jeanette Pidgen is a must for the next Forum.

3. CHRIS CARVELL - ENVIRONMENTAL CONTRACT

Chris Carvell – Environmental Service Contract Manager

Role to be link from members of the public to Veolia. Has previously been a neighbourhood manager.

Role is to make sure they are doing what they need to on time and to the correct standard.

Been at NBC since Easter so a little while before June changeover. Well aware of the work in the previous contract and the standard of their work.

Some changes include green high vis to orange, new vehicles, new cards and new branding.

“Pride” is the remit behind the branding campaign.

Hopefully noticed some changes, the grass has had multiple cuts now, was left for a while before the handover and was really overgrown.

New management team but old staff, management are trying to change old behaviours. People get into work habits but we are working towards changing those to help with productivity.

Services

Refuse and recycling – blue lid wheelie bins should be out to everyone now. Boxes have changed to the wheel bin now for 70,000 houses.

Day change has happened to, this changes the collection days for around 65-70% of the population.

It's generally going well, some people haven't put their bins out on the right day, or they haven't read the letter or the crew have not gone down the right street. It is going to take a while to be back to a normal service, hoping it will be there at around 6 weeks but these things take some time.

There are resources here at the council to deal with issues.

STREET CLEANSING

Previous contracting was a reactive service. Veolia works on a scheduled basis and there will be a small team to work on those fly tips. Everywhere will be visited and cleaned on an 8 weekly basis instead of just reactions from complaints.

STREET TRANSFORMATION TEAMS

Working through the borough on the places that haven't been treated over the past 8 years or so.

First 3 months team has picked up around 60 tonnes of dirt/litter.

Working through a schedule, teams are then being tasked to then maintain the standard that the STT has set.

MOWING

Now into 5th cut, first 2 cuts took a while as the grass was so long and sometimes it had to be gone over multiple times.

Once the season changes, the mowing schedule will turn into winter maintenance and shrubbery will then be worked on.

There will be changes to the shrubbery and it may seem quite drastic compared to how much they have been allowed to grow.

Transformation team has worked in Southfields and similar areas quite a lot.

TREES

Trees have started to have the growth moved, especially the ones close to paths and roads which helps peoples visibility.

ALLOTMENTS

Working well, been talking to the Northampton Allotment Network. Working with

them to help manage these areas property better than previously, especially the ones which are still being paid but are massively overgrown.

CEMETARY

Not much has changed.

PUBLIC CONVENIENCES

Not many problems apart from a small amount of ASB.

Q: Fly tipping – who do you ring if it's on NPH property?

A: NBC and NPH call centre is the same so this should be delegated appropriately.

Q: Kingsthorpe cemetery – there has been a lot of headstones disappeared over recent weeks.

A: May be due to safety but not entirely sure.

Q: Continental landscapes – do you know their schedule?

A: They will be focusing on their shrub maintenance from October onwards.

BN: Waste guide was very comprehensive but you really have to study it to know what bin to put out. Had difficulty telling the difference between the colours on the leaflet.

Q: How do you report a bin that hasn't been collected if you have no access to the internet?

A: Channel shift policy – trying to steer people away from manual – so using a feedback form online.

Bin liners for the small bins – WRAP project – bid to encourage food waste separation. Can get these from the one stop shop or the call centre or just use plastic bags.

Where does the recycling go?

To Veolia – mainly separated by machine and then the end is manually separated.

Bin hanger

Q: Changed the time/day – not many people have read the leaflet.

Christiana-The Blue lid bin for recycling is great, the old ones used to blow all over the place and leak.

TB: Semilong is much cleaner, the cleanest it has been in years. Problem with taking stuff away is that it becomes a hotspot and people keep dropping things off there.

CC: Once we have the data from areas about issues, we will then start to target those areas much more.

There is a peak when students are in accommodation. When we have data we can work with the university and the landlord's forum etc.

Something that will be worked on and priority areas will be focused on, we want people to learn what to do instead of just leaving it for the council on the street.

Q: Other issue is tree's, how do we report tree's that are potentially dangerous?
Veolia have employed tree surveyors to look through areas to see what needs to be done.

BO: They will only chop a tree down if it is diseased, dead or a danger to health and safety/causing structural damage. It is not a quick fix to deal with trees.

TB: Community centres car parks are supposed to be under idverde, they weren't under the previous contract.

CC: If you have any particular areas I can check but I will need to be in front of my computer.

SH: The drivers are not raising the skirts when driving past raised paths, they are damaging the paths and the vehicles.

CC: If you let me know the area, I can find out what vehicle as they all have trackers on. Weston Favell Village (east side) is one with noticeable marks – they will be notified.

Q: Is fly tipping people putting things out in front of their house, or going elsewhere and dumping it?

A: It is both. If it is mattresses, tv's etc. If it is large amounts of bags etc.

ACTION: CC to try and find out how many people have been fined/prosecuted?

Q: A lot of rubbish down the A45, anything going to be done about this?

A: Supposed to be done quarterly but staff need to be specifically trained and they are waiting to be trained (chapter 8) – need this to work on fast roads.

NS: Outnumbered by officials – not happy about this.

Other official said the barrows cannot be used due to health and safety rules.

CC: There isn't particular rules against health and safety.

SB: Maybe for the previous contractor it was but for this contractor it is.

NS: Fines for everything e.g. littering – can't take the retail twice.

Forum members discussed that it's the people that drop the litter, it's difficult because people say the fines are harsh but then you have to discipline people because they will continue to litter.

TB: Some schools are doing projects on litter which is a good starting place, this would be good for all schools.

BO: They also take this info back home to parents.

BO: The recycling bins might be overflowed because of fortnightly collections.

CC: The workers are being told to take everything at the minute even if it is in the old boxes.

BO: Street cleansing – two NPH estates on my patch, only so much idverde will touch and before leaving the rest to NPH. There is a complex grey area between the

boundaries and who's responsibilities the grass, fly tip etc. is.

Street cleansing every 8 weeks but it is on need, Abington Street will receive more treatment, 8 weeks is a minimum.

Q: Ground maintenance – once a year

A: As per species.

Blue top bin goes out with brown bin and then the other black bin goes out the week following on its own. Food waste can go every week.

Old electrical equipment can be collected, what about scrap metal? No, we do not collect that. It has got a value but it's more for scrap yards not a recycling centre.

New contract is more expensive than the previous contract, are we seeing more recycling?

Hard to tell at the minute but it should produce more recycling, changing to this same system in the past has worked. Only risk is people hiding things that aren't recyclable under recyclable material.

Q: What if you're not sure about something, whether it is recyclable or not?

A: If in doubt, leave it out.

Christiana: Won't it be sorted out anyway?

CC: It might be but it could contaminate many other recyclable items.

BO: What time constitutes a missed collection? On a Friday, if it is missed, they cannot report that until Monday, is that right?

A: Yes that is correct as there isn't anybody there over the weekend.

If a collection is missed, the chances of it happening again is slim as they will have to go back to collect it until the following day. Unfortunately Friday you can't report a missed collection until 6pm, which means it will not be collected until Tuesday.

NS: Sheltered housing, 30 flats over 3 floors. We have to keep bulky waste in our flats as we can't put them out. Is there anything in place to bulk collect sheltered housing for free instead of individual collections? Surely this would be more cost effective.

CC: Not aware of any plans for this at the minute.

ACTION: Mike Hallam to be invited for a future meeting.

4. CLLR HIBBERT - NPH

Northampton Partnership Homes

NPH Set up to manage housing stock – still belongs to the borough but NPH have been established to manage it.

Quarterly meetings to discuss service reports RAG.

The recent NPH house building project is the biggest in 30 years. NPH have presented the government with a programme in hopes to extend a loan cap. There are new houses over the borough and planning permission has been approved for more.

Q: Building houses for sale and rent. Shouldn't they be building houses for sale and not just for rent?

A: It is an investment which means a longer steady income.

Q: How do you see unitary effecting this?

A: A wholly NBC contract, the agreement should be transferred over to the unitary but it is their choice what they do with it.

TM: Residents association, going to be questions about garages being knocked down for flats/houses/bungalows. Problem is for car parking, what can be done?

SH: When these processes go forward, there has to be a public consultation. Some aren't currently needed or fit to have a car in, some will be knocked down for housing or even open parking.

BO: You have to weigh up the car parking vs housing issue, it is a difficult choice.

NPH looking to have ground level sheltered housing only, other associations do not have the same rules.

SH: The planning applications that are going in, they have to consider the parking for the property.

5. UNITARY UPDATE

BO: Voted for acceptance at the end of August about 2 unitary council. North and West Unitary, we would be part of west.

District leaders are now meeting regularly to discuss the format and the proposals can be managed.

There is a consultation that will be going out about the parish/town council.

It does not look like there will be 2019 local elections.

What happens to things like the forum and committees? Planning and licensing committees etc. will more than likely carry on.

Benefits of unitary will stop the back and forth between NBC and NCC and the question of who's responsible for certain things.

Q: 2020 is not far away, will there be false promises?

A: Cannot answer for that.

SH: This is going to happen because this is what the government wants.

BO: We did ask for a 3 unitary system and that we would be a town wide one, but this was not accepted. We did not get what we wanted but we have accepted the 2 unitary because we get a seat at the table and we can contribute shaping the future of Northampton.

Q: Do the MP's boundaries change?

A: No.

TM: Community Governance Consultation will take place in November – this is regarding parishes and a possible town council. Process will have to happen very quickly.

6. COMMUNITY NEWS EXCHANGE

TM: Brookside Residents – community gardening club – 15th Nov 5pm-7pm – seed sharing gardening event.

CO: Birchfield Road – many people are driving through the no entry.

Are there any computer courses going on to learn more about paying council tax etc.

Forum members discussed how NPH may be running one. Also the Doddridge centre at St James. They may also be something at the Abington Library once a week or so, they may be able to help.

Unity Dem project has moved from the Deco to the Abington Library.

TB: There has been a spike in lead theft, a group is going round taking lead from the roof of buildings and selling it for scrap.

NCC have adopted a road or part of a road but it is a NBC property.

BO: Baskets in town – Northampton got Gold in East Midlands in Bloom. Britain in Bloom is being judged now.

Northampton in Bloom Awards is next week.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

8. ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Jeanette Pidgen for next.

Ruth Austen for future.

Andy Leighton and Derrick Simpson for next.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

29th November, next meeting.