

PUBLIC

MINUTES of a meeting of **IMPROVEMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - PLACES** held on Wednesday, 27 September 2023 in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Matlock.

PRESENT

Councillor S Bull (in the Chair)

Councillors J Siddle, A Clarke, N Gourlay, A Haynes, D Murphy, P Niblock, M Ford and R George.

Apologies for absence were submitted for Councillors D Greenhalgh and J Nelson.

50/23 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Alan Haynes to his first meeting of the Improvement and Scrutiny Committee – Places.

51/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

52/23 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 July 2023 were confirmed as a correct record.

53/23 PUBLIC QUESTIONS (30 MINUTE MAXIMUM IN TOTAL)

There were no public questions.

54/23 COLLABORATIVE WASTE COLLECTION AND DISPOSAL

Chris Henning, Executive Director – Place, introduced the report which provided an overview of the structure and delivery of waste management services across the county and the potential opportunities for greater collaboration between the districts, boroughs and County Council.

Daniel Ayrton, Assistant Director Resources & Waste provided the committee with a detailed overview and highlighted the potential opportunities for more improved collaborative working.

Municipal waste management in Derbyshire was delivered through a two-tier system, with responsibility for waste collection held by the eight districts and boroughs, while responsibility for waste disposal was held by the County Council.

The Environment Act 2021 was introducing significant additional requirements of all local authorities. It had also introduced new funding mechanisms and opportunities for local authorities to achieve a step change in performance. At the same time, the financial resources available to all councils had reduced substantially. Recent acute cost pressures arising from greater demand for services coupled with high levels of inflation had further compounded the situation, drawing into question the sustainability of the sector as a whole. It was therefore essential that the Council explored all opportunities to improve performance while mitigating risks to statutory service delivery and the financial sustainability of the County Council, districts and boroughs.

The County Council, districts and boroughs had previously explored the potential to deliver cost efficiencies through closer joint working. While some limited joint working arrangements had been implemented, these had not led to sustained benefits in the longer term. Work was beginning to identify the scale of all such opportunities and the options available to the County Council, districts and boroughs in the medium term.

Previous exploration of joint working opportunities between the districts, boroughs and the County Council had identified clear areas of potential benefit but had not led to the delivery of sustained improvements to date. This work had been disrupted by the onset of Covid-19 and the consequent disruption to frontline services, and the need to prioritise operational delivery ahead of long-term strategy.

Officers of the County Council were beginning to work with WCAs to explore possible opportunities for delivering shared benefits through collaboration and would report back to Cabinet once an agreed scope of enquiry had been determined. Members of the Committee requested that prior to the report being submitted to Cabinet, that the officers returned to a future meeting to provide an update on the progress and the proposed way forward.

Members of the Committee were afforded the opportunity to ask the officers questions in relation to the report and waste collection and disposal in general.

Questions were raised in relation to the disposal of asbestos and tyres and the recent announcement that the Authority would be charging non-residents for the use of the County's HWRC. How would this be enforced and would it result in an increase in fly-tipping.

On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman wished to thank Daniel Ayrton and Chris Henning for their most informative and detailed report.

RESOLVED that the Committee notes the content of the report.

55/23 TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDERS (TROS) PROJECT REPORT

Chris Henning, Executive Director – Place presented the Committee with a Project Progress Report which provided an overview of how the Council currently processed Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs). Mr Henning introduced Max Adams, Senior Project Engineer, Neill Bennett, Assistant Director – Highways Commissioning and Richard Handbury, Project Engineer who provided the Committee with further details of the processes involved.

Traffic Regulations Orders (TROs) were legal documents that restricted or prohibited the use of the highway network, in line with The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. They helped the Authority to manage the highway network for all road users, including pedestrians, and they aimed to improve road safety and access to facilities. Examples of schemes that would require a TRO included:

- Speed limits
- On-street parking restrictions
- Weight limits
- One-way streets and banned turns
- Prohibition of driving

TROs followed a statutory process and were a legal document. Communities were often surprised at the length of time it could take to progress a scheme and Mr Adams talked the Committee through the consultation process and other statutory processes. The formal consultation stage of a TRO was open for all to comment on and there was an advertisement period in which representations could formally be lodged. The advertising process and the requirements placed on local authorities by the Department for Transport was explained.

It was suggested that Members would find it helpful if they were updated with explanations of why a scheme could not be progressed or why there was a delay in implementation, which would help them to respond to residents' concerns.

In order to provide the additional staffing required to address the current backlog, £228,000 Public Service Agreement (PSA) road safety money had been made available to engage specialist agency staff. However, the Committee was informed that this funding would be exhausted by January 2024. Discussions on other sources of funding would need to be had to enable the staffing levels to be maintained.

On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman thanked the officers for their thorough presentation.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee notes:

- a) How Derbyshire County Council currently process Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs);
- b) The delivery of TRO schemes over the past five-year period;
- c) The existing TRO processing backlog;
- d) Progress of the project to reduce the TRO backlog;
- e) Projected project completion timescales; and
- f) Objectives of the project going forward, and the risks associated to delivery of the project goals.

56/23 WORK PROGRAMME 2023-24

The Committee's work programme for the remainder of 2023-24 was presented and Members were invited to suggest possible items for consideration. The following items were put forward:

- An update on the Countryside Service review.
- The committee's input on engagement and partnership was suggested by the Assistant Director – Highways Commissioning.
- An update on the broader issues with regard to waste management after it was reported that 50% of the Place budget was taken up by the service.