

**BOROUGH OF KETTERING**

**RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

**Meeting held: 16<sup>th</sup> April 2019**

**Present:** Councillor Duncan Bain (Chair)

Councillors Ash Davies, Paul Marks and Mick Scrimshaw

**Also Present:** Martin Hammond (Executive Director)  
Ian White (Electoral Services Manager)  
Beth Gordon (Operations Manager)  
Rachel Christie (Interim Environmental Services Manager)  
Heather Jackson (Senior Electoral Services Officer)  
David Pope (Committee Administrator)

**18.RD.31 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Mike Tebbutt and Jenny Henson. It was noted that Cllr Paul Marks was acting as substitute for Cllr Henson.

**18.RD.32 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Research and Development Committee held on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2019 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**18.RD.33 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None

**18.RD.34 RIGHT TO SPEAK**

None

**18.RD.35 APPROVAL OF KETTERING TOWN CENTRE TASK AND FINISH GROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE (A1)**

The Committee received a report which sought approval for the Kettering Town Centre Task and Finish Group Terms of Reference.

It was noted that the group had already held two meetings as well as a town centre walkabout, with a further meeting scheduled for 29<sup>th</sup> April.

**RESOLVED** that the Terms of Reference for the Kettering Town Centre Task and Finish Group be approved.

**18.RD.36 POLLING PLACE AND POLLING DISTRICT REVIEW (A4)**

A report was submitted that sought to notify members of the Committee in respect of the Polling Place and Polling District Review as well as seeking comment in regard to the review timetable and the process for considering the existing structure of polling stations within the Borough/Constituency.

It was heard that there was a legal requirement for Returning Officers to review their polling districts and polling places every five years with the last such review for Kettering Borough having taken place in 2014 and its findings implemented at the Borough Council elections held in May 2015. Since that point, a small number of amendments had been made where premises had become unavailable or unsuitable for use as polling stations or in response to local requests to move polling stations. A list of current polling stations was supplied to the meeting.

The meeting heard that as a result of planning for the upcoming European Parliament Elections, the timetable for the review as published in the report was very likely to be delayed. There was a statutory deadline for conclusion of the review by January 2020 and this was still deemed achievable even in light of the above elections.

It was reported that the Notice of Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places had been published that day and this document invited comments and representations from all quarters. Media releases would be published to advertise the review and local press had already published an article in that regard.

The Council maintained a database of existing polling stations and it was understood that although there were a number of existing polling stations that lacked suitability, there were also a lack of alternative venues available in certain areas.

The following had been sent letters seeking comments and representations as part of the review:

- Parish and Town Councils in the Borough  
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- Registered Political Parties active in the Borough
- Local Groups representing people with disabilities
- Any individual elector who expressed an interest

The committee raised concerns regarding the locations of certain existing polling stations being hard to find and asked that consideration be given to the placement of additional directional signage on the highway. These comments were made especially in relation to Highfield Barnes Community Centre and Counties Community Centre.

It was heard that a new community centre was being developed on Britannia Road that could potentially replace Park Infant School as a polling station in future. In addition Barton Seagrave Village Hall would be replacing both the local schools as stations for the upcoming European Parliamentary Elections. It remained the Council's policy to reduce its reliance on schools as polling stations over time.

Details of groups representing those with disabilities that had been contacted regarding the review were provided, including Shopmobility, Northamptonshire Association for the Blind and Kettering Voluntary network.

**RESOLVED**

that the Committee noted the timetable and process for the review and made such comments as outlined above

**18.RD.37 TOWN CENTRE PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDER (PSPO) REVIEW (A2)**

The Committee received a report which sought to inform members of the recommendation to the Executive Committee to extend the Town Centre PSPO with the existing restrictions for a period of three years.

Details of the context, experience of the PSPO and trends that had arisen following its implementation were outlined to the meeting. An overview of the public consultation results were provided as an appendix to the report. It was noted that there was support from 92% of those responding to the consultation for a three year extension to the PSPO.

Members acknowledged the contribution that the PSPO had made to being able to address anti-social behaviour in town, and noted the continuing pressures from serious organised crime and drug dealing that continued to impact on workloads and the reputation of the town centre.

## **RESOLVED**

That Members approve the recommendation to Executive Committee to extend the current Town Centre PSPO for a further three years from 25<sup>th</sup> July 2019 in line with the consultation outcome.

### **18.RD.38 CONSULTATION ON GOVERNMENT WASTE STRATEGY (A3)**

Members received a presentation that provided an update in relation to the recently published government strategy on waste.

The waste strategy, “Our Waste, Our Resources, a Strategy for England” was published in December 2018 and set out proposals to minimise waste, promote resource efficiency and move towards a circular economy. These were seen as significant changes in waste policy which had the potential to impact local authorities, however these proposals were subject to further consultation.

Four consultation documents were published by DEFRA on 18<sup>th</sup> February 2019. These were:

- Consistency in Household & Business Recycling
- Introducing a Deposit Return Scheme in England, Wales & Northern Ireland
- Reforming the Packaging Producer Responsibility System
- Plastic Packaging Tax

Consultation responses were due in on 13<sup>th</sup> May, except for the Plastic Packaging Tax which was due to close a day earlier on 12<sup>th</sup> May. The consultations themselves asked a total of 306 questions across the four documents with a number of key issues that would impact local authorities to be considered.

#### **Consistency in Household & Business Recycling**

Members were asked to consider responses to key questions that formed part of the “Consistency in Household & Business Recycling” consultation document, including:

- Type of recyclable materials collected
- Weekly food waste collections from 2023
- Separating dry recyclable materials
- Green waste collections
- Standardised waste container colours nationally
- Standards for household waste collections

Members agreed with the suggested officer response but also unanimously stated that the proposals were very prescriptive and would remove autonomy from local authorities in areas of work which did not need to be centralised or standardised as proposed.

### Introducing a Deposit Return Scheme

The Committee considered a number of factors relating to the potential introduction of a Deposit Return Scheme

Members responded positively to the proposal and considered that an “all-in” (no restriction on size of container) deposit scheme was preferable to an “on-the-go” (limited to containers in scope that are less than 750ml in size) scheme. It was noted that local authorities may see a reduction in the volume of material collected as part of recycling collections should such a scheme be introduced, however there was the possibility of a reduction in littering of such collectable items.

### Reforming the Packaging Producer Responsibility System

The Committee noted that that government was attempting to incentivise producers to improve the designs of packaging and to fund the cost of disposing household packing waste in the residual waste stream.

Members again backed proposed consultation responses from officers and supported a nationwide labelling scheme that would identify which items were recyclable and which container they went into. Concerns were raised that by making producers responsible for the costs to local authorities of collecting and recycling agreed packaging wastes, consumers could see an increase in prices.

In relation to producer fees being used to support local and/or national related communications campaigns, it was agreed that this would be positive, but it was considered that local schemes were preferable in terms of levels of engagement.

### Plastic Packaging Tax

This HMRC consultation sought views on the possible implementation of a tax on packaging containing less than 30% recycled material with a suggestion of a flat rate per tonne. Members were asked to consider whether they supported a 30% threshold. It was considered that such a tax might stimulate better packaging design and could streamline products for recycling.

The Committee noted that its comments would be fed into the response to be sent to DEFRA. It was requested that links to the consultation be circulated to all elected members so that their input could be included.

## **18.RD.39 WORK PROGRAMME 2018/19 (A5)**

The work programme was noted with the addition of scrutiny of the financial efficiencies of the Council’s temporary housing policy and the impact this had on the people using this service

*(The meeting started at 7.00pm and ended at 8.12pm)*

Signed: .....

(Chair)

DJP