

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEETING, 2ND OCTOBER, 2018

Present – Councillors Silvester (Chairman), Evans (Vice-Chairman), Allen, Baines (as deputy for Councillor P. Wild), Darvesh, Flitcroft, Gibbon, Harkin, Haworth (as deputy for Councillor Mistry), Hewitt, Iqbal, Kellett, Khurram and Radcliffe (as deputy for Councillor Haslam).

Also in Attendance

Councillor Peel	Executive Cabinet Member for Environmental Services
Councillor Chadwick	Executive Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport
Mr. G. Brough	Interim Director of Place
Mrs. D. Ball	Deputy Director of Place
Mr. K. Roberts	Head of Service, Community Services
Mr. J. White	Cemeteries and Crematorium Manager
Mr. M. Padley	Director of Water and Scientific Services
Ms. S. Pennington	Drinking Water Inspectorate
Mr. R. Phillips	Drinking Water Inspectorate
Mr. P. Boardman	United Utilities Waste Water
Mr. I. D. Mulholland	Principal Democratic Services Officer

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Critchley, Haslam, Mistry, P. Wild and Wilkinson and J. Byrne as Executive Cabinet Member.

Councillor Silvester in the Chair.

10. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 28th August, 2018 be agreed and signed as a correct record.

11. WASTE AND RECYCLING TEAM

The Chairman advised the Committee that the Waste and Recycling Team had received the APSA Award for being the service team of the year and on behalf of the Committee passed on their congratulations.

12. THE COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2018/2019

The Borough Solicitor submitted a report which set out details of the proposed Committee work programme for the remainder of the Municipal Year.

Resolved – That the work programme be approved.

13. THE QUALITY OF BOLTON'S DRINKING WATER

Mr. Martin Padley, Director of Water and Scientific Services gave a presentation on matters concerning the Sweetloves water treatment works incident in 2015.

Members were reminded that in 2015 there were two incidents at Sweetloves Water Treatment Works, one on 31st March and 18th to 22nd July. During the second incident there was an interruption to supply followed by a precautionary boil water advice notice for three days. Those actions prevented any adverse health impact to customers.

It was highlighted that United Utilities had worked hard to restore treatment at the site, provided bottled water to customers and targeted delivery to vulnerable customers.

The precise root causes to the incidents were different, although both were caused by the failure of a pump that dosed sodium hydroxide.

Members were advised that United Utilities paid over £1.5m in compensation, £1.2m of which was voluntary. Also, United Utilities was fined a total of £200,000 plus £54,000 costs at Bolton Crown Court in June, 2018.

It was explained that since 2015 United Utilities had worked closely with the water regulator, invested £7.5m at the Sweetloves water treatment works in Bolton and £154m invested across the company since 2015.

Mr. Padley also apologised for the incidents, UU had undertaken successful engineering and scientific led deep dive assessments to understand both what wrong and also the inherent operational risk across the company. This lead to the Water Transformation Programme, a changed approach to customers and reduced the operational risk.

Members in their deliberations referred to –

- Matters around the detail of what had gone wrong in basic terms, why and how it was fixed;
- Issues around a visit for all members to the Sweetloves site;
- Action plans that could be put in place – the testing of systems.

Resolved – That Mr Padley be thanked for his detailed and informative presentation and that the position and discussions be noted.

14. THE DRINKING WATER INSPECTORATE - ITS ROLES AND POWERS

Ms. Sue Pennington and Richard Phillips from the Drinking Water Inspectorate gave a presentation on how the water quality in Bolton was monitored, its findings following the Sweetloves incident and how it worked with United Utilities to prevent a similar incident.

By way of background, members were informed of the background to the establishment of the Inspectorate which was formed in 1990 and had 40 members of staff.

They also had a wide range of enforcement powers.

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In terms of the Sweetloves offences, it was indicated that those were –

- supply of water unfit for human consumption;
- Failure to prepare water adequately for disinfection;
- Failure to disinfect water;
- Failure to design and continuously operate an adequate treatment process; and
- Use of unapproved materials.

They also explained that there had been previous incidents at the site in November, 2012 and June, 2013, one relating to elevated chlorine due to faulty valves on sodium hypochlorite system and a failure to respond to alarms and defective valves on dosing system and the other, a failure of the lime dosing system.

Members were also advised of the actions taken by the Inspectorate which comprised eight formal recommendations covering wider operational and management practices. Also referred to was the United Utilities transformation programme which was a staged programme from 2015 until 2021.

Members in their deliberations referred to –

- Excess chlorination and the balance being critical;
- The reassurance given by United Utilities actions and the Inspectorate;
- Whether United Utilities were on target to meet the 6 year target plan;
- The previous incidents in 2012 and 2013;
- Enforcement notices and areas for improvement;
- Transformation programmes;
- Enforcement matters;
- Recommendations regarding providers and associated risk assessment;
- Learning following recommendations; and
- Whether more regulatory powers were needed.

Resolved – That Messrs Pennington and Phillips be thanked

for their detailed presentation and that the position and discussions be noted.

15. DRAINAGE AND SEWERS

Mr Paul Boardman, United Utilities Waste Water gave a presentation on the current state of Bolton's drainage systems. It was explained that UU (United Utilities) maintained over 3500km of sewers in Bolton, 140 combined sewer overflows, over 90 wastewater pumping stations, carried out over 840 planned inspections and had four wastewater treatment works.

UU also had over 70 resolution units across the North West which dealt with blockages, collapses, internal flooding, external flooding and pollutions.

The meeting was also informed of matters around the future investments in water quality. Eight combined sewer overflows required improvement in Bolton. Also explained was matters concerning the hydraulic sewer flood risk in Bolton and protection for 40 properties in Bolton.

In conclusion, members were advised of the on-going work with Bolton Council.

Members in their discussions referred to-

- The 40 houses that needed flood defences and whether the people could stay living there;
- Matters around getting drain or sewer problems fixed and being able to contact the right people;
- Issues around Victorian drains and accommodating new builds;
- Work on private land – powers and obligations;
- The housing flooding problem locations and timescales; and
- Forecasting information and capacity planning.

Resolved – That Mr Boardman be thanked for his detailed presentation and that the position and discussions be noted.

16. CEMETERIES AND BEREAVEMENT SERVICES

Mr Kevan Roberts, Head of Service (Community Services) and Mr John White, Cemeteries and Crematorium Manager gave a presentation on the scope and challenges facing the cemeteries and bereavement services.

Members were advised of matters around the Overdale Crematorium and grounds and the facilities and the East and West Chapels. There were four cremators and two of those had been fitted with equipment to reduce mercury emissions. Also referred to was the chapel of remembrance and the memorial gardens of remembrance.

Mr Roberts explained that in 2016/17 there were 2187 cremations and in 2017/18 2138.

Members were also advised of the burial and crematorium records being available on-line, web cast photo tribute display facilities and matters around memorial stones, memorial cards and inscriptions.

The meeting was further informed of the recent developments at Overdale, matters around the maintenance of the various Borough Cemeteries, closed church yards, cemetery chapels, cemetery maintenance, income and expenditure matters, staffing and future plans.

Members in their discussions referred to –

- Heaton Cemetery being a large area and the case work it generated and the state of the lodge by the ceremonial gates;
- Deane Church and its large cemetery and it being in a poor state;
- Practical matters around prisoners attending funerals;
- The web casting service;
- The cost of a cremation;
- The deceased on-line records;
- Direct cremations;
- Adding names onto memorial stones;

- The cost of graves; and
- Burying on your own land.

Resolved – That Messrs Roberts and White be thanked for their detailed presentation and that the position and discussions be noted.

17. MEMBERS' BUSINESS

The minutes of various meetings relevant to the remit of this Committee were also submitted, viz –

- Executive Cabinet Member for Environmental Services held on 10th September, 2018;
- Executive Cabinet Member Culture and Sport held on 10th September, 2018; and

Resolved – That the minutes of the various meetings be noted.

(The meeting started at 6.00 p.m. and finished at 8.17 p.m.)