

**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - THURSDAY, 14TH JULY, 2016**

**SUPPLEMENTARY PAPERS**

The following Papers were tabled at the meeting.

<b><u>AGENDA ITEM</u></b>	<b><u>REPORT TITLE</u></b>	<b><u>PAGE</u></b>	<b><u>WARD</u></b>
3.	Member Questions  <i>(An opportunity for Committee Members to ask questions of the relevant Director/ Assistant Director, relating to pertinent, topical issues affecting their Directorate – maximum of 10 minutes allocated).</i>	1 - 2	

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**Members' Questions – Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 14<sup>th</sup> July 2016**

1. Given the recent news regarding the 5 workers killed in a Birmingham Waste Recycling Plant, can the Committee please receive an update on work in-progress for the waste recycling plant next to the railway lines? Also, information regarding arvato's site off Farnham Road, where our Health & Safety and Trading Standards teams enforced a closure last month is requested.

**Reply from Roger Parkin, Director of Customer and Community Services:**

The Green world site has been cleared under the guidelines of Environmental Agency (EA) intervention (as it is a prescribed site under their licensing arrangements).

Slough Borough Council and BFRS staff paid a full part in supporting the EA in managing the situation. Further health and safety assessments on the empty structure have been carried out and the appropriate actions put in place to deal with this matter.

The site is now closed and secured.

SBC is undertaking a review of all waste and scrap sites in the borough to check whether there are any risks similar to those at Greener World or the Birmingham site.

We are also speaking to the EA at a senior level in the light of the Greener World problems to discuss how the powers of the EA, councils or others could be enhanced to enable a swifter and more certain outcome.

2. As previously requested at March 3rd meeting regarding of minutes item 69. Could we have the estimated additional costs by department regarding the knock on costs caused by issues arising from the relocation of the Registrars Offices to the Curve?

**Reply from Roger Parkin, Director of Customer and Community Services:**

The capital cost of the creation of the Registrar's office at The Curve had a global figure of £688,795. This was brought this to Capital Strategy board in July 2016 and approved.

3. With regards the issues of how many residents were effected by the communications issues between arvato and its contracted bailiff / debt collection agents as described in a recent letter about the issues raised by the resident in Little Brook Avenue, in which they were incorrectly told initially was down to a computer glitch? Including how many residents were wrongly Simmonds to court? Who much did this cost in un-necessary court costs? What actions have been taken to avoid a similar occurrence?

**Reply from Roger Parkin, Director of Customer and Community Services:**

The letter received by SBC was not caused by a communication glitch between arvato and the Enforcement Agent. Rather, the agent had a liability order for 2015/16, they collected the money for 2015/16 and passed the matter to arvato / Council Tax.

However meanwhile the customer paid some council tax, which they wanted to go to 2016/17 - they did not specify (though I am not saying that they should) but did not pay the instalment exactly and made the payment late - so on this basis the amount received was allocated to the earliest debt (the system or arvato would not know the customers intention and at this stage did not know the Enforcement Agent had collected).

The enforcement agent had a liability order; this included the date what they had collected from the customer had been paid in (specifying the year) - so this money correctly went to 2015/16 after the customer had paid their amount in. (This is not the Enforcement Agents fault or a communication error on their part)

As there were therefore no payments showing in 2016/17 the customer received a summons, they had already had a reminder - once the customer raised this via Cllr Strutton the money was transferred to 2016/17 and the summons removed.

It is a particular set of circumstances related to this account. It is possible that there could be another customer who was in arrears for last year paid the Enforcement Agent. They could then have made a payment to SBC that did not match their instalments before the Enforcement Agent deposited their money with arvato. However, these could not be identified; arvato review on a regular basis reports where there are credits in one year and debits in another year to transfer them, but in this case the timing was the cause of the problems.

I cannot say if there were others with the same set of circumstances. If so, then summonses would have been issued and then removed before the court date. However, this could be because the customer paid (as can be the case). We had to pay the court for the summons which is £3.00. As stated credits are reviewed on a regular basis but this one was not picked up before the summons run.

As has been stated previously, arvato has an ongoing project to look at all the credits on all the accounts going back to the start of Council Tax. These will then either be refunded or allocated to a year where there is an outstanding debit. The intention is to complete this by October 2016.