

Community Safety Overview & Scrutiny Committee 12 November 2013
Report of the Assistant Director, Governance & ICT

Update on Implementation of Recommendations from Previously Completed Scrutiny Reviews

Summary

1. This report provides Members with an update on the implementation of the recommendations arising from the previously completed scrutiny reviews which fall within the remit of this overview & scrutiny committee.

Background

2. Community Resilience Scrutiny Review
At a meeting in September 2012, this Committee agreed they would like to carry out a review on adaptation to climate change. Their concerns centred on the increase in localised surface water flooding (not river flooding) and they questioned what plans the Council had in place to respond.
3. At a meeting in November 2012, the Committee received a presentation on the changing climate, flood risk and emergency planning in respect of flooding in general. They considered information on York's vulnerability to past events e.g. flooding, snow, wind and storms etc, and, the consequential disruption to Council and/or Partner organisations processes i.e. interference with day to day service delivery and normal operational regime. They also looked at the predicted changes in climate for the future and its potential impact.
4. In January 2013, the Committee received information on Surface Water Management and queried if there were ways in which communities could assist the council in identifying flood risks, and learnt that the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy included consultation and engagement with the community. Also, that the council encouraged residents to notify them when persistent surface water problems occurred in order that they could be assessed.

5. Having considered all of the information provided, the committee agreed that a review of Surface Water Management was not required following Cabinet's approval of a new Surface Water Management Plan. However having learnt that the new plan was generic for across the whole city, this raised the question of community preparedness for any form of emergency, as the Committee perceived a gap in emergency preparedness at community level. They therefore agreed that the focus of their scrutiny review should be on the arrangements in place to enable communities to be more resilient in times of emergency.
6. Work on the review concluded in April 2013 and the Committee concluded that:
 - The approach taken by East Riding of Yorkshire Council to community resilience planning could be adapted and combined with current practices in York e.g. Snow Wardens, Flood Wardens etc, for introduction across the city.
 - The introduction of community emergency plans could be supported by the Council's Emergency Planning Unit and the Communities & Equalities Team, and the completed plans could lie beneath the Community Contracts currently being drawn up.
 - The council's partners e.g. North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue and Yorkshire Water would be willing to support and help fund the process of introducing community resilience plans.
 - It would also be useful to provide individual households with advice and guidance on emergency preparedness.
7. In May 2013 the review recommendations were approved by Cabinet, and this report presents the first update on their implementation – see Annex A. Having been made aware of the update information provided, the Chair of this Committee has requested some additional information. The questions raised are also included in Annex A.
8. Winter Maintenance Review

In January 2010, following a period of prolonged snowfall, this Committee agreed to carry out a review of the Council's Winter Maintenance Policy based on the following objectives:

 - i) To review current policy in regard to cycle paths to:

- understand the practicalities of gritting different types of cycleways and optimum timing for gritting and make available this information in order to control residents and visitor expectations
- draw up a priority list of cycle routes to be gritted where funding and resources allow, for inclusion in the manual
- Consult cycling groups to raise awareness of the issues

ii) To review current policy in regard to council funded salt bins:

- to understand the costs involved to the council of supplying and maintaining 200+ salt bins across the city, and filling / re-filling those salt bins
- to compare the advantages and disadvantages of providing those salt bins i.e. does the provision of salt via salt bins only benefit a minority of residents, could the money be put to better use funding the gritting of secondary routes across the city e.g. rat runs / roads with gradients, and public areas such as outside schools, public car parks etc

iii) To identify:

- current working practices not presently included in the manual e.g. working relationship with call centre to identify residents' concerns etc
- reasons why the council is unable to grit certain road, cycle and pedestrian routes within the city e.g. due to limitations in staff resources, suitable equipment and funding and make available this information in order to control residents' and visitor expectations
- a list of secondary roads / routes for gritting where funding and resources allow

iv) To review the Council's methods for raising awareness of the gritting policy and communicating with interested parties

9. The final report and the review recommendations were presented to Cabinet in July 2010. At the same meeting the Cabinet also considered revisions to the council's Winter Maintenance Policy drafted by officers based on the findings from the Scrutiny Review. Both the review

recommendations and the revised policy were subsequently approved by Cabinet.

10. Taxi Licensing Scrutiny Review

In September 2010 this committee were informed that a survey of unmet demand was required in spring 2011 with a view to reviewing the restriction policy on hackney carriage numbers. Officers welcomed this scrutiny review as a way of assisting with their revision of the policy within that timeframe.

11. A Task Group was set up to carry out the review and a timeframe for the review was agreed to enable the review findings to be fed into the Licensing Unit's policy review process. The agreed aim and objectives were:

To ensure the council has an up to date Taxi Licensing Policy which is robust and fit for purpose by:

- i. Considering the future allocation of hackney carriage vehicle licences having regard to the Department for Transport's Best Practice Guidance for Taxi & Private Hire Licensing, in meeting the needs of all potential members of the travelling public
 - ii. Examining the provision and usage of taxi ranks in the city
 - iii. Examining conditions attached to vehicle licences, in particular with regard to accessibility, emissions, vehicle colour and window tinting
 - iv. Looking at innovative ways in which the licensed taxi and private fleet may enhance the public transport provision both within the city and in rural communities
12. The recommendations arising were presented to the Gambling Licensing & Regulatory Committee in July 2011. Recommendations 1 & 5-15 were approved and recommendations 2-4 & 16 were noted to be officer delegated decisions. The recommendations were subsequently fed into revisions to the Taxi Licensing Policy which was later approved by Cabinet on 21 November 2011.

Consultation

13. The Assistant Director of Housing & Community Safety has provided the update information contained within Annex A, and will be in attendance at this meeting to answer any questions arising.

Options

14. In regard to the Community Resilience Review, Members may choose to sign off any individual recommendations where implementation has been completed, and can:
 - a. request further updates and the attendance of the relevant officers at a future meeting to clarify any outstanding recommendations relating to the above reviews or;
 - b. agree to receive no further updates on those reviews
15. In regard to both the Winter Maintenance and Taxi Licensing Reviews, Members are asked to consider whether they would like reports to a future meeting on how successfully the associated revised policies have been embedded into working practices.

Council Plan 2011-15

16. The Community Resilience Review supported the Council's priority to build strong communities and be a city full of active and self-reliant communities, where everyone has an effective voice in local issues and where there is a strong sense of belonging.
17. In regard to the Winter Maintenance Review, a robust gritting policy provides an environment which allows workers and visitors to travel freely and safely around the city in times of severe weather, therefore maintaining the city's economy. This supports the council's strategic aim to make the city safer and enabling it to thrive.
18. The Taxi Licensing Review supported a number of the priorities within the Council Plan i.e. to make York a thriving city with a successful economy, and a safer city.

Implications

19. There are no known Financial, Human Resources, Equalities, Legal, ITT or other implications associated with the recommendation made in this report.

Risk Management

20. In compliance with the Council's risk management strategy, there are no known risks associated with this report.

Recommendations

21. Members are asked to note the contents of this report and
- i. Sign off all recommendations from the Community Resilience Review that have been fully implemented.
 - ii. Agree whether a future report on the embedding of council policies revised as a result of the Winter Maintenance Review and the Taxi Licensing Review should be brought to a future meeting of this Committee.

Reason: To raise awareness of those recommendations which are still to be fully implemented.

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Report Approved



Date

25 October 2013

Wards Affected:

All



For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers: None

Annexes:

Annex A – Update on Community Resilience Review Recommendations
Annex B – Update on Winter Maintenance Review Recommendations
Annex C – Update on Taxi Licensing Review Recommendations