
| | |
|-----------|--|
| MEETING | COMMUNITY SAFETY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE |
| DATE | 7 JULY 2009 |
| PRESENT | COUNCILLORS BOWGETT (CHAIR), GILLIES (VICE-CHAIR), KING, ORRELL, SUNDERLAND AND B WATSON |
| APOLOGIES | COUNCILLOR VASSIE |

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to declare any personal or prejudicial interest they may have in the business on the agenda.

Councillor King declared a personal non-prejudicial interest, as a Member of the Fire and Rescue Authority.

2. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That the press and public be excluded from the meeting for consideration of Annexes 2 and 3 of Agenda item 8 (2008/09 Final Monitoring Report - Finance and Performance) on the grounds that it contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). This information is classed as exempt under Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

4. UPDATE FROM THE ASSISTANT DIRECTORS

The Assistant Directors gave presentations on their areas of work and responsibilities:

John Goodyear, Assistant Director, Environmental Services, gave an overview of the work of the service and drew Members' attention to a number of issues including:

- The targets that were in place in respect of recycling and reducing household waste and strategies that were being implemented.
- The Beckfield Lane Household Waste Site.
- Neighbourhood Pride services including street cleaning, grounds maintenance and public toilets, (a report on proposed improvements to public toilets was to go to the Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services on 21 July 2009).
- National Indicators with regard to litter, fly tipping etc.
- The work of the Street Environment and Street Enforcement Officers and the new teams.
- Internal performance indicators, including sickness targets and accidents.
- The way in which parking services had been incorporated into the work of the Directorate in January 2009. It was noted that decisions on charging and income remained the responsibility of City Strategy.
- Cleaning Services – there were 600 employees (200 full-time) in over 120 locations and hence communication was a key issue. This service was working closely with schools. The target was to increase satisfaction rates from 95% to 98% by next year. Training was a key focus.

Members sought clarification with regard to the Groves Project and asked if it was the intention that all properties would eventually have wheelie bins. Officers explained that, for reasons of accessibility, there may be some properties for which wheelie bins were not an appropriate option but in general terms wheelie bins had considerable advantages over bags in terms of storage and health and safety. Members referred to petitions that had been received regarding this matter and asked if there had been sufficient consultation prior to implementation of the trial. Officers stated that there had been many opportunities for residents to have an input on the proposals and that consultation meetings and drop-in sessions had been held. Information had also been provided via ward committees. Officers confirmed that it was a long process to assess needs of streets in the city. The Government target was for kerbside collection (within 400m of properties) of at least two materials.

Discussion took place as to the most effective way of Members responding to complaints from residents regarding environmental services. It was noted that if concerns were forwarded direct to Officers they would continue to be dealt with but Members were encouraged to use the [Easy@York](#) Members' portal, as this would also enable them to have an overview of any problems within their ward.

Councillor Gillies stated that he was considering submitting a scrutiny topic on the issue of parking enforcement. Officers outlined the types of offence that could be dealt with by Council staff and those which could only be dealt with by the Police. Details were given of changes to legislation that were due to be implemented on 1 April 2010.

Andy Hudson, Assistant Director, Neighbourhoods and Community Safety, gave an overview of his areas of responsibility, as illustrated on the diagram that was tabled. Details were also given of the work of the

Regional Investigation Unit which had been granted funding for two years to carry out work in respect of fraud and counterfeit goods.

Members were updated on key issues for the Neighbourhoods and Community Safety team including:

- Air quality management/road traffic
- Noise patrols
- Customer Service Excellence Award
- Licensing and Bereavement Services
- The requirement for the Council to comply with mercury abatement legislation by 2011 – this would require capital funding in the region of £600,000 to £800,000 for work at the crematorium
- The vacancy for the post of Head of Neighbourhood Management – this was a key post in view of the increasing engagement with the community
- Registration of births marriages and deaths services had been rated as “Good” rating following Home Office inspection and had been only 3% from achieving the “Excellent” score
- The work of the Safer York Partnership

Richard White, Assistant Director, Maintenance Services, outlined his areas of responsibility including:

- Highways repairs and maintenance and infrastructure
- Drainage department
- Blacksmiths
- Ancient monuments (including the city walls) in partnership with City Strategy & Archaeology
- Buildings maintenance (including housing, schools and some other council buildings).

A key challenge would be the merging of building maintenance with HASS, as identified by Northgate Kendrick Ash consultants.

Members asked if the gas-servicing contract was working well. Officers stated that it was and that there had been increased customer satisfaction.

Officers were asked how effectively the functions that had moved from City Strategy had been amalgamated into the work of the Directorate. They stated that initially it had been quite challenging as not all staff had transferred across and vacancies had had to be covered. Now staff were working well as a team but the final restructuring had been put on hold pending the outcome of the Northgate Kendrick Ash review.

The Chair thanked the officers for their verbal reports.

5. NEW ARRANGEMENTS FOR OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY IN YORK

Members received a report that highlighted the agreed changes to the Overview and Scrutiny function in York, detailed the terms of reference for the new committees and the resources available to support the function.

The Scrutiny Officer highlighted the key changes, different remits and roles detailed in the report.

Concerns were expressed by a Member that the Licensing and Regulatory function had been included in the remit of the Economic and City Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee, rather than the Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Members agreed that this should fall within the remit of the Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Committee noted the current entries on the Executive Forward Plan relevant to their remit as they recognised that this was the tool for identifying issues for pre-decision scrutiny. They expressed concern at the limited number of relevant items it contained for the forthcoming four-month period. It was noted that this issue had already been identified by the Effective Organisation Overview and Scrutiny Committee and that they had agreed to receive a feasibility report on a possible review of the use of the Executive Forward Plan at their next meeting.

The Chair and Vice Chair confirmed that the onus was very much on Members to identify what was coming up on the Executive Forward Plan and for the scrutiny and overview process to be Member driven. It was confirmed that the scrutiny process involved both pre- and post-decision overview and scrutiny.

Officers confirmed that Building Maintenance still fell within the remit of Neighbourhood Services and thus should be included in paragraph 12 of the report under the detailed responsibilities of the Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED: That the report and Members' comments be noted.

6. CORPORATE STRATEGY - RELEVANT KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND ACTIONS

Members received a report that presented the Corporate Strategy key performance indicators and actions relevant to the remit of this particular overview and scrutiny committee.

RESOLVED: That the contents of the report and its annex be noted.

REASON: To inform the work of this Committee.

7. CRIME AND DISORDER GUIDANCE

Members received a report that presented guidance for the scrutiny of crime and disorder matters in England, based on national guidance recently produced in partnership by the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) and the Local Government Information Unit (LGiU).

RESOLVED: That the contents of the report and its annexes be noted.

REASON: In order to inform any relevant forthcoming work of the Committee.

8. 2008/09 FINAL MONITORING REPORT - FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE

Members received a report that presented the outturn figures for:

- (a) Revenue and capital expenditure for the Neighbourhood Services Portfolio
- (b) Directorate Plan priorities and key performance indicators.

Officers went through the financial position and the performance indicators.

Members questioned why performance on street cleanliness had declined and the targets had been missed on all four sub-elements. Officers explained that the targets had been set a year after the changes had been introduced to the way in which the barrowmen worked and which had shown a great improvement. Unfortunately it had not been possible to sustain that level of increased improvement. For part of 2008, a number of the barrowmen had been agency staff but this was no longer the case. Members noted that performance on litter and detritus remained well ahead of the performance before the changes had been introduced and that the targets had been missed by only a marginal amount.

At the request of Members, details were given of the current arrangements for vehicle maintenance. As the Ministry of Defence had now withdrawn from delivering external contracts, negotiations were ongoing regarding the purchase of equipment from them and the putting in place of alternative arrangements.

RESOLVED: That the Scrutiny Committee notes the financial position of the portfolio and the carry forward requests.

REASON: In accordance with budgetary and performance monitoring procedures.

9. WORK PLAN 2009-10

Consideration was given to the Work Plan for the Committee. It was agreed that, to enable more detailed consideration of the information that

had been presented to them, the Committee would defer adding further items to the Work Plan until the next meeting.

It was noted that should a scrutiny topic on parking/traffic enforcement issues be submitted, it would be possible for a feasibility report to be prepared for the next meeting.

- RESOLVED: (i) That the Work Plan be approved.
- (ii) That further consideration be given to the Work Plan at the next meeting.

Councillor Bowgett, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.00 pm and finished at 6.45 pm].