

Goose Management Scrutiny Review - Cover Report

Introduction

1. This cover report re-presents the final report from the Goose Management Scrutiny Review and asks the Committee to agree whether it wishes to reconsider any of the review recommendations, in light of the recent decision of the Executive.

Update on Review Recommendations

2. In March 2016, the Communities & Environment Policy & Scrutiny Committee considered the Goose Management Task Group's review findings as presented in the final report at Appendix 1 and endorsed the review draft recommendations as listed below:
 - i) Officers to carry out a number of trials to test the effectiveness of various measures i.e.:
 - A licensed chemical (if sourced)
 - A droppings collection machine
 - Ultrasound audio
 - Amend the fencing at War Memorial Gardens
 - Expand and refresh signage in public parks and open spaces
 - ii) To inform the current annual egg treatment works undertaken by the council and to inform a future integrated goose management strategy for the city, Executive to consider providing funding from the additional ward funding monies allocated for environmental projects, to enable a survey to be undertaken of the city's Canada & Greylag goose population, and to map nesting sites across the whole CYC administrative area.
 - iii) Officers to draft an integrated goose management strategy for the Executive's consideration (taking account of the findings from the various trials and the survey), which identifies:

- A range of measures suitable for specific public spaces/parks
 - The costs and resource requirements associated with those measures
 - Appropriate funding options to include ward funding, capital budget etc.
 - A monitoring regime to assess the strategy's effectiveness
- iv) Permission to be sought from private land owners identified in ii) for access to treat eggs laid on their land
- v) The strategy's effectiveness to be monitored over several years, before consideration is given to whether a cull is required in support of the strategy.

Reason: To assist in the development of a suitable long term strategy for the management of geese in York and to conclude this scrutiny review in line with scrutiny procedures and protocols.

3. In April 2016, the review final report was subsequently presented to the Executive by Councillor Kramm (Chair of the Task Group) who provided a comprehensive run through of the review work undertaken, which had led to the recommendations above. Cllr Kramm also confirmed the Scrutiny Committee's view that the recommended actions would provide the city with a much needed long term strategy for the management of geese.
4. The Executive thanked the Task Group for their work but raised concerns regarding the resourcing and officer time required to produce and implement an integrated goose management strategy. The Executive Member for Culture, Leisure & Tourism confirmed that, whilst not fully supporting the review recommendations, officers would continue to trial various measures in an effort to alleviate the problems detailed in the report.
5. The Executive chose not to approve the recommendations as presented. Instead they agreed to refer the review recommendations back to this Policy & Scrutiny Committee with a request that they be reconsidered in line with budget constraints, and redrafted for further consideration by the Executive Member for Culture, Leisure & Tourism.

Options

6. The Committee may choose to:
 - a. Reconsider the review findings and identify alternative recommendations
 - b. Reconvene the Task Group to continue its work on the review by gathering more information/evidence in the hope that this will allow alternative recommendations to be identified.
 - c. Agree that:
 - The work undertaken to date was thorough and complete;
 - The review findings were properly presented and;
 - The original recommendations as presented to the Executive in April 2016 are the most appropriate to properly address the needs of the city in relation to goose management.

Implications

7. Options a) & b) above will require time and space within the committee's 2016/17 work programme.
8. It has not traditionally been the role of scrutiny to produce reports or recommendations which an Executive can always support. Rather the role of effective scrutiny is to independently challenge and present alternative options, and it is an Executive's right to choose not to approve all or any recommendations arising from a scrutiny review, or to instruct appropriate service delivery officers to carry out alternative work.
9. Having examined best practice elsewhere, no other examples have been identified of an Executive referring recommendations back to scrutiny in this way. Furthermore, if an Executive were to adopt a course of referral back more frequently, it could have a detrimental effect on the dedicated resources available to support scrutiny reviews i.e. have an adverse affect on the time commitment of service delivery officers to support scrutiny reviews. It would also set a precedent for the future working relationship between Scrutiny and the Executive.

Recommendations

10. Having considered the feedback from the Executive and the original review final report and recommendations and the current practice outlined in paragraph 9 above, the Committees are invited to consider how they wish to proceed.

Contact Details

Author:

Melanie Carr
Scrutiny Officer
Scrutiny Services

Tel No.01904 552054

Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Andrew Docherty
AD Governance & ICT

Report Approved

Date

9 May 2016

Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers: None

Appendix:

Appendix 1: Goose Management Scrutiny Review – Final Report

Annexes:

Annex A: Copy of Presentation

Annex B: Information pack containing best practice guides, UK examples of good practice & Information on goose management across the EU