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Meeting	Communities and Environment Policy and Scrutiny Committee
Date	27 July 2015
Present	Councillors Gunnell (Chair), Richardson (Vice-Chair), Funnell, K Myers, Mason, Orrell and D'Agorne (Substitute for Councillor Kramm)
Apologies	Councillor Kramm
In attendance	Councillor Aspden Councillor Waller

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## **8. Declarations of Interest**

Members were asked to declare any personal interests not included on the Register of Interests, or any prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interests that they might have in respect of the business on the agenda.

Councillor Richardson declared a personal interest in agenda item 4 (minute 11 refers) because, as the Conservative spokesperson on the Environment, he met periodically with the Executive Member.

## **9. Minutes**

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 June 2015 be approved and signed as a correct record.

## **10. Public Participation**

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

## **11. Attendance of Executive Member for Environment**

The Executive Member for Environment outlined his priorities for the year. He went through the key issues outlined in his written

report to the Committee and gave details of work to tackle the following issues:

- Increasing recycling and reducing waste
- Pride in York, and local environmental decision making
- Flooding and surface water drainage
- One Planet York and Carbon Management

Members questioned the Executive Member on the proposed projects and requested that the following be taken into account:

- Improved communication with residents as to what happens with recyclates
- Exploring the possibility of using vehicles which run on bio gas when considering the purchase of new vehicles.
- Measures, including enforcement processes, to tackle the problems caused by commercial businesses disposing of waste materials into the drains.
- Green waste collections in areas of the city not currently offered this service.
- Measures to encourage landlords of commercial properties to tackle issues such as graffiti and overfilled waste bins.
- Consideration as to the provision in place in the city centre for recycling.
- Consideration as to how CYC commercial waste services could be made more competitive.
- Ensuring that mechanisms for residents to report issues such as graffiti, including by mobile devices, were effective.
- A request for information to be provided regarding the weir at Naburn<sup>1</sup>.

The Executive Member stated that he was keen that annual targets were set for specific projects and that these targets were measurable.

Members noted that the Committee had previously carried out a review on domestic waste and recycling and it was agreed that an update on the implementation of their recommendations would be presented at the next meeting.

The Executive Member was asked if he had suggestions as to how the Committee could support the work that was taking place. He stated that he would welcome Members' suggestions as to how best the policies could be applied to the communities

they represented, as he was keen to ensure that a more localised approach was taken to enable services to be delivered in a way which best met the needs of residents.

The Executive Member was thanked for his written report and for his attendance at the meeting.

## **12. Safer York Partnership Bi-Annual Report**

Consideration was given to a report which provided an update on the work of the Safer York Partnership.

Members' attention was drawn to the year end data for 2014/15 which showed that total crime in York was 5% lower than in 2013/14 and that there had been an improvement in York's position when compared to similar local authorities.

Officers gave details of some of the strategies that were in place to tackle issues including anti-social behaviour and alcohol-related disorder. Members requested a copy of the action plan in respect of Operation Erase (Saturday alcohol-related disorder).<sup>1</sup>

At the request of Members, officers detailed the respective roles of the PCSOs and Council officers who had Community Safety Accreditation Scheme powers.

Officers were asked why data on crimes such as sexual assaults, child exploitation or cyber crime had not been included in the report. They stated that the report detailed the year-end performance against the Community Safety Plan. The Plan had now been refreshed and did now include crimes such as child sexual exploitation and hence future reports would include statistics on this type of crime.

Members requested that the following additional information be provided in future Safer York Partnership bi-annual reports<sup>1</sup>:

- More contextual information, for example drug-related crime, as well as output data to be provided in future reports
- Data on crimes not currently included in the update reports including child sexual exploitation, other sexual offences and cybercrime

- Comparative data on numbers of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic collisions (re paragraph 6.3 of the report)

Resolved: That the report be noted.

Reason: To ensure Members are kept updated on performance against the Community Safety Plan.

Action Required

1. Arrange for requested information to be provided JM

### **13. Update on Domestic Abuse**

Members considered a report which provided an update on work to tackle domestic abuse in York.

Members questioned officers as to the arrangements that were in place to ensure that the statistics did not under represent the situation, as not all incidents were reported to the Police. Officers confirmed that work was ongoing to refine the data and to provide more contextual information. Members suggested that charities such as Survive would have data that could enhance the statistics available from other sources.

Members welcomed the work that was taking place to tackle the issue of domestic abuse and were pleased to note that the issue was being taken seriously.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

Reason: To provide an update on the work being carried out to tackle domestic violence.

### **14. Listening to Residents: Ward Committees**

Members considered a paper which presented a report which was due to be considered by the Executive on 30 July 2015. It set out a new approach to community engagement, through working with local neighbourhoods, and the establishment of revised ward committees.

The Executive Member for Economic Development and Community Engagement was in attendance and went through the key issues in the report.

Members were asked to comment on:

- The new approach to community engagement
- The allocation of increased funding to these ward committees
- The production of ward fact sheets in order to support ward councillors and explain the process to residents
- The production of a range of local service choices giving options for how the ward committee funding pot could support local communities
- The options set out in paragraph 8 of the report to the Executive for the constitution of ward committees

Members' comments on the proposed arrangements included:

- Whilst generally welcoming a more localised approach and the devolving of more funding to local communities, some reservations were expressed regarding the challenges that the new arrangements would present. These would include ensuring that local people had an input and addressing the complexities that would arise because wards were likely to have different service requirements. Members also commented on the need to manage residents' expectations regarding the funding that would be made available, particularly in view of the challenges to the Council's budget. It was also important that the new arrangements did not detract from integrated working or strategic planning.
- There was a need to ensure that there were sufficient local facilitators and that the ward committees were appropriately supported. There were already significant demands on officers.
- In respect of the options as to how ward committees could be established within the Council's Constitution, the general view was that, initially, they should remain informally constituted, relying on the delegated authority of the relevant chief officer to implement the wishes of the committee (subject to Council policy and procedures), for example in its spending decisions. This option (Option B in the report) acknowledged that the new arrangements would need to evolve over time and recognised that a number of ward members were new to the role.

- Some concerns were expressed regarding the timescale of the implementation of the new arrangements and it was acknowledged that this may necessitate the carry forward of some funding. The Executive Member confirmed that there would be the option for ward committees to budget for larger projects by carrying funding forward.
- Concerns were expressed regarding the use of Section 106 funding and requests were made for local members to be more involved in decisions as to how this funding was used.
- Members found the ward team meetings to be very useful.
- There was a need to ensure that the Community Care Fund was targeted effectively.

The Executive Member was thanked for his attendance at the meeting.

Resolved: That the committee's comments be noted.

Reason: In order to support the Council's commitment to working with local communities and devolving power and budgets to residents.

## 15. **Work Plan**

Consideration was given to the committee's work plan for 2015/16.

Members requested that the following items be included on the work plan:

- Update on the implementation of the recommendations of the scrutiny review into domestic waste and recycling. (To be considered at the next meeting as per minute 11)
- Regular updates on the implementation of the revised ward committee arrangements.

Members also gave further consideration to proposed scrutiny topics.

Resolved: (i) That feasibility reports on the following topics be considered at the next meeting:

- Geese
- The impact of Hen and Stag parties on the city

- (ii) That, subject to the inclusion of the above agenda items, the work plan be approved.

Reason: To ensure that the committee has a planned programme of work in place.

Councillor Gunnell, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 8.15 pm].