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Meeting	Communities and Environment Policy and Scrutiny Committee
Date	22 September 2015
Present	Councillors Gunnell (Chair), Richardson (Vice-Chair), Kramm, K Myers, Mason, Orrell and D Myers (Substitute)
Apologies	Councillor Funnell

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#### **16. 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 as Conservative Group spokesperson on the Environment, in which role he met on occasions with the Executive Member for Communities and Environment.

#### **17. Minutes**

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 27 July 2015 be approved and signed as a correct record.

#### **18. Public Participation**

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

#### **19. Attendance of Executive Member Housing and Safer Neighbourhoods**

Copies of a report from the Executive Member for Housing and Safer Neighbourhoods had been circulated. He informed Members of his priorities for the year, which focussed on increasing the level of affordable housing and reducing levels of anti-social behaviour.

Members questioned the Executive Member on issues detailed within his report.

The Executive Member was asked about the allocation of funding for adaptations to homes. He explained that the resources were deployed according to demand from customers.

Clarification was sought as to the impact that installing bars on benches had had on the homeless. Members were informed that this measure had been implemented as a mobility aid for older people waiting at the bus stops. It did, however, deter rough sleepers from using the benches as a sleeping platform although it was too early to ascertain data on this issue. Accommodation was available for rough sleepers although it was acknowledged that some people preferred not to use these facilities.

The Executive Member was asked about priorities in respect of energy efficiencies. He gave details of the work that was being carried out in terms of high insulation, double glazing and condensing boilers.

Members asked about the initiatives to reduce fuel poverty such as Collective Switch and the work that was taking place to encourage people to downsize to free up family homes for other tenants. They queried whether these mitigated the impact of welfare reforms. The Executive Member stated that the Council was able to provide smaller homes where tenants asked to downsize, for example nine of the properties at the Beckfield Lane scheme were allocated to tenants who were downsizing.

The Executive Member was asked about the licensing of HMOs and the YorProperty accreditation scheme for private rented accommodation. Members were informed that there were 290 landlords registered but that some of these owned more than one property. Part of the process included inspection of the properties as well as ensuring that landlords were aware of their legal responsibilities.

At the request of Members, the Executive Member outlined the provision that was in place to support victims of domestic abuse. Details were also given of the agencies and organisations with which the Council worked in supporting the homeless, including working with the Salvation Army.

The Executive Member was asked about proposed cuts in respect of North Yorkshire Policing. Some concerns were also raised regarding neighbourhood policing in areas other than the city centre. The Executive Member stated that although police spending had been reduced so had recorded crime. If there were concerns with community policing in particular areas of the city this was an issue that could be raised with North Yorkshire Police. He believed that the PCSOs were carrying out a useful role.

Members requested that the Executive Member gave consideration to the following issues:

- Young People coming out of care were being allocated properties with meter keys – this was a very expensive means of paying for fuel and had financial implications for them.
- Whether it would be possible for university accommodation to be utilised for emergency accommodation outside of term time.

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

Resolved: That the report of the Executive Member for Housing and Safer Neighbourhoods be noted.

Reason: To ensure that the Committee is kept updated on his priorities.

## **20. 2014/15 Finance and Performance Outturn Report**

Members considered a report which provided details of the 2014/15 outturn position for both finance and performance across services within City and Environmental Services and Communities and Neighbourhoods.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

Reason: To update the committee on the latest finance and performance position.

**21. 2015/16 Finance and Performance First Quarter Monitoring Report**

Members considered a report which provided details of the 2015/16 forecast outturn position for both finance and performance across services within City and Environmental Services and Communities and Neighbourhoods.

Officers responded to Members' questions on aspects of the report, including the dividend from Yorwaste. Members were informed that, in future, they were also welcome to submit questions on the finance and performance reports to officers in advance of the meeting.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

Reason: To update the scrutiny committee on the latest finance and performance position.

**22. Update on the Work of AVANTE (Alcohol, Violence and Night-time Economy)**

Members considered the annual report on the work of the AVANTE Task Group.

Having considered the ongoing work around alcohol related anti-social behaviour, Members questioned what actions were being undertaken to address the drug situation in York, and they requested that a report on this issue be presented to the committee.

Resolved: (i) That the report be noted.

(ii) That a report be presented to the committee on the work of the Substance Misuse Team.

Reasons: (i) To ensure that the committee is kept updated on the work of the AVANTE Task Group.

(ii) To update the committee on the work that is taking place regarding this issue.

## 23. Scrutiny Topic Proposals - Feasibility Report

Members considered a report which provided detailed information in support of two topics proposed for scrutiny review by the committee. Members were asked to decide whether or not the following topics should proceed to scrutiny review:

- Goose management
- Stag and Hen parties

### Goose Management

Officers detailed the work that was taking place to address the issue of goose management and the strategies that had been put in place. Members noted that the Council received a number of complaints about goose management but that it was a very divisive issue. Differing views were put forward as to whether this would be a suitable topic for a scrutiny review. Whilst some Members commented that the situation had been stabilised, others were of the view that this was an issue that was of concern to residents and it would be useful to identify strategies that had been implemented elsewhere and ascertain whether these would be appropriate in York. Members noted that the Friends of Rowntree Park had carried out research on this matter and it would be useful to meet with them prior to a decision being taken on whether to carry out a scrutiny review on this topic.

### Stag and Hen Parties

Officers stated that a considerable amount of partnership working was ongoing to tackle alcohol related issues in the city on a Saturday and that stag and hen parties were only one element of a much wider issue. Members were informed that, as it was difficult to separate the problems caused by stag and hen parties from those caused by other groups, it may be useful for any scrutiny review to look at wider issues. It was also important to make clear the anticipated outcomes of any review. Members commented on specific problems such as the offensive dress sometimes worn by stag and hen parties, boisterous behaviour which was upsetting to families and measures that some visitors were taking to avoid the restrictions in place at the railway station in respect of alcohol. Members agreed that a scrutiny review should be carried out on this topic.

- Resolved:
- (i) That the information provided by the Head of Parks and Open Spaces and the Head of Community Safety be noted.
  - (ii) That Councillors Gunnell, Kramm and Richardson meet with the Friends of Rowntree Park to discuss the research they had carried out on the issue of goose management and report back to the Committee.
  - (iii) That a scrutiny review be carried out on the topic of Stag and Hen Parties.
  - (iv) That a task group comprising of Councillors Kramm, Mason and K Myers be appointed to carry out the review.
  - (v) That the task group draft the proposed remit of the Stag and Hen Parties Scrutiny Review (to be circulated to committee members via email and approved at the next meeting).

Reason: To progress the work of the committee.

#### **24. Update on Implementation of Recommendations from Previously Completed Domestic Waste and Recycling Scrutiny Review**

Members considered a report which provided their first update on the implementation of the recommendations arising from the previously completed Domestic Waste and Recycling Scrutiny Review. Members were asked to sign off any recommendations now considered to be fully implemented.

Officers explained that, because of significant changes in the service at management and operational level, progress in implementing the recommendations had been delayed. However, intensive work was now taking place to address this matter and an update report on recycling would be presented at the next meeting. The Chair stated the importance of ensuring that the actions included dates by which they would be completed.

Members requested that a tour of Hazel Court with a presentation on the work of the team be arranged in order for them to gain a greater understanding of the services.<sup>1</sup>

- Resolved: (i) That the report be noted.
- (ii) That the recommendations not be signed off as having been completed, and a further report be presented to the committee at the next meeting.

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

Action Required

1. Arrange tour of Hazel Court to include presentation on Waste Services RS

**25. Workplan 2015-2016**

Consideration was given to the committee's workplan for 2015-2016.

It was agreed that the following items should be added to the work plan:

- Feedback from the task group meeting with the Friends of Rowntree Park
- Approval of the remit of the Stag and Hen Parties Scrutiny Review
- Overview report on the work of the Substance Team
- Further update report on the implementation of the recommendations from the Domestic Waste and Recycling Scrutiny Review
- Report on Tenancy Strategy and Allocation Strategy

Resolved: That, subject to the agreed additions, the workplan 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 8.00 pm].