

---

Meeting	Communities and Environment Policy and Scrutiny Committee
Date	29 June 2016
Present	Councillors Gunnell (Chair), Richardson (Vice-Chair), Kramm, Funnell and Hunter
Apologies	Councillors Mason and Dew

---

### **1. Declarations of Interest**

At this point in the meeting, Members were asked to declare any personal, prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interests that they might have had in the business on the agenda.

Councillor Funnell declared a personal interest in the remit of the committee in that she was a member of the charity of St Nicks and was once its Chair.

No other interests were declared.

### **2. Minutes**

Resolved: That the minutes of the last meeting of the Communities and Environment Policy and Scrutiny Committee held on 17 May 2016 be approved and then signed by the Chair as a correct record.

### **3. Public Participation**

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

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

The Executive Member for Environment attended the meeting to give an update on various areas within his portfolio.

His report was uploaded to the agenda, which was subsequently republished following the meeting.

He highlighted the following points from his report;

### Flooding and Flood Defences

- Although the Council had been given DEFRA funding for flood defence works, £37 million of the £45 million was flood grant in aid. This meant that the Council had to fund some of the flooding and flood defence works out of its own budget.

### Resilience and Surface Water Drainage

- Sandbags were only 40% useful as a drainage tool.
- Resilience grants were available for residential properties, but they were also available through Make it York for businesses. This was not well known and should be promoted.

Questions from Members to the Executive Member included;

- What were the priority and actions for the Green Jobs Task Force? Was there a time frame for a network feasibility study?
- When studying the effects of Air Quality on the city, would Officers concentrate on the Public Health aspects?

The Executive Member felt that the future of the Green Jobs Task Force was uncertain as most of its funding came from the European Union. Following questions about recycling and litter collection, the Executive Member informed the Committee that further information would be circulated to Ward Members about procurement of new recycling vehicles. It was also noted that he would give an update to the Committee on Air Quality in September.

The Chair thanked the Executive Member on behalf of the Committee for the update.

Resolved: That the update be noted.

Reason: So that the Committee are kept aware of the Executive Members priorities and challenges in his portfolio area.

## 5. **Report on Riverside Safety**

Members received a Powerpoint presentation which informed them of steps taken following a review of waterside safety.

Officers informed the Committee that the ROSPA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents) commissioned review, had highlighted a number of valuable elements. These were;

- Minimum safety standards
- Minor works- the ladders and chains alongside the watersides had not been inspected regularly.
- Lifebuoys- a complaint had been received about the length of a rope, when used in a rescue. These were now inspected on a weekly basis. Ropes were to be 1.25 metres long.
- Ladders alongside the waterside would be painted a fluorescent lemon colour

Members questioned why there had been a higher level of incidents in the rivers than in previous years. It was felt that although alcohol consumption had a part to play it was not the main cause, as a number of deaths had been associated with mental health issues. They added that the numbers may have increased over a longer period of time prior to the formation of ROSPA and the collation of the number of incidents.

It was felt that regular maintenance of the city's riverbanks was needed, which would be challenging. However it was hoped that University campaigns to discourage students from over drinking might also help to reduce the number of incidents.

Resolved: That the presentation be noted.

Reason: So that Members are kept informed of steps taken in regards to waterside safety in the city.

## 6. **Commissioning Through Ward Budgets: Introductory Report**

Members received a report which asked them whether they wished to conduct a scrutiny review of commissioning at ward level.

A full discussion of the report took place and the following points were raised;

- There needed to be a tracking process for proposed schemes
- A demarcation was needed between the roles of the Councillor and roles of Officers
- There were local organisations who were missing out on the chance to apply for grants as they were not aware of the procedures to do so.

Members agreed to conduct a review and to form a Task Group to undertake the review.

Resolved: (i) That a scrutiny review be undertaken on commissioning through ward budgets.

(ii) That a Task Group be formed to undertake this review with a membership of:

- Councillor Funnell
- Councillor Hunter
- Councillor Richardson

Reason: To ensure compliance with scrutiny procedures and protocols.

## **7. Work Plan 2016/17**

Members reviewed their current year's work plan and received a scrutiny topic proposal on volunteers & local community/environmental projects.

If the Committee wished to proceed with the proposed topic, the Scrutiny Officer suggested that the Committee could focus on how to encourage more volunteers, their training requirements and how to retain them.

It was also suggested that if the review was taken forward York CVS could be invited to participate and consideration could be given to the procurement of service level agreements for volunteers from organisations in the city.

It was agreed to proceed with the review once the new 'Commissioning through ward budgets' review was completed.

Resolved: That the Committee's draft work plan for the municipal year 2016/17 be noted.

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

Councillor Gunnell, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.35 pm and finished at 7.15 pm].