

PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1 June 2017

PRESENT – Councillors Carson (in the Chair), Cossins, Coultas, Donoghue, L Hughes, KE Kelly, Lyonette, MR Nicholson, Tostevin and Wright. (8)

APOLOGIES – Councillor MR Nicholson. (1)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Councillor Lee. (1)

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE – Ian Thompson, Assistant Director, Community Services, Dawn Taylor, Principal Officer (Trading Standards and Animal Health) and Lead Officer, Brian Graham, Head of Environmental Services and Karen Graves, Democratic Officer.

P1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – There were no declarations of interests reported at the meeting.

P2. TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS – RESOLVED – That meetings of this Committee be held at 9.30am on those dates as agreed on the calendar of meetings by Cabinet at Minute C133/Mar/17.

P3. MINUTES – Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 6 April 2017.

RESOLVED – That the Minutes be approved as a correct record.

P4. MATTERS ARISING – There were no matters arising.

P5. MONITORING OF OUTCOMES FROM THE MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2016-20 – STREET CLEANSING, ENVIRONMENTAL CRIME, LITTER AND GROUND MAINTENANCE – The Assistant Director Community Services a PowerPoint Presentation in light of the decision made around the MTFP which included a 40 percent reduction in Street Scene staff and associated vehicles, resulting in a saving of £480k.

Particular references were made to the number of drivers, operatives and vehicles for Street Cleaning Resources before and after October 2016 and Members were also reminded of the Street Cleaning Standards.

Details were supplied of the number of Street Cleaning Requests which had reduced since the introduction of wheeled bins in 2013/14, Performance Response Times for all services relating to street cleaning and the results of the Local Environmental Quality

Survey which most local authorities undertake.

Scrutiny Committee welcomed the intense projects that had been undertaken with residents in a bid to clean up various back lanes in the Borough. Work included knocking on doors and speaking to residents relating to litter and rubbish in back lanes, encouraging residents not to leave wheeled bins in back lanes and undertaking a thorough cleanse of the area.

In relation to fly tipping Scrutiny Committee was informed that the Council reports to Flycapture, a national database to which all local authorities report and Members noted that, apart from 2014/15 when there was an abnormally high number of fly tipping, the numbers remained fairly static. It was also noted that due to a reduction in resources less investigations of fly tipping were undertaken.

Members were informed of changes to the frequency of emptying litter bins and of the work being undertaken to refine the programme due to problem areas being identified. In refining the programme it was noted that there was a need to balance the required number of bins to problems areas.

Scrutiny Committee welcomed the community work of volunteers who undertook litter picks around the Borough and to the launch of a Member-led approach to volunteers which would be rolled out later this year.

Discussion ensued on the effect of employees on holiday and sickness leave; abandoned vehicles rising following introduction of new rules by DVLA in Autumn 2014 that paper tax discs no longer needed to be displayed; use of litter enforcement companies to issue Fixed Penalty Notices; education of the public to be responsible for their own back lanes and take their litter home; use of contact as opposed to residual weed killer; collection cycles of litter bins and the trial of bin sensors in certain areas which give a reading to advise when the bin is 80 per cent full; litter strewn rural roads; and the need to keep arterial roads clean and welcoming.

It was also noted that Stanhope Park litter had improved after Students were reminded of their responsibilities and that there were no resources to liaise with businesses to keep their premises clear from litter.

Further discussion ensued on volunteers and community groups being provided with orange bin bags for litter picks which are taken away by the Council; rolling programme of litter picks being advertised on the Council's website; possibility of purchasing larger litter bins in areas where needed; and the for pubs to provide some form of ashtray for customers to avoid cigarette butts being thrown in the street.

RESOLVED – (a) That the thanks of this Scrutiny Committee be extended to the Assistant Director – Community Services for his informative and interesting presentation.

(b) That Members consider establishing a Task and Finish Review to investigate the advantages of Enforcement Companies being utilised to issue Fixed Penalty Notices for litter.

P6. WORK PROGRAMME 2016/17 – The Director of Neighbourhood Services and Resources submitted a report (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to the revised methodology for this Scrutiny Committee’s current work programme.

It was reported that the proposed work programme has been reviewed and revised to enable the Committee to analyse information for each topic area aligning it to the eight outcomes and three conditions in the Sustainable Community Strategy, and relevant performance indicators from the Performance Management Framework.

The proposed structure of the work programme will provide Members with the opportunity to develop each topic through a series of questions and drill down to investigate particular aspects of extensive topics.

Members were provided with an updated position in relation to individual items within the schedule.

Discussion ensued on Performance Indicators being submitted to a future meeting of this Scrutiny; and an update on the Car Parking Strategy in light of changes to the Town Centre in the Feethams area.

RESOLVED – (a) That the current status of the Work Programme be noted.

(b) That the Work Programme be updated to reflect the decisions of this Scrutiny Committee.
