

**MINUTES
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Monday 14 July 2014

Councillor Mike Hope (Chair)

Councillor Gary Gregory	Councillor Lynda Pearson
Councillor Sandra Barnes	Councillor Stephen Poole
Councillor Paul Feeney	Councillor Suzanne Prew-Smith
Councillor Cheryl Hewlett	Councillor Nick Quilty
Councillor Paul Hughes	Councillor John Truscott

Apologies for absence: Councillor Patricia Andrews and Councillor Colin Powell

Officers in Attendance: J Ansell and S Bray

47 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P. Andrews and Powell.

48 TO APPROVE, AS A CORRECT RECORD, THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12 MAY 2014.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the above meeting, having been circulated, be approved as a correct record, subject to the following amendment: Councillor Poole's attendance at the meeting to be recorded.

49 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS.

None received.

50 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2014/15

i) Rolling programme of Portfolio Holder holding to account

The Chair informed Members that due to the unavailability of the Portfolio Holder, Community Development, to attend this meeting, the item and questions relating to the 'Locality Working' area of Councillor Fox's portfolio would be rescheduled to a later date in the rolling programme of Portfolio Holder holding to account.

ii) Council Plan 2013/14: Overview of Year End Performance

Stephen Bray, Corporate Director, provided Members with the key highlights of year-end performance 2013/14 as follows:

2013/14 had been a very positive year in terms of performance, particularly in the context of the requirement for significant expenditure reductions.

93% of Actions in the Council Plan 2013/14 had either been completed or were on target at year-end, compared to 83% in the previous financial year.

78% of performance indicators had been met (55 out of 70). This compared to 67% in 2012/13.

Furthermore, performance against 17 specific indicators had significantly exceeded targets, all of which were in high priority areas i.e. speed of processing of Housing Benefit claims and the provision of Affordable Housing.

Highlights had included:

1. Refurbishment of Bonington Theatre
2. Commencement of work on Gedling Country Park
3. Co-location arrangements within the Civic Centre and Arnot Hill House
4. Extension of Locality Working to include Killisick
5. Progression of the Gedling Access Road
6. Implementation of the tripartite Collaboration Agreement
7. The Men in Sheds initiative
8. Expansion of CAB services

Of the remaining indicators, a small number had shown red at year – end, however those were showing an improvement.

Further information requested from Members

- a) Members asked whether the footpaths had been completed on the Gedling Country Park, as they are currently closed to public access.
- b) Further information was requested on performance in respect of the processing of minor and major planning applications.
- c) Further information about staff absence levels was also requested.
- d) An explanation of the changes to grass cutting, winter garden bin collection and the timing of street cleansing.

Councillor Barnes, Portfolio Holder for Environment, who was present at the meeting, provided the following further information:

- a) Contractors were still operating on Gedling Country Park up until the week prior to this meeting and the second phase had commenced on the day of this meeting. The Solar Farm will be implemented in September 2014 therefore the site is technically a working unit until then. Official opening of the site will take place in March 2015.
- b) On the matter of grass cutting, Councillor Barnes reported that the Council has implemented a new arrangement for targeted grass cutting of verges and parks in order to achieve cost savings.
- c) On the matter of garden bin collections, Councillor Barnes reported that winter collections had been reduced as a cost saving, particularly as these collections had been under used, due to the winter weather.
- d) On the matter of street cleansing, Councillor Barnes acknowledged that parked cars are an issue which sometimes impacts on the street cleansing timetabled in the early morning, however he reported that an exercise undertaken on Carlton Hill demonstrated that parked cars are an issue all day long, with individuals being unwilling to alter parking habits.

Stephen Bray, Corporate Director, provided the following further information on the matter of staff absence:

Staff absence had been a matter of ongoing concern, however when looked at by service area, the majority of departments were maintaining a very low absence record, with three departments however demonstrating a marked difference in sickness levels. Some targeted work had since been undertaken within those service areas.

Additionally, as sickness absence is reported on a rolling 3 monthly basis, in the event that there is a bad performing month, that would appear on the performance report all year. Work had been undertaken to 'drill down' into the detail in order to provide month to month information. This work had revealed that the performance trend had reversed in the first 3 months of 2014, indicating an average of 0.8 days per staff member per month, a figure far lower than that reported for the same period in the previous year.

The Chair requested that the Senior Members' Services Officer arrange written responses to be circulated to Scrutiny Members on:

- Planning Performance: processing of major and minor planning applications
- The issue of the timing of street cleansing.

iii) 2014/15 Rolling programme of Portfolio Holder attendance

The Chair drew Members' attention to the draft programme of Portfolio Holder attendance at Overview and Scrutiny Committee at Appendix 2 of the report, and requested that Members identify the specific areas within each Portfolio that they would like to review at Committee.

Members agreed the following final programme:

2014/15 ROLLING PROGRAMME OF PORTFOLIO HOLDER HOLDING TO ACCOUNT		
Date of Committee	Portfolio Holder	Subject areas
Monday 29 September 2014 Reception room	Councillor P. Barnes Portfolio Holder Environment Dave Wakelin, Corporate Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance and development of the public realm, including parks, open spaces, cemeteries and allotments - with specific reference to the Gedling Country Park
Monday 15 December 2014 Reception room	Councillor Payne Portfolio Holder Public Protection and Communications Dave Wakelin, Corporate Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crime reduction and community safety - with specific reference to PCC Policing Plans and the proposed closure of Carlton Police Station. • Customer services, information and communications technology - with specific reference to Customer Satisfaction.

Wednesday 11 February Committee room	Councillor Pulk Portfolio Holder Leisure and Development Paula Darlington, Corporate Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sports development - with specific reference to health, youth engagement in sport and links to Leisure Centres Strategy. • Review of performance in processing planning applications
Monday 13 April Reception Room	Councillor Wheeler Portfolio Holder, Health and Housing Mark Kimberley, Corporate Director or Service Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing and council tax benefits - with specific references to changes in the benefit system and the impacts experienced in Gedling

iv) In – depth Scrutiny

The Senior Members' Services Officer updated Members on progress of current in- depth Scrutiny Working Groups as follows:

Reducing Unemployment in the Borough

- Work programme completed – report and recommendations pending

Homelessness and Hardship in the Borough

- Meeting with NCC to take place in Sept to consider the impacts of the Supporting People funding reductions
- Meeting with RCAN in October to consider issues of Rural Poverty

Reports and recommendations of both the above reviews will be tabled at the December Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Transport Links to, and within, the Borough

- First meeting to be held on Tuesday 22nd July to scope the review

v) Six month follow up on completed reviews

The chair informed Members that requests for follow up on the following completed reviews would shortly be made to Portfolio Holders, with the outcomes being reported at the September Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

- The Council's engagement with the Voluntary Sector
- Inclusion and Equality
- Taxi Licensing

RESOLVED to:

- i) note the Q4 2013/14 performance information
- ii) request further information on the processing of major and minor planning applications and the timing of street cleansing in the Borough
- iii) approve the 2014/15 rolling programme of Portfolio Holder attendance at Committee, and
- iv) note the progress and follow up of in – depth Scrutiny.

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ITEMS REFERRED TO THE CHAIR OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AS REQUIRED UNDER THE CONSTITUTION OR LAW

Members considered the standing report detailing items referred to the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny under the Constitution or Law.

This included the following notification received where it had not been possible to obtain 3 quotations for a contract estimated to be between £10,000 and £50,000:-

Waiver of Contract Standing Orders in order to enable the Council to enter into a contract for a Facilities Planning Model assessment with Sport England.

RESOLVED:

To note the information.

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ANY OTHER ITEM WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT.

None.

The meeting finished at 19.00pm

Signed by Chair:
Date: