

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 20 FEBRUARY 2019 FROM 7.00 PM TO 9.05 PM

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Philip Houldsworth (Chairman), Malcolm Richards (Vice-Chairman), Andy Croy, Guy Grandison, Kate Haines, Mike Haines, Ken Miall, Shahid Younis and Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey

Other Councillors Present

Councillors: Graham Howe

Officers Present

Peter Baveystock, Lead Specialist, Place Clienting and Reactive Highway Services
Neil Carr, Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist
Louise Griffin, Performance and Programme Management Specialist
Emma Pilgrim, Specialist - Place Clienting

76. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Lindsay Ferris, Clive Jones, Ian Pittock and Bill Soane.

Rachelle Shepherd-Dubey attended the meeting as a substitute.

77. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN

The Committee appointed a Vice-Chairman for the remainder of the 2018/19 Municipal Year.

RESOLVED: That Malcolm Richards be appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the remainder of the 2018/19 Municipal Year.

78. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 16 January 2019 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

79. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

80. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

81. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Member questions.

82. GRASS CUTTING DELIVERY PLAN - SPRING 2019

The Committee considered a report, set out at Agenda pages 11 to 34, which gave details of the grass cutting delivery plan for 2019.

Councillor Graham Howe (Deputy Executive Member for Environment, Leisure and Libraries), Peter Baveystock (Service Manager, Cleaner, Greener and Reactive Highway Services), and Emma Pilgrim (Specialist – Place Clienting) attended the meeting to present the report and answer Member questions.

Nigel Payne (Regional Director) and Peter Fry (Area Manager) attended the meeting as representatives of the Council's contractor, Tivoli.

The Committee had requested the report as a follow up to its Scrutiny review of the Council's Grounds Maintenance service in 2018. The Scrutiny review had included 12 recommendations which were approved by the Executive in January 2019. The recommendations focussed on measures to ensure that the Council's contractor (Tivoli) had sufficient resources in place (staff, supervisors and machinery) to enable the grass cutting service to be delivered effectively. Appended to the report was a schedule containing Officer comments and actions relating to the 12 Scrutiny recommendations.

The report stated that an action plan had been developed with the contractor which identified key risks and mitigating actions put in place. These included:

- early recruitment and training of contractor staff;
- a focus on ensuring readiness of new and existing machinery;
- a clear two-way communications plan which enabled early warning of emerging issues;
- contingency arrangements in the event of delays in the grass cutting programme.

Members were informed that work on the action plan had commenced in January 2019 and that good progress had been made. This included staff recruitment, the procurement of new machinery and maintenance of existing machinery. Current key performance indicators (KPIs) had been reviewed and new KPIs added in order to make targets more realistic and penalties more appropriate.

The report stated that progress in delivering the action plan would be monitored during the year and would be discussed at regular review meetings between the Council's client team and Tivoli. Further update reports would be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as the grass cutting season progressed.

During the ensuing discussion Member raised the following points:

In relation to the Risk Matrix attached to the report, what actions had been taken to address the risk relating to lack of WBC monitoring resource? It was confirmed that the Council's new Locality Services team would provide increased resilience to contractual arrangements by engaging with local stakeholders and providing feedback on emerging service issues.

How was the Council addressing the problems caused by hedge encroachments onto footpaths? It was confirmed that this was more of a street cleansing/highways issue. Specific issues would be investigated and addressed.

In relation to Winnersh Meadows, there were major problems in 2018 when the grass was up to four feet high which attracted ticks and fleas. What improvements were planned for 2019? It was confirmed that a management plan would be developed for Winnersh Meadows in consultation with the Council's biodiversity experts and local Members.

As the weather was currently very mild were plans in place to deal with early growth? It was confirmed that preparations were well advanced relating to staff

recruitment/training and maintenance of machinery. Three sub-contractors were also in place to act as a backstop.

Was the current distribution of waste bins across the Borough adequate, especially in relation to the collection of dog waste? It was confirmed that dog waste could be placed in general waste bins. There were currently around 1,000 waste bins in place across the Borough. Officers were happy to look at specific issues to determine whether local provision was adequate and effective.

What were the key lessons learned from earlier years and what were the key improvements in place for 2019? In order to illustrate the response Peter Fry gave a presentation to the Committee on the changes being introduced in 2019. These included earlier recruitment of full-time and seasonal operatives and enhanced maintenance facilities with two full-time mechanics. Tivoli were also introducing a new operating platform comprising hand-held devices which would improve productivity, reduce paperwork and strengthen health and safety procedures.

What measures were in place to improve communication about the grass cutting service to residents and Members? It was confirmed that details of the grass cutting schedules would be shared with Members. Work was ongoing to place improved information on the Council's website. In the meantime residents' queries and complaints should be submitted to the Council's Customer Service team. Information received would be fed into the Dynamics system which would enable more accurate monitoring and reporting.

What was the potential for using drones to monitor the effectiveness of the grass cutting programme? It was felt that drones may not add much value to the monitoring of grass cutting but may be useful to improve health and safety and reduce risk in relation to arboriculture work.

Members considered the most suitable time for a follow-up report once the grass cutting season was under way. It was felt that a report to the Committee's June 2019 meeting would be appropriate followed by a "lessons learned" report to the October 2019 meeting.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) Graham Howe, Peter Baveystock, Peter Fry, Nigel Payne and Emma Pilgrim be thanked for attending the meeting to update the Committee and answer Member questions;
- 2) the Officer response to the Committee's twelve Scrutiny review recommendations be noted;
- 3) the grass cutting delivery and communication plans for 2019 be welcomed and supported;
- 4) the Committee receive a further update report at its June 2019 meeting and a "lessons learned" report at its meeting in October 2019.

83. Q3 2018-19 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT

The Committee considered a report, set out at Agenda pages 35 to 82, which gave details of the Quarter 3 2018/19 Council Plan Performance Monitoring.

Louise Griffin (Performance and Programme Management Specialist) attended the meeting to present the report and answer Member questions.

The report gave details of responses to questions posed by the Committee at its meeting in November 2018. It also provided a service narrative for the Q3 measures falling short of the specified targets (Red).

For Quarter 3 of 2018/19, 75% of the performance measures were reported as meeting the assigned targets (Green); 14% were marginally off target (Amber) and 11% were reported as Red.

The targets assigned to each indicator were SMART – specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely. They took into account historic trend information to assess the direction of travel and benchmarking data which showed how the Borough compared with regional or national performance.

The indicators with a Red rating were:

- EA1iii: Percentage of Wokingham borough state-funded special schools with a current Ofsted rating of Good or better;
- EA3: Percentage of early years settings in Wokingham borough with an Ofsted rating of Good or better;
- EA7: Percentage of infants who received a 6-8 week review within 8 weeks;
- EA11: 12-month rolling voluntary turnover of qualified Social Worker within Children's Social Care and Early Intervention Service;
- VP1iv: Non-elective admissions;
- VP7: Percentage of children leaving care who achieved permanence;
- VP8: Percentage of child protection visits due in the period which were completed on time (within 10 days of the previous visit);
- VP11: Percentage of formal homelessness decisions made within 45 working days.

Appended to the report was a summary of the performance measures currently supporting the Council Plan Key Actions for 2018/19 (Appendix A) and supplementary performance information for each performance measure (Appendix B).

During the ensuing discussion, Members raised the following points:

VP8: Percentage of child protection visits due in the period which were completed on time (within 10 days of the previous visit).

Members noted that this indicator had been reported as “Red” for the previous six quarters and sought clarification on the reasons given for not achieving the target. It was confirmed that the 10 day target had been set locally. The statutory target for this indicator was 42 days. Members queried whether this local target was “SMART”, i.e. achievable and asked

for an update on the implications of not meeting the target and the measures being put in place to achieve it.

EA2: Percentage of children who attend a Wokingham Borough state funded school (Primary, Secondary or Special) which is Ofsted rated Good or Outstanding.

What were the implications of the new tougher Ofsted inspection regime for the achievement of the target? How was the service responding to the new challenges? As this indicator was linked to the performance of individual schools, what was the Council's contribution towards achieving the target – in that sense, was it a SMART target? In relation to the Northern House School, what progress was being made in improving the school's performance?

EA7: Percentage of infants who received a 6-8 week review within 8 weeks.

Members noted that this indicator had also been reported as "Red" for the previous six quarters and requested further information on the measures being taken to achieve the specified target.

Council Plan Priority: Improve the customer experience when accessing Council services.

Members noted that, of the 11 underpinning performance indicators relating to this Council Plan Priority, only two appeared to relate directly to improving the customer experience:

CE9: Percentage of first contact resolution – calls and emails;

CE10: Percentage of calls answered.

Members asked for clarification on the indicators used to measure the customer experience when accessing Council services. It was confirmed that the Committee would be considering an update on the 21st Century Council programme at its March 2019 meeting. This update should include information on measures to improve customer satisfaction as this was one of the key aims of the programme. The update should also include the steps taken to monitor and report customer satisfaction levels.

Members discussed the process for deciding on key performance indicators and associated targets, including who set the targets and who was consulted about the process. It was felt that a briefing session on key indicator and target setting would be useful. It was reported that the Committee would be receiving an update on the new Borough Plan at its March 2019 meeting. This could be linked to a briefing on the setting of priorities, key indicators and targets for the new plan.

Members asked for clarification on the process for identifying the demand for new schools across the Borough, e.g. analysis of birth rates, demographic projections, number of new houses approved and built, movements in and out of the Borough, etc.

Wokingham Town Centre Market Place – Members noted the comments in the report relating to Member scrutiny of this project via the Town Centre Board. Members asked for clarification on the operation of the Town Centre Board, e.g. membership, terms of reference, frequency of meetings, decision-making powers, public accountability, consultation and communication processes with local stakeholders.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) Louise Griffin be thanked for attending the meeting to present the report and answer Member questions;
- 2) the Quarter 3 2018/19 Council Plan Performance monitoring report be noted;
- 3) responses be sought to the specific issues raised by Members during the meeting;
- 4) a briefing on the setting of key performance indicators and targets be provided at a future meeting of the Committee.

84. CONSIDERATION OF THE CURRENT EXECUTIVE AND INDIVIDUAL EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISION FORWARD PROGRAMMES

The Committee considered a copy of the Executive Forward Programme and Individual Executive Member Forward Programme as set out on Agenda pages 83 to 92.

During the ensuing discussion, Members raised the following points:

Cemetery Regulations – Members requested an update on the provision of burial space across the Borough.

Parking Strategy – it was confirmed that an update would be submitted to the Community and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting in March 2019.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) the Executive and Individual Executive Member Decision Forward Programmes be noted;
- 2) the items raised by Members be considered as part of the development of Overview and Scrutiny work programmes for 2019/20.

85. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMMES

The Committee considered its forward work programme and that of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees as set out on Agenda pages 93 to 98.

Members noted that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programmes for 2019/20 would be considered at the Committee's meeting on 20 March 2019.

The Chairman highlighted a potential Scrutiny item for 2019/20 relating to the development of 55 apartments at the Carnival Pool regeneration site.

Ken Miall confirmed that the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee scheduled for 19 February had been moved to 25 March 2019.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) the Overview and Scrutiny work programmes for 2108/19 be noted;
- 2) the development of 55 apartments at the Carnival Pool site be added to the list of potential work programme items for 2019/20;

- 3) Members submit any potential Scrutiny items for 2019/20 to Neil Carr in Democratic Services.

86. UPDATE REPORTS FROM CHAIRMEN OR NOMINATED MEMBER OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

The Chairman invited members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees to provide an update on the issues considered at recent meetings.

RESOLVED: That the updates from the Overview and Scrutiny Committees be noted.

This page is intentionally left blank