



Minutes

Scrutiny Committee

Venue:	Committee Room
Date:	22 November 2011
Present:	Councillors I Chilvers, M Dyson, M Hobson, Mrs W Nichols (Chair), C Pearson and D Peart
Apologies for Absence:	Councillor K Ellis, D Mackay and R Price(Vice Chair)
Also Present:	Councillor M Crane
Officers Present:	Jonathan Lund, Deputy Chief Executive, Mark Steward, Managing Director – Access Selby, Karen Mann, Democratic Services, Simon Parkinson, Lead Officer – Community Support Teams, Aimi Brookes, Senior Contracts Officer, Mike Lyons, Head of Service WLCT, Julia Jennison, Policy Officer and Vanessa Crane, Housing Officer
Press:	None

24. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

25. Minutes

RESOLVED:

To receive and approve the minutes of the Scrutiny Committee held on 20 September 2011 and they are signed by the Chair.

26. Chair's Address to the Scrutiny Committee

The Chair informed the committee of some forthcoming training events scheduled for December and asked committee members to contact Karen Mann as soon as possible if they wished to attend.

- 2 December in York
- 9 December in Doncaster

The Chair also informed the meeting that on the 27 January North Yorkshire County Council Scrutiny of Health Committee are holding their meeting at Selby District Council Offices and Selby's Scrutiny Committee had been invited to attend and also take part in the debate with regard to the Pontefract Emergency Department temporary closure. Any member wishing to attend this meeting should give Karen Mann their name to forward on to the Chair of the Scrutiny of Health Committee.

The Chair asked the committee to review the start time of the committee meetings. It was agreed that the meetings would continue to commence at 5.00pm.

27. Crime and Disorder Update – Report SC/11/10

North Yorkshire Police Authority prepared a report, for information, summarising the local Safer Neighbourhood Team Priorities and the proposed consultation methodologies.

RESOLVED:

To receive and note the report.

28. Choice Based Lettings - Report – SC/11/11

Vanessa Crane, Housing Officer, presented a report which provided information on the North Yorkshire Home Choice – Allocations Choice Based Lettings Scheme. Vanessa explained the new system and how it works.

Selby District Council entered the partnership on the 7 July 2011 since then there had been 1433 registrations dealt with in the Selby District and over 12,000 applications for registration submitted across the whole partnership area. 87 properties had been let in the Selby District with 78 of the successful applicants coming from the Selby area.

The main aim of the scheme was to provide a transparent lettings scheme across the North Yorkshire area, while helping as many people as possible use the new system. There was an Equalities Group set up as a sub group of the main partnership Project Group, which aims to ensure everyone can access the information in a variety of formats, information was left at libraries, local council offices and on the internet.

The Chair opened the meeting to questions:

Q When residents' circumstances change can they move out of social housing or downsize?

A Yes some people with a large house move into a smaller property and the Council offers incentives to encourage downsizing

- Q Can we make them move?
- A There was nothing in the current tenancy agreement but this was currently under national review in relation to new tenancies.
- Q What happened to the people on the old waiting list?
- A Everyone had to reapply – some people did not do so as their circumstances may have changed, however the drop in waiting list numbers was also reflected over the whole partnership area.
- Q What effect does the moving from areas have?
- A A baseline has been established and movement can be measured in each district. Capping can take place if evidence shows that migration into one district was unreasonably excessive.
- Q Complaints had been received about the amount of housing allocated to people from outside the district, was this fair?
- A For a number of years the Council has had a duty to allow households from outside of the district to register. The reported figures showed that as a result of the partnership some households outside the district had been successful in Selby, but a greater number of households from the Selby area had been able to access tenancies across North Yorkshire.
- Q Anyone who was not IT literate may have had difficulties with completing the form, are people encouraged to ring Access Selby for their assistance?
- A Apart from advertising on the website there are also leaflets available at Access Selby, all the local libraries, with Social Services and the Community Officers are available to assist residents. Anyone can nominate a friend or family member to bid on their behalf. It may be possible to put boards up in 'soon to be vacant' properties to advertise their availability and to advertise them in the Contact Centre window, this will be looked into.
- Q Who makes the final decision on the tie break and how quickly does this happen, to avoid having void properties?
- A Empty properties are advertised as soon as possible usually within the first week of the 4 week notice of termination of a tenancy
- Q Out of the 1433 how many people are still looking for properties as there are residents that had been waiting a very long time?
- A Once their application for registration was submitted the business support team band the resident and let them know what banding they belong to. Following this, residents can place 3 bids a week on different properties.
- Q How many Sherburn tenancies had been taken?
- A This information was not to hand but can be sent to the Councillor making the request after the meeting
- Q How do we help residents at risk of homelessness remain in their own homes?
- A SDC Officers assist by speaking to landlords, mortgage lenders and housing associations and there was lots of prevention work done, working with tenants and homeowners, by the Housing Options Team.
- Q How long does the whole process take?
- A The registration process usually takes 14 days

- Q Could the list of new tenancies within the Councillors Wards be sent to Councillors, this information used to be available, can it be made available once again?
- A North Yorkshire Home Choice website does publicise the available properties each week but officers will look at the Data Protection implications of supplying data directly to Ward Councillors
- Q The information used to be very helpful, when the Home Choice system was reviewed can this be looked at once again?
- A Yes it can be reviewed
- Q Was there anything in the application form that says it was the tenant's moral duty to look after and keep their gardens tidy?
- A This was in the tenancy agreement, any gardens in disrepair can be reported to the Community Officers who will visit the tenants and ask that they keep their gardens tidy. If the residents continue to leave the gardens a mess enforcement action can be taken.

The Chair thanked Vanessa and Julia for attending and they left the meeting.

RESOLVED:

- i) To receive and note the report**
- ii) To review the information that can be provided to Councillors with regard to tenancies**
- iii) To review ways in which properties can be advertised**

29.2nd Quarter Corporate Plan Report – Report SC/11/12

Jonathan Lund presented the interim Corporate Plan report which provided details of Access Selby key performance indicators following the 2nd quarter of reporting for the financial year 2011/12. Councillor Crane and Mark Steward, Managing Director, were in attendance.

The Chair thanked Mark Crane and Mark Steward for attending the meeting.

RESOLVED:

To receive and note the report.

30. Access Selby Service Provision – Leisure Provision (WLCT) Report – SC/11/13

Aimi Brookes, Senior Contract Officer, presented the report and introduced Mike Lyons, Head of Service – Sports and Leisure, Wigan Leisure and Cultural Trust (WLCT), who was in attendance to take questions.

The contract between Selby District Council and WLCT had now been in place for two years and had recently completed its first formal review. The review looked at the achievements of the service as well as key strategic objectives moving forward. Highlights included the refurbishment of both Abbey and Tadcaster Leisure Centres and the increase in gym membership.

The Chair opened up the meeting for questions:

Q Was the all weather pitch facility available for all clubs including the hockey club?

A Mike Lyons responded that WLCT was currently completing an Options Appraisal to look at the most suitable surface for all groups and organisations. A consultation was currently underway and once this has been completed a report and recommendation will be passed to Selby District Council.

Q Would the existing changing facilities be adequate?

A Yes, there are sufficient changing facilities at Abbey Leisure Centre

Q Are there any plans to market the Amphitheatre to get it used more often?

A Paul Hirst, Abbey and Tadcaster Leisure Centre, General Manager, will be looking at marketing the Amphitheatre in Spring and he will be speaking to groups and organisations to get them involved in using this facility

Q The plants and shrubs that had been removed from Selby Park that had died had not been replaced, whose responsibility was it to replace these plants?

A Enterprise Contractors – Aimi Brookes will speak to Enterprise for a response

Q As the Olympics are on next year can something be done to support the Paralympics games?

A The new General Manager will be looking into this.

Q How are you coping with the increase in membership?

A At peak times it can be a challenge but there may be further investment in the future to expand the 1st floor facilities. Membership has increased from 750 to 2700 members

Q With the increase in fuel costs heating the pool must be very costly?

A Yes it was and WLCT are looking at replacing the heating system from coal to gas to make this more efficient, however this may prove to be a challenge

Q What are the future plans for the pool?

A There was a learn to swim initiative with 700 swimmers involved which we hope to increase, the lessons had between 8-10 children in attendance which was about 90%. The aquatic strategy was currently under review

Q There was no lane swimming available early mornings could this be reviewed? Also some of the lockers are damaged and access to the ladies changing rooms was not available from the pool, can this be improved?

A We can look at having one lane out for serious swimmers at peak times and we will repair broken lockers and look at accessibility to the ladies changing area.

Q At the annual review was Health and Safety and Risk reviewed?

A Yes, there had been very few accidents this year, the only slight issue was slips at poolside, however a new surface has been laid and this has been resolved.

The Chair thanked Mike and Aimi for attending and they left the meeting.

RESOLVED:

- i) **To receive and note the report**
- ii) **To contact Enterprise to deal with the issue of plants and trees at Selby Park**
- iii) **To look into questions raised with regard to the lockers at Abbey Leisure Centre swimming pool and get them repaired**

31. Access Selby Service Provision – Customer Contact Centre – Report SC/11/14

Simon Parkinson, Lead Officer-Community Support Teams, presented the report. The Customer Contact Centre was the front facing first point of contact for residents of Selby District.

Since the Civic Centre moved to the Doncaster Road site there had been an increase in the number of telephone calls received at the Contact Centre. The staff were working generically and can answer questions on a wide range of topics. There was a dedicated Councillor telephone line which elevates the Councillors calls to the top of a waiting call list.

The Chair opened the meeting for questions:

- Q Was there any provision for residents to make cash payments?
A The council stopped taking direct cash payments last year following a decision by full council. There are facilities to pay cash payments at post offices and a number of other outlets at no cost to the payee.
- Q Customers are asked to take a ticket, was this timed, from when the ticket was taken until the resident was seen?
A Tickets are only taken if the customer needs to speak to an advisor, many queries can be dealt with at reception, this was timed
- Q Was there a procedure in place for dealing with abusive callers?
A Yes, there was an alarm system, which has a rapid response to the police station. Safety procedures are in place and there was a mechanism for managing vexatious or abusive customers.
- Q If calls are monitored or discussions at reception, listened into, does this adhere to data protection rules and regulations?
A Simon would look into this matter and report back to Councillors. Simon extended an invitation to Councillors to go to the Contact Centre and observe what happens. Councillor Peart expressed a wish to visit and observe. Simon will arrange a date and contact Councillor Peart
- Q Do other district councils have similar contact centres?
A Some do but not all replicate Selby's approach. The team are trained through a 6 week programme. There had been 40,000 contacts in the second quarter and 37,000 had been dealt with at the contact centre which equates to 92% being answered at the first enquiry
- Q How do you audit the footfall into the centre?

- A When they enter the contact centre the staff log a request or the residents take a ticket

RESOLVED:

- i) **To receive and note the report**
- ii) **To arrange a date for individual Councillors to visit the contact centre**
- iii) **To check the data protection guidelines with regard to monitoring calls and listening to conversations at reception**

32. Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

Karen Mann presented some suggested changes to the Work Programme for the 20 March 2012 meeting.

RESOLVED:

To receive and agree the changes suggested on the work programme.

The Chair thanked all for attending. The meeting closed at 7.05pm.