

Scrutiny Committee

- Venue: Committee Room
- Date: Tuesday 21 January 2014
- Present: Councillors J Crawford (Chair), I Chilvers, M Dyson, M Hobson, D Mackay, J McCartney and D Peart.
- Also Present: Councillors J Cattanach, M Crane (Leader of the Council), Mrs G Ivey (Executive Member), Carl Les – North Yorkshire County Council and Chief Inspector Mark Khan – North Yorkshire Police
- Apologies for Absence: None
- Officers Present: Karen Iveson – Executive Director (s151), Eileen Scothern – Business Manager, Helen McNeil – Lead Officer, Debt Control and Enforcement, Colin Moreton – Selby Community Safety Partnership, Ray Busby – North Yorkshire County Council, Richard Owens – Assistant Director, North Yorkshire County Council, Richard Marr – Highways Area Manager, North Yorkshire County Council, Gary Lumb – Highways, North Yorkshire County Council and Palbinder Mann, Democratic Services Officer.
- Press: None

22. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

To APPROVE the minutes of the Scrutiny Committee meetings held on 24 September 2013 and 18 December 2013 to be signed by the Chair.

23. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

24. CHAIR'S ADDRESS TO THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Chair informed the Committee that the next Waste and Recycling Task and Finish Group meeting will take place on Thursday 6 February 2014 at 12 noon.

25. CALL IN

No items were called in.

26. CRIME AND DISORDER REVIEW

Chief Inspector Mark Khan from North Yorkshire Police and Colin Moreton from the Selby Community Safety Partnership were present to discuss the latest position with regard to crime levels in the district. It was reported that the following crimes had increased on the previous years performance:

- **Burglary in a dwelling** – there had been a significant number of domestic burglaries in November and December 2013 with mainly cross border incidents. There had been a significant number of arrests made and the number of burglaries had now begun to slow down. Details were also provided of Operation Hawk which was an operation to tackle cross border crime. The Committee were informed that in the Selby team, there were two detectives and two police constables working on burglary crimes.
- **Shop theft** – this had increased in Selby however this also seemed to be a national trend. It was reported that there was a problem solving plan in Selby which was tackling the issue.

It was also reported that crimes on vulnerable victims and domestic abuse had also increased. Inspector Khan explained that while the overall effect was that people were feeling more confident in the Police, it was a concern that these crimes had increased.

A query was raised regarding the definition of hate crime. Inspector Khan explained that hate crime was a crime where there was an aggravating factor such as a racial or disability discrimination element. A further query was raised on the figures around why they were high as there was a low BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) population in North Yorkshire. It was explained that this may be due to there being a large Polish community in the area.

In response to a query concerning shoplifting, Inspector Khan explained that shoplifting was not just a factor in Selby and shoplifters tended to travel across regions. With regard to shoplifting in Selby, it was explained that the Police felt that this was being done by people from Selby.

In response to a query concerning preventing shoplifting, Mr Moreton explained that a number of shops were involved in a scheme where photographs of known shoplifters were circulated to shops in the scheme so that they could be identified when they entered the premises.

The Committee were informed that overall, crime was down by 2.8% in the region.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee receive and note the report.

27. POLICE AND CRIME PANEL UPDATE

Councillor Carl Les, Chair of the Police and Crime Panel, Councillor Mrs Ivey, Vice Chair of the Police and Crime Panel and Ray Busby, Support Officer to the Police and Crime Panel were present to provide a update on the work of the Panel.

Mr Busby explained that in comparison with the rest of the country, the region tended to have an effective panel and officer support which was regarded as better compared to others in the country. Some of the work completed by the Panel included:

- Agreeing the Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan.
- Agreeing the precept.
- Agreeing the three key appointments of the Commissioner, the Chief Constable, Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer.
- Dealing with two complaints against the Commission.

The Committee were informed that there would be a new plan by the Panel in the new year based on the strategic assessment. This included a better monitoring regime of the Commissioner's Plan along with monitoring the budget. The Committee were also informed that the latest precept would have to be agreed and there was a currently an ongoing consultation on a 1.99% increase. It was explained that Panel were keen to find out more information about the new headquarters for the Police and how this would be financed. Other issues to look into included effective community engagement with elected Members by the Commissioner.

A query was raised regarding what were the benefits of the role of the Commissioner. Councillor Les explained that the Commissioner would be able to provide a more detailed answer however some of the benefits including quicker decision making compared to the previous system and holding the Chief Constable to account in a more direct way.

In response to a query concerning the costs for the Police and Crime Panel, it was explained that at the moment it was around £100,000 cheaper than the old arrangements.

A query was raised concerning the role of the Panel. Mr Busby explained that the main role of the Panel was to scrutinise the Commissioner however the Panel were also interested in other areas and activity.

Discussion took place on the prospective new arrangements for Community Safety Partnerships. Concerns were raised over the effect of these on a local level and in particular the loss of services such as the Night Marshalls who were seen as a value to the public. It was explained that the Commissioner had made it clear that she expected some things to be delivered however could not support the administration for these services. The Committee were informed that the changes would be introduced from May onwards and would all be in place by September 2014.

It was felt that a further discussion on this subject should take place at the provisional Scrutiny meeting on 26 March 2014.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the Committee receive and note the report.**
- ii) That the Committee hold a further meeting on 26 March 2014 to discuss the prospective changes to the Community Safety Partnership.**

28. ACCESS SELBY 2ND INTERIM KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR PROGRESS REPORT APRIL 2013 TO SEPTEMBER 2013

Councillor Mark Crane, Leader of the Council presented the Access Selby 2nd Interim Key Performance Indicator Progress Report.

Councillor Crane explained that the outlook was positive with regard to the performance indicators. It was explained that the Executive had provided the view that one or two of the targets were not robust enough and may have been too low. One of these examples was the target around customer service.

A query was raised concerning the monitoring of customer service. It was explained that this target had been much lower than previous years. The Committee was informed that the indicator involved asking customers if they were satisfied with the service provided by the Council and this was recorded by customers being invited to comment on the service they had received such as on the phone or on a one to one basis.

In response to a query concerning the introduction of charging for planning advice, Councillor Crane explained that this would result in offering people a higher level of service for professional advice. It was also explained that some application costs totalled to a considerable amount and the fee only represented a small amount of that cost for professional advice received in return.

Concerns were raised regarding street cleanliness especially down Ousegate. It was stated that parked cars in the area resulted it in being made very difficult for street sweepers to clean the area due to access issues. Councillor Crane explained that this could be raised with Amey, the Council's waste

collection contractor and one option could be conducting more patrols in the area.

RESOLVED:

- i) **That the Committee receive and note the report.**

29. TRANSPORT PROVISION IN THE DISTRICT

Richard Owens, Assistant Director, Integrated Passenger Transport, North Yorkshire County Council, Richard Marr, Highways Area Manager, North Yorkshire County Council and Gary Lumb, North Yorkshire County Council were present to talk about reductions to bus subsidies and highways issues.

Bus Subsidies

Mr Owens explained that a report had been considered by the Executive at North Yorkshire County Council where it had been decided to make £2m of savings to bus subsidies in North Yorkshire. It was explained that this was an increase to the originally proposed £1.1m savings. Mr Owens explained that an option of £1.7m had actually been put forwarded however the additional savings would be mainly through procurement.

In response to a query concerning parish councils in their respective areas taking over the funding, Mr Owens explained that some Parish Councils and local groups in other areas had agreed to fund the cost for buses in their areas.

Concerns were raised regarding procurement where the contract was given to the cheapest tender offered. Mr Owens explained that the County Council adhered to procurement regulations and that all operators had to meet quality checks.

The Chair allowed Councillor John Cattanach to speak on this item. Councillor Cattanach circulated the submission he had made to the County Council. Councillor Cattanach explained that with regard to the number 42 bus, he had obtained funding from all Parish Councils on the route with the exception of Selby Town Council and York City Council.

With regard to the 492/3 bus service, he raised concern that recent planning applications had been approved in the Church Fenton area for additional housing with the regular bus service being a factor considered however the bus service would now be reduced. Mr Owens explained that there were currently temporary contracts in place for Tadcaster to Sherburn route and discussions would be held with the successful operator regarding this route. It was explained that as it was the frequency of the service which took up the most resources it was decided to reduce the frequency.

In response to a query, Mr Owens explained that if a service was being withdrawn then 12 weeks' notice had to be provided. It was stated that if people were not using services, they would be withdrawn.

Councillor Cattnach stated that he would be happy to talk to anyone who wanted further information on funding from partners for routes. In response to a query concerning funding from Community Engagement Forums (CEFs), Councillor Cattnach stated that previously grants had been received from CEFs however funding was dependent on the priorities for each CEF.

In response to a query concerning the exact subsidy required for each rate, Mr Owens stated that on average, costs tended to be £30-35 per hour for a bus service however there was also concessionary fares to take into account of which a proportion was given to bus companies.

A Member of the Committee requested further information on passenger numbers at Stutton, Ulleskelf and Saxton. Mr Owens agreed to provide this information.

Highways

A Member of the Committee had submitted questions concerning the A1041 Selby to Camblesforth Road and the traffic lights at the Brayton crossroads. Mr Marr explained that with regard to the A1041, the road was a fast and very straight road however following a fatal accident, an assessment was always completed in cooperation with the Police. With regard to the current situation, due to the road being long and straight, this encouraged speeding however inserting a reduced speed limit would not be within the guidelines and there was not enough funding to fill the ditches on the road to amend the shape of the road.

The Committee were informed that sites with four accidents within 100 metres of each other were eligible for funding. Mr Marr explained that in order to change the shape of the road, there would be engineering involved to put bends in. Mr Marr explained that there were road safety teams who went to schools and older group meetings to talk about road safety.

With regard to the concerns about the traffic lights at the crossroads in Brayton, Mr Marr explained that an engineer would be visiting the site to check the lights again and a vehicle camera would also be sent out to see if the speeding was occurring outside the hours of the patrol crossing person being there.

Concerns were also raised regarding the traffic flow and traffic lights at the junction of Leeds Road and Doncaster Road in particular regarding the traffic coming from Scott Road. Mr Marr explained that when the system had been upgraded, there had been issues reported of tailbacks on Scott Road, a loop had then been installed to detect if there were queues however this had subsequently been switched off. With regard to altering the road, discussions had taken place with landowners about purchasing the land however this had

not amounted to anything. The latest software had now been installed which analysed and worked out what was happening to reduce the queues as much as possible. Despite this, it was reported that complaints had still been received, in particular from the Town Council.

The Committee raised concerns regarding the poor state of the Selby Bypass. Mr Marr explained that discussions had been held with the Highways Agency who had been in discussions with the contractor, Skansa who had carried out the work. It was accepted that work was needed however this would cost a substantial amount of money. Discussions had taken place with regard to who would be funding the repairs as the cost was likely to be in the region of £5m. Mr Marr explained that it was hoped to carry out better temporary repairs this year and hope to find the funding for major repairs to be carried out in 2015.

In response to a query concerning the planning of the initial build, Mr Marr explained that a number of schemes had been identified at that time and the condition of the bypass was not predicted to deteriorate in the manner that it had.

Discussions took place regarding vehicle activated signs. It was explained that with regard to the trial for these, they were into the last phase. The Committee were informed that several trials had been held where speeds before and after had been analysed. The signs had been offered countrywide with local Parish Councils paying for them.

A query was raised concerning claiming for damages to a vehicle as a result of potholes. Mr Marr explained that previous bad winters had seen an increase in claims where the success rate of the County Council in defence was 87%. In recent times, the defence rate had risen to 91% as the local authority had a statutory defence under the Highways Act where if they were not aware of the pothole under a previous inspection, they were then not liable if it caused any damage to vehicles.

RESOLVED:

- i) **That the Committee receive and note the report.**

30. ACCESS SELBY SERVICE PROVISION – ENFORCEMENT

Helen McNeil, Lead Officer, Debt Control and Enforcement presented a report detailing the work of the Enforcement Service.

Helen outlined some of the key areas which were covered by enforcement and these included benefit fraud, housing and planning. A breakdown of the work completed in each of the areas was provided in the report along with the team's current performance

A query was raised concerning fly tipping and the cost to the authority regarding this. Helen explained that the incidents of fly tipping were increasing however the Council was publicising its prosecutions. In terms of

prosecutions, if the identity of the person fly tipping could be identified then prosecutions were carried out and this could result in the person being fined and having to pay the costs of the prosecution. In response to a further query concerning the costs to clear the items if the person responsible could not be identified, Helen explained that if the person responsible could not be identified then then it did cost the Council to clear the items.

A query was raised that prosecutions regarding internally lit shop signs took up to a year and whether these could be speeded up. Helen agreed that she would look into this.

Discussion took place on dog fouling and it was queried whether Councillors were able to issue Fixed Penalty Notices if they witnessed dog fouling. Helen agreed to look into this.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the Committee receive and note the report.**

31. ACCESS SELBY SERVICE PROVISION – HOUSING REPAIRS

Eileen Scothern, Business Manager, presented a report providing an overview of the housing repairs service.

Eileen explained that over the last three years, there had been improvements to repairs being carried out on time. At the formation of Access Selby the Assets and Housing Team had been combined together to streamline the process.

In response to a query, it was explained that some of the most common problems were usually water or electrical problems.

Concerns were raised that the satisfaction figures did not necessarily reflect the reports provided by local residents. It was reported that one resident for example had reported her bungalow window as broken however she had been told that she would be on a 5 day waiting list. Eileen stated that for the responses recorded, it was found that most residents were satisfied with the work that had been carried out. It was suggested that a survey could be placed in the next tenants newsletter to ascertain a better opinion of residents thoughts. The Committee was also informed that staff at the contact centre were provided with a list of questions to ask to tenants about the service they had received.

It was stated that before another survey was carried out, it may be worthwhile to analyse the data for all urgent and non-urgent repairs.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the Committee receive and note the report.**

32. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2014-15

It was decided that this could be discussed at the next meeting however Members of the Committee should email their comments they had on the work programme to the Democratic Services Officer.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the Committee email any comments they have on the work programme to the Democratic Services Officer and this be discussed at the next meeting.**

33. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2013-14

It was noted that the next provisional meeting would now be on Monday 24 February 2014 rather than Wednesday 26 February 2014. This was due to Nigel Adams MP not being able to attend the original date.

It was also noted that as discussed earlier, there would now be a Committee meeting on the provisional date of Wednesday 26 March 2014 to discuss the changes to the Community Safety Partnership arrangements.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the above changes be incorporated into the work programme.**

The meeting closed at 7.16pm