

Scrutiny Committee

Venue:	Committee Room
Date:	Tuesday 23 September 2014
Present:	Councillors J Crawford (Chair), L Casling, I Chilvers, M Dyson, M Hobson, D Mackay and D Peart.
Also Present:	Councillor M Crane.
Apologies for Absence:	Councillors Mrs W Nichols and Mrs M McCartney.
Officers Present:	Karen Iveson – Executive Director (s151), Helen McNeil – Lead Officer, Debt Control and Enforcement, Ruth Lucas – Lead Officer, Policy, Tony Walker – North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service, Dave Dryburgh – North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service, Colin Hunter, North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service and Palbinder Mann, Democratic Services Officer.
Press:	None
Public	2

66. MINUTES

The Committee considered the minutes from the last meeting.

RESOLVED:

To APPROVE the minutes of the Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 25 June 2014 and they be signed by the Chair.

67. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

68. CHAIR'S ADDRESS TO THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

There was no address by the Chair.

69. CALL IN

No items were called in.

The Chair agreed to amend the running order of the agenda.

70. NORTH YORKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Tony Walker, Dave Dryburgh and Colin Hunter from North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service were present to provide an update on the position of North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue services within the district.

Mr Dryburgh provided an overview of the report submitted and informed the Committee of the Fire Cover review of the North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service which would be taking place. It was explained that initial proposals would be taken to the Fire Authority for approval in December and then it is likely that outcomes for consultation would be approved by the Fire Authority following the February 2015 meeting. Any proposals would then be consulted on with implementation during 2016. In response to a query concerning the amount of savings that needed to be delivered, Mr Dryburgh explained that at present a further saving of £900,000 needed to be delivered out of the £30m budget by 2016/17.

The Committee were informed that the forthcoming review would look at the whole brigade including how services were delivered, staffing models for delivering those services and options such as alternatively sized fire appliances may be explored.

Mr Dryburgh informed the Committee that the Fire Service received a number of false calls to business premises and were currently looking into introducing a charge if the respective businesses still wanted automatic attendance from the service. It was estimated that this would create savings of approximately £80,000.

Discussion took place on attendance for fires in the district from fire authorities in neighbouring authorities. Mr Dryburgh explained that there was an agreement between the different fire services regarding attendance of the closest fire engine available and North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service also attended fires in neighbouring areas across the year. The Committee were also informed of the River Rescue service which was now fully operational in North Yorkshire.

It was agreed that there would be a further update at the next meeting in January 2015 concerning the Fire Cover review.

RESOLVED:

To note the update and agree to a further update concerning the Fire Cover Review in January 2015.

71. ACCESS SELBY 1ST INTERIM KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR PROGRESS REPORT: APRIL 2014 TO JUNE 2014

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

Concern was raised at the robustness of the performance indicator concerning customer satisfaction. It was felt more evidence was needed with regard to how the data was collected as the figures did not match comments made by some residents and tenants. The Leader of the Council explained that the Executive had asked Access Selby to review their processes to capture the views of residents.

Concern was also raised regarding the robustness of the street cleanliness figures. The Leader of the Council stated that this was also an area in which the Executive had asked for review.

A query was raised concerning whether the specific Councillor line for the Contact Centre was still in existence. It was agreed this would be looked into. A further query was raised concerning the car parking machine at the South Parade car park not accepting specific coins. It was agreed this would be looked into.

RESOLVED:

To note the report.

72. ACCESS SELBY SERVICE PROVISION – DEBT CONTROL

Helen McNeil, Lead Officer, Debt Control and Enforcement was present to provide information on the services offered by the Debt Control team.

The Lead Officer, Debt Control and Enforcement explained that the biggest areas of work for the team were rent collection, council tax and National Non Domestic Rates (NNDR). It was explained that since the introduction of changes to welfare reform, there had been further challenges to maintain the level of collection and further help and support had been provided to residents affected by the changes.

The Committee were informed that the service worked closely with other service areas such the Homelessness Team and the Community Support Teams to support people who were struggling to make payments or in danger of losing their home.

It was advised that future plans included preventative work with Benefits on housing benefit overpayments and exploring a co-ordinated approach with the enforcement team on tenancies with arrears and anti-social behaviour issues and joint working on premises licence debts where the premises licence of a venue could be suspended if they had not paid the cost of their licence.

A query was raised concerning why the figures for collection were lower in 2012/13 than other years. It was explained that this was due to the actual amount collectable being lower and it increasing year on year due to the annual rent increase.

A further query was raised concerning the use of bailiffs as a method of debt collection. The Lead Officer, Debt Control and Enforcement explained that once a liability order had been obtained the Council could instruct bailiffs to try and recover Council Tax and Non Domestic Rate arrears and how this differed from the use of a Debt Collection agency for other debts.

RESOLVED:

To note the report.

73. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY - UPDATE

Ruth Lucas, Lead Officer, Policy was present to provide an update concerning the progress of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

The Lead Officer, Policy explained that the consultation on the amended charging levy had recently closed and 23 responses had been received. The consultation responses had been sent to the appointed consultants who would analyse all the responses. The Committee were informed that subject to no major changes, the CIL would be submitted to the examination in public stage in December and subject to approval from the examiner, could be introduced in April next year. It was explained that if there were any changes as a result of the consultation, then a further consultation would have to be carried out.

A request was made for the regulation 123 list and it was agreed this would be circulated to the Committee.

RESOLVED:

To note the report.

74. BARLOW COMMON NATURE RESERVE

The Committee considered the Barlow Common Local Nature Reserve Annual Report. It was agreed to defer this item until the next meeting to allow an officer from the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust to attend.

RESOLVED:

To note the report.

75. WASTE AND RECYCLING TASK AND FINISH GROUP – VERBAL UPDATE

The Committee were informed of the current progress concerning the trial of recycling bags instead of boxes as per the Scrutiny Task and Finish Group recommendations. It was explained that a procurement exercise had been conducted with regard to the supplier of the bags and a final decision on the manufacturer would be taken by the end of September. There would then be a 10 to 12 week manufacturing and delivery period. The trial would then commence towards the end of February 2015 which would avoid the post-Christmas recycling potentially distorting the figures.

It was explained that the trial would last for six weeks with there being three collection cycles. There would also be a pre-trial assessment period of six weeks which would assess the tonnage collected with the current recycling boxes to allow a comparison.

76. WORK PROGRAMME 2014/15

The Committee considered the current Work Programme 2014/15. It was agreed that there would be a further update from North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Services in January, along with the deferred item on Barlow Common and an additional item regarding the customer service performance indicator.

RESOLVED:

To update the work programme with the above amendments.

77. FORWARD PLAN

The Committee considered the latest version of the Forward Plan.

RESOLVED:

To note the Forward Plan.

The meeting closed at 6.30pm