

CANTERBURY CITY COUNCIL

SCRUTINY SUB COMMITTEE

**Minutes of a meeting held on Wednesday, 5th August, 2009
at 9.30 am in the Marion Attwood Room, Council Offices**

Present: Councillor A Perkins (Chairman)

Councillor Calvert-Mindell
Councillor MacCaul
Councillor Reuby
Councillor H Taylor
Councillor Thomas
Councillor Windsor

Officers: Dan Hamlin - Improvement Manager
Charlotte Hammersley - Senior Scrutiny and Improvement Officer
Tracy Himmer - Senior Policy Officer
Nick Hughes - Democratic Services Officer
Matthew McLellan - Policy Officer

1 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Samper.

2 **SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

Councillor H Taylor was present as a substitute for Councillor Samper.

3 **DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS**

There were no disclosures of interest, lobbying or whipping made.

4 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11 JUNE 2009**

The minutes of the meeting of the 11 June 2009 were agreed as a correct record.

5 **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11 JUNE 2009**

The Senior Scrutiny and Improvement Officer confirmed that the Rural Sustainability Scrutiny Review recommendations had been presented and considered by the Rural Area Member Panel as per the recommendation by the committee. They had noted the recommendations but did query if the list of farms provided by the National Farmers Union was up to date.

6 **CALL IN OF DECISIONS**

There were no call-ins made.

7 **POLICE AND JUSTICE ACT - 2006 - CRIME AND DISORDER SCRUTINY**

The Improvement Manager outlined the report on Crime and Disorder scrutiny and made the following points:

- i) The new arrangements were designed to allow for scrutiny of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership.
- ii) It was envisaged that the Scrutiny Sub Committee would be the Committee of the Council that would perform this function.
- iii) By involving local Councillors it would enable scrutiny of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership by elected officials.

The Sub Committee then discussed the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny arrangements and made the following points:

- i) Could KCC be invited to participate in meetings when the Sub Committee were discussing the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership?
- ii) There should be a standing item on the agenda every other month asking if there were any issues that needed to be addressed and a six monthly update where a representative from the Partnership should present to the Sub Committee.

RESOLVED – That:

- a) A standing item be added to the agenda of the Scrutiny Sub Committee on a bi-monthly basis to allow for discussion of any issues arising.
- b) A twice yearly update from a representative of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership be added to the Scrutiny Sub Committee Work Programme. In addition KCC Members be invited to attend these updates.

8 **ANNUAL PERFORMANCE DATA**

The Senior Policy Officer outlined her report on the annual performance data and made the following points:

- i) It was the first year of data for the new suite of indicators and so it wasn't possible to provide any analysis of performance, as there was no comparative data at either a local level or a national level.
- ii) Also for many of the new indicators, no targets had been set as there was no baseline data available to set an appropriate target.
- iii) For those indicators where targets had been set, 16 out of the 20 targets were met.
- iv) The retained Best Value Performance Indicator's and Key Local Performance Indicators were shown alongside each other in the tables.

The Sub Committee then discussed the report and made the following points:

- i) It was not possible to compare the targets, as there was insufficient data.
- ii) How well were planning applications being dealt with? Sometimes it was better to take a long time over an application and get it right rather than rushing one and making a bad decision.
- iii) The target for non decent homes had not been met, also why was the figure for supply of ready to develop housing sites was 174%.
- iv) It would be good if Members had descriptions of each of the new indicators, as this was the first year for these.
- v) How was it possible to reduce the Climate change target without knowing what the target was in the first place?
- vi) How was the baseline figure in NI185 CO2 reduction from Local Authority operations calculated?
- vii) How much time was spent on calculating and collating the figures?
- viii) The figures were useful and important as without them managers would find it very difficult to know what was going on in the organisation.
- ix) There were targets being missed on the level of disabled employees and percentage of the top 5% of earners being women.
- x) It appeared that in response to the Sub Committee recommendation regarding call answering, instead of looking in the management of the phone system, the target had just been changed to make it more achievable.
- xi) How was the level of sickness being affected?
- xii) Did the level of sickness include those on maternity leave or was this covered in a separate indicator?

The Senior Policy Officer and Policy Officer both then responded to Members questions and made the following points:

- i) The indicators that dealt with planning applications had shown good results, two out of three indicators had been met and the other had only just been missed.
- ii) By 2012 all the Councils houses would meet decent homes standard.
- iii) The figure of 174% of ready to develop housing sites mean that there were 74% more ready to develop housing sites than the target required.
- iv) The CO2 emissions had been measured by calculating the number of Council vehicles using the city and the types of Council buildings in the city.
- v) It was a national requirement to produce such figures on the environment. The 22.4% reduction was based on the baseline figure for 08/09.

- vi) The new indicators were a statutory duty. Some of the indicators were reported on a quarterly basis, some were reported on nationally.
- vii) 3.6% of the district were registered as disabled, however only 2.22% of Council employees were disabled.
- viii) It was not possible to positively discriminate against those that were disabled. More work would be carried out on identifying those staff that had not declared that they had a disability.
- ix) Although the Council had done well last year on sickness absence, however sickness in the first quarter went up and as a result the target for sickness was unlikely to be met. The sickness figures did not include those on maternity leave.

RESOLVED that –

- a) the Scrutiny Sub Committee note the Annual Performance Data and are aware that some are lacking targets, but these would be completed when data was available.
- b) A report on the definitions of the indicators be presented to the next meeting of the Sub Committee

9 PLACE SURVEY

The Policy officer outlined his report on the Place Survey results and made the following points:

- i) The place survey results affected a number of agencies, not just the Council.
- ii) The most important things that affected people's quality of life had been identified as the level of crime and the health service.
- iii) The things that most needed improving had been identified as road and pavement repairs and the level of traffic congestion.
- iv) The Council had received 2661 surveys back.
- v) Of the 18 questions asked, six were directly comparable to the results from the BVPI survey and 3 were indirectly comparable.

The Sub Committee then discussed the Place Survey results and made the following points:

- i) The reason for the fall in the number of people that felt they could influence decisions could be because there hadn't been a national election.
- ii) There had been a local County election and the issues people most thought needed improving were both KCC responsibilities.

- iii) The survey was necessary to inform the relevant authorities what people thought of the services being provided for them.
- iv) There were some big gaps between the Canterbury area and the rest of England. We did well against the other East Kent districts, but not nationally.
- v) Would it be possible to compare where the Council spent its money against the areas identified as priorities in the survey.
- vi) What was the next stage, as it appeared that the Council wanted to create a communications strategy in response to the results rather than trying to see where council services could be improved?

The Policy Officer then responded to the questions raised by the Sub Committee and he made the following points:

- i) It was true that the general public sometimes found it difficult to distinguish between the functions provided by district and county councils.
- ii) The results allowed for comparison between East Kent, the whole of Kent and nationally.
- iii) The next stage was to create a corporate marketing, communications and consultation strategy. Each Head of Service would receive a set of Place Survey results.

RESOLVED – That the next stage in the process should be:

- a) To see where Council Services could be improved and,
- b) That a corporate marketing, communications and consultation strategy be developed to respond to the issues identified by the Place Survey.

10 **COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION PRESENTATION**

The Improvement Manager gave a brief presentation to the Sub Committee on the new Councillor Call for Action regulations.

The Sub Committee discussed the presentation and made the following points:

- i) There should always be an action plan following a call for action as otherwise it would be pointless doing them.
- ii) It was not possible for the Sub Committee to simply say no to a Call for Action if they thought that it would achieve nothing. They had a responsibility to consider the call for action and listen to the witnesses and recommendations.
- iii) English Heritage needed to be on the list of accountable bodies.

The Improvement Manager then made the following points in response to the issues raised by the Sub Committee:

- i) The Council was working with KCC on how Call for Actions would be dealt with if they affected the others area of responsibility.
- ii) Monitoring would take place and its regularity would depend on the issue.
- iii) The guidance that had been distributed to the Sub Committee had been based on how the government guidance would work in Canterbury.
- iv) The Centre for Public Scrutiny was gathering examples of Calls for Action.

11 **TIMETABLE FOR MONITORING SCRUTINY REVIEWS**

The Sub Committee discussed the timetable for monitoring scrutiny reviews and made the following points:

- i) The Entertainment Economy scrutiny review was coming to an end; the last remaining issue to discuss was provision of entertainment in rural areas.
- ii) The Outside Bodies and City Life scrutiny reviews were back on track and had more meetings arranged.
- iii) A meeting of the Health Scrutiny Panel had been arranged and the Patient Transport scrutiny review would be discussed.
- iv) The Health Scrutiny Panel would not be carrying out any further scrutiny reviews after this, as they were a body designed to comment on Health policies affecting the district, not a work commissioning body.
- v) The next scrutiny review would be on the Role and Provision of Council Run facilities. It would be chaired by Councillor Reuby.

12 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING AND ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

The next meeting of the Scrutiny Sub Committee would be on September 23 at 9.30am

Items for the agenda would include:

An explanation of indicators in the 1st quarter performance data
 The Draft Entertainment Economy Scrutiny Review report
 Concessionary travel report

There being no other business the meeting closed at 11.15 am