

## **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Meeting held in the Committee Room, Council Offices, Urban Road, Kirkby-in-Ashfield,**

**on Tuesday, 27th June, 2017 at 6.30 pm**

**Present:** Councillor Lee Anderson in the Chair;

Councillors Helen Hollis, John Knight,  
Cathy Mason, Lauren Mitchell, Christine Quinn-  
Wilcox, Paul Roberts and Robert Sears-  
Piccavey.

**Apologies for Absence:** Councillor Christian Chapman.

**Officers Present:** Jo Froggatt, Mike Joy and Alan Maher

### **OS.01 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary or Personal Interests and Non-Disclosable Pecuniary/Other Interests**

No Declarations of Interest were received.

### **OS.02 To receive and approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 9 February 2017**

The minutes of the meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on 9 February 2017 were approved as a correct record.

### **OS.03 Corporate Score Cards - Year End 2016/17 Position**

Members were reminded that the Council had adopted a 'Balanced Scorecard' methodology for measuring the Council's performance. This methodology placed greater emphasis on customer satisfaction and service quality, with the aim of providing a more rounded way of measuring how the Council's corporate priorities are being delivered.

The report to Committee set out the Balanced Scorecard information for 2016-17. This was presented by the Corporate Performance Manager, Jo Froggatt. Mrs Froggatt explained that during the course of the year, overall performance had improved on 80% of the measures and that 91% of them had been achieved or exceeded their targets. Similarly, 84% of Corporate Plan actions had been completed or were on track to be completed.

The Committee was told about those targets where performance had been within 10% of the target, but which had not been achieved. In this context, Members heard that the goal for collecting National Non Domestic Rates (NNDR) in the District, had been narrowly missed. The goal had been to collect 98.50% of the amount owed. The collection rate achieved was 97.86%.

Members were keen to understand what this percentage shortfall meant in practical terms. In particular, they wanted to know how much NNDR the council had failed to collect by not achieving the target. The Corporate Performance Manager agreed to provide this information

Members were then told that the number of Market Stalls occupied in the District's outdoor markets had fallen. The reasons for this were explained. The Committee went on to consider the average housing void re-let time target, which had been narrowly missed. The goal had been to re-let void or empty properties in 21 days. The average letting time achieved for the year was 21.6 days.

Members were told that there had been problems finding tenants for small, hard to let, properties towards the end of the year. This had extended overall letting times across the District as a whole.

Finally, the Committee heard that the number of requests from residents for services related to dog fouling was just above target. The aim had been to keep the figure down to 360 requests. The final figure was 370 service requests.

The Committee discussed the problem of dog fouling. Members felt that the publicity campaigns to discourage owners from allowing their dogs to foul pavements and other public places had been valuable, but they also felt that continuing action was required to both help prevent the problem and to punish those who refuse to clean-up after their dogs. In particular, there was a consensus that sufficient bins ought to be provided in the right locations and emptied regularly, to ensure that dog owners can dispose of the waste properly.

The Committee also thought that, when appropriate, enforcement action should be taken against those who refuse to clean up the waste. Members asked for information about how many fines had been issued against individuals because of dog fouling. Again, the Corporate Performance Manager agreed to provide this information.

The Committee thanked Mrs Froggatt for her presentation and discussed the Scorecard Information. As part of this discussion, Members asked for clarification of the balanced scorecard methodology, why certain measures had been included and why the targets for others seemed quite low. On this point, the Committee was told that many of the targets had emerged from past 'Place Surveys' which the Council had been obliged to carry out by central government. It was explained that a new, locally driven, Place Survey would be carried out across the District. Along with other survey work, the new Place Survey would help to improve the targets included in the Scorecard. Members welcomed this.

There was a discussion about the role of the Commercialisation Team and its performance in terms of generating new sources of income. The Committee agreed that this ought to be considered as part of any review carried out by scrutiny into the Council's Commercialisation Agenda.

Members were reminded that they had expressed concern earlier in the year

about the number of Fly Tipping incidents. The Committee was informed that they had continued to increase. Consequently, the total number of Fly Tipping incidents for 2016-17 as a whole had exceeded the target figure.

The Committee heard about the approach taken to tackling the problem. Members were told that the majority of fly tipping incidents in Ashfield involved Builder and Contractor waste and also household furniture. They heard that evidence was being gathered so that repeat offenders could be brought to court and if found guilty, be subject to serious legal penalties. This was welcomed by the Committee.

The Committee also heard about publicity campaigns that had been launched to try and raise public awareness of Fly Tipping and especially the importance of making sure that household waste is disposed of properly. The point was made that people should not use un-licensed waste collectors and that if they do they could find themselves held responsible if any of their waste was illegally dumped. The Committee supported this message.

Although Members recognised that Fly Tipping was a national issue, there was general agreement that further progress was required locally in order to tackle the problem and bring performance up to the target level. Members recognised that some things that might have exacerbated Fly Tipping were outside the Council's control. In particular, they highlighted the potentially adverse impact of changes which had been made to how rubbish tips in the County are used; especially the requirement on residents to register their cars before they can use them to take rubbish to these sites.

At the conclusion of the discussion, the Committee reiterated its view that the problem of Fly Tipping should continue to be monitored as part of the scrutiny work programme.

## RESOLVED

That the Overview & Scrutiny Committee notes the level of performance achieved against the Corporate Scorecard at the 2016-17 year end in order to facilitate delivery of the Corporate Plan and improved performance of the organisation.

### Reasons

Performance management is one of the key roles of Overview & scrutiny. It provides members with the opportunity to proactively review delivery against Corporate Priorities and challenge performance, add value to the Council's services and monitor functions delivered with and by the Council and its partners that add quality of life to the citizens of Ashfield.

## **OS.04 Scrutiny Workplan Consideration 2017/18**

Members were next asked to agree up to eight topics to be included in the Scrutiny Workplan for 2017-18. These would be in addition to the regular standing topics, which were looked at each year as part of the scrutiny work programme – Performance, the Budget, Crime and Disorder. There would also

be a new standing topic on Housing Performance. The new standing topic had been introduced following on from the Council's decision to directly manage its housing stock, rather than through the arms-length management organisation, Ashfield Homes. Two co-opted Members (non-voting) would also be appointed to participate in the Housing Performance discussions, as and when it is presented to the Committee.

The report to Committee set out the possible discretionary topics that had been identified as a result of consultation with elected Members and officers within the Council. Members were also informed of other possible topics for the Workplan, which had been suggested since the publication of the report.

The Committee discussed extensively what topics should be included in the plan. It was generally felt that the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, along with the two Scrutiny Panels, ought to focus on those areas where they can genuinely add value and should avoid topics where they could have only a limited impact, or where it would be more appropriate for other bodies, such as Cabinet, to carry out the work.

At the conclusion of the discussion, the Committee decided on the topics to be included as a basis for the 2017-18 Workplan. Members recognised that the plan may need to change over time in order to allow any other pressing issues to be scrutinised, as and when this was required.

**RESOLVED:**

- a) That the following standing topics be included as part of the Scrutiny Workplan for 2017-18:
  - (i) Performance
  - (ii) Budget Scrutiny
  - (iii) Crime & Disorder Scrutiny (including Community Protection)
  - (iv) Housing Performance Scrutiny
  
- b) That the following other topics be included as part of the Scrutiny Workplan for 2017-18
  - (i) Fly Tipping
  - (ii) Commercial Enterprise Strategy / Commercialism
  - (iii) The Council's representation on Outside Bodies
  - (iv) Pest Control (Street Vermin)
  - (v) Peer Challenge Action Plan
  - (vi) Absenteeism (attendance management)
  - (vii) Leisure Facilities Provision
  - (viii) Impact of Car Parking in town centres.
  
- c) That the scope of the specific investigations into these topics be

determined by the Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee in consultation with the Chairs and Vice Chairs of Scrutiny Panel A and Scrutiny Panel B.

#### Reasons

Consulting, reviewing and agreeing items for the Scrutiny Workplan 2017-18 provides guidance and direction for the work undertaken by scrutiny in the coming year.

The meeting closed at 7.30 pm

Chairman.