

Council

23 October 2018

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1

Report of the Chairman of Overview & Scrutiny Committee 1

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 To present to Members the following:

- A summary of the Scrutiny Committee Meeting held on 20 September 2018.
- Details of any Task Group Meetings held since the last Council Meeting.
- A summary from the Performance Monitoring Briefings.

2.0 Scrutiny Meeting held on 20 September 2018

2.1 Disappointingly the Scrutiny Meeting on the 20 September 2018 was unable to go ahead, as the number of Members in attendance was not enough to form a quorum. The items on the agenda were:

- Business Rates – Discretionary Reliefs – Local Childcare Providers
- Fees and Charges 2019/20
- Performance Monitoring Briefings – Quarter 1 2018/19
- Task Group Update and Work Programme 2018/19

2.2 The Vice-Chairman and I had a meeting with Brian Bottle and Katy Riley on 4 October 2018 in relation to their reports.

2.3 The Localism Act 2011 allows for rate relief for childcare providers. There are only 7 private childcare providers in the District and it was recommended that these should receive the discretionary relief.

The cost of the relief to the Council will be circa £14,000. It should be noted that the relief only applies to private operators.

We both fully supported the recommendations.

2.4 The fees and charges report recommends most charges be raised by 2% with the exception of car parking charges, green waste and development charges. These charges would be effective from 1 April 2019.

At Corporate Board on 9 October 2018, when the fees and charges report was considered Scrutiny were asked to 'prior to budget setting, examine the viability of extending the range of car parking permits available to include non-resident workers, scope to include applicable rates, options for flexible payment and enforcement of non-payments'.

A task group meeting will now be arranged to look into the matter.

3.0 Task Group Meetings

- 3.1 Following a referral from Council on 24 July 2018 (Minute DC19/18 refers), a Task Group meeting was held on 10 October 2018 to consider litter bin provision throughout the District and their potential replacement within three years, by more appropriate receptacles to lessen the environmental impact of those currently used.
- 3.2 The Task Group were advised that there are approximately 500 bins across the district, of which circa 350 bins require replacing. A list is maintained of the location of each bin and a condition survey of each bin was undertaken when the renewal programme commenced in 2017.
- 3.3 A number of sample bins were available at the meeting and each one was considered for suitability and value for money. There was consensus among those present about which bins we would like to see installed, with different bins chosen for town and village locations.
- 3.4 Officers will now consider the recommendations from the meeting and draw up the relevant costings.

4.0 Performance Briefings

- 4.1 In August the Vice-Chairman and I attended the three Quarter 1 Performance Monitoring Briefings. The key points raised at these were:

Operational

- Promising progress in relation to key income streams – car parking income, green waste subscriptions and income from public toilets.
- Improved performance on repairing street lighting when compared to 2017/18.
- Active consideration of the direct provision of telecare (assistive technology) via an extension of the Lifeline Service.
- It was noted with pleasure that rent arrears of £145,000 were decreasing.
- On-going challenges around re-letting Council properties and an associated service within Landlord Service. It is understood that there is a shortage of bricklayers which is effecting the issue.
- It was noted that the pest control service is still not breaking even.

Resources

- The ongoing transition of access to the Council from face to face to electronically was discussed. As part of discussing the CA£H programme, Sian was asked to review the arrangements for only providing details of a change of address once, as customers requested to update all relevant RDC services.
- The excellent collection rates for Council Tax, were noted. Sian is to consider the legality and validity of offering discounts for early payment. However it was noted that, with interest rates at a low level this could provide the Council

with an issue of not being able to place on deposit to cover the costs of a discount.

- Members requested an update on Gatherley Road. This is still awaiting completion but a non-fundable deposit has been received.
- The forthcoming peer review was noted, this has now taken place and will be reported shortly.

Strategy & Regulatory

- We discussed the successful Housing delivery figures from 2017/18 and the 'Celebrating our Success' event that was held at Scotch Corner and how a new housing target would have to be developed as part of the Local Plan Review.
- Members noted that the Business and Community Team are now supporting a number of economic growth projects from various businesses across the District with a cumulative value of £6.3m. Members were also informed of the number of business visits that had taken place during the quarter and the intention to continue these through the year so that businesses are more aware of the support that the B&C Team can offer.
- Members discussed the operation of the Homeless Unit at George Nickling House and how not all homeless referrals could be placed there due to the fact that it is an unsupported unit. Members also clarified the way in which B&B accommodation is used by the Council and it was confirmed that this type of accommodation is not used for children or families.
- The new Homeless Reduction Act is now in operation. However, at the time of the Quarter 1 meeting the performance measures had not yet been agreed with Government so Members discussed our own internal measures which will be monitored over the coming year.
- The proposal to review the Economic Action Plan and Destination Management Plan was noted as was the proposal to undertake a review of the Constitution.
- The saving made against the Tour de Yorkshire budget was noted.
- Members were also reminded about the amendment to the Private Water Supply Regulations and the potential increase in charges that may result from the wider testing regime which is now in operation.

Contact Member: Councillor Jamie Cameron
Email: cllr.j.cameron@richmondshire.gov.uk
Date: 12 October 2018