

ACTION NOTES

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

TUESDAY, 14 MARCH 2017



COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Councillor Lynda Coutts
Councillor Phil Dilks
Councillor Mrs Rosemary Kaberry-Brown
Councillor David Mapp
Councillor Bob Sampson (Chairman)

Councillor Jacky Smith (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Mrs Judy Smith
Councillor Mrs Brenda Sumner
Councillor Frank Turner

OFFICERS

Executive Manager Environment (Ian Yates)
Business Manager Street Care Services (Keith Rowe)
Strategic Lead- Programme Delivery (Lee Sirdifield)
Performance and Projects Team Leader (Sam Pearson)
Democratic Officer (Lucy Bonshor)

OTHER MEMBERS

Executive Member Environment (Councillor Nick Craft)

40. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Bob Russell and Councillor Sarah Stokes. Councillor Phil Dilks sent apologies for lateness.

41. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

None disclosed.

42. ACTION NOTES FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 15TH DECEMBER 2016

The action notes of the meeting held on 15th December 2016 were noted.

43. UPDATES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

The Chairman informed the Committee that following the last meeting the Strategic Lead Programme Delivery, Lee Sirdifield would be attending to talk to the committee about CRM and the website. Unfortunately Councillor Ray Wootten had a prior engagement and would be attending the next meeting.

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44. FEEDBACK FROM THE EXECUTIVE

No recommendations had been made from the Committee to the Executive and therefore there was nothing to report at the present time.

45. QUESTION WITHOUT DISCUSSION REFERRED FROM COUNCIL 2ND MARCH 2017

A question without discussion had been referred to the Scrutiny Committee from Council on 2nd March 2017 from Councillor Baxter concerning the fall in recycling rates in Lincolnshire. He had asked that the Scrutiny Committee investigate why they had fallen in SKDC and any practical steps that could be taken to promote waste prevention, recycling and composting.

The Executive Manager Environment introduced the Business Manager Street Care Services who dealt with the operational side of waste services. In order to understand the context of waste and recycling figures and the reason that they had fallen he gave Members some background information on wasteflows and what happens to waste, black bin, silver bin and green bin. He circulated to Members three slides which showed residual waste, reuse, recycling/composting for the Lincolnshire Waste Partnership over a rolling 12 month period between March 2013 and March/June 2016.

The first slide showed a significant amount of residual waste going to landfill before the Energy from Waste (EfW) plant was built towards the end of 2013 at Hykeham. Once the plant was opened in Autumn there was a gradual increase in the amount of tonnage to the EfW and less to landfill to the extent that now the EfW was at capacity. Some materials which did not go to the EfW or landfill went to alternative facilities such as Ketton cement where they were still used as energy from waste and this total tonnage was increasing. Tonnage that went to landfill was expensive at around £100 per tonne.

The next slide referred to recycling and composting/green waste figures which showed a decline of below 50% to 47%. The next slide indicated the amount of recycling both from homes and including household waste recycling centres. Again there was a drop in recycling collected from homes but a slight increase in the amount of recycling sent to household recycling centres.

The recycling figures demonstrated a fall for the whole of those within the Lincolnshire Waste Partnership, SKDC was not an exception.

A range of reasons could be responsible for the decline. The District Council used to receive recycling credits for the collection and treatment of waste which was an incentive from the County Council. However, the County decided to scrap recycling credits across Lincolnshire which reduced SKDC's budget from between £500,000 and £750,000 per annum. This was a significant impact to funding of the service at District level but which saved the County in the region on £2.7M. The County let the contract but was responsible for marketing, promotion and education.

One of the key issues with waste was contamination, when the District Council had the contract for the recycling service there was 10% contamination rate. Contamination figures currently stood at 25%. New regulations and a new contract made it a challenge although the Lincolnshire Waste Partnership was trying to address the contamination issue. Regulations governing quality control had been tightened and even a small amount of contamination had a significant impact. Education was seen as a key factor and the Lincolnshire Waste Partnership introduced a food waste campaign over the Christmas period. Unfortunately, because of the tight regulations only a small amount of contamination meant that a bin was not collected. A sampling study had been requested by South Kesteven and had been undertaken to identify the three heaviest items.

Contaminated waste in recycling bins included any type of food, electricals and any textiles/clothing. This did cause problems as prior to the County taking over the contract textiles were allowed to be put in silver bins, however this item was not transferred when the new contract was implemented.

Due to the lack of funding (recycling credits) the education team support at South Kesteven that used to promote waste/recycling had been significantly reduced. It had been hoped that an invest to save proposal put forward by LCC would be put in place to undertake education. If people were unsure they tended to put things in the black bin which had a cost implication going down the line with extra going to landfill as the EfW was at capacity.

The Lincolnshire Waste Partnership was working on the issues but there was a cost implication whichever route was taken. The national trend for recycling was going down but it didn't mean that nothing should be done to try and get recycling rates back up. South Kesteven would work with LCC to improve the education campaign and intended to undertake our own campaign targeting the three main causes of contamination.

Councillor Baxter thanked the officers for the work that they had done in addressing the question that had been put forward. The County budget seemed to be a major factor. He asked about the contract in relation to the EfW to which the Executive Manager Environment replied that it was a 30 year contract with FCC a Spanish company. The Executive Manager stated that anything in relation to the contract and the EfW plant should be directed to the County Council as it was commercial information. He was aware that North Kesteven District Council's Scrutiny Committee had recently discussed the item.

A question was asked about whether there were any community champions, also information on what you could put in and what stayed out of recycling bins needed more PR and information on the website. The stricter regulations concerning silver bins was increasing due to contamination which was causing recycling per tonne to decrease. Although the figures were decreasing the Business Manager Street Care Services pointed out that the decreases were only by small margins, point five or point six of a percent also different authorities promoted their services such as green waste differently and reference was made to South Holland.

The Executive Member Environment referred to the website and stated that a relatively cheap option would be to improve the website so that a predictive search on products could be done.

Members then discussed the waste generally. One Member was concerned about the attitude of the waste operatives who collected the bins in her area and felt that they were very rude. She had a lot of elderly residents in her area and often bins were left because a teabag had been included in the silver bin. It was suggested that perhaps officers could attend one of the OAP meetings held monthly to speak about waste.

Further discussion then followed on why vegetables such as cauliflower and fallen apples could not be put in the green bin to which the Executive Manager Environment responded explaining the strict regulations which needed to be in place due to the type of composting process used.

Various Members then made references to their dealings with the waste operatives which were positive and about what could and could not be put in the recycling bins. It was stated that a countrywide standard and better recycling labels would be helpful. Other Members stated that "might be recyclable" which was put on various packaging was not helpful and in her particular area there was a lot of contamination with silver bins.

The Executive Manager Environment stated that contamination was a real problem and waste operatives on the ground had a difficult task. Education was key be that by website or by the SK Today which was circulated widely in the district. Unfortunately as had previously been stated the funding for an education officer for schools had been cut and any invest to save proposal was with LCC.

The Executive Manager Environment and the Business Manager Street Care then discussed the household waste recycling facilities including the mobile unit at Stamford. He would take on board what had been said about stickers for the bins and tagging. There was a lot of information on the DEFRA website including national studies that had been undertaken. Work would continue with County colleagues to standardise contracts but education needed to be in place before enforcement took place.

One Member gave an example of recycling practice in Canada. Another Member referred to Rutland but because the civic amenity site was over the boarder it came under a different county.

The Officers were thanked for attending and answering questions. The Chairman indicated that Officers had highlighted the difficulties being encountered, although to a large extent they were being governed by both the County Council and the rules and legislation governing recycling. He thanked all Members for the contribution to the item.

(A small adjournment took place between 11:25am and 11:30am)

46. CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT AND WEBSITE UPDATE ROAD MAP

The Strategic Lead – Programme Delivery, Lee Sirdifield spoke to Members about the Customer Relationship Management system which was one of the tools that formed part of the flexible organisation programme which supported improved access to services. The system was used by both staff and the public and enabled online access and better support for telephony and face to face transactions.

The website links to the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system to deliver services online. The system enabled a holistic view of customer interactions with the council enabling an improved customer service and enhanced business intelligence.

The CRM allowed teams such as the Neighbourhood Teams to deliver services using mobile devices without the need to come into the office. The system was used by other teams such as Revenues, Benefits, Street Scene, Licensing, Customer Services and to a small degree Legal and Democratic Services.

The authority was seeing good levels of take-up for online services. For those transactions that had already been enabled, almost 60% of demand now came through the website instead of through the call centre or customer services centres enabling people to interact 24/7, 356 days a year. Since the launch of the solution, over 100,000 transaction had been managed through the CRM system.

The Flexible Organisations programme had also delivered a 29% reduction in the amount of office space needed. The office space was rented out to other organisations generating income. The end target for the reduction in office space was 30%.

Following the last meeting Members had asked about registering an account. Mr Sirdifield displayed the SKDC website home page and provided Members with guidance on where they would go to make an account or report something such as a missed bin. Examples were also provided for how they could track progress through the website.

The website could be viewed on anything from a laptop/PC, iPad to a smart phone and it adapted to the technology that was being used enabling it to be accessed 24/7. One of the most popular areas that was accessed was the garden waste with currently 28,000 customers accessing this service via the website. The website could also be used for council tax billing, benefits applications and 20 business licences. Depending upon why customers were using the website they may need to set up an account, i.e. if they wished to have an assisted collection as that was personal to them. If however they only wished to report dog fouling or litter that could be done without having to register. The system had been set up to work intelligently on key words with the biggest area used being planning with over 1,000 hits a week.

Further work was planned to deliver further improvements in areas such as revenues, benefits and also housing and reporting repairs through the website.

The Chairman thanked the Strategic Lead – Programme Delivery for attending the meeting and stated that if he needed any help in further developing the site to make the committee aware.

47. QUARTER 3 CORPORATE PLAN PERFORMANCE

Members had been circulated with report PPMO06 from the Performance and Projects Team Leader, Sam Pearson which dealt with Quarter 3 Corporate Plan Performance between the period October to December 2016. Executive Managers had given an overview of their specific areas. The Council was working towards two main corporate priority themes: Open for Business (five outcomes and eight measures) and Commercially and Customer Focus (three outcomes and five measures) for this period.

She referred Members to page 11 of the report which dealt with the Southern Quadrant and which was showing as red. There had been delays with the project (which included building the relief road, housing and employment land) which were outside of the Council's control but since the report had been circulated supplementary information which had been outstanding had now been received and the project had moved on. A question was asked about the project to which the Executive Manager Development and Growth replied – the Southern Quadrant was a massive application involving various elements some of these relied on third parties submitting the correct information, in this case it was a noise survey that had been outstanding. All information had to be submitted before the DCC could determine the application which maybe June/July this year. Members expressed concern about the progress of the project to which the Executive Manager replied that there were two separate projects, the relief road was one project which was a County Council project and although phase one had been completed it was within the County's gift as to when the next part of the project started although construction of Phase 2 was scheduled to start in May 2017. One Member asked about guaranteeing that the Section 106 contributions would be spent on site, however there was not a lot of money funding the infrastructure it was put towards allowing the town centre to thrive and survive.

The Chairman referred to page 14 OD02 – Net Additional Homes provided which also was showing as red. Unfortunately housing delivery had slowed down in the last couple of years and this was a national issue not a local issue. Work was being done to try and speed up the process and this had been discussed at the recent housing summit that had been held for Members on reviewing the housing strategy. The Council currently had a 5.3 year supply for housing where as some authorities were not meeting their housing targets. The Council could look to have the right housing, in the right place at the right time in the right form as we had more than five years supply. A question was asked about a particular site within the district to which the Member was a trustee of the charity who owned the site. The pre application that had been done by agents had given incorrect information and the Executive Manager

Development and Growth said he would speak to the Member outside of the meeting.

A Member asked about the Grantham Improvement Scheme referenced on page 15 of the report and an illustration was given of what that involved also it was part of the Annual Report which gave examples of shop fronts such as the Picture Café in Westgate.

The Chairman asked what the registered name of the company was on page 12 - "Gravitas Housing" had been registered.

The Performance and Projects Team Leader highlighted OB13 on page 16 of the report which concerned fly tipping. Although the national figure was on the rise within South Kesteven this figure was down by 20% for the same time as the previous year and this could be contributed in part to the successful prosecutions which had been carried out.

The Chairman on behalf of the Committee thanked the Performance and Projects Team Leader and stressed how valuable the information was and that it was available to all Members on the Modern.gov app on their iPads.

48. WORK PROGRAMME

Currently there was little for the Scrutiny Committee to look at although there was an issue which may come before the Committee concerning street lighting but currently there was ongoing dialogue between the Member who raised the issue and officers in Venues and Facilities. Following LCC's decision to turn street lights off at 12 midnight reference was made to the number of street lights no longer being repaired by LCC and lights reported back in September were still not repaired in March. Currently there was about 2,500 lights waiting to be repaired hopefully this situation would be resolved soon.

Elected Member training was also raised, this had been discussed at a recent meeting of the Constitution Committee following the Scrutiny Committee's recommendation about mandatory training being undertaken during each term of office. Some training was seen as a "soft" option such as Data Protection, Safeguarding and Knowing Your Community. It was felt that perhaps Members needed more in basic training on understanding what the requirements were of being a District Councillor both from a reputation point of view and their responsibility to the council all training that was provided directly affected how Councillors carried out their role. This was an issue that the Committee could discuss at a later date.

49. REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

The Chairman reiterated to Members that Councillor Ray Wootten would be attending the next meeting to talk about the Lincolnshire Police and Crime Panel which he was the Councillors representative on.

Councillor Mrs Kaberry-Brown briefed Members about relevant issues following a recent meeting of Lincolnshire Health Scrutiny Committee including LIVES, Grantham hospital's A & E department, Lincolnshire's high mortality rate (due to the high number of older people who live in the area) and the proposed closure of Glenfield Children's heart hospital.

Councillor Brenda Sumner referred to a recent meeting she had attended at Stamford Hospital where the A & E department had closed down and only minor injuries were dealt with. Although she was not a council representative at the meeting she spoke about the proposed merger with Hinchingsbrooke Hospital to form a North West Anglian Trust and also that Stamford had a new scanner and chemotherapy was now available at the hospital.

Councillor Dilks thanked the Member for her report on the Lincolnshire Health Scrutiny Committee and referred to the Government's plan to close a third of Pharmacies down as the Government's grant to pharmacies was being withdrawn and this would impact the number of pharmacies.

Councillor Jacky Smith mentioned the mobile health units that were available (chemotherapy, breast screening and diabetics) including the mental health ambulance car which was a valuable service of great benefit. She also briefly spoke about the drainage boards and the particular problem of fly tipping in the drains and dykes which meant extra work for the Upper Witham Drainage Board to remove the obstructions which meant less time to do other work. Also the relationship between LCC as flood authority and the drainage boards.

The meeting closed at 12.28pm.