

ACTION NOTES

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, 15 DECEMBER 2016



COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Councillor Lynda Coutts
Councillor David Mapp
Councillor Bob Russell
Councillor Bob Sampson (Chairman)

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

OFFICERS

Business Manager Neighbourhoods
(Mark Jones)
Community Engagement & Policy
Development Officer (Carol Drury)
Democratic Officer (Lucy Bonshor)

OTHER MEMBERS

Councillor Nick Craft (Executive Member
Environment)

31. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors' Dilks, Kaberry-Brown, Judy Smith and Sarah Stokes.

32. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

None disclosed.

33. ACTION NOTES FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 1ST NOVEMBER 2016

The action notes of the meeting held on 1st November were noted.

34. UPDATES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

The Chairman referred to the Gravity Fields Festival update – analysis of the event was still being undertaken and a report would be available in January. It was agreed that the effectiveness of festivals would be an agenda item for the next meeting of the Committee in March.

The Chairman informed the Committee that he had not had the opportunity to catch up with the necessary officers with regard to the current situation with the Disabled Facilities Grant funding, however the Executive Member Environment who was present at the meeting indicated that dialogue for 2015/16 funding

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was still ongoing, the Executive had sent a strongly worded letter about the funding and he believed that the full amount of funding for 2017/18 would be coming from LCC. The Chairman indicated that he would catch up with the Strategic Director to get an update.

Members were informed that Councillor Ray Wootten had been invited to attend the meeting to give a report on the outside body that he represented, however he was unable to attend this meeting but would be available to attend the next meeting in March. The Chairman on behalf of the Scrutiny Committee sent best wishes to both Councillor Ray and Linda Wootten at this time.

The Democracy Officer confirmed that the Grantham Growth Point Board was still in effect and the Executive Member Environment agreed that it had not been disbanded.

35. FEEDBACK FROM THE EXECUTIVE

As no recommendations had been made by the Committee to the Executive there was nothing to report under this item.

36. THE NEIGHBOURHOOD APPROACH

The Business Manager Neighbourhoods gave a presentation to Members about the Neighbourhoods Initiative. A mini restructure had taken place to better align the Council priorities. Neighbourhoods (previously community safety) were under Environment together with street care services (clean, green) and environment health. The Executive Member Environment was on the Community Safety Board and the Neighbourhoods Team covered community safety at a local level. From customer feedback and the reduction of resources from other areas, it was apparent that there was a need to have dedicated officers who, when a report of environmental crime or anti social behaviour was received that there were officers who could pick up the report and "run" with it, much in the same way as dedicated housing officers did for council house tenants.

Due to the reduction in resources a different way of working was required with officers needing to be more mobile and have a broader knowledge base. The focus needed to be on where a difference could be made with help from partnerships with other sectors. Accurate reporting of issues such as fly tipping or abandoned vehicles was essential as the information could be evaluated and linked straight to officers out in the field without the need for them to come back into the office. A comprehensive response could be given based on accurate information received to enable the issue to be dealt with quickly and efficiently.

The Business Manager Neighbourhoods then gave an example of an enforcement evening that had taken place in Stamford during the early hours of the morning.

The neighbourhoods agenda had been put together and based on this a team

had been created. The team's workload was a mixture of environmental issues and anti social behaviour. Legislation for anti social behaviour covered everything from dogs barking or escaping their gardens to fly tipping. The core meaning of anti social behaviour (ASB) was that it was an action which caused alarm and distress, however not all reports alleging ASB could be viewed within this context. An example was given of reports that children under 10 years old kicking a ball on a green space close to their home making a lot of noise. Some would see this as ASB as they had less tolerance for that type of behaviour, where others would just see children playing, there was a balance to be reached as it worked both ways.

In order to deal with these types of issues the right kind of skills and experience was needed. Following the re-organisation of the Community Safety team to the Neighbourhood team two members of staff were displaced. Two external members of staff were brought in with a wealth of knowledge and experience on dealing with investigations. Currently they were learning how a local authority operated and the scale of the work that was undertaken.

Using links with partners was one of the keys to having a successful team be that the Police, Fire and Rescue, Anglian Water or British Transport Police. Having the correct information reported was a key factor and the new website allowed people to pin point (accurately by map) the location of abandoned vehicles and instances of fly tipping which helped a quicker response to be given as officers weren't searching for locations and the new mobile technology enabled officers to be contacted out in the field.

(10.19am Cllr Mapp arrived)

The Business Manager then spoke in more detail about the skill sets required and how having a broader knowledge base could help other sections such as investigating basic planning enforcement and noise complaints, or taking photographs for evidence or carrying out basic premises checks, a common sense approach was needed.

One Member asked about assisting building control and the Business Manager Neighbourhoods responded by stating that although this had been looked at initially, further training would be required by officers.

It was envisaged that a designated point of contact for issues would be in place in due course which would be aligned with policing areas.

The Business Manager then spoke about action that the team had been involved in. Leaflet drops and letters had been carried out in an area of Grantham covering one of the main routes from the railway station in to town in respect of waste issues, often the tenants in the properties were on temporary contracts with short leases. Three prosecutions had been successful and the waste issues had been vastly reduced in the area through education as well as the prosecutions. It was proposed that similar action would be carried out in other parts of Grantham where waste was also an issue.

The Business Manager Neighbourhoods then answered questions that

Members had including taxi driver licensing in Stamford, links with education partners, academies and inclusion officers and reporting issues on the website. The Business Manager referred to the customer relationship management system (CRM) which was linked with the website and enabled a more rounded picture of customers to be given. Some Members commented on the difficulties they encountered when trying to log on to the system and also their frustrations with trying to contact people by telephone. It was suggested that the Strategic Lead, Programme Delivery be invited to attend the next meeting of the committee to update Members on the streamlining of services.

➤ **Action note**

That the Strategic Lead, Programme Delivery, Lee Sirdifield be invited to attend the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee to update Members on the streamlining of services including the CRM system and the website.

Another Member asked how many members of staff were in the Neighbourhood Team to which the Business Manager Neighbourhoods replied there were six including a Team Leader and also an admin support officer. Further comments were made about aligning the team to the police boundaries and it was indicated that further work on volumes needed to be known before designations were made.

The Chairman thanked the Business Manager Neighbourhoods for his presentation and the Committee looked forward to the progress with the team in the quarterly performance reports.

As a visit to the CCTV room had been organised for after the meeting the Business Manager Neighbourhoods took the opportunity to update the Committee on the work undertaken by the CCTV unit, which would have its 20th anniversary next year. He showed a surveillance video that had been captured by the CCTV operators in Stamford which led to the apprehension and arrest of two pick pockets in town. This was a good example of partnership working between the CCTV unit and the Police.

37. WORK PROGRAMME

From discussions held during the meeting it was proposed that items for discussion at the next meeting would include:

- Next quarter performance report
- Effectiveness of Festivals
- An update on the streamlining of services including the Customer Relationship Management system and the website.

The Business Manager Neighbourhoods indicated that Superintendent Mark Housley may be available to speak to Members from a police perspective following his presentation today at a future meeting of the Committee.

The Chairman reminded Members about Scrutiny's role and if they had any items for discussion which were within the remit of the Committee, they should put them forward in order that a scoping exercise could be carried out.

38. REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

None of the Members present had anything to report under this item.

39. CLOSE OF MEETING

Before the meeting closed the Chairman wished all those present a Happy Christmas and informed Members that the next meeting was the 14th March 2017.

The meeting closed at 11:05am.

After the meeting, a tour of the CCTV room had been organised.