

MEETING OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**TUESDAY, 22 FEBRUARY 2011 10.30
AM**



GROUP MEMBERS PRESENT

Councillor Robert Hearmon
Councillor Bryan Helyar
Councillor David Higgs
Councillor Trevor Holmes

Councillor Ken Joynson
Councillor Mrs Rosemary Kaberry-
Brown
Councillor Bob Russell (11:32 onwards)
Councillor Mrs Judy Smith

OFFICERS

Performance, Consultation and
Communications Service Manager
(Sharon Yates) – 25-29
Local Strategic Partnership Coordinator
(Carol Drury) – 29-30
Principal Democracy Officer (Jo
Toomey)

OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT

Councillor Mike Exton

25. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs Bosworth, Russell and Williams.

The Committee was disappointed that two Members were unable to attend as two meetings had been scheduled at the same time.

26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were made.

27. ACTION NOTES FROM THE MEETING OF 25 JANUARY 2011

The notes of the meeting held on 25 January 2011 were agreed as a correct record.

28. UPDATES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

Following representations from the Principal of New College, Stamford, during the Committee's last meeting, Councillor Hearmon had submitted two motions to Council on 3 March 2011. If Council agreed to support the motions, letters would be sent to Lincoln University and Lincolnshire County Council.

Action Point:

Subject to the outcome of Council debate, send letters to Lincoln University and Lincolnshire County Council.

The Committee had requested an update on the Cellar Bar, Stamford. Negotiations were underway and as such, no information could be released at the time of the meeting. The Head of Assets should be able to provide a full update at the Committee's meeting on 5 April 2011.

Action Point:

The Head of Assets to update the Committee on the outcome of negotiations regarding the Cellar Bar at Stamford Arts Centre.

29. BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS - QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE FOCUS ON QUALITY LIVING

The Chairman welcomed the Performance, Consultation and Communications Service Manager to the meeting. She explained the quarter two performance report the Committee had before them focussed on the Quality Living priority and covered the period April to September 2010. Mrs Yates provided a brief overview of performance against the priority:

- 54.2% of households' waste was recycled, reused or composted between April and September.
- Waste crews made 72,295 refuse/green bin collections per week, equating to over 3.7million collections a year.
- Public confidence in the district council and police working together to tackle anti-social behaviour had increased from 52% to 57%.
- The number of food businesses who had achieved only one star as part of the council's hygiene ratings had decreased.
- During the reporting period, the Waste and Recycling team had received the greatest number of complaints. This averaged at 3 a week. 37 out of the 45 complaints were about missed bins.

Reducing the environmental impact of waste disposal

- The Council aimed to achieve 55% recycling/composting of household waste by March 2011.
- Officers delivered educational work about recycling through schools. Members supported this approach. Feedback from schools had been

positive and many reported their pupils had started their own recycling schemes.

- One Member suggested that the Council could run a “recycling proficiency” programme with schools, where children would carry out recycling-related activities and achieve a badge or certificate. ***This would be fed back to officers.***
- The economic climate meant people were welcoming the recycle/reuse agenda and were making deliberate choices to reduce waste.
- The Scrutiny Committee had set up a working group to review bin collection vehicles. The routes were changing and the working group was in hiatus until this had been completed.
- Last year the Council did not meet its target for recycling, composting and reusing. At the end of the reporting period for 2010/11, the level being achieved was just under target. Members questioned whether the target was realistic or whether it needed reviewing for 2011/12.

Reducing carbon emissions and protecting local communities from severe weather events

- Members felt people were becoming more open to the idea of reducing carbon emissions because it provided opportunities for them to save money.
- Messages about reducing carbon emissions and energy efficiency were central features of public engagement events like ‘Cleaner, Greener, Safer’.
- Advice for reducing emissions is regularly included in SK Today.

Stronger communities with clean and safe places to live

- Members agreed that the standards of cleanliness in the district were generally good.
- New bins for depositing chewing gum had been deployed in each of the district’s major towns. ***Members queried whether these would also be available in villages.***
- Officers from Waste and Recycling were handing out heatproof pouches that go in pockets, bags, etc. for the safe collection of cigarette butts so that smokers could dispose of them at home. They were being distributed at public events. ***Members wanted to know the cost of this project.***
- Lots of villages in the district had ‘clean up’ days and some parish councils employed someone to litter-pick.
- The survey that demonstrated increases in public confidence about the district council and police working together was carried out by Lincolnshire Police. It only showed improvement in terms of percentages. ***Members asked how many people were surveyed.***

Developing a range of housing to meet the needs of all residents

- South Kesteven District Council had carried out a full survey on its housing stock. It provided a list of required work for properties to meet the Decent Homes Standard. Often only small adjustments

- were required to get the property to Decent Homes Standard.
- The Council aimed to adapt a minimum of 700 homes to enable disabled or older people live independently. Members were concerned about setting a minimum number in case there were insufficient requests for adaptations.
- There were plans for the fitting of solar panels at a sheltered housing scheme in the district. **Members asked where the scheme was and whether the Council received support from the government for the installation of solar schemes.**
- When Members spoke to tenants, they were satisfied with the quality of the housing and with SKDC as their landlord.
- The report stated the Council would continue to work with occupational health services. Members were concerned that this would not be achievable because Lincolnshire County Council's budget incorporated a significant reduction in adult services. **Members asked whether this would impact the district council's service delivery.**

Improved health and wellbeing and offering positive lifestyle choices

- The performance report only referred to health walks in Grantham. These walks were funded by the Primary Care Trust, who stipulated that funding could only be spent in Earlesfield, Harrowby and St. Wulfram's Wards. Negotiations with the PCT led to officers delivering walks in towns across the district.
- Members commented that each of the four towns in the district had their own swimming pools. **They asked whether the council did anything to encourage more people to use the leisure centres.**
- The government scheme offering free swimming sessions for under-16s and old aged pensioners had been withdrawn. Free swimming was still available for under-8s.
- General consensus was that **leisure centres could be better advertised locally, particularly highlighting public swimming sessions.**

So that there was a clear picture of how well the Council was performing year-on-year, Members requested performance information from the same period in the previous year.

The Chairman thanked the Performance, Consultation and Communications Service Manager for attending the meeting and commended the format and readability of the report.

Action Point

To feed the comments and questions to the relevant Service Managers.

30. PARTNERSHIPS

The Chairman welcomed the Local Strategic Partnership Co-ordinator to the meeting. She had been invited to give a brief overview on partnerships in which the council was involved.

In 2007/8, partnerships were the subject of an internal audit. One of the recommendations that arose from this was producing and maintaining a database of significant partnerships. There are three types of significant partnership:

- 1) Those required by statute (e.g. Community Safety Partnership)
- 2) Those for which the district council is the accountable body (e.g. Local Strategic Partnership)
- 3) Partnerships that had funding in excess of £100,000.

In 2007/8, 11 significant partnerships were identified. During 2010/11, this number had decreased to eight, which were:

- Four town centre management partnerships (TCMPs)
- Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)
- Community Safety Partnership (CSP)
- Grantham Growth Point
- Lincolnshire concessionary fare scheme (until April 2011)

All partnerships required regular review, to ensure they were still fit-for-purpose. With the exception of Grantham Growth Point, all of SKDC's partnerships were under review.

Community Safety Partnership – The CSP was under review to reflect a police re-structure.

Local Strategic Partnership – The LSP review was partly motivated by Lincolnshire County Council's withdrawal from many partnerships in August 2010.

Town Centre Management Partnerships – The district's four TCMPs were under review following an audit.

Members discussed partnership working and the partnerships of which South Kesteven District Council was a part.

- Members recognised the value of working in partnership when it added value, provided access to a new or shared resource and when it delivered something that could not be achieved by an agency working alone.
- Partnership working could prevent duplication and strengthen an outcome beyond that which could be achieved by a single agency.
- The real outcomes of partnership working were more evident at delivery level, rather than the executive/strategic level.
- Partnership working was jeopardised if a significant player withdrew from a partnership.
- Working in partnership is an excellent way of supporting "weaker

groups" who may not have sufficient resources at their disposal.

South Kesteven District Council had its own partnership policy, which was being updated. The policy provided guidance for officers on setting up partnerships, what the council wanted from a partnership and what to do if SKDC was the accountable body or just a member of the partnership. Before entering any partnership, officers should complete a partnership checklist, which should ensure all partnerships are appropriate, properly constituted and supported the Council's priorities. This process should also identify any risks or financial implications. The Council also had a partnership assurance toolkit for reviewing existing partnerships, which provided a means of risk assessing partnerships and ensuring they are fit-for-purpose. All partnerships should be reviewed annually.

The Committee thanked the Local Strategic Partnership Co-ordinator for her input and suggested that they might undertake future work scrutinising partnerships in greater detail.

Action Point

Circulate copies of the draft Partnership Policy to Scrutiny Committee members.

31. SCRUTINY ARRANGEMENTS

The Principal Democracy Officer introduced the briefing note on overview and Scrutiny and provided a summary of the role of scrutiny, the Centre for Public Scrutiny's four principles of good scrutiny, different ways of working and examples of effective scrutiny from South Kesteven District Council and other authorities.

The Localism Bill was expected to add greater clarity and strength to the overview and scrutiny function. Members recognised that the Scrutiny Committee should be focussing on the council and partners' performance and the impact on communities within South Kesteven.

The Committee decided it would like to spend time at its last meeting before the election putting together guidance for incoming scrutiny Members.

Action Points:

- **Include a 'Scrutiny' item on the agenda for the Committee's meeting on Tuesday 5 April 2011.**
- **Circulate copies of the scrutiny presentation.**

32. WORK PROGRAMME

Members discussed potential items for the Committee's final meeting:

- Scrutiny – guidance for new scrutiny councillors

- A Cabinet/Portfolio Holder decision (decision to be agreed)
- Quarter 3 performance report – ‘Good For Business’
- Update on further education following the council meeting
- Update on funding of Bourne Youth Centre

33. REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Councillor Joynson reported that Stamford College were amongst the top 5% of most improved higher education establishments in the country and were the most improved in Lincolnshire.

Councillor Mrs Smith reported on a meeting of the Bourne Youth Centre Management Committee held on 21 February 2011. A representative from Lincolnshire County Council’s Children’s Services attended the meeting and advised the management committee that a 90-day consultation on the delivery of Children’s Services had begun. Funding from the County Council would be allocated on a need-assessed basis. Members of the management committee had been asked to prepare a business plan showing how it would continue to fund and run the youth centre. On average, 35-40 young people attended the centre on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. On Friday, up to 70 young people attended.

Action Point:

Report back to the Scrutiny Committee following a further meeting at Bourne Youth Centre on 7 March 2011.

34. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting was closed at 12:43pm. The Committee were next due to meet on **Tuesday 5 April 2011 at 2pm.**