

Monday, 1 September 2014
at 6.00 pm



Scrutiny Committee

Present:-

Members: Councillor Ansell (Chairman) Councillor Shuttleworth (Deputy-Chairman) Councillors Cooke, Murray and Ungar.

5 Minutes of the meeting held on 2 June 2014.

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 June 2014 were submitted and approved and the Chairman was authorised to sign them as an accurate record.

6 Apologies for absence.

Councillor Belsey and Thompson. Councillor Taylor attended as substitute for Councillor Belsey.

7 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPIs) by members as required under Section 31 of the Localism Act and of other interests as required by the Code of Conduct.

There were none.

8 Eastbourne Community Safety Plan.

The committee considered the report of the Senior Head of Community, detailing the current performance of the Eastbourne Community Partnership (ECSP) under the updated Eastbourne Community Safety Plan. The report outlined issues that could potentially impact future crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) performance.

Cabinet had previously endorsed the successful Crime Reduction performance of the Partnership. In 2005/2006 Eastbourne was subject to around 11,000 crimes. For the performance year 2010/2011 this had dropped to approximately 7,500 crimes and to the end of June 2014, this had reduced to around 5,700 crimes, a further reduction of 5% compared with the same period last year.

Members were advised that the current Plan had been developed in consultation with key partners including the Police and other members of the ECSP. Version 1.2 was available as Appendix A to the report.

It was now established that the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) had direct control in determining budget allocation to local ECSPs commencing in the 2014/2015 financial year. Eastbourne CSP was working with the East Sussex Community Safety Partnership to highlight the positive benefits for the PCC to retain and increase investment in ECSP activity. Without additional funding next year from the PCC the ECSP's

ability to fund worthwhile local community safety projects may be compromised. The PCC's allocation this financial year was increased by £10k to £26.5k.

Overall crime had substantially reduced since 2005/2006 performance year. Notable crime reductions had again been achieved in the performance year 2013/2014 and crime performance was again positive within measured criteria of the updated plan in the current performance year to date. Central Government cut-backs coupled with the introduction of Police and Crime Commissioners may have an adverse impact on local ECSP funding in financial year 2015/2016. Further potential countywide changes as a result of a newly 'elected PCC' had been mitigated by a continued local focus in addition to adding value in developing initiatives, including Neighbourhood Management. ECSP was working closely with the office of the PCC to implement the new ASB legislation. Members were advised that the ASB Crime and Policing Act 2014 would come into operation in October 2014. The Act was designed to simplify ASB powers and tools to make implementation of the tactics more timely and effective. Partners re working together to share best practice and consistency of use and the ECSP was working closely with the office of the PCC to ensure best use of Community Trigger and Community Remedy. A briefing paper on the subject as Appendix B to the report. A Member Seminar on the subject had been scheduled for 22 September 2014.

The Committee discussed the figures for Road Accidents, Safeguarding Children with particular reference to child exploitation, and funding for the Women's Refuges across the County. In addition the committee discussed the work of the ECSP in relation to diversionary activities for the younger generation in Eastbourne. The Chairman requested that the Safeguarding training provide for Council staff be extended to Members.

Scrutiny committee was requested to note the continued Crime Reduction performance, endorse the updated 2014/2017 Community Safety Plan and continue the delegated authority to the Senior Head of Community to implement actions set out.

NOTED.

9 Corporate Performance - Quarter 1 2014/15.

Members considered the report of the Chief Finance Officer and Head of Corporate Development updating Members on the Council's performance against Corporate Plan Priority actions, indicators and milestones for Quarter 1 2014/15.

As part of the 2014 refresh the Council had removed a number of Performance indicators (PI) which were either not directly related to Eastbourne Borough Council activity, were no longer related to the Council's priority activities or were measured in a different way.

The removed PIs included:

- JSA Claimant Count

- Towner Visitors
- Online accommodation referrals made
- Number of incidents of homelessness prevented and relieved
- Number of homeless applications
- Number of homes where category 1 hazards have been remedied
- Number of young people engaged in positive activities
- Number of people engaged in the Youth Forum
- Number of buildings tackled with success

A new PI had been added to measure environmental crime:

- Reduction in the number of reported fly-tipping incidents

Appendix 1 to the report provided a detailed report on the 2014/15 activities and outturns of the performance indicators listed within the Corporate Plan. The first section of Appendix 1 listed all the Corporate Plan priority actions whose in-year milestones had already been fully completed this year. The second section of Appendix 1 listed the ongoing actions showing all milestones that were scheduled for completion within the first quarter of the 2014/5.

Of the 27 Key Performance Indicators reported in the Corporate Plan this quarter, 7 were currently showing as "Red," 13 were showing as "Green," 5 are showing as "Amber" and 2 were "data only" or contextual PIs. The off target PIs were:

- DE_011 - Reduction in the number of reported fly-tipping incidents
- CD_008 - Decent Homes programme
- CD_056 - Average number of days for assistance with adaptations
- CD_156- Number of households living in temporary accommodation
- ECSP_002 - Shoplifting rate compared to 2013/14
- ECSP_004 - Violent crime in a public place
- ECSP_016 - Serious Acquisitive Crime (robbery, car crime and burglary dwelling) rate compared to 2013/14.

Members queried the removal of PI's as reported, particularly the JSA Claimant Count, and Towner Visitors and were advised that there were either no priority projects relating to those PI's in the Council's emerging refreshed Corporate Plan, or that they could not be directly influenced by the Council. However, the removed PI's would still be monitored by the relevant Council departments.

The addition of the new PI relating to fly-tipping was intended to reduce duplication in reporting incidents and the actual number of incidents, with Neighbourhood Teams playing a more active role in re-educating the residents of Eastbourne as a preventative measure.

Members noted the position of the General Fund as of the end of the June showed a small variance of £17,000. This related to several areas of minor under and over spends which were being carefully monitored. These included:

- Additional grant income (£40k)
- Dotto Train income not met £65k

The committee were advised that there were a number of risks around the Revenues and Benefits area, which included staff resources, additional work with the implementation of the new Revenues and Benefits computer system and the introduction of universal credit. Recovery work had been put on hold over the last month whilst data was migrated to the new system, which may have implications for collection rates in the short term. This was being monitored and any variances would be reported in the Quarter two monitoring report.

The contingency fund currently stood at £170,000, of which £5,000 was currently committed, leaving a balance of £165,000, available to fund inflationary increases and any future unforeseen one off areas of expenditure during the year.

HRA performance was currently above target by £10k this was as a result of a number small variances which were carefully being monitored.

The detailed capital programme was shown at Appendix 3 to the report. Actual expenditure was low compared to the budget. There were no significant variances and expenditure was in line with traditions patterns of spend as at quarter one. Expenditure was expected to increase as schemes progress throughout the year.

The projected Collection fund for the year was highlighted within the report.

Council Tax was currently showing a £10,000 surplus a variance of 0.02% of the total debit due for the year. The Business Rates deficit of £534,000 was as a result of a bigger than anticipated provision made in 13/14 for outstanding appeals, giving rise to a higher than budgeted for balance carried forward as at 1 April 2014. There were 106 properties with appeals outstanding with a total rateable value £18m. The valuation office was expecting to settle all these claims within the next 12 months. The uncertainty of the potential value of successful appeals was a major risk to the Collection Fund at this time. The deficit represents 1.57% of the total debit for the year.

10 Annual Finance Seminar.

The Chairman reminded the Committee that the Annual Finance Seminar would be held on Tuesday 14 October 2014, 6.00pm, Court Room, Town Hall.

NOTED.

The meeting closed at 7.05 pm

Councillor Ansell (Chairman)