

Monday, 2 September 2013
at 6.00 pm



Scrutiny

Membership:-

Councillor Warner (Chairman) Councillor Shuttleworth (Deputy-Chairman)
Councillors Belsey, Coles, Cooke, Murray and Ungar

5 Minutes of the meeting held on 3 June 2013 - previously circulated.

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 June 2013 were submitted and approved and the Chairman was authorised to sign them as a correct record.

6 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 (please see note at end of agenda).

None reported.

7 Corporate Performance - Quarter 1 2013/14.

Members considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer updating the committee on the Council's performance against Corporate Plan Priority actions, indicators and financial targets for 2013/14.

The 2010/15 Corporate Plan was refreshed for 2013 and sets out a number of key actions and indicators to deliver and measure progress against key priorities.

Members noted that further detail behind the report and evidence providing a full and robust audit trail for the performance information presented was available to view within the online system. A new "dashboard" view of the Corporate Plan actions, milestones and related information had been developed to improve the ease of access to data for Members and Officers. Member training sessions dedicated to accessing and using Covalent had been carried out and Members were invited to contact the Strategic Performance Team at any time to arrange individual training support on using the system if required.

The committee were advised that Appendix 1 was a detailed report on the Quarter 1 activities and outturns of the performance indicators listed within the Corporate Plan. This report showed the latest available outturns for the National and Local Performance Indicators featured in the 2010/15 Corporate Plan broken down into themed areas.

All of the planned milestones for Quarter 1 of 2013/14 have been completed within the reporting period.

There were 35 Performance indicators featured in the Quarter 1 report. Their current performance breaks down as follows:

- 8 Red/Off target
- 2 Amber/slightly off target
- 16 Green/On Target
- 1 Unknown/awaiting data from a third party

There were also a number of "data only" indicators that were monitored to provide context to key services or were being measured in order to provide baseline performance to benchmark new services.

Devolved Budget spend was reported at the end of the appended performance report. The table lists the projects supported and showed the total spend per ward so far this year.

The Chair and Deputy Chair had requested some further information regarding the recent implementation of the new waste contract. A briefing paper detailing the patterns and reasons behind the issues experienced, volumes of calls and the common issues raised during those calls had been provided to Members prior to the meeting. The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Place Service and the Senior Head of Infrastructure were in attendance to answer Members questions.

The committee were advised that missed collections were not yet at an acceptable level, however the Council were working closely with Kier to resolve the issues. Members were reminded that missed collections were per container and not per household.

The implementation of new collection rounds for the whole of Eastbourne had led to an unprecedented level of calls, which staff had dealt with in a professional manner and no complaints had been received regarding Council staff. Staff had remained positive throughout with a maximum of eight phones being manned at any one time. The issue was currently being monitored and an extra Specialist Advisor had been made available to assist with more complicated calls.

Over the first five weeks following the changes, 424 calls about waste issues were being handled per day, on average. By way of comparison with call volumes under the previous contract, when calls were being handled by a specific cleansing team, in three days following the bank holiday in January 2013 (traditionally a busy time), an average of 70 calls (56%) were handled per day with the rest going to answer phone.

The main service delivery issues which led to increased call volumes were:

- Queries about bin deliveries, with many residents not wishing to have an additional bin, some residents requesting additional bins and many residents who had not received new garden waste bins,

largely due to the fact that they were not formally recorded by the previous contractor as being in receipt of the garden waste service.

- Higher numbers of missed assisted collections due to a failure to successfully share knowledge of assisted collection store points between crews due to round changes. Kier had tried to ensure the carry over of this knowledge however this information was not currently available to crew members through the collection vehicles' onboard computers. Kier had been issued with a default notice regarding this issue in August 2013.
- Entire roads, or parts of roads, on narrow rounds being missed following the amendments by Kier. These issues were now being resolved with further changes to narrow rounds, resulting in some additional changes to collection days being experienced by residents.

The Chairman stated that not all experiences of the new contractor had been negative and the improvements and savings to the residents of Eastbourne were recognised.

Members discussed the changes to the staffing at Kier and the changes to rounds, numbers of complaints, with less than 1% of collections being missed across Eastbourne. Some members felt that the initial information regarding the new contract may have been distributed too early for residents. The committee were advised that a detailed programme of communication had been produced.

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Place Services advised that between 800 and 1000 bins had not been delivered, however this had been expected as 'inherited' bins had not been accounted for by Kier as the information had not been passed on by the previous contractor. It was to be noted that residents of Eastbourne would receive a saving of £1 million pounds per year for the full 10 year contract.

The Senior Head of Infrastructure agreed to provide details of the average call wait time to the committee following the meeting.

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Place Services also reported that as a result of the increase in the volume of calls there had been no increase in staff absence, with regular team briefings and consultation with the teams being held. The Cabinet Portfolio Holder felt that there would be no need to increase staffing levels as the previously experienced increase in the volume of calls was now reducing and being managed effectively.

The committee expressed their thanks to the Customer First team for their efforts during the implementation of the new contract.

Finally members were reassured that new electronic reporting systems available in each collection vehicle would continually provide crew members with information relating to all of the issues mentioned.

Members noted the quarter 1 financial outturn for the year 2012/2013, the report further highlighted the general fund revenue account, housing revenue account and the capital programme.

Members noted that the position at the end of June showed a small underspend of £24,000. This related to several areas of minor under and over spends which were being carefully monitored. These included:

- Additional planning fee income of (£21k)
- Cremation income and expenditure savings of (£75k)
- Revenues and Benefits additional costs of £33k
- Shortfall in Catering income of £31K.

The contingency fund currently stood at £638,000 which was available to fund the pay award, other inflationary increase and any future unforeseen one off areas of expenditure during the year.

Notification had now been received from the National Joint Council for Local Government Services (NJC) that agreement had now been reached on rates of pay applicable from 1 April 2013. The agreed pay increase of 1% had been applied to all staff across the workforce on national pay scales. This would be applied to the August payroll and c£120,000 would be vired from the contingency fund to service budgets.

No pay claim has been made to the NJC for Chief Executives/Chief Officers and a letter dated 26 April 2013 from the employers side states that they are in no position to make any offer for any claim made in respect of the 2013/14 year.

Cabinet would be recommending to Council to make a local award to mirror the 1% award applied across the rest of the organisation.

The Housing Revenue Account performance was highlighted in paragraph 4.2 and Members were advised that the HRA performance was currently above target due to the variance in the provision for bad debts. A prudent increase in the provision for bad debts was included in the budget to offset any effect of the new benefits regime. Whilst rent collection performance for quarter one had remained at prior year levels, the introduction of universal credits and the benefits cap may impact on this position later in the year.

The current spend on the under occupation scheme indicates a potential overspend for the year due to the increase in the number of property transfers taking place. This budget is being carefully monitored.

Members noted that the capital programme was detailed in appendix 3. 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 capital programme had been amended from that approved by Council in February to reflect the final outturn re-profiling of schemes between years. Members noted that the Collection Fund recorded all the income from Council Tax and National Non-Domestic Rates and its distribution to the major precepting authorities. With the introduction of the new system for the local retention of business rates, the performance of the Collection

Fund would now be included as part of the performance monitoring and the results shared with the major preceptors. The performance monitoring was being developed so that more information would be available for future reports; however indications for the first quarter figures show that the collection fund was on target.

The report further detailed activity in Treasury Management, the Council's Annual Investment Strategy and Investment Performance.

Members discussed the provision for Eastbourne's homeless community and requested a briefing regarding what is currently being provided in Eastbourne.

NOTED.

8 Eastbourne Community Safety Plan.

Members considered the report of the Senior Head of Community regarding the current performance of the Eastbourne Community Partnership (CSP) under the updated Eastbourne Community Safety Plan outlining issues that may 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. For the current rolling year up to the end of June 2013, this had reduced to around 6000 crimes, a further reduction of 9% compared with the same period last year.

The current Plan had been developed in consultation with key partners including the Police and other members of the CSP. Version 1.3 was available as Appendix A. It had been modelled on a countywide endorsed layout, with a focus on what could realistically be achieved within current resource constraints and reflects some priorities of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC).

Members noted that although the Plan was for a three year period, performance targets were reviewed at the end of each performance year. Key performance targets had been incorporated into the relevant sections of Eastbourne Borough Council's Corporate Plan.

Members noted the performance of year 2012/2013 compared with the baseline performance year 2011/2012.

The committee were advised that Eastbourne over the last few years had seen a substantial reduction in crime and despite the recession crime was down further in 2012/2013 with further reduction this year so far. Paragraph 3.1 of the report showed clearly all five targets met and this reduction pattern was again evident so far this year. Shoplifting had fallen again to 2011 figures but it was essential to continue to remain focused. Reductions in criminal damage and public place violent crime were of note especially in view of the major percentage reductions the year before, 25.3% and 25.2% respectively.

Overall police recorded anti-social behaviour was down from 5682 to 4732; a reduction of 950 incidents, or 16.7%.

The CSP's Strategy Group, having agreed the updated Plan and its priorities had matched the priorities with the reduced area based grant funding, smoothed out over a two year period to £43k per annum. This excluded the continued Basic Command Unit funding of approximately £60k for this year, utilised mainly by the District Police in direct support of the Plan's objectives.

Overall crime had substantially reduced since 2005/2006 performance year. Notable crime reductions had again been achieved in the performance year 2012/2013 and crime performance was again positive within measured criteria of the refreshed 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 CSP funding from next performance year 2014/2015.

Further potential countywide changes as a result of a newly 'elected PCC' above had been mitigated by a continued local focus in addition to adding value in developing initiatives, including Neighbourhood Management.

Members discussed the reduction in funding and were advised that the Partnership Co-ordinator would be meeting the Police Crime Commissioner regarding funding for Eastbourne on 17 September 2013.

Members noted that the relationship between Neighbourhood Management, Communities and Councillors was an essential part of the success of the Community Safety Partnership, which took a holistic view of reducing crime in Eastbourne. The Partnership highlighted that whilst recorded crime was being reduced in Eastbourne a great deal of internet fraud and forgery was still unreported and on the increase.

Councillors were urged to make use of the Joint Action Group and to apply for funding for local initiatives, which had given great value for previously approved schemes.

Councillors Warner and Shuttleworth asked to be included in the subsequent press release which would be produced for the Cabinet meeting on 4 September 2013.

Scrutiny was requested to note the continued Crime Reduction performance, endorse the updated 2011/2014 Community Safety Plan and continue the delegated authority to the Senior Head of Community to implement actions set out.

NOTED.

9 Future of services at Eastbourne District General Hospital (DGH) - Scrutiny presentation Update

Councillors discussed the Scrutiny presentation regarding the future of services at Eastbourne District General hospital.

Members were advised that Officers were currently in the process of discussing the format of the presentation with the East Sussex Hospital Trust and requested that the Committee be kept informed of the discussions with a view to holding the presentation in October 2013.

NOTED.

The meeting closed at 8.30 pm

Councillor Warner (Chairman)