



SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

4.30pm – 6.15pm

29 September 2011

Present: Councillors Stephenson (Chair), Bradford, Driver, Galvin, Gayton, Gee, Grahame, Grenville, Jeraj, Sands (M)

Apologies: Councillors Lubbock and Storie

1. MINUTES

In response to a member's question, the head of strategy and programme management explained that the open public spaces white paper, released by the government, would set policy direction for the public sector. Some of the proposals were radical and a work plan would be published in November 2011. This would provide a clearer indication of the impact on local government.

He provided an update on the actions agreed at the previous meeting.

RESOLVED to:-

- (1) approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2011; and
- (2) request that a tracker be used for recommendations made at future committees, to be attached to the agenda for discussion during the work programme item.

2. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The chair presented the report. She explained that although the ICT review had been postponed, it would be discussed at a future scrutiny committee before being presented to cabinet.

The report on the future priorities and shape of the council had also been postponed to enable members to receive a full report on the outcome of the public consultation. The quantitative and qualitative results of the consultation would be analysed, including the level and type of public engagement, and reported to scrutiny so that members could make informed recommendations to cabinet. In response to members requesting regular updates on the budget situation, the director for corporate resources said that an 'all members briefing session' had been arranged for 18 October 2011, which would outline the changing financial landscape of local government and the impact on the council's medium term financial strategy.

Members discussed the opportunity to join Broadland District Council to look into services for older people and the potential impact of Norfolk County Council efficiency savings. The exercise could help to address historical cross-border issues when accessing services; that Broadland's older age profile could help to provide more information related to older people; and that members could learn from working with another authority. Councillors Gayton, Gee and Grenville would be willing to join the panel if it were to go ahead (with Councillors Bradford, Galvin, and Sands (M) as substitutes).

The head of city development services informed members that the highways agency agreement had been removed from the work programme following the renewal of the agreement for a four year period and a members briefing held during September 2011. In response to a member's question, he explained that in December 2010, Norfolk County Council cabinet had agreed to maintain the previous voting arrangements of two voting members from each authority. Although there had been a reduction in the level of funding and therefore available money for improvements, Norwich City Council members could still influence the budget in certain areas, for example Chapelfield North. He also said that members would be able to influence how the funding, received through the community infrastructure levy, would be spent throughout the city.

Members suggested that the asset management strategy should be reinstated onto the work programme. Although an 'all members briefing session' had been provided, members said that they would like to review a list of the assets; the criteria for best consideration, for example monetary considerations to take into account; and also the investment strategy and how funds would be released from the sale of assets. The chair informed the committee that any items for inclusion on the work programme would need to undergo the PICK analysis.

Members suggested that the review of community centres should also be included on the work programme, to include the criteria used; and how it would fit with the wider council engagement strategy. A member also suggested that the options for the Mile Cross depot be considered by scrutiny before it went to cabinet on 9 November 2011.

The chair suggested that the environmental strategy should also be considered by scrutiny before cabinet. The head of strategy and programme management said that a full draft of the strategy had been discussed at the sustainable development panel in September 2011. In response to a member's suggestion for an all members' briefing on the strategy, the director for corporate resources said that members could suggest topics for briefings to the democratic services manager.

RESOLVED to:-

- (1) defer consideration of the ICT strategy until a report was ready to be considered by the cabinet;
- (2) defer consideration of channel migration so that the scrutiny committee could receive a full overview of the issue and therefore better able to plan further work in this area;
- (3) defer consideration of the future shape and priorities of the council report to the next meeting, to enable the results of the public consultation to be considered by the scrutiny committee;

- (4) to note that the chair and officers would progress the opportunity for a joint scrutiny with Broadland District Council;
- (5) remove the highways agency agreement item from the committee's work programme at this stage;
- (6) conduct a PICK analysis of the asset management strategy and review of community centres at the next meeting, for inclusion onto the work programme;
- (7) receive the cabinet report on the regeneration of the mile cross depot at the next meeting; and
- (8) reschedule the 20 October 2011 meeting of the scrutiny committee to 3 November 2011 so that the outcomes of the public consultation could be considered.

3. QUARTER ONE PERFORMANCE REPORT

(A copy of member questions and the responses were circulated at the meeting).

The head of strategy and programme management presented the report. A link to the report had been circulated to members, as requested, two weeks in advance of the committee to enable members to submit questions and receive a written response from officers.

The chair said that this process had worked well but requested that in future, responses were provided in advance of the meeting.

(Details of the questions and replies, together with any supplementary questions and replies are attached at appendix A to these minutes).

RESOLVED to note the performance update.

4. COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP AND PERFORMANCE

The head of local neighbourhood services presented the report, which considered the potential role of scrutiny in the future of the Norfolk community safety partnership.

During discussion, members were concerned that the new operational policing arrangements could result in reduced police presence throughout areas of the city; reduced number of safer neighbourhood action panels (SNAPs); and reduced working with the council. The head of local neighbourhood services said that it would be necessary to explore how the council could work with the police more effectively at a neighbourhood level. He explained that the operational policy review would result in a reduction from 7.5 police neighbourhood teams to four and that the council were in discussions with the police to examine how the four areas could align with the council's four neighbourhoods. The new policing arrangements would come into effect from January 2012. A member suggested that an update on the police strategy and the potential impact on wards within Norwich, should be included on the work programme.

The council were already working closely with the police on walkabouts in the city to gather the views of local people. Over 30 people attended a recent walkabout in Mile Cross, talking to officers about issues within their community. Members said that SNAPs provided a good vehicle to share issues and encouraged people to engage at a local level. A reduction in the number of SNAPs could result in less engagement because there were diverse issues throughout different wards. It may be that the focus of the SNAPs could change to community engagement and participation in the local community.

The scrutiny committee could take on the role of reviewing crime figures; feedback from the public; the priorities identified; and resource allocation. The head of local neighbourhood services said that if members wished to review a thematic issue, a thematic lead could be invited to present to the committee. Members were concerned that, over time, Norwich level data may be replaced with county wide data. The head of local neighbourhood services said that data was still available for Norwich at a neighbourhood level.

The police reform and social responsibility act 2011 had received royal assent, which would see the election of a police and crime commissioner in November 2012. The council would have the opportunity to influence the police and crime panels which would oversee the work of the police and crime commissioner over the next few months as arrangements for the panels need to be agreed by end of March 2012. Final details of the new arrangements were outstanding and members requested an update at a future meeting.

RESOLVED to:-

- (1) ask the head of local neighbourhood services to provide an update on the community safety partnership, in particular the creation of the police and crime panels, at a future meeting; and
- (2) conduct a PICK analysis of the police strategy and the potential impact on wards within Norwich at the next meeting, for inclusion onto the work programme

CHAIR

Appendix A

Q1 Performance report - questions to heads of service and directors

PRIORITY - Strong and prosperous city

Question 1 - SPC 03b - eco retrofit council homes

Does the change in assessment mean that the target of average rating of 73 is unachievable under our current programme?

It is important to note that the average rating of 73 specifically refers to the average energy rating of council dwellings across **the whole stock**. The current target of 73, as an average, was set some time ago and has not been updated since the last change in measuring protocol. We are moving to the latest RdSAP 2009 calculation methodology and shall use the opportunity to align a new average target value - see below.

The eco retrofit programme (funded by the HCA) (to which SPC 03b specifically refers) did not set any specific targets other than to deliver eco-retrofit of at least 800 council homes by the deadline of 31 March 2011. We exceeded these targets- by delivering eco-retrofit improvements to 895 properties by the end of the last financial year and the figures for these are as follows: the pre works average SAP rating was 66 and the post work average rating was 69 - a huge 3 point increase across nearly 900 dwellings. The highest increase on a single dwelling was 11 points. These results were therefore regarded as a success.

As a supplementary question, Councillor Jeraj asked when the new target for the energy rating of new stock would be made available. In response, Jerry Massey explained that the new performance system would be in place by the end of October 2011, which would feed through into the Q3 performance report.

Question 2 - SPC 03b - eco retrofit council homes

The council's measures to complete the eco retrofit of over 800 council homes have been assessed to be failing/cause for concern. The explanation given on page 8 for the below target SAP rating* is that original target (71) was set too high. A new methodology will be employed in future and targets will be re-assessed in light of its introduction. It is pointed out that compared to the national SAP average (59) Norwich City Council is performing well. Why was the original target set too high and what is the new methodology?

As pointed out above, the council's measures to eco-retrofit over 800 properties have been successful. The issue about measurement relates to the performance indicator across the whole housing stock.

From 17 April 2011, the methodology for calculating the RdSAP value for domestic Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) changed from SAP2005, to RdSAP2009. There are numerous changes to the methodology and calculations meaning that a direct comparison cannot be made between criteria. The current target of 71 reflects the old methodology and we are well on our way to achieving this despite the

disruption to the capital works programme over the past year. The updated ICT system will be in place by end of October 2011 which will allow the use of RdSAP2009. At such time, a new target will be set and a programme of works compiled to achieve it.

As a supplementary question, the chair asked why the target was higher than could be achieved. In response, Jerry Massey explained that the delivery timescale had been agreed with SCA.

Question 3 - SPC 06 - economic development

Have no suitable projects come forward in the past year?

In view of very limited resources available the £50k additional funding would be most effective in responding to a direct opportunity to work with a business or inward investor to create new permanent jobs in the city; for example co-investing in the refurbishment of a premises to attract a new business tenant (and new jobs); or partnering with a business looking to significantly expand its workforce by providing some financial support with recruitment or training costs for any new employees recruited from within the city's boundary.

This kind of use would provide a very effective direct link between funds spent and jobs created for Norwich citizens as opposed to simply adding resource to existing projects with no direct job outcomes or developing what would be a very limited, short-term people-based regeneration project with just £50k.

Economic development service staff have worked with several businesses both new to the city and existing ones looking to grow this year, directly supporting creation of 658 new private sector full-time equivalent jobs in Norwich to date since January 2011 with a further 170 new jobs expected before the end of the financial year. So far the cost of creating all of these jobs has been fully met by the businesses involved and there has been no need to utilise any of the £50k as a mechanism for ensuring that prospective job growth happens in Norwich rather than elsewhere, the funding remains in place to meet such an eventuality. Norwich City Council's "investment" in these jobs has been made in staff time.

PRIORITY - Safe and healthy neighbourhoods

Question 4 - SHN 03 - introduce four neighbourhood teams

Given that several of the progress indicators are behind, is the community engagement strategy still deliverable?

SHN03 refers to the establishment and development of the council's four neighbourhood teams and in particular the networks and relationships those teams develop to engage and involve residents. An example is the development of neighbourhood walkabouts which are now planned and co-ordinated by the four neighbourhood managers as a corporate engagement tool. Using information reported to the council to develop hot spot maps, the neighbourhood managers in conjunction with ward councillors and residents can agree the venues for walkabouts using an evidence based approach.

The community engagement strategy is the council's corporate strategy that sets out how the council will involve and engage with residents. The neighbourhood teams and specifically the community engagement officers may help facilitate and support the engagement activities of other services, but it is a role of all services where they are introducing or changing services or policies to engage residents on these changes.

Recent examples which show the continued deliverability of the engagement strategy include:

- the recent play development work to install new facilities such as the water facility in Waterloo Park
- the discussions held with residents on Lime Tree Road prior to works being undertaken on the roadside trees so that they understood what and the reason why the work was being undertaken
- The engagement with and involvement of allotment tenants in the review of the allotment rules
- The involvement of residents through the Bowthorpe community partnership in the development of Three score
- A community engagement workshop was held on 19 Jan 2011 (funded by Regional Cities East) - this allowed local people to propose how they would like to be engaged when proposals for Threescore are developed. Following this local people were able to contribute to the questions used during the selection process for a developer partner for the first phase at Threescore
- A community engagement learning event was held on 5 July 2011 (funded by HCA). Local residents were invited to attend along with reps from the city council and HCA.

Resident engagement is still developing across the council but the above examples show that positive strides have been made.

Question 5 - SHN 04 - participatory budgeting (PB)

Is the council looking to mainstream participation into the budget process? One of the recommendations of the PB working party was that the Council examine how to mainstream participatory (rather than consultative) methods into the budget and service planning process. Has any work been done on this recommendation, even if it is just scoping the feasibility?

The council is currently consulting with the public and partners on the future priorities and shape of the council. The results of this will be used to inform the development of the council's new corporate plan and future budget. Within the consultation there has been a range of participatory elements including asking residents to rank priorities in term of importance and savings options in terms of acceptability through different mechanisms including a questionnaire and discussion exercises at different events. At the end of this process the council will want to review how the different elements have worked and use this to further develop our approach to resident

consultation, engagement and participation in future priority and budget setting processes.

Question 6 – SHN 06 – improve recycling

Despite the introduction of the new food waste service, the Q1 overall recycling rate stalled at 40%. Likelihood of meeting the target of 55% by year's end is low. What needs to be done to improve this rate, and what is the council doing to improve it?

The growth in the level of waste being diverted to recycling has stalled and discussions have been held with the contractor, who has considerable experience of delivering high performing waste recycling contracts. These discussions have identified a number of operational areas for improvement and has also raised the need for more local engagement with individual households in areas where the level of participation could increase. This 'invest to save' approach will be considered by cabinet in October. Furthermore, subject to cabinet and council approval in September, the final phase of the communal bin project will be rolled out over the next twelve months and this should increase the level of recycling by several percentage points.

PRIORITY - Opportunities for all

Question 7 - NI 181 (Processing Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Claims (average number of days))

The indicator displays well below target performance, with the processing of change of circumstances applications a particular cause for concern. The recruitment of two new employees is suggested as an answer to this issue. Will these employees be recruited, or will other action be taken to speed the processing?

- Service performance has suffered due to staff turnover and increasing workloads from the recession.
- The recruitment of 2 temporary posts to fill vacancies within the benefits team is underway and it is likely that effective appointments will be made. This will improve capacity and therefore performance.
- The LEAN review has identified a number of potential process improvements for changes of circumstances and these will be implemented over the next few weeks - and will similarly improve capacity and performance.

PRIORITY - One Council

Question 8 - OC 03 - achieve the equivalent of a two star landlord services rating

Can we have an update on why ASB has risen?

The target for 2010/11 is a 6% reduction in ASB reports to the council related to its landlord function. For the year to date, performance is showing a 1% increase in new cases of antisocial behaviour compared to last year, which represents 20 new cases.

This performance indicator fluctuates monthly as anti-social behaviour reporting has seasonal trends which increases in summer and reduce in the winter. Therefore it is difficult to say whether the 1% increase is because customers are more aware of how to report antisocial behaviour and have an increased confidence in how we can resolve issues, if it is due to expected seasonal trends or if there is generally an increase in the amount of antisocial behaviour taking place in our neighbourhoods. For the year ended March 2001, there was a 6% decrease in reports of anti-social behaviour reported to the council when compared to the previous year.

We have worked towards improving the accuracy of the data for this indicator by removing duplicate reporting from our systems and we are looking to move towards reporting on the customers' satisfaction with how the case was dealt with, which we believe will be a better performance indicator. However, we do not collect this information for all types of antisocial behaviour and further work is required to resolve this matter.

Question 9 - OC 03 - achieve the equivalent of a 2 star landlord services rating

Considering that the poor performance in all indicators in this category can be partly accounted to the difficulty experienced in re-letting certain properties, could these properties be given a 'green makeover' to make them more energy efficient/aesthetically pleasing/interesting to potential tenants i.e. a place people would really want to live?

The target for 2010/11 is 22 days.

Performance has improved week on week since mid-June, apart from one week in July when one property affected the figure significantly. This property had been empty since June 2009 and was re-let on a short-term lease to a caring agency in July 2011.

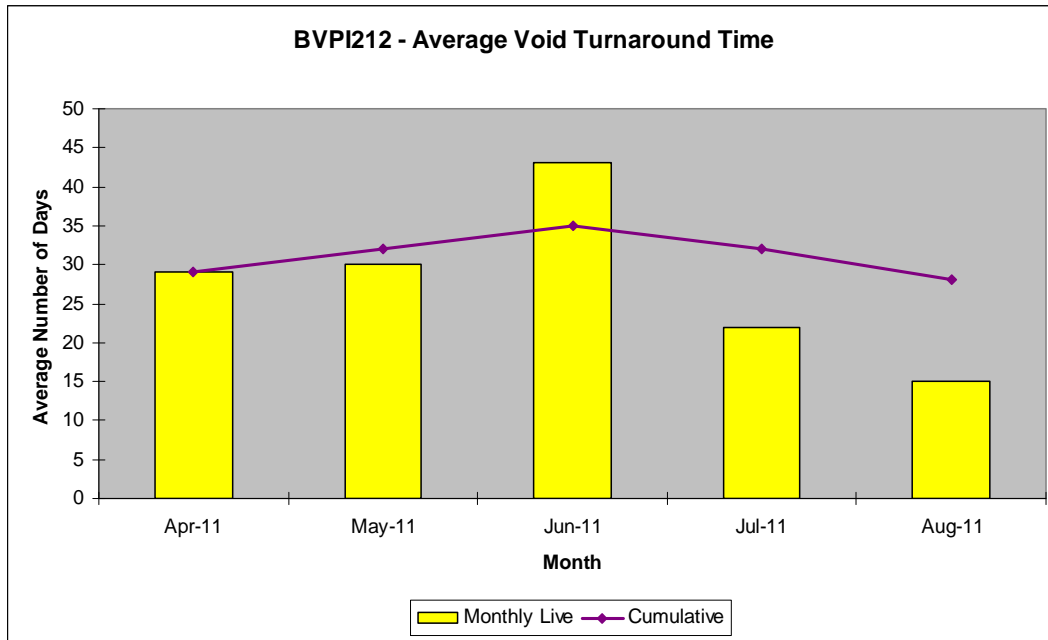
We have re-let over 500 dwellings in the last 4 months and are achieving an average 28 day turn around, and in August this was down to 15 days.

We have a voids standard, which has been agreed with out tenants and an on going investment programme to continue to improve to standard of our stock.

Our contractors are currently turning around properties within 10 days and a partnering day was recently held to identify further efficiencies within the system.

The table below shows the continuing improvement in our performance on managing our voids.

Average of BVPI212 Turnaround Time		Average days	No. of void properties let
Month	Week	Total	Total
April	Week 1	22	22
	Week 2	13	31
	Week 3	46	24
	Week 4	57	9
April Total		29	86
May	Week 5	20	20
	Week 6	19	29
	Week 7	42	24
	Week 8	45	21
May	Week 9	25	19
May Total		30	113
June	Week 10	54	32
	Week 11	68	25
	Week 12	24	30
	Week 13	24	21
June Total		43	108
July	Week 14	17	22
	Week 15	44	21
	Week 16	15	19
	Week 17	14	30
July Total		22	92
August	Week 18	17	25
	Week 19	18	25
	Week 20	13	25
	Week 21	9	21
August	Week 22	20	17
August Total		15	113
Grand Total		28	512



Question 10 - OC 06 - customer standards

Is the council still looking to install a system which would tell callers where they are in the queue and would allow for a message to be left?

Our new integrated contact system is due to go live next month (October) and as part of that functionality will have the ability to enable customers to choose to leave messages as well as enable us to provide messages on each individual queue specific to that service area. Also we will be able to provide messages around position in the queue and average wait time within that queue. As part of the implementation programme functionality will be phased in across the project plan so we can monitor the effect on service delivery as we add additional functionality to our system.