

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4)
held at 2.00 pm on Wednesday, 8 November 2017

Present:

Members: Councillor N Akhtar (Chair)
Councillor K Mulhall
Councillor T Sawdon
Councillor B Singh
Councillor R Thay
Councillor S Walsh

Other Members: Councillor L Bigham, Cabinet Member for Community Development
Councillor C Thomas, Deputy Cabinet Member for Community Development
Councillor J Innes, Cabinet Member for City Services
Councillor R Lakha, Deputy Cabinet Member for City Services

Employees (by Directorate):

Place: M Andrews, S Bennett, G Holmes, G Hood, A Walster

Apologies: Councillors R Bailey and L Kelly

Public Business

16. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

17. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6 September, 2017 were approved and signed as a true record.

Further to Minute 12/17, the Scrutiny Board welcomed the two recent successful prosecutions in relation to fly tipping and congratulated officers on their work in this regard.

18. Review of Street Cleansing

The Scrutiny Board considered a Briefing Note which detailed and reviewed the operational changes resulting from the restructure of the Streetpride Service which took effect in January/February 2016 and the resultant service impact of reduced resources on Streetpride and street cleansing.

Streetpride's operational budget was reduced by £500,000 as part of the Council's overall Medium Term Financial Strategy in April 2015, which represented 25% of the services budget. In order to meet the budgetary reduction, the Streetpride Service was restructured with the new service coming into effect during January/February, 2016. The Briefing Note provided details of the restructure, which reduced Streetpride's operational zones from 10 to 6 and which reduced full time posts by approximately 28.

During October 2016, meetings were held with Streetpride North and South staff to seek the views and thoughts from managers and staff from the individual service areas on the impact of the restructure in terms of what had worked well and what hadn't. A number of clear positive aspects of the new Service, such as the success in the new shift patterns, were identified. There was no noticeable increase in complaints regarding cleansing and litter removal and evidence suggested that recorded complaints had actually fallen from the previous year. There were however a number of areas where it was recognised that operational and structural changes could be made to improve service delivery and management, and these were identified in the report.

The report detailed:-

- Existing structure and operation
- Neighbourhood Operatives
- Streetpride Operatives
- Cleansing Teams
- Mechanical Sweeping
- Site Clearance Team
- Special Cleaning Operative
- Cleansing Standards
- Mechanical Sweeping
- Manual Cleansing
- City Centre
- Complaints received 2014/15 – 2017/18
- Future Challenges

The Scrutiny Board questioned officers on aspects of the Briefing Note including:-

- Work undertaken by the Enforcement Team to encourage shop owners to act responsibly in relation to litter around their premises
- Relationships and work undertaken with both Universities to encourage students to act responsibly
- How the service is managed in terms of the zones

RESOLVED that the Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board:-

- 1) Notes that the service budget was reduced in 2015 by £0.5m, representing 25% of the budget**
- 2) Notes the operational and service changes made as a result of the resulting restructure and review**

- 3) **Notes the impacts of the service changes reflected in the level of complaints received**
- 4) **Requests that a map of the operational zones, together with details of area managers, be circulated to all members of the Scrutiny Board.**

19. **The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017**

The Scrutiny Board considered a Briefing Note which detailed the new duties and service requirements arising from the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

The Act, which will be implemented in April, 2018, will place new duties on the Council to provide advice and assistance to people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness to either help to prevent them becoming homeless or to help them to secure alternative suitable accommodation. The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has published a draft Homelessness Code of Guidance which updates the statutory guidance with the provisions of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. This is under consultation for eight weeks until 11 December, 2017 and it is intended to agree a response to the consultation with the Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods and the Shadow Cabinet Member. The final guidance is expected to be published in the Spring.

The Briefing Note detailed the following issues:-

- The new duties and main changes
- Prevention and Relief Duty and Measures
- Government Funding – new sources for services to prevent and relieve Homelessness

The Briefing Note also detailed the City Council's response to the new legislation and indicated that additional services will need to be provided either by, or on behalf of, the Council. A project team is currently examining the options for how the new service can be provided and whether any services need to be commissioned. It will also be incorporated into the review of the Housing and Homelessness Strategy, due to be updated in 2018.

The Scrutiny Board questioned officers on aspects of the Briefing Note including:-

- Current provision for the homeless provided by the Council
- The anticipated impact on Council resources
- Partnership working with social housing providers

RESOLVED that the Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4) notes the duties and service requirements arising from the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

20. **Outstanding Issues**

The Scrutiny Board noted that all outstanding issues were dealt with in the Scrutiny Board's Work Programme.

21. Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4) Work Programme 2017/18

The Scrutiny Board considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) which detailed the Board's Work Programme for 2017/18.

RESOLVED that the following items be added to the Work Programme:-

- **Housing provision in the City**
- **Public toilets, particularly in the City Centre**

22. Any Other Items of Public Business

There were no other items of urgent public business.

(Meeting closed at 3.20 pm)