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SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

2 June 2008 – 6.00 pm

PRESENT:

Councillor Williamson (in the Chair); Councillors Barker, Burroughs, M Coleman, Collins, Hacon, Hewitt, Page, Pettit, Reynolds and Councillor Weymouth.

Mr G Jermyn (Director GYB Services), Miss K Edmonds (Senior Member Services Officer), Mr R Hodds (Member Services Manager and Scrutiny Officer), Mr T Howard (Head of Regeneration and Environment), Mr S Mutten (Service Manager – Environment), Mr P Hardy (Executive Director – Economy and Environment).

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Field.

1. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 March 2008 were confirmed.

2. FORWARD PLAN

The Forward Plan for the period 1 May 2008 to 31 August 2008 was noted.

3. GYB SERVICES PERFORMANCE DATA

The Committee was informed that the GYBS Partnership commenced with Great Yarmouth Borough Council in October 2003 and the objective of the Partnership was to deliver a service that achieves value for money for Great Yarmouth Borough Council.

The Director of GYB Services reported on the Performance Data provided, and informed the Committee that due to the way Great Yarmouth Borough Council pays GYB Services they often run with a deficit and then a profit, however, their aim was to have £51,000 at the end of the financial year. It was reported that there was an issue with the location and the premises of GYB Services and that they would ideally like to seek alternative accommodation, however, this was now on hold due to the Local Government Review.

A Member expressed concern that GYB Services were unable to provide a breakdown of costings for ground maintenance on Great Yarmouth seafront. A Member pointed out that the aim of Seafront Management was to ensure value for money for Great Yarmouth Borough Council, but without this information they were unable to ascertain this. The Chairman asked if details of what GYB Services were contracting for were available. The Service Manager (Environment) stated that the specification and schedule of old rates were

transferred to GYB Services. It was agreed that the Tourist Authority needed to know if it was receiving value for money and this should be pursued. The Service Manager (Environment) stated that maintenance of the Seafront within the Council/GYB Services partnership was managed by the Council within the Tourism Service Plan although some elements were now being overseen by Environmental Services on behalf of Tourism and that this was currently under review at the moment. It was reported that input based contracts had changed to output contracts. The GYB Services Partnership was now performance based and related to outcomes rather than relating to the old input based contracts. He referred to other areas of the Partnership where maintenance budgets had been aggregated to provide more flexibility in meeting priorities and delivering outcomes. The cost of the output/outcomes for these services in relation to the seafront would be able to be provided. It was suggested that the Chief Executive of the Tourist Authority should attend a future meeting of the Scrutiny Committee along with the Director of GYB Services in order for the Tourist Authority's frustrations to be detailed. The Director of GYB Services stated that all available data and information had been provided to the Service Manager (Tourism) on a number of occasions in the past. A Member suggested that a future meeting be held to discuss the seafront maintenance. The Service Manager (Environment) stated that within the next two months he would be working with GYB Services and Tourism on the impact of the asset management obligations arising from the completion of the inteGREAT scheme and the effect this would have on assessing future service priorities within budget provision and would be able to present details to the Scrutiny Committee in the Autumn. Comment was made that the appearance of the Seafront had improved considerably over the last couple of years.

Members discussed the customer satisfaction surveys being completed and the Committee were informed that Annual Citizens Panel Surveys had been undertaken (although not in 2007 where the results of the National MORI survey were used) and the next one was due in Autumn 2008. The Chairman suggested that stakeholder surveys also be carried out.

The Committee then discussed refuse collection and were informed that there were 30 missed bins per week and that the reasons behind the bins being missed was logged to avoid double collections. The Council was required to deliver 16,000 tonnes per annum of waste to Aldeby landfill. If GYB Services failed to achieve this target, then the Borough Council would be charged for transportation costs by Norfolk County Council. A Member pointed out there was a need to ensure that the refuse collectors were sympathetic to elderly residents in the Borough who may place incorrect rubbish in the incorrect bin to reduce the likelihood of bad press. Members discussed grass cutting in the Borough and a Member asked if grass could be blown away from the gullies.

Street cleaning was also discussed and the Committee were informed that National Indicator BV199 was about how unclean the streets were in the Borough and that this had been changed to National Indicator 195. It was reported that the Borough was randomly inspected by trained assessors who found in 2006/07 17% of streets failed to achieve cleanliness standards. However, in 2007/08 only 7% failed. The Chairman requested further information on costs for flytip removal.

The Director for GYB Services explained the accounts attached to the agenda which detailed the actual budget and variant sections.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That Seafront maintenance be discussed at a future meeting.
- (ii) That the Chief Executive of the Tourist Authority along with David Marsh be requested to attend a future Scrutiny Meeting where the Tourist Authority's frustrations could be detailed to the Committee.
- (iii) That information on hedges and the rolling programme along with how they are dealt be provided at a future meeting.
- (iv) That trade refuse accounts be produced at the next meeting.

(Councillor Reynolds and Councillor Collins declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in the following item on the grounds that they are both Members of the Greater Yarmouth Tourist Authority in accordance with the provisions the Members' Code of Conduct were both allowed to speak and vote).

4. THE GREATER YARMOUTH TOURIST AUTHORITY

The Committee considered the Executive Director (Economy and Environment's) report on the governance arrangements for the Greater Yarmouth Tourist Authority. The Committee were reminded that this review was part of the Scrutiny Committee's overall review of Partnership Working. Two recommendations had arisen from the report, the first being that in future, Cabinet should receive a written annual report from the Greater Yarmouth Tourist Authority which would include commentary on its main activities, the season's performance and longer term trends and issues. The second recommendation asked that consideration be given to the concept of a tourism based "business improvement district" broadly on the lines of the Town Centre Partnership business improvement district. The Committee stated that they were happy for Great Yarmouth Borough Council to apply for a business improvement district on the seafront which would allow for additional fees to be collected from businesses where a 100% of the fee received would be used for service delivery and to produce a Service Plan. The Committee however, agreed that the National Advisory body should be spoken to, to ascertain if a main bid area could be used along with sub-regional areas which would include Hopton, Gorleston, Caister and Hemsby.

The Chairman thanked the Executive Officer (Strategic Projects) for an excellent report.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet be informed of this Committee's support to the above two recommendations, with the addition of the sub-regional areas being included for the bid area.

5. WORK PROGRAMME

The Member Services Manager and Scrutiny Officer reported that the Scrutiny Committee carried out reviews of the following items last year:-

- (i) Day to Day housing maintenance review
- (ii) A review of the public broadcasting screens
- (iii) A review of the SHARP project

- (iv) The Head of Financial Services detailed the Section 106 funds
- (v) A review of Partnership Working

It was reported that the Scrutiny Committee was yet to consider the Integrated Service Centre, The Greater Yarmouth Tourist Authority and Town Hall Repairs Project. Performance Indicators were considered on a quarterly basis.

The Member Services Manager and Scrutiny Officer tabled a form for members to complete detailing any items that they would like the Scrutiny Committee to investigate. Members were reminded that they were also able to scrutinise outside organisations and partnerships.

6. CONSTITUTION – SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Member Services Manager and Scrutiny Officer reported on the details of Article 6 of the Constitution relating to the functions and procedures of the Scrutiny Committee. The Chairman explained the process of call-ins to the Committee.

(Councillor Williamson declared a personal and non-prejudicial interest in the following item as a Member of the County LSP Board in accordance with the provisions of the Members' Code of Conduct and was allowed to speak and vote).

7. SCRUTINY NETWORK

The Member Services Manager and Scrutiny Officer explained to the Committee that the Scrutiny Network had recently discussed the proposal to create a Joint Scrutiny Committee to scrutinise Local Strategic Partnerships and Local Area Agreements in Norfolk and asked if the Great Yarmouth Borough Council Scrutiny Committee were in agreement with this. It was reported that this Joint Scrutiny Committee would be administered by Norfolk County Council.

RESOLVED:

That Great Yarmouth Borough Council's Scrutiny Committee agreed in principle to the proposal to create a Joint Scrutiny Committee.

8. CLOSURE OF MEETING

The meeting ended at 7.25 pm.