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SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

26 August 2008 – 6.00 pm

PRESENT:

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

Miss K Edmonds (Senior Member Services Officer), Mr R Hodds (Member Services Manager and Scrutiny Officer), Mrs C Metcalf (Head of Customer Services) and Mr N Darwish (Crime Reduction Manager).

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Field and Councillor Page.

1. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 July 2008 were confirmed.

2. FORWARD PLAN

The Forward Plan for the period 1 July 2008 to 31 October 2008 was noted.

3. SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD TEAMS

The Crime Reduction Manager gave a presentation detailing the Safer Neighbourhood Teams in the Borough. The Committee were informed that Safer Neighbourhood Teams were part of a national agenda giving every local community a dedicated local policing team. Norfolk was selected to run the pilot for the scheme with Great Yarmouth being the path finder for Norfolk. There are currently nine Safer Neighbourhood Teams in the Great Yarmouth Borough. Each team is run by a Sergeant and includes Police Officers and Police Community Support Officers, the teams are then overseen by an Inspector. The teams were created by Government funding and were now funded through the Police Authority.

The Committee discussed the powers that the Police Community Support Officers have and it was reported that they were currently limited although they could take names and details. It was being considered that in the future they could be given the power to issue fixed penalty notices.

The Committee discussed the decriminalisation of car parking in the Borough and it was suggested that this issue should be discussed at a future meeting.

It was reported that since the introduction of Police Community Support Officers crime in the Borough had fallen by 28% since 2003/04, the stretch target was 18.5%. This meant this was one of the best performing partnerships in the East. Their six performance priorities are:-

- Increasing Reassurance
- Reducing Violent Crime
- Reducing Criminal Damage
- Reducing Anti Social Behaviour
- Reducing Harm caused by Drugs & Alcohol
- Reducing Harm caused by Prolific and Priority Offenders

Safer Neighbourhood Teams are driven by Community Priority Setting and informing of the action to be taken. Key Individual Networks have been created to involve the key people in the local community.

It was reported that areas used to be given resources dependant on crime levels and that now communities are given an even policing level at all times.

The Key Risks are:-

- Silo Working
- Cultural Performance Clashes
- Disjointed service delivery
- Lack of Communication

The Committee discussed long term plans for the police which did not exceed 6 months and could involve engaging youths in education or relevant social activities to reduce Anti Social Behaviour.

A Member pointed out that Police Community Support Officers needed to be educated that they should not make promises to the local community that the Council could then not deliver and it was agreed that this is where member involvement should be increased.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That contact details for all Safer Neighbourhood Teams be send out to all Councillors along with these being added to the Council Extranet.
- (ii) That the police District Commander be requested to attend a future meeting to discuss decriminalisation of car parking along with the Safer Neighbourhood Teams and Travellers encampments.
- (iii) That Police Community Support Officers be given better education in not promising the local community issues that the Council can not deliver.
- (iv) That Safer Neighbourhood Teams liaise with the relevant Ward Councillors on a regular basis to ensure that Members are aware of incidents that happen in their Wards.
- (v) That alignments of Partners and outcomes need to be investigated.
- (vi) That there is a need for more environmental staff to be employed to assist with the Safer Neighbourhood Teams work.

- (vii) That Ward Crime Figures be given to Councillors on a regular basis.

4. STAFF ACCOMODATION

The Committee considered the Head of Customer Services report on Staff Accommodation. The Chairman explained to the Committee that the item was raised due to the poor condition of staff accommodation and the Council withdrawing from the Integrated Service Centre.

The Head of Customer Services stated that the Council manages 5 staff accommodation sites and that any health and safety issues that arise are dealt with however there is poor staff disability access to some of the sites.

A Member of the Committee pointed out that in light of the Local Government Reorganisation it would be unclear at this present time the level of staffing required for the new authority and therefore accommodation planning would be limited.

The results of an accommodation appraisal would be ready after the 3rd September and would be presented to the Asset Management Group who would then determine the long term plan for the next 3-5 years. The Committee were informed that staffing and accommodation data would be regularly reviewed.

RESOLVED:

That the staff accommodation item be placed as a future item on the Scrutiny agenda.

5. INTERNAL POST

The Member Services Manager and Scrutiny Officer reported that all post delivered to the post room at the Town Hall is scanned and then given to the relevant department with the exception of the Mayor and Leaders post which is not scanned. It was agreed that the post room would now scan the Mayor and Leaders post with the exception of their Private and Confidential Post.

It was agreed that the Councillors Pigeon holes would be removed and all post would be sent out to Councillors. A Member raised the problem that cheques delivered to the Town Hall had gone missing and that internal post took too long to arrive at the appropriate departments. The Committee were informed that all cheques received by the Council would soon be scanned on receipt which would cut down on the time taken for these to be processed.

RESOVLED:

(i) That all the Mayor and Leaders post be scanned by the post room

(ii) That all Cheques received by the Council be scanned onto a computerised invoice system.

6. WORK PROGRAMME

The Member Services Manager and Scrutiny Officer reported on the updated work programme and informed the Committee that the Internal Post item was now completed. At the next meeting the Police would be invited to attend to discuss the Safer Neighbourhood Teams item. The Head of Financial Services had been contacted with regards to the Parish

Council Precept information and that this would be provided at a future meeting. The Use of the Town Hall item would be discussed at a future meeting.

The following two additional items would be added to the Work Programme:-

- The Scrutiny Committee to consider the Managing Director's review of the new Management Structure.
- That the Scrutiny Committee discuss the Travellers Incursion asking why did the police give the command to not stop the travellers entering Great Yarmouth, as agreed 7 years ago after the new year travellers' encampment.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Committee were informed that the next meeting would be held on Monday, 15 September 2008 at 6.00 pm.

8. CLOSURE OF MEETING

The meeting ended at 7.25 pm.