

NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM AGENDA



14 November 2012

at 1.00 pm

in Committee Room B, Civic Centre, Hartlepool

MEMBERS: NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM:

Councillors Beck, Cook, Gibbon, Jackson, Loynes, Payne and Tempest.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS

3. MINUTES

3.1 Minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2012.

4. RESPONSES FROM THE COUNCIL, THE EXECUTIVE OR COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL TO FINAL REPORTS OF THIS FORUM

No items

5. CONSIDERATION OF REQUEST FOR SCRUTINY REVIEWS REFERRED VIA SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

No items



6. CONSIDERATION OF PROGRESS REPORTS/BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK DOCUMENTS

- 6.1 Neighbourhood Services: Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2013/14 to 2016/17 - Initial Consultation Proposals – *Scrutiny Support Officer*

7. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

No items

8. ISSUES IDENTIFIED FROM FORWARD PLAN

9. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS ARE URGENT

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

- i) **Date of Next Meeting 19 December 2012, commencing at 2pm in Committee Room B**



NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

MINUTES

17 October 2012

The meeting commenced at 1.00 pm in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

Present:

Councillor: Rob Cook (In the Chair)

Councillors: Paul Beck, Steve Gibbon, Peter Jackson and Brenda Loynes

Also in attendance: Stella and Gordon Johnson and John Lynch

Officers: Denise Ogden, Assistant Director, Neighbourhood Services
Paul Hurwood, Climate Change Officer
Albert Williams, Property Manager
Helen Beaman, Environment Co-ordinator
Elaine Hind, Scrutiny Support Officer
Denise Wimpenny, Principal Democratic Services Officer

24. Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor Tempest.

25. Declarations of interest by Members

None.

26. Minutes of the meeting held on 19 September 2012

Confirmed.

27. Responses from the Council, the Executive or Committees of the Council to Final Reports of this Forum

None.

28. Consideration of request for scrutiny reviews referred

via Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee

None.

29. Consideration of progress reports/budget and policy framework documents

None.

30. Scrutiny Investigation into the JSNA Topic of Environment – Climate Change – Covering Report/Presentation *(Scrutiny Support Officer/Climate Change Officer)*

As part of the Forum's investigation into the JSNA topic of Environment, officers from the Waste and Environmental Management Team had been invited to attend the meeting to provide evidence in relation to the climate change element of the investigation.

The Climate Change Officer provided a detailed and comprehensive presentation which focussed on the key issues, risks, level of need, services currently provided and projected level of need in relation to climate change and included:-

- Definition of Climate Change – What is it?
- What do People Think?
 - 98% of people are aware of climate change
 - 75% know a great deal or fair amount about it.
- Global Warming
- Global Average Temperature
- Effects of Climate Change
 - hotter, drier summers
 - milder, wetter winters
 - increase in severity and frequency of severe weather events
 - rising sea levels
- Impacts on Vulnerable People
 - heat/sun, flooding, storms
- What is Being Done
 - Education on and awareness raising programme
 - Range of carbon/energy reduction projects
 - Compilation of carbon footprint
 - Town wide intervention, promotion of energy efficiency measures
- Progress to Date
 - carbon reduction of 4.7% in past year for the Council's own estate
 - carbon reduction of 14% since 2005 for the whole borough against a target of 20% by 2020

Discussion ensued which included the following issues:-

- (i) In relation to the carbon energy reduction projects, clarification was provided in response to a number of queries raised by members of the public in relation to voltage optimisation and electric vehicles
- (ii) A query was raised regarding future lighting improvements to which the Assistant Director for Neighbourhood Services advised that a number of models were being explored and would be presented for consideration in due course.
- (iii) A Member sought clarification on the approximate saving to the Council as a result of the introduction of electric vehicles for Council related business. The Assistant Director for Neighbourhood Services indicated that significant savings had been achieved, a breakdown of which would be provided following the meeting.
- (iv) In response to a query as to whether the carbon emissions targets were achievable, Members were advised that there had been a carbon reduction of 4.7% in the past year for the Council's own estate, against an aspirational target of 7%. The 7% target was currently being reviewed and would be replaced by a more achievable target by the end of the financial year. Carbon reduction for the entire town currently stands at 14% since 2005, against a target of 20% by 2020.
- (v) The Climate Change Officer outlined the process and benefits of the Collective Energy Switching Scheme in response to a number of queries raised by the Forum. Members commented on the need to publicise the scheme to residents acknowledging the continuing increase in fuel poverty in the town. The Assistant Director provided details of the options currently being explored regarding collective switching and to raise awareness regarding fuel poverty
- (vi) The Forum discussed renewable energy issues, the proposal to introduce wind turbines at Brenda Road and the potential benefits as a result. Members suggested that the use of solar panel water heaters on Council Buildings was investigated. The Forum also suggested that the least energy efficient Council buildings should be considered for disposal first.

Following the conclusion of the question and answer session, the Climate Change Officer provided an update on progress made to date on the delivery of the agreed scrutiny recommendations against the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Investigation into climate change and carbon management undertaken in 2009/2010.

The various measures and initiatives that had been introduced or explored to help reduce energy costs were discussed including the benefits of solar panels and renewable heat incentives.

Recommended

That the information given be noted and discussions be used to assist the Forum in completing the scrutiny investigation.

31. Information from the Health Protection Agency (*Scrutiny Support Officer*)

The Scrutiny Support Officer referred Members to extracts of information from the Health Protection Agency in relation to the climate change element of the investigation, as detailed in the report. It was reported that as health colleagues had been unable to attend the meeting, any queries arising from the information provided could be co-ordinated via the Scrutiny Support Officer.

Recommended

That the information contained within the report, be noted.

32. The Executive's Forward Plan

The Executive's Forward Plan for October to January 2013 relating to the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum was provided to give Members of the Forum the opportunity to consider whether any items within the Plan should be considered by this Forum.

In relation to Forward Plan Reference Number RN74/11 – Former Leather Chemical Site, in response to a request for clarification, the Assistant Director for Neighbourhood Services advised that a report had been considered by Cabinet in early October which identified which sites were contaminated. Two were deemed to be safe, however, the remaining site required further investigation. It had been agreed that the one site be further explored, the outcome of which would be reported to Cabinet in January. The forward plan had since been updated to reflect this decision.

With regard to Forward Plan Reference Number RN 18/12 – Leasing of Land to a Wind Turbine Developer for the Erection of Wind Turbines on Land at Brenda Road and the suggestion that the arrangement would lead to an annual fixed price income, in response to a query as to the level of such income, the Assistant Director for Neighbourhood Services indicated that this information would not be available until the completion of the tendering process. A number of queries were raised in relation to the proposed development to which the Assistant Director for Neighbourhood Services provided clarification. The Forum suggested that any income received should be split between the Community Benefit Fund and the Invest to Save Scheme.

In relation to Forward Plan Reference Number RN24/12 – Additional Highway Maintenance Works 2012-13 and in response to a request for clarification, the Forum was advised of the process for determining which maintenance works should be undertaken.

Recommended

That the comments of the Forum be noted and reflected in the Forward Plan where necessary.

33. Date and Time of Next Meeting

It was reported that the next meeting would be held on 14 November at 1.00 pm to consider the budget.

The meeting concluded at 2.40 pm.

CHAIR

NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

14 November 2012



Report of: Scrutiny Support Officer

Subject: NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES: MEDIUM TERM
FINANCIAL STRATEGY (MTFS) 2013/14 TO 2016/17
- INITIAL CONSULTATION PROPOSALS

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide the opportunity, as part of the consultation process in relation to the development of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for 2013/14 to 2016/17, for the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum to consider initial proposals in relation to those service areas of the Regeneration and Neighbourhood Department's budget that fall within its remit.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 At the meeting of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee held on 19 October 2012 it was agreed that, as in previous years, consideration of the budget proposals would be split to enable each standing Scrutiny Forum to look in detail at the service areas that fall within their remit. Any comments / observations to then be fed back to the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee on the 7 December 2012, to enable a formal response to be presented to Cabinet on 17 December 2012.
- 2.2 As a starting point for the 2013/14 budget process, Cabinet on the 4 October 2012 considered a detailed report in relation to the development of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for 2013/14 to 2016/17 and approved details of the consultation process and timetable for consideration of the Executives proposals. In addition to this, it was also brought to the Cabinet's attention that, over and above dealing with core budget issues, the Local Authority will also have to address:-
- the impact of significant national changes in the funding system for local Authorities which the Government are introducing from April 2013, covering Council Tax Benefit Reform and the re-localisation of business

rates. Furthermore, the Council needs to address financial risks arising from these changes.

- 2.3 Overview and Scrutiny involvement in the consultation process commenced at the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee meeting on the 19 October 2012, at which consideration was given to the report received by Cabinet on the 4 October 2012. The Committee looked in detail at the report and discussed at length the ongoing budget deficit, approving the submission of the initial proposals contained within the report to the relevant Standing Scrutiny Forums for further detailed consideration.
- 2.4 In accordance with the wishes of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee, the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum is today being asked to look in detail at the initial proposals in relation to those service areas within the Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Department that fall within its remit. Details of these initial proposals are contained within the following appendices:-

Appendix A – Budget Pressures; and
Appendix B – Saving Proposals.

- 2.5 Where individual budget items were identified to be considered as part of a Forums work programme, greater detail in relation to the proposed savings may have been presented at an earlier meeting of the Forum.
- 2.6 To assist Members of this Scrutiny Forum in the consideration of the initial proposals, arrangements have been made for the Assistant Director of Neighbourhood Services and the Assistant Director of Transportation and Engineering to be in attendance and an invitation to this meeting has also been extended to the relevant Portfolio Holder(s) (attendance subject to availability).

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum: -
- a) as part of the Budget and Policy Framework initial consultation proposals for 2013/2014, consider the pressures and saving proposals relating to the neighbourhood services areas of service provision within the Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Department; and
 - b) formulates any comments and observations in relation to each to be presented by the Chair of this Scrutiny Forum to the meeting of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee to be held on 7 December 2012 to enable a formal response to be presented to the Cabinet on 17 December 2012.

Contact Officer:- Elaine Hind – Scrutiny Support Officer
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BACKGROUND PAPERS

- (i) Report of the Corporate Management Team entitled 'Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2013/2014 To 2016/2017' presented to Cabinet on 4 October 2012
- (ii) Minutes from Cabinet 4 October 2012
- (iii) Report of the Corporate Management Team entitled 'Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2013/2014 To 2016/2017 – Initial Consultation Proposals' presented to Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee on 19 October 2012

SCHEDULE OF 2013/14 PRESSURES

Description of pressure	Value of pressure
<u>Income pressures</u> - these issues relate the 2.5% inflation increase included in the MTFS forecast which is not expected to be achieved for areas previously identified as shortfalls in the 2012/13 budget and addressed as budget pressures covering	
<u>b) Car Parking income inflation</u> Car Parking - owing to the current economic climate it is not recommend that an increase in car parking charges is implemented in 2013/14. Furthermore, owing to the practicalities of setting an increase which generates increases in multiples of 5p a higher increase than 2.5% would be required. It is therefore recommended that no increase is applied for 2012/13. The position can be reviewed for 2014/5/15.	37
<u>NFFO (Non Fossil Fuel Obligation)</u> The Government have removed the 27% 'credit' SITA and the Council received since the start of the contract. This was part of the contract and always planned.	279
<u>Landfill Tax</u> There is an annual increase in Land Fill Tax of £8 per tonne, which includes the bottom ash from the incinerator.	29
Total Potential Pressure Identified	345

Scheme	Potential Saving 13/14 £'000	Potential Saving 14/15 £'000	Risk	Impact
Collaboration				
Changes in services and options in respect of reduced staffing and costs	50	110	M	The savings are largely dependent upon collaboration within Corporate Services and a smaller amount in Place. Savings through joint procurement exercises will be reliant upon how we can work jointly, the market place and gaining benefits from economies of scale. There may be impact on internal staff and the local economy. 13 / 14 savings rely upon potential "tactical / quick wins" from collaboration which will be challenging
Other Savings				
Waste Management Reconfiguration - Revision of refuse collection and recycling arrangements	400	200	M	The savings are based upon current recycling market rates which could be impacted upon if there was a drop in the market. These changes may cause some disruption to service, which in turn could lead to non-compliance by residents, whether deliberate or accidental. However, as each of the proposals would be introduced simultaneously, disruption would be minimised. Formal consultation and communication with residents would ensure that users of the service are aware of the changes. 2014/15 savings would be provided through the introduction of a subscribed green waste collection service or the cessation of it altogether
Revision of operations in Parks and Countryside including lifeguard reduction, income generation in grounds maintenance and horticulture		80	M	Risk is associated with the current economic climate resulting in the loss of external works. Changes to the lifeguard service were discussed previously and agreed that we would reduce the number of weeks the service was provided, these changes have been introduced and the risk has proved minimal to date. Reduction in the number of weeks the lifeguard service is provided, this was introduced during 2011/12 and no adverse impacts have been received from the public. The council has received Quality beach awards for 2012/13 based upon 2011/12 performance including the lifeguard service.
Facilities Management - Revision of working arrangements and income generation		100	M	Facilities Management is a volatile area with respect to building maintenance, however changes within how services are delivered internally have resulted in increased income opportunities e.g. Empty homes, and DFGs (Disabled Facilities Grants). We will look to reduce overtime by employing more FTEs rather than Part Time employees and paying overtime. Schools continue to be a major client for this service area, the school funding reform heralds several changes in the method of school funding. which will mean the budgets for school meals will be delegated in full to all schools not just secondary.

Transportation and Engineering - Income generation in ITU (Integrated Transport Unit), Engineering Services and driver assessment.	223	50	H	Significant savings in excess of £1m have been achieved in this area to date. To enable service expansion and growth determines a fine balance of efficiency measures against invest to save and invest to promote income stream. Depleted resource levels will require careful planning and impact analysis of existing service provision standards to allow for income generation "start up" and achievement
Neighbourhood Management (including Community Safety and street cleansing) - Review of structure and working arrangements		150	M	Reduction in service performance regarding street cleansing and community safety services
TOTAL POTENTIAL SAVINGS	673	690		