

CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 17th March 2014

Present: Councillor J Oakes (Chair)
Councillors Bleakley, Essex (substitute for Milling), Fletcher
(substitute for Hughes), McInnes (substitute for Creaser),
Procter

Keith Pilkington (Co-opted member).

In Attendance: Tracy Brzozowski, Licensing and Enforcement Manager
Emma Hussain, Principal Policy Officer
Clare Law, HR Manager
Councillor Serridge, Deputy Leader, RBC
Councillor Marriott, Portfolio Holder, RBC
Pat Couch, Scrutiny Support Officer

1 members of the public

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Creaser, Hughes, Milling and Pilling.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETINGS

Resolved:

That the minutes of the last meeting held on 10th February 2014 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Essex declared an interest as he substituted at the last Licensing Committee when items D3 and D4 were presented.

Councillor Oakes declared an interest as she substituted at the last Licensing Committee meeting when items D3 and D4 were presented.

4. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no urgent items of business.

5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Chair agreed to deviate from the Procedure for Public Speaking and allow the members of the public to ask questions as the reports were discussed.

No questions were raised at this point.

6. CHAIR'S UPDATE

The Chair indicated that Members' recommendation for item 7 of the previous minutes (Members Mobile Phone Policy) was that the Policy be presented at a future meeting once the changes had been agreed by JCC.

The Scrutiny Support Officer emailed Members to inform them that JCC members had agreed only one change to the Policy in relation to health and safety and asked Members to accept the change rather than the Policy be brought back to Committee for a third time. This was accepted by the Committee.

The Chair also updated the Committee on information from the bi-monthly health meeting with the CCG, which the Scrutiny Support Officer and the Health Lead attend, which was as follows.

- Information on the Minor Injuries Unit at Rawtenstall
- The retirement of Dr Williams as a Rossendale GP and that Dr Tom McKenzie would take over as Rossendale representative on the CCG.
- Dementia Friendly Rossendale
- Concern about ambulance response times in Rossendale. The Chair confirmed that an invite had been sent asking them to attend a future meeting.

7. APPRENTICESHIP SCHEME POLICY

The HR Manager presented the Apprenticeship Scheme Policy which was last reviewed in 2008.

The Council currently has a high percentage of employees above the age of 50 and apprentices are an opportunity to offer entry level jobs in order to continue the development of an effective workforce.

An apprentice would typically be an employee, and would therefore benefit from all related rights, such as unfair dismissal and protection against discrimination. Although, while the primary purpose of a regular employee would be to undertake work for the employer, the focus for an apprentice was more on the facilitation of training and undertaking work that may enhance the process.

The Council over the last two years has been supporting the Get Britain Working Government funded initiative, which was aimed at (NEET), Not in Education, Employment, Training, for 18-24 year olds. Due to the success of the scheme the Council recruited two full-time apprentices to join the Corporate Support Team.

Following legislation changes there was a requirement to provide an apprenticeship with a Training Agreement, which sets out the terms and conditions of the apprenticeships contract of employment.

It is proposed that the Council pay the Apprentices the National Minimum Wage for Apprentices to maximise the recruitment of young people into apprenticeship roles across all areas of the Council.

Government funding via the Apprenticeship Grant of £1,500 per apprentice (maximum 10 grants in twelve month period) was available to support employers employing apprentices aged 16 to 24 years.

A budget of £27K has been approved at Full Council on 26th February 2014 with funding coming from the Director reserves.

The scheme would begin in September when following advice from the Children's Trust, NEETs were at the highest. Vacancies would be advertised at the Job Centre Plus, ACROSS, school portals and social media.

Whilst members welcomed the scheme and the fact that the scheme was looking to support young people of Rossendale, they raised concern about the proposal that the Council will pay the Apprentices National Minimum Wage for Apprentices. The HR Manager indicated to Members that a wage increase will mean fewer number of apprentices will be supported as the budget for this was set at £27k at Council.

Members indicated that more detailed information was required before the Committee could support the scheme and it was suggested that a one-off task and finish group be established to look at the scheme and that more information including a comparison on the wage levels and number of apprenticeships we could support, together with examples of what other authorities pay, was made available for the task and finish group members before they could support the scheme.

RESOLVED:

That Member note the Apprenticeship Scheme Policy, but that a task and finish group be established to look at the policy in more detail before any support could be given to the scheme.

8. QUARTER 3 INTEGRATED PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Principal Policy Officer presented the Council's performance report for Quarter 3 (October to December 2013), which showed that the Council was working well towards delivering its Actions and Performance Indicators in its 2013-2014 Corporate Business Plan.

After a strong performance in Quarter 2, the Council has continued to perform well in Quarter 3, with 93.9% of Actions finishing Quarter 3 green in status, on track with no issues to jeopardise the action. This was an improvement of 2% on Quarter 2.

Actions that were amber status also reduced by 1% on Quarter 2 to only 6.1%. Quarter 3 finished with no red Actions, this is a 1% reduction on Quarter 2, and the same as this Quarter last year.

The number of Performance Indicators that were green in status had fallen by 21.7% to 57.6%. The number of amber Performance Indicators increased from Quarter 2 by 20.4% to 27.3% in Quarter 3. The number of Performance Indicators that were red in status increased by 1.3% on Quarter 2 to 15.1%, from 4 in Quarter 2 to 5 in Quarter 3.

Customers were waiting for less time in our One Stop Shop (OSS). Performance of customer waiting times both on the phone and in the One Stop Shop have both reported at quicker than the target, this was especially pleasing considering the changes to the welfare system which continues to see higher enquiry rates.

The accuracy rate for procession Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit claims was 3% above target, reporting 96% accuracy rates for Q3, an increase on Q2.

STAN continues to have a strong performance this quarter, with the number of people accessing STAN being over double the target (targeted 120, actually seen 271). Rossendale represented 76% of the whole STAN footfall (the service is shared between 2 boroughs now, with Ribble Valley pulling out after Quarter 2). Satisfaction rates with the service remain very high; Quarter 3 reported 98% satisfaction rates.

For those Performance Indicators that were behind target an action plan had been completed which provides a summary of the related issues and intended actions to improve future performance. Members were taken through the action plans.

In relation to PM18 - % of Appeals Submitted to the Tribunals Service in 4 weeks, there was discussion on whether to continue with this indicator as it does not provide a true reflection of performance due to the small number involved.

It was therefore agreed by Members to remove this Performance Indicator as it was being monitored through the Capita Strategic Governance Board which three Councillors attend.

In Quarter 3 the Council received 20 complaints, down by 2 from Quarter 2 in 2013-14 and down 1 from Quarter 3 in 2012-13.

The highest area/category of complaints was seen in 'Processing', which saw 4 complaints. These were from both Capita and Licensing and Enforcement. In Quarter 2 2013-14 the highest area was 'Action/Response/Communication', which saw 4 complaints. In Quarter 3 2012-13 the highest area of complaints was seen in relation to 'RBC Policy or Procedures', with 15.

There were no new ombudsman complaints received in Quarter 3. There are also no outstanding ombudsman complaints at the end of Quarter 3.

In Quarter 3 the Council received 45 compliments from a wide range of Service Areas. This was more than double the number of Complaints this Quarter.

A number of questions were asked as follows:

In relation to household waste, it was noted that there were a number of possible ongoing factors that members had been made aware of which contribute to impact on achieving the targets, including:

- a) Economic climate – financial impacts on households not buying as much therefore less to potentially recycle.
- b) Recognised limitations by the Local Authority Recycling Advisory Committee that the council can make in encouraging greater participation to recycling.
- c) Some seasonal variation impact –monitored this year for smarter targeting next year.

The council continues to work hard to promote recycling and composting. The need to continue to get the message out into the community to enforce the need to have recycle bins was noted. Further the council's bins policy continues to be enforced good progress has been made but is an ongoing piece of work.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Corporate Scrutiny Committee notes the level of performance and risks detailed in the report.
2. That the Corporate Scrutiny Committee continues to monitor performance of those actions and performance indicators that are underachieving targeted levels of performance and if required, would ask the relevant Head of Service and Portfolio Holder to attend a future meeting to provide information on how improvements would be made.
3. That the Corporate Scrutiny Committee agrees to the removal of PM 18 - % of appeals submitted to the Tribunals Service in 4 weeks as this indicator is monitored through the Capita Strategic Governance Board which was attended by three Councillors.

9. REVIEW OF STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY – LICENSING ACT 2003

The Licensing and Enforcement Manager introduced the report which asked that the Corporate Scrutiny Committee recommend to Full Council that the revised Statement of Licensing Policy relating to the Licensing Act 2003 be adopted for a further five years. It was noted that this was a statutory document and that the proposed changes were minor ones, brought about by changes in legislation and practical experience. The proposed changes were outlined as follows:-

- New Rossendale statistic details from the 2011 Census.
- Change of name of Office Manager to Licensing and Enforcement Unit Manager.
- Addition of new legislation, Live Music Act 2012 and the Police and Social Responsibility Act 2011.
- Clarification of Live Music Act exemptions at section 5.2.
- Removal of the words 'in particular live music and dancing' at paragraph 17.
- Addition of paragraph 20.2 in relation to an application for a Late Temporary Event Notice.
- Increase of the hours a Temporary event notice can be in existence.
- Confirmation that the Sexual Entertainments Venues Policy has now been adopted.

- Removal of the vicinity test

Members raised a number of questions, which the Licensing and Enforcement Manager responded.

RESOLVED:

That the Corporate Scrutiny Committee recommend to Full Council the adoption of the revised Statement of Licensing Policy relating to the Licensing Act 2003 for a further five years.

10. REVISED POLICY STATEMENT ON GUIDELINES TO CONVICTIONS INCLUDING STATEMENT OF POLICY ABOUT RELEVANT CONVICTIONS

The Licensing and Enforcement Manager outlined the purpose of the report which asked that the Corporate Scrutiny Committee recommend to Full Council the adoption of the Revised Policy Statement on Guidelines to Convictions including Statement of Policy about Relevant Convictions.

It was noted that the current Policy Statement had been adopted by the Cabinet on 21st March 2007 and that the Policy was relied upon by the taxi trade by providing guidance on the view that a Licensing Sub-Committee is likely to take when determining applications for those applicants falling within the scope of the policy.

The Policy had been updated and the Licensing and Enforcement Manager outlined the proposed amendments at Appendix B of the committee report.

During February 2014, following a briefing with the Chair of the Licensing Committee, Portfolio Holder and Legal Services, the section relating to violent offences was re-drafted.

Members raised a number of questions, which the Licensing and Enforcement Manager responded.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Corporate Scrutiny Committee recommend to Full Council the adoption of the revised Policy Statement on Guidelines to Convictions including Statement of Policy about Relevant Convictions.
2. That the Corporate Scrutiny Committee recommend that all future minor amendments to the policy be delegated to the Director of Business in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.
3. That the Corporate Scrutiny Committee recommend to Full Council that all other amendments to the policy be delegated to the Licensing Committee.

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and closed at 7.25pm

Signed
(Chair)

Date