

# **STREETSMART AND HIGHWAYS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**WEDNESDAY, 16 SEPTEMBER 2015**

PRESENT:- Councillors Junab Ali, Alan Bishop, Paul Dixon, Colin Lovell, Derique Montaut, Kevin Parry (Chair), Eric Shaw (Vice-Chair), Vera Tomlinson, Joe Tray and David Wood.

Also in attendance were Councillors Brian Ford and Des Moffatt.

No apologies for absence were received.

## **6. Declarations of Interest**

The Chair reminded members of the need to declare any known interests in any matter to be considered by the Committee. No interests were declared.

## **7. Public Question Time**

No public questions were received prior to or during the meeting.

## **8. Minutes**

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 June 2015 be accepted as a correct record.

With reference to Minute 3, Public Question Time, Councillor Brian Ford, Cabinet Member for Streetsmart, advised the Committee that there had been a breakdown in communication between the work teams involved in repairing the damage to the railing fence at St Andrews Ridge. Councillor Ford also confirmed that an update had been provided to Mr Tenty as agreed at the meeting.

## **9. Response to Parking Issues**

The Committee received a report responding to issues raised at a previous meeting held on 21 January 2015 (Minute 29, 2014/15 refers). The Committee had requested a report on a range of Parking Service items including parking patrols and contraventions, threats and assaults to staff, officers working in pairs, partnership working, service improvements available, and the sickness absence levels within the team.

Apologies were presented from the Cabinet Member for the Economy, Regeneration and Skills, who was unable to attend to present this report, and from the Parking Services Manager who was also unable to attend.

Leon Barrett, Head of Streetsmart, introduced the report in their absence and highlighted the current operational hours of the two teams within Parking Operations. He noted the threats and assaults experienced by the parking services staff in 2014 as compared to 2013, and explained why the risk mitigation method of officers working in pairs is sometimes required. Members noted that increased joint working with the Police in enforcement areas is being discussed, along with other

improvements available, such as the introduction of a mobile system, which would also improve enforcement. Mr Barrett also explained that the higher than average levels of sickness absence within the team were not unexpected given the nature of the work undertaken.

After the presentation of the report, members asked questions and made observations on the following issues:

- The cost of sickness levels to the Council, expectations placed upon staff, and how potential abuses of the system are identified.
- Long term support measures in place for staff to assist with their returning to work.
- The recruitment process, and measures put in place to identify those who may be at risk of going on long-term sick leave such as medical surveys.
- The breakdown of figures contained within the table in paragraph 3.43 of the report, and what this means in terms of the number of people rather than percentages.
- The cost of signage within resident zones.
- The locations where the risk of threats or aggression is heightened for officers and they subsequently patrol in pairs.
- If the Body-Worn Camera System records sound as well as pictures, and the opportunity they present of officers being able to work individually rather than in pairs.
- The perception that patrols take place at certain times in certain areas to target particular groups.
- The monitoring of parking officers to ensure that tickets are not being falsely issued.
- The number of tickets issued within a year, how many of those are appealed against, and how many of those appeals are successful.
- The costs and length of time involved in introducing a mobile system which can enforce in locations where Civil Enforcement Officer enforcement is difficult.
- How to present information on the geographical location of where tickets are being issued and at what time or day without affecting the behaviour of offenders.
- The attendance of parking officers at schools during drop-off and collection times, and the allocation of resources depending in identified problem areas.
- The Committee expressed their disappointment that the Cabinet Member and report author had been unable to attend this meeting.

Resolved – To note the contents of the report.

## **10. Streetsmart Service Standards**

The Committee received a report setting out the current performance of the Streetsmart service, and the service standards and criteria applied in service delivery.

Councillor Brian Ford, Cabinet Member for Streetsmart, introduced the report and noted that the level of complaints about the service had decreased. He welcomed input from the Committee on the proposed service standards as set out in Appendix

B of the report, and highlighted that he is keen to improve the levels of publicity on the work done by the EnviroCrime Team which will assist in reducing the instances of littering and waste fly tipping.

After the presentation of the report and Appendix A, members asked questions and made observations on the following issues:

- Staffing levels within the EnviroCrime Team, and the percentage of working time spent on issuing fixed penalty notices to offenders versus time spent on their other areas of work.
- The importance of educating residents on waste management within the Borough, particularly for those who may have come from another country that has a different attitude to waste disposal.
- Investigating the possibility of improving signage across the town centre to clearly show the penalty for littering as part of raising awareness.
- The work already undertaken during this municipal year to increase the supervision and inspection frequency of waste collection crews.
- The data available to support the assumption that some customers complain of missed collections when they haven't put their bin out at the correct time, or fill their bin up again immediately after collection but say it wasn't emptied in the first place.
- The possibilities with regards to redesigning bins to help alleviate problems on windy days, or alternative solutions that homeowners could be educated on.
- The restrictions placed upon waste collection vehicles, and the resultant consequences if these are not adhered to.
- The education of, and instructions given to, the waste collection crews for during their rounds, and proposals for changes to the way they operate.
- The process of dealing with improperly presented kerbside waste and the timelines involved if items are not collected on the day.
- It was agreed that a report will be brought to this Committee within six to nine months' time giving an update on the progress against proposed service improvements.
- The current trial taking place on devolving some streetsmart services to Town and Parish Councils, and future plans for other services to follow.

The Committee then received a presentation from Leon Barrett, Head of Streetsmart, regarding the proposed service standards as set out in Appendix B to the report.

During the presentation of Appendix B, the following questions and observations were made by members:

- Definitions of play area emergencies as opposed to general enquiries, and the inspection regimes involved where both the Borough and Town / Parish Council are involved.
- The cost effectiveness of maintaining trees, as opposed to the potential pay out due to an insurance claim from a householder against the Council, and the fairness of expecting home owners to pay for remedial works as a result of encroachment from a tree that is not their responsibility.
- The on-going issues of street littering around food establishments.

The Committee thanked Councillor Ford and Mr Barrett for their contribution to this meeting, and noted the improvements in this service area that have been brought about since they commenced their respective roles.

Resolved – (1) To request that the Cabinet Member for Streetsmart investigates the possibility of improving signage in the town centre showing the penalties for littering.

(2) To note the current performance of the Streetsmart service and the service standards.

## **11. Work Programme 2015-2016**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Law and Democratic Services regarding the development of its work programme for 2015-2016.

The Committee noted that the Work Programme had been populated following a review by the relevant officers of the items suggested at the last meeting.

It was proposed that a Task Group be set up to review the devolution of streetsmart services to Town and Parish Councils. Expressions of interest will be sought from members.

Resolved – That, subject to the additions to the programme as set out in these minutes, the Committee's updated work programme be noted.