

**ORGANISATION IMPROVEMENT & ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW
AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION
HELD ON 23 JUNE 2008
(FROM 5.30 PM TO 6.42 PM)**

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs Atkinson in the Chair. Councillors Ian Galloway, Grange, Hill, Reg Marsh, Bob Nash, Newby, Ward and Willoughby.

Late Arrivals: None.

Early Departures: Councillor Reg Marsh at 6.27 pm.

01/08 - APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTES: Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Hawke and notification had been received that Councillor Ward was to act as substitute for Councillor Geoff Webber.

(5.30 pm)

02/08 - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: There were no such declarations.

(5.30 pm)

03/08 - MINUTES: It was reported that, in relation to Minute 78/07, Mr John Stockdale was not a Member of Ripon City Council as detailed in the Minute but rather a resident of Ripon.

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 7 April 2008, as amended, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

(Eight Members voted for the motion and there were two abstentions).

(5.31 pm)

04/08 - EXEMPT INFORMATION: There were no exempt information items.

(5.31 pm)

05/08 - PUBLIC ARRANGEMENTS - QUESTIONS: There were no questions to consider pursuant to Standing Order 27.

(5.32 pm)

MATTERS HOLDING THE EXECUTIVE TO ACCOUNT

06/08 - WASTE AND RECYCLING SERVICES: Councillor Cooper as Cabinet Member for the Environment and the Acting Head of Environment gave an update on the Council's Waste and Recycling Services. It was reported that the provisional annual recycling rate for 2007/08 was 26.9% compared to that of 23.21% for the year 2006/07. There had been an increase of 3.07% during the year and an approximate 9% increase in the previous four years. It was explained that the

overall increase was relatively low in comparison to that seen in other authorities but that it had occurred dramatically over a short period of time. It was also explained that on average, people living in the Harrogate District produced 10% less waste per head than those living in other districts, the figure being 384 kg per head compared to 424 kg per head.

It was reported that the box and bag recycling scheme had been expanded and now covered nine out of ten homes in the District, that Tetrapak banks had been installed at several waste amenity sites and that the number of textile recycling facilities had also been increased. Further expansion of the box and bag recycling scheme was planned for Autumn 2008 as was the green waste recycling scheme, although it was noted that it would be impossible to offer these schemes to all households due to them being located in spaces that simply could not accommodate the large collection vehicles.

It was further reported that a focus would be put upon waste diversion work throughout the coming year with the message being to encourage people to reduce, re-use and recycle. The Cabinet Member also explained that the Council had entered into a Service Level Agreement with neighbouring authorities and therefore become part of the York and North Yorkshire Waste Management Partnership (YNYWMP). Work had been undertaken as part of the Partnership with the aim of introducing a junk mail recycling initiative, a home composting scheme and also a furniture re-use initiative. The Service Level Agreement would ensure that the costs associated with the establishment and consequent management of these new schemes would be shared amongst its Members.

The Cabinet Member also informed the Commission of the possibility of a new recycling facility in the District and also the expansion of the paper recycling scheme to include magazines, newspapers, office paper, junk mail and cardboard.

In response to questions from Members, the Acting Head of Environment informed the Commission that the Council was doing everything possible to include every household in the various recycling schemes currently in operation and that alternatives were available to assist those who could not be included due to the location of their home, such as the provision of over 127 'bring sites' and also work being undertaken in an attempt to make it easier for people to gain access to the waste amenity sites to use recycling facilities there. She also explained that those properties located outside village collection perimeters could be included in recycling schemes in the future when drivers are more familiar with their routes and the times taken to turnaround their loads. Residents in this position could contact the Customer Service Unit with requests for inclusion in the schemes and their information would be passed on to the appropriate officer.

In relation to questions about the cost of the recycling services, the Cabinet Member informed the Commission that the Council spends a vast amount of money and will always experience losses in connection with the services. However, it was explained that the Council must continue to provide the services as landfill sites are rapidly reaching capacity and the Government and also the EU continue to impose strict targets that authorities are obliged to strive for. The suggestion was put that the Council could incinerate waste and use it to produce electricity but the Cabinet Member responded that no matter how sophisticated the technology, incineration

would always produce harmful carbon by-products. He indicated that the most suitable way of dealing with waste would be to focus upon reducing consumption.

Several Members then expressed concern that some residents had difficulty in handling numerous waste and recycling bins and that others permanently left their recycling boxes on the pavements and grass verges outside their homes. The Acting Head of Environment explained that assisted collections were available to those residents who may require them and also explained that the Council's agreement with the Highways Authority was that bins and boxes should only be left outside on the day of collection or in cases of early morning collections, from the night before. Members were asked to give details of those households permanently leaving receptacles on the streets to the Acting Head of Environment after the meeting so that officers could help suggest alternative arrangements.

Members then discussed the need for a second waste amenity site in Harrogate. The Cabinet Member informed the Commission that the County Council had not yet decided upon a suitable location and expressed his dismay at it taking so long. It was felt that County Councillor Wood should be invited to the next meeting of the Commission to join in the discussions.

Following a suggestion from Councillor Willoughby, it was agreed that the Acting Head of Environment would liaise with Parking Services about the possibility of providing temporary recycling facilities throughout the summer months at picnic sites in the District.

RESOLVED (UNANIMOUSLY):

That (1) County Councillor Wood be invited to a meeting of the Commission to discuss with Members the need for an additional waste amenity site in Harrogate; and

(2) the Head of the Environment would liaise with Parking Services about the possibility of providing temporary recycling facilities at various sites throughout the summer.

(5.32 pm - 6.03 pm)

07/08 - 2007/08 YEAR END PERFORMANCE REPORT: The Performance Manager submitted a written report outlining the Council's performance on the national Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) for the year 2007/2008. The report also detailed the Council's performance on its own Corporate Basket of Performance Indicators, the Corporate Improvement Plan actions and the Strategic Plan actions.

The Performance Manager reported that overall the Council had done very well in terms of performance. It was reported that 70.0% of the national BVPIs had achieved/surpassed the year end performance targets and that 76.9% had improved on or maintained their 2006/2007 performance, although it was noted that the figures were currently un-audited. Although it didn't appear that the Council had performed as well in relation to the Corporate Improvement Plan and Strategic Plan targets, it was explained that for the performance monitoring software to identify the actions as completed, each separate component of the action had to be registered as complete.

As such there were relatively few actions where a great deal of work has taken place but the overall status is shown as incomplete.

In response to a question from Councillor Willoughby, the Performance Manager explained that it was still not possible to calculate the performance on PI LCS01, the percentage of complaints meeting the response target, due to software problems, but it was noted that the Chief Customer Services Officer was working to rectify this.

RESOLVED (UNANIMOUSLY):

That the report be received and the Council's 2007/2008 year end performance on its BVPIs, Corporate Basket of Performance Indicators, Corporate Improvement Plan and Strategic Plan actions be noted.

(6.03 pm - 6.10 pm)

08/08 - 2008/09 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS: The Performance Manager submitted a written report presenting the 2008/2009 Performance Indicators (PIs) from which the Commission was asked to make a selection of those which they wished to monitor throughout the year. Attached to the report was an appendix containing a list of all the PIs that were relevant to the Commission's Agenda and the Performance Manager had highlighted several that she recommended for monitoring. The six PIs highlighted in yellow were recommended for monitoring on a quarterly basis and the two in blue on an annual basis. A further ten were highlighted in grey and it was recommended that the Commission choose not to monitor these with reasons given in the notes section of the table.

The Performance Manager explained that the changes to the reporting mechanisms for scrutiny followed a request that the scrutiny commissions are able to decide which PIs they monitor.

Several Members of the Commission then suggested that further PIs also be monitored including the number of unfilled Council job vacancies. The Performance Manager explained that at present it was not possible to monitor this as a PI but that it could be in future due to system improvements. It was decided that the Performance Manager would speak with the Head of Human Resources regarding this issue.

In relation to the numerous other PIs that were suggested for monitoring it was felt that the number should be kept to a minimum in order that the performance reports could be more focussed. It was noted that CMT also monitor some of the targets relating to the Commission's agenda and as such it was felt that only those PIs that indicated a drop in performance should be reported to the Commission.

RESOLVED (UNANIMOUSLY):

That (1) the Performance Manager liaise with the Head of Human Resources about the possibility of monitoring the number of unfilled Council job vacancies; and

(2) only those PIs indicating a drop in performance of more than 10% should be reported to the Commission.

(6.10 pm - 6.23 pm)

09/08 - **FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS:** The Commission considered Forward Plan Key Decisions which fell within its remit.

(6.23 pm - 6.26 pm)

SCRUTINY CONSULTATION

10/08 - **CPA RECATEGORISATION UPDATE:** The Assistant Chief Executive attended the meeting and gave a verbal update on the CPA Recategorisation process. It was reported that the Audit Commission would be attending to inspect HBC during July 2008 and Members' attention was drawn to a briefing note emailed the week prior to the meeting.

The Assistant Chief Executive outlined preparations for the inspection visit including the production of a self-assessment document that had been submitted to supplement the inspectors' tour of the District. It was reported that as part of the inspection, the inspectors would be seeking to interview Members about various aspects of work, in particular Overview and Scrutiny which was seen as a key inspection issue. Those Members to be interviewed would receive a short briefing beforehand which would highlight the type of questions that would be asked. Members were assured that such a briefing was acceptable to the inspectors, with the Lead Inspection Officer having commented that they expected interviewees to have been briefed but not coached.

Members were informed that the Chief Executive, the Leader of the Council and Members of the CPA Working Group would be accompanying the inspectors on the tour of the District, the object of which is to ensure that the inspectors understand what is special and unique about HBC and the way it works. At this stage Councillor Willoughby expressed her dismay at a visit to Knaresborough being omitted from the tour schedule. The Assistant Chief Executive agreed that it was disappointing but just not possible to cover all parts of the District due to the allotted time of only four hours. He explained that a request had been made by HBC for a full day tour but that the inspectors had believed four hours was sufficient. The decision to omit a visit to Knaresborough had been reluctantly arrived at by the Working Group which was made up of Members from all parts of the District.

(6.29 pm - 6.37 pm)

SCRUTINY MATTERS AND REVIEWS UNDERTAKEN BY THE COMMISSION

11/08 - **ORGANISATION IMPROVEMENT AND ENVIRONMENT COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT 2007/08:** The Scrutiny Officer submitted a written report providing a summary of work undertaken by the Commission in 2007/08 and the issues identified as potential areas of work in 2008/09.

RESOLVED (UNANIMOUSLY):

That the report be received and the areas identified within it make up the Commission's formal work programme for the year 2008/2009.

(6.37 pm - 6.39 pm)

12/08 - **CAR PARKING WORKING GROUP:** The Commission considered the establishment of the Working Group and its Membership.

RESOLVED (UNANIMOUSLY):

That (1) the Car Park Working Group be established with Councillor Reg Marsh in the Chair and Councillor Willoughby as a Member; and

(2) Councillors Hawke and Parnaby be asked to serve as Members.

(6.26 pm - 6.32 pm)

13/08 - **HIC EXHIBITION HALLS REDEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY PANEL:** The Commission considered the establishment of the Panel and its Membership.

RESOLVED (UNANIMOUSLY):

That (1) Councillors Hill and Bob Nash be Panel Members; and

(2) Councillor Webber be asked to serve as a Panel Member.

(6.32 pm - 6.39 pm)

14/08 - **HBC REPRESENTATIVE ON THE NYCC SCRUTINY OF HEALTH COMMITTEE:** The Commission considered nominations for the NYCC Scrutiny of Health Committee.

RESOLVED (UNANIMOUSLY):

That Councillor Bob Nash be the HBC representative on the NYCC Scrutiny of Health Committee.

(6.39 pm - 6.41 pm)

15/08 - **REQUESTS FOR INCLUSION OF ITEMS IN FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME:** There were no such requests.

(6.41 pm - 6.42 pm)