

Item 8a

SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL

PROSPEROUS AND ATTRACTIVE BOROUGH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Council Chamber,
Council Offices,
Spennymoor

Tuesday,
6 November 2007

Time: 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillor G.C. Gray (Chairman) and

Councillors D.M. Hancock, Mrs. I. Hewitson, B. Lamb, Mrs. E. Maddison and J. Robinson J.P

In

Attendance: Councillors Mrs. P. Crathorne, A. Gray, Mrs. J. Gray, Mrs. S. Haigh, J.E. Higgin, J.G. Huntington and Ms. I. Jackson

Apologies: Councillors Mrs. L. M.G. Cuthbertson, P. Gittins J.P., G.M.R. Howe, A. Smith, B. Stephens and A. Warburton

P&A.11/07 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

P&A.12/07 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 25th September 2007 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. (For copy see file of Minutes).

P&A.13/07 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Consideration was given to a report relating to the monitoring of Performance Indicators against the Council's Ambitions of a Prosperous and Attractive Borough and supporting Community Values covering the period from 1 April 2007 to 30th September 2007. (For copy see file of Minutes).

The Committee was informed of the new style of reporting Performance Indicators which included the targets for the existing year, comparison with previous years targets, targets for the following year, and achievements to date. The report also included commentary on performance of the Indicators.

Key points of progress and key areas of concern were brought to Members attention. Particular reference was made to the following key areas of progress relating to the Council's Corporate Ambitions of a Prosperous and Attractive Borough:-

Prosperous Borough

- Percentage of Industrial Properties let (CPP302)
- Housing Benefit Overpayments (HB) (BV79(a) (bi) (biii))
- Number of Concessionary Travel Permits Issued in accordance with the agreed criteria (LP27)
- Overall success rate of young people who have completed an apprenticeship programme with Sedgefield Borough Council (CPP23)

Attractive Borough

- The Tonnage of Household Waste sent by the Authority for Composting or Treatment by Anaerobic Digestion (BV082)
- The Percentage of Decisions delegated to officers as a proportion of all decisions (LP139)
- Average time take to determine all planning applications (LP124)
- Percentage of minor Commercial and Industrial applications decided within 8 weeks (BV109)
- Standard Land Searches Completed within 10 Days (LP143)

Members then considered progress on each Performance Indicator and identified areas of concern in relation to the Council's Corporate Ambitions of Prosperous and Attractive Borough, with a view to inclusion in the Committees Work Programme.

The following Indicators were highlighted as areas of concern :-

Prosperous Borough

Social Inclusion

Number of Fraud Investigations per 1,000 caseload (BV706(c))
Number of prosecutions and sanctions per 1,000 caseload (BV76(d))
Speed of processing (average time for all new claims) (BV078(a))
Speed of processing (average time for a change) (BV078(b))
Housing Benefit Overpayments Performance Indicators (BV079(bii))

It was considered that the area of Housing Benefits needed to be considered by the Committee particularly in relation to staffing levels and that performance was below targets set for 2007/2008.

Increased Skills Levels of Local People

Number of People achieving NVQ Level 2 through Train 2 Gain (CPP29)

Concern was raised that current performance of 6 people was significantly lower than the 2007/08 target of 72 people to achieve NVQ Level 2 through Train 2 Gain.

Attractive Borough

A cleaner, greener, sustainable environment

Percentage of conservation areas in the local authority area with an up-to-date character appraisal (BV219(b))

Members expressed concern that a target had been set to achieve 20% of conservation areas within the local authority area to have an up to date character appraisal and that 2006/07 year end performance was 6.7% and current performance was 6.6%.

Number of collections missed per 100,000 collections household waste (LPI01)

Concern was raised that year end performance for 2006/07 had deteriorated from the 2005/06 performance outturn and that current performance was not achieving the target set for 2007/08.

Improved Design and Quality of Towns and Villages

Percentage of Applicants considering Building Control Service very good or better (LPI32)

Percentage of Building Control plans approved/responded to within three weeks (LPI34)

Members expressed concern that both Building Control Indicators were currently performing below target set for 2007/08.

Concern was also raised regarding local Plan Indicator 35 Percentage of Complaints relating to alleged breaches of planning Control resolved in 12 weeks. It was however noted that Building Control Section had indicated that performance would be on target by end December 2007.

Increased involvement in Cultural Activities

Number of People Spectating or Participating in a Cultural Activity (CPA02)

Members were informed that performance against this indicator was 7451 people and not 2774 as indicated in the report. However concern was expressed regarding the definition of the indicator and how supporting information was collected.

The Committee considered that priority needed to be given to the area of Housing Benefits.

AGREED : That the information be noted and areas of concern be highlighted in the Work Programme.

P&A.14/07 WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to the Work Programme for Prosperous and Attractive Borough Overview and Scrutiny Committee. (For copy see file of Minutes).

Members identified Performance Indicators to be addressed in the Work Programme. It was highlighted that Housing Benefit Performance Indicators would be identified as a priority.

Members requested that a report be presented to the Committee detailing progress and impact of the Local Improvement Plan.

- AGREED :*
1. *That the Work Programme be noted.*
 2. *That the following items be placed on the Committees Work Programme:-*
 - Progress towards Housing Benefits Best Value Performance Indicators BV 76c, BV 76d, BV 78a, BV 78b, BV 79b(ii) relating to the Prosperous Borough Community Value 'Reduced Social Inclusion'.
 - Progress towards Corporate Plan Performance Indicator CPP 29, which relates to the Prosperous Borough Community Value 'Increased Skills of Local People'.
 - Progress towards BVPI 219(b) and Local Plan Indicator LP1 01 which relates to the Attractive Borough Community Value 'A Cleaner, Greener, Sustainable Environment'
 - Progress towards Local Plan Indicators LP132 and LP134 relating to the Attractive Borough Community value 'Improved Design and Quality of Towns and Villages'.
 - Progress towards Corporate Plan Performance Indicator CPA02 relating to the Attractive Borough Community Value 'Increased involvement in Cultural Activities'.
 3. *That a report be presented to a future meeting of the Committee detailing progress to date and impact of the Council's Local Improvement Programme.*

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Any person wishing to exercise the right of inspection, etc., in relation to these Minutes and associated papers should contact Liz North 01388 816166 ext 4237 email: enorth@sedgefield.gov.uk