

BOROUGH OF BARROW-IN-FURNESS
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Meeting:- Thursday 12th July, 2012
at 2.00 p.m. (Committee Room No. 4)

A G E N D A

PART ONE

1. To note any items which the Chairman considers to be of an urgent nature.
2. To receive notice from Members who may wish to move any delegated matter non-delegated and which will be decided by a majority of Members present and voting at the meeting.

3. **Admission of Public and Press**

To consider whether the public and press should be excluded from the meeting during consideration on any of the items on the agenda.

4. Disclosures of Interests and any declarations under Paragraph 16: Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules (Party Whip).

A Member with a personal interest in a matter to be considered at this meeting must either before the matter is discussed or when the interest becomes apparent disclose

1. ***The existence of that interest to the meeting.***
2. ***The nature of the interest.***
3. ***Decide whether they have a prejudicial interest.***

A note on declaring interests at meetings, which incorporates certain other aspects of the Code of Conduct and a pro-forma for completion where interests are disclosed will be available at the meeting.

5. Apologies for Absence/Attendance of Substitutes.
6. Confirmation of Minutes of the meeting held on 30th May, 2012 (copy attached).
- (D) 7. Tenants' Co-regulation.
- (D) 8. Coastal Protection.
- (D) 9. Street Cleansing.

**NOTE (D) – Delegated
(R) – Referred**

Membership of Committee

Councillors Roberts (Chairman)
Doughty (Vice-Chairman)
Biggins
Derbyshire
Hamilton
Husband
Johnston
R. McClure
Murphy
Opie
C. Thomson
M. A. Thomson

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BOROUGH OF BARROW IN FURNESS

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Meeting, Wednesday, 30th May, 2012
at 2.00 p.m.

PRESENT:- Councillors Roberts (Chairman), Doughty (Vice-Chairman), Biggins, Derbyshire, Hamilton, Husband, Johnston, Murphy, Sweeney, C. Thomson and M. A. Thomson.

1 – Apologies for Absence/Attendance of Substitute Members

Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillors R. McClure and Opie. Councillor Sweeney had replaced Councillor Opie for this meeting only.

2 – Minutes

The Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 21st March, 2012 were taken as read and confirmed.

3 – Tenants' Co-Regulation

The Policy Review Officer reported that following a meeting with the Housing Manager, members of the work group had agreed that more information was needed to progress this review. The Housing Manager had offered to contact Lancaster City Council to discuss their approach to co-regulation. He was hoping that they would meet with our work group and share their ideas.

RESOLVED:- To arrange a meeting with the work group and a representative of Lancaster City Council after the Housing Management Forum meeting on 14th June, 2012.

4 – Coastal Protection

The Policy Review Officer provided Members with an update of the scrutiny review into Coastal Protection.

The publication of the Walney Island Coastal Protection Strategy had been delayed because the Environment Agency had asked for an assessment of the mainland side of Walney Channel to be carried out. It was now expected to be published in October this year. A report on the initial assessment was now available and Members were provided with copies of the conclusions and executive summary at the meeting.

The Director of Regeneration and Community Services had agreed to discuss the background for the Strategy with the work group and a meeting had been arranged for 10.00 a.m. on 13th June, 2012.

RESOLVED:- Members were invited to attend a meeting with the Director of Regeneration and Community Services to discuss the Coastal Protection Strategy on 13th June, 2012.

5 – Street Cleansing

The Policy Review Officer provided Members with an update of the scrutiny review into Street Cleansing.

The Council continued to face increasing financial pressures and these had been compounded by the uncertainty regarding Cumbria County Council's decision to reduce the value of the Recycling Reward Scheme. To offset the impact that this may have on the Council's waste collection arrangement the Council had submitted an interim bid for funding from the Weekly Collection Support Scheme.

The current recycling figure was 36.7% compared to 36.0% for the same period last year and the Council had achieved the maximum Recycling Reward Scheme funding for 2011/12.

The Streetcare Manager had attended the meeting to provide an update on the cleanliness of the streets and particularly the control of weeds.

He reported that sixteen zones for weed spraying were complete, one was part complete and eight were outstanding. All outstanding zones would be completed by Friday 22nd June, 2012. When one completed spray of the Borough had been achieved one quad would continue on the second spray, and the second quad would target the hot spots.

Members thanked the Streetcare Team for the work they were doing and requested that Street Cleansing be kept on the agenda for regular updates.

RESOLVED:- (i) That the information on Street Cleansing be noted; and

(ii) That Street Cleansing remained on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agenda for regular updates.

The meeting closed at 2.50 p.m.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	(D) Agenda Item 7
Date of Meeting: 12th July, 2012	
Reporting Officer: Policy Review Officer	
<p>Title: Tenant's Co-regulation</p> <p>Summary and Conclusions:</p> <p>Provide Members with an update of the scrutiny review into tenant's co-regulation.</p> <p>Recommendation:</p> <p>Members are invited to consider the information and are invited to attend the meeting with Lancaster City Council.</p>	

Report

Changes to the regulation were reported to the Housing Management Forum in June:

From 1st April 2012, the Housing Communities Agency (HCA) took over the housing regulation role. Co-regulation remains at the heart of the framework which means having a solid partnership between tenants, landlords and those who govern the organisation to deliver positive results for tenants. Specifically, for Barrow Borough Council, it means that Councillors who govern housing services are responsible for:-

1. Meeting the standards set out in the framework.
2. Delivering the organisations social housing objectives, including being transparent and accountable.
3. Supporting tenants to both shape and scrutinise service delivery and to hold Councillors to account.

The standards from the old system have been added to and undergone some amendment. They are now called 'economic' and 'consumer' standards. Economic standards cover rents, governance and financial viability, and value for money. Consumer standards cover tenant involvement and empowerment, home, tenancy and neighbourhood/community.

The regulator is going to focus regulatory activities on the economic standards. Local Authority owned housing will not be subject to economic regulation by the HCA so the Council will not need to deal with this aspect of the regulatory standards.

With regard to consumer standards, the regulator no longer has an active role in monitoring provider's service performance. There will be no automatic inspection regime and intervention will only occur where there is a risk of serious harm to tenants. This has been referred to as the 'serious detriment test'. Since 1 April 2012, there are known to have been 19 enquiries to the regulator under the 'serious detriment test' and all have been refused. No details of these complaints have been released but what can be drawn from this is that the regulator is keen for issues to be resolved between the landlord and tenant at a more local level.

The requirement for local offers and annual reports is retained.

With regard to the Council's position, it appears that as long as an effective system of co-regulation is in operation and the Authority is meeting the consumer standards, there will be no intervention by the regulator.

Key Changes to Consumer Standards

Some of the key changes to these standards are as follows:-

1. There is a greater focus on local resolution of complaints and disputes, including a role for tenant panels in resolving complaints.
2. There is an increased scope for tenants to have considerably more influence in relation to repairs and maintenance through the development of a tenant cash back scheme in which tenants are rewarded for undertaking minor repairs.
3. There is a greater focus on promoting mutual exchange to assist tenants in moving to properties appropriate to their housing needs.
4. Local Authorities have flexible tenure options (shorter fixed terms tenancies of not less than 5 years or by exception tenancies of not less than 2 years, in addition to any probationary period) if they choose to use them and must have clear and accessible lettings policies detailing the types of tenancies granted.

To provide additional information and a perspective from another Housing Authority the Housing Manager has invited Lancaster City Council to discuss their approach to co-regulation. A meeting has been provisionally arranged for 19th or 20th July and we are waiting for confirmation.

Background Papers

Nil

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	(D) Agenda Item 8
Date of Meeting: 12th July, 2012	
Reporting Officer: Policy Review Officer	
Title: Coastal Protection	
Summary and Conclusions:	
Provide Members with an update of the scrutiny review into coastal protection.	
Recommendation:	
Members are invited to consider the information and also invited to visit a selection of the Council's coastal protection assets.	

Report

Members of the work group met with the Director of Regeneration and Community Services who provided information on the Council's responsibility under the 1949 Coastal Protection Act. In order to discharge the Council's duty under the act we need to undertake surveys of our coastline and other coastal protection assets. The latest survey was carried out earlier this year and access has been provided to Members in the Member's area of the web site.

The Director of Regeneration and Community Services informed Members that the coast line is divided into cells and that each cell has one of the coastal protection policies attached to it:-

- Hold the line
- Advance the line
- Manage re-alignment
- No active intervention

Coast protection is very expensive and the Government through DEFRA has offered Local Authorities grant in aid for high priority work. The Council has two schemes which have been submitted for funding, Roa Island defence improvement and West Shore Park.

The next stage of the review is to carry out site visits to some of our assets, these are dependent on the state of the tide and I will be arranging these in the near future.

Background Papers

Nil

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	(D) Agenda Item 9
Date of Meeting: 12th July, 2012	
Reporting Officer: Policy Review Officer	
Title: Street Cleansing	
Summary and Conclusions:	
Provide Members with an update of the scrutiny review into street cleansing.	
Recommendation:	
Members are invited to consider the information and determine how this review should be progressed.	

Report

The Council continues to face increasing financial pressures and these have been compounded by the uncertainty regarding Cumbria County Council's decision to reduce the value of the Recycling Reward Scheme. To offset the impact that this may have on the Council's waste collection arrangement we have submitted an interim bid for funding from the Weekly Collection Support Scheme. We have received feedback and support from Department of Communities and Local Government on this bid and are now preparing our final bid.

The recycling reward scheme payments for the first two quarters of this year have been capped at the level for the same period last year. The situation for Barrow is that we exceed the capping level on the recycling percentage basis so the payments will be based on the tonnage of recyclate collected. In the first quarter this year we have collected 2813 tonnes of recyclate compared to 2742 last year and therefore we are on target to claim the maximum available recycling reward.

The Streetcare Manager is continuing to work with Biffa to improve the waste collection and street cleansing service.

Background Papers

Nil