

BOROUGH OF BARROW-IN-FURNESS
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Meeting:- 14th March, 2013
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. Declarations of Interest

To receive declarations by Members and/or co-optees of interests in respect of items on this Agenda.

Members are reminded that, in accordance with the revised Code of Conduct, they are required to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests or other registrable interests which have not already been declared in the Council's Register of Interests. (It is a criminal offence not to declare a disclosable pecuniary interest either in the Register or at the meeting).

Members may however, also decide, in the interests of clarity and transparency, to declare at this point in the meeting, any such disclosable pecuniary interests which they have already declared in the Register, as well as any other registrable or other interests.

5. Apologies for Absence/Attendance of Substitutes.
6. Confirmation of Minutes of the meeting held on 31st January, 2013 (copy attached).
- (D) 7. Tenants' Participation.
- (D) 8. Allotment Review Recommendations.
- (D) 9. Street Cleansing.

(D) 10. Performance Management.

**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, Thursday, 31st January, 2013
at 2.00 p.m.

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

28 – Apologies for Absence/Attendance of Substitute Members

Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillors R. McClure and Opie.

29 – Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6th December, 2012 were taken as read and confirmed.

30 – Tenants’ Participation

The Policy Review Officer confirmed that the work group had met with the Housing Manager and Tenant Representatives and it had been agreed that the Housing Manager would develop a proposal for changing the Tenants’ role and present it to this Committee. However, due to other commitments this had not happened.

He informed the Committee that the existing calendar of Committees meant that the reporting process could not be completed and therefore any recommendations which may include potential changes to the constitution could not be approved prior to the Annual Council meeting on 14th May, 2013. The next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee was due to take place on 14th March and the Housing Management Forum was due to take place on 28th February, 2013. In view of that he asked to the Committee if they would be satisfied with the report from the work group going directly to a meeting of the Housing Management Forum then the Executive Committee without reporting the proposals back to this Committee first. The Committee were satisfied with that arrangement and the Chairman of the Housing Management Forum had advised that a special meeting of the Forum could be called prior to the Executive Committee meeting on 20th February, 2013 if required; he would liaise with the Housing Manager regarding that.

RESOLVED:- To agree that Members of this Committee were satisfied with the work group agreeing the proposals to be reported to the Housing Management Forum and then the Executive Committee.

31 – Allotment Review Recommendations

The Policy Review Officer reported that himself and Councillor Doughty had met with the Assistant Director of Community Services to review the implementation of the recommendations made by this Committee following the allotment review in 2011. They had been satisfied that the key recommendations had been implemented, namely:-

1. To agree that vacant plots were let on an “as seen” basis and a temporary rent reduction should be considered for heavily contaminated plots. Offers of vacant plots should be restricted to two and if neither was accepted, the resident should be removed from the waiting list. The time to respond to an offer should be restricted to three weeks;
2. To agree that the number of plots per household should be restricted to two for future Tenants. Tenants may hand over a single plot to a family member when they terminate their tenancy provided that the recipient was on the waiting list;
3. To agree that the Allotments Service should be funded by the income from the rents. The proposed increases in rent identified in the budget strategy would cover the cost of delivering the service;
4. To agree that waste generated by gardening activities was the responsibility of the allotment holders and they should remove it. The Council should consider alternative cost effective options for removing fly tips and bulky waste;
5. To agree that the Council should set a fixed rent for a standard size allotment and a higher fixed rent for larger allotments. The Council should accept direct debit and card payments for allotment rent to reduce external charges. If Tenants wished to continue to use other methods then these payments should incur a surcharge to cover the additional costs; and
6. To encourage allotment holders to make their own provisions for collecting water to reduce the volume used at the standpipes. The supply of water to the standpipes could be restricted in winter to prevent freezing.

It was noted that the replacement of water systems had been considered but it was decided to apply for capital funding to carry out repairs when needed. There had not been any significant water issues in 2012 and a number of repairs had been undertaken which contributed to a reduction in water usage.

It was also noted that there had been an increase in the number of Tenants paying by direct debit and the Council continued to promote that.

A Member had requested a detailed report of the progress on the recommendations outlined above from the scrutiny review so that this Committee could be satisfied that the recommendations had been followed through. He had also requested the figure of the number of Tenants paying by direct debit.

RESOLVED:- (i) To note the information; and

(ii) To agree that the Policy Review Officer would arrange for the Assistant Director of Community Services to provide a detailed report to the next meeting of this Committee.

32 – Street Cleansing

The Policy Review Officer provided Members with an update of the scrutiny review into Street Cleansing. He reported that Officers from the Streetcare Team had met with the Executive Director and had agreed to undertake a review of the recycling service to make it more efficient and cost effective. Data was currently being gathered and assessed to inform how the service could be changed.

He reported that the Mechanical Biological Treatment plant (MBT) was still being commissioned and that a visit would be arranged once the plant was operating routinely.

In respect of collecting waste in adverse weather, a Member reported that the Snow Strategy had proved very effective during the adverse weather conditions recently where refuse collections had been suspended for one day and that information had been publicised at 7.00 a.m. on the radio, Council's website and telephone services.

RESOLVED:- To note the information.

33 – Efficiency Savings

The Policy Review Officer reported that in December, the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government had published a document suggesting 50 ways to make savings in Local Government. He reported that the Council's Management Board had reviewed the savings and identified further savings that the Council could make. A copy of the full document "50 Ways to Save" had been appended to his report. To summarise, the suggestions along with the comments endorsed by the Council's Management Board were as follows:-

- 1. Share back office services** – Currently no arrangements in place.
- 2. Community Budgets - Bring staff and money together** – Currently no arrangements in place.
- 3. Use transparency to cut waste** – Expenses and payments are currently published on the website and the information is used in the budget setting process.
- 4. Tackle duplicate payments** – The Council's system does not allow two payments to be made against the same invoice number. As a safeguard data is checked annually as part of the National Fraud Initiative and this would identify duplicate payments.

5. **Clamp down on corporate charge cards** – The Council does not provide corporate credit cards.
6. **Special spending controls** – The Council operates systems of “dual spending control” and “absolute budgetary control” to prevent overspending.
7. **Tackle fraud** – The Council already share data matching information under the National Fraud Initiative.
8. **Claw back money from benefit cheats** – Liberata claws back money on the Council’s behalf and uses sanctions and prosecutions against perpetrators.
9. **Get more for less by improving procurement** – The Council uses the Chest and Procurement Plus to make savings.
10. **Buy together** – The Council makes small level savings using the Yorkshire Purchasing organisation and the Cumbria equivalent.
11. **Stop the scope for procurement fraud** – The Council’s anti-fraud and whistle blowing policies and the National Fraud Initiative prevent this.
12. **Utilise £16 billion of reserves creatively** – The Council uses its reserves as part of the budget strategy.
13. **Improve council tax collection rates** – Council Tax collection had increased from 95.4% to 96.8% over the last 10 years.
14. **Encourage direct debit and e-billing for council tax** – The Council promote direct debit payments and should consider e-billing.
15. **Close Council cash offices** – The Council has closed its cash offices.
16. **Better land and property management** – HMRC have offices in the Town Hall and the Police share the Neighbourhood Management Office. The Council’s Community Centres are managed by Community Groups.
17. **Hot-desking, estate rationalisation and sub-letting** – The Council sublets space to Liberata, Continental Landscapes and Biffa as part of the Contracts or a separate lease. The Council also have arrangements with Capita, Cumbria Police and Grant Thornton.
18. **Open a ‘pop up’ shop in spare office space** – Sodexo have a “pop up” facility in the Park Leisure Centre and Costa Coffee in the Forum. Additional options could be considered when the Catering Contracts are re-let.
19. **Close subsidised Council canteens** – The Council does not provide a canteen service.

20. **Cancel away days in posh hotels and glitzy award ceremonies** – The Council has reduced attendance at awards ceremonies and these always use standard accommodation.
21. **Open a coffee shop in the library** – The Council does not provide library services.
22. **Cut senior pay** – The Council has reduced the cost of senior management.
23. **Share senior staff** – The Council does not have arrangements for sharing senior staff.
24. **Scrapping the Chief Executive post entirely** – The Council has replaced the post of chief Executive with an Executive Director on a reduced salary.
25. **Introduce a recruitment freeze** – The Council only replace business critical posts.
26. **Freeze Councillor allowances and end Councillor pensions** – The Council has frozen Councillors allowances in line with the current freeze on staff pay. It has also reduced the number of Committees, thereby reducing special responsibility allowance payments.
27. **Cut spending on consultants and agency staff** – The Council has reduced spending on consultants and does not use agency workers.
28. **End expensive 'Leadership' courses** – The Council has reviewed and reduced the training budget.
29. **Cut spending on head hunters and expensive adverts** – The Council has not used these recruitment methods in the last 5 years.
30. **Review and reduce absenteeism** – The Council has reviewed absenteeism which has delivered short-term improvements which are difficult to sustain.
31. **Scrap Trade Union posts** – The Council does not employ a full time Trade Union Officer and monitors time spent on Trade Union activities by Union representatives.
32. **Charge for collecting Trade Union subscriptions** – The Council has reduced administration costs for the collection of Trade Union subscriptions. Further changes would not yield significant savings.
33. **Stop spending money on commercial lobbyists** – The Council does not use lobbyists or public affairs consultants.
34. **Stop translating documents into foreign languages** – The Council only provides a small number of translated documents.

35. **Reduce the number of publications and media monitoring** – The Council has reduced the number of publications and does not undertake media monitoring.
36. **Earn more from private advertising** – The Council's income from private advertising is limited to a few publications. Additional options are being considered including the market entrance.
37. **Cease Funding 'sock puppets' and 'fake charities'** – The Council only funds registered charities.
38. **Scrap the Town Hall pravda** – The Council does not publish a Council newspaper.
39. **Stop providing free food and drink for meetings** – The Council has significantly reduced the provision of food and drink at meetings and continues to monitor whether further savings can be made.
40. **Reduce first class travel** – The Council does not provide first class travel.
41. **Cut mileage payments** – The Council has reduced mileage allowance payments and it is below the HMRC figure. The number of business miles has also been restricted.
42. **Video conference instead of travel** – The Council makes limited use of video conferencing because we have to visit offsite locations to use it and the active use by other local organisations is limited. The Council makes more use of teleconferencing.
43. **Help the voluntary sector save you money** – The Council uses a number of organisations including CAB for welfare benefits service, the Playing Fields Association for some grounds maintenance service and the Barrow and District Disability Association.
44. **Cut printing costs** – Management Board have agreed a plan to reduce printing and photocopying costs and this is being implemented.
45. **End lifestyle and equality questionnaires** – The Council continues to carry out equality questions and undertake EqlAs.
46. **Sell services** – The Council does not currently sell services to the public.
47. **Hire out the Town Hall** – The Council hires out the Town Hall for weddings and the Forum and Dock for conferences.
48. **Lease works of art not on display** – The Council does not currently lease out art work. The Council are currently encouraging more departments to display art work rather than keep it in storage.

- 49. Save money on computer software** – The Council is currently expanding the use of open source software and virtual desktops.
- 50. Ask your staff for more sensible savings ideas** – The Council continues to consider all cost saving ideas.

From the 50 suggestions outlined above, the Council fully complied with 33, a further 11 the Council complied with partly but there may be scope for improvement and 1 of the suggestions was not applicable to this Council. The remaining 5 suggestions (namely numbers 1, 2, 23, 34 and 48 above) the Policy Review Officer invited this Committee to consider any ways in which the suggestions could be progressed.

The Borough Treasurer advised that this report would support the Council's business case for the Efficiency Support Grant as many of the changes had been made already.

The Scrutiny Committee supported the savings which had already been made.

RESOLVED:- To agree that this Committee was satisfied and fully supported the savings identified in the report which had already been made.

REFERRED ITEMS

THE FOLLOWING MATTERS ARE REFERRED TO COUNCIL FOR DECISION

35 – Scrutiny of the Council Budget for the Year 2013-2014

The Borough Treasurer submitted a report stating that the Executive Committee on 23rd January, 2013 had considered the budget proposals for 2013-2014 and their recommendations would be before Council on 26th February, 2013. It was noted that the Executive Committee had recommended the Council to agree to retain the Neighbourhood Management Team and the operational costs of 242-244 Dalton Road at a cost of £87,690 which was different to the recommendation outlined in the report to the Executive Committee on 23rd January, 2013 which was to agree to retain the Neighbourhood Management Team at a cost of £75,870.

She invited Members of this Committee to scrutinise the budget proposals and raise any concerns to full Council at their meeting on 26th February, 2013.

For Members' information the Executive Committee report with the related appendices had been appended to her report.

A Member had suggested monitoring capital expenditure. The Borough Treasurer advised the Committee that capital expenditure was reported to the Executive Committee on a quarterly basis and that the report could be adapted to be reported to this Committee also.

The Borough Treasurer responded to Members' questions in relation to the budget proposals for 2013-2014.

RECOMMENDED:- To agree that Members were satisfied with the budget proposals for 2013-2014 as approved by the Executive Committee at its meeting on 23rd January, 2013 and agreed to forward these proposals to full Council for approval at its meeting on 26th February, 2013.

The meeting closed at 3.04 p.m.

Part One

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	(D) Agenda Item 7
Date of Meeting: 14th March, 2013	
Reporting Officer: Policy Review Officer	
Title: Tenants' Participation	
Summary and Conclusions:	
To provide Members with an update of the scrutiny review into Tenants' participation.	
Recommendation:	
Members are invited to consider the information and submit the recommendations to the Executive Committee for consideration.	

Report

At the last meeting of this Committee Members agreed that the Housing Manager's report should be considered by the Work Group and be reported to the Housing Management Forum and then the Executive Committee.

I have since discussed this decision with the Monitoring Officer and have been advised that to comply with the Constitution I should send the report to this Committee and if Members agree I will send it to the Executive Committee with the recommendations from this Committee.

The report is attached as **Appendix 1**.

Background Papers

Nil

DISCUSSION DOCUMENT...DRAFT

TENANT ENGAGEMENT

The purpose of this report is to summarise the discussions by members of the Scrutiny Committee into the current arrangements for tenant engagement in the governance of the Housing Service.

Background Information

In order to aid the consideration of this matter, reference was made to:

A presentation by Lancaster City Council regarding their approach to engagement;

A background paper on Tenancy Engagement including recent changes to the regulatory requirements for Tenant participation in the governance of such services; and

Open discussion between Councillors, Tenant representatives and Officers from the Housing Service.

Summary of Key Issues and Comments

The following text summarises a number of issues discussed at the meeting with explanatory comments and possible solutions in terms of the way forward.

The issues are not listed in order of priority and could be considered individually but regard should be given to changing each with regard to the impact of changing the current model of Tenant engagement.

	Issue	Discussion points	Option Proposed	Officer Comment
1. Membership of Housing Management Forum	Many of the Tenant representatives are 'Residents' not 'Tenants'.	It is Council policy to allow representation to be non-Tenants. Such representations have to be nominated by the Residents' associations which they represent. The result is a number of representatives on the HMF are not Tenants.	The Council should encourage more Tenants to take an active role in Tenants' participation.	The Council is not required to consult with non-Tenants. However, to enable such to occur is possibly an appropriate approach having regard to the mixed tenure nature of many Council estates.
	Balance of membership.	The membership is of equal numbers of Tenant representatives and Councillors. Concern that whilst Tenants will operate as one voice, as political membership is dictated by the political make-up of the Council.	Reduce number of Tenant representatives to two, Chair and Vice Chair of the Tenants' Forum.	HMF has no 'executive powers'. Its role is to make 'recommendations'. Should the Council not agree a recommendation, it has the power to ultimately make a different decision.
2. Chair of HMF	The Council appoints a Housing Chair however, Council Constitution allows for the HMF to appoint a Chair for the 'purpose of management of the meeting' who may be a different person.	The group questioned whether this approach was correct or whether the Chair should be the Council's appointed Chair for Housing.	Change the Council Constitution to appoint the Council's appointed Chair as the sole Chair of HMF.	The HMF has no 'executive powers'. Allowing a Tenant representative to be Chair demonstrates the Council's approach to ensure as far as is practical Tenants are involved in the Council's decision-making process. I would suggest a current weakness is that whilst the Housing Spokesperson is a member of HMF, they are not on the Council's Executive Committee. It would be appropriate for the appointed Councillor to attend both in order to ensure continuity in decision-making.
3. Scrutiny Function	Are we able to demonstrate sufficient and robust scrutiny within the Housing services governance arrangements?	Following presentation and discussion with Officers from Lancaster they have moved towards a "scrutiny based" approach as a key process for Tenants. At present the governance arrangements include regular presentation of Performance Information which enables members and Councillors to scrutinise delivery. Also development of services progressed through a clear structure of participation. However, noted this does not perhaps demonstrate scrutiny to a level required. Lancaster has created four groups to reflect the regulatory Framework. Recognised capacity to facilitate four groups on a practical level would be difficult to achieve.	Change remit of Tenant Compact Working Party to carryout scrutiny of current policy and practices.	Role of TCWP as a "discussion" Forum to consider the Council's approach to service development would end. Whilst it would be appropriate to separate Members and Tenant Reps on Scrutiny from the decision making process, because of the relatively small number of Tenants who are actively engaged it may not be practical to achieve.

	Issue	Discussion points	Option Proposed	Officer Comment
4. Tenant Compact Budget	A budget of £10k is made available to the Tenants' Forum to be used at their discretion to support Tenant Participation.	Funding used for a variety of purposes including grants to individual groups, supporting one off events, training, transport and childcare.	Agreed budget should remain.	With reference to Regulation and good practice, Tenant Participation should be supported and appropriate resources provided to enable the process. Continuation of this is common and good practice to enable Tenant Associations to have a degree of autonomy from their Landlord.
5. Area Improvement Budget	A budget of £25k is made available annually to spend on environmental improvements at the discretion of the Tenants' Forum.	Funding is generally used for small scale improvements which have a community benefit. Money allocated in first instance on an area based approach based of number of properties. Question over whether Councillors should have more of a role. Suggestion Councillors unaware of this funding opportunity.	Agreed budget should remain but Councillors should be made aware of the funding opportunity.	With reference to Regulation and good practice, Tenant Participation should be supported and appropriate resources provided to enable the process. Continuation of this is common and good practice to enable Tenant Associations to have a degree of autonomy from their Landlord. It would be appropriate to share potential schemes with the Ward Councillor prior to approval at Tenants' Forum and to include on joint site inspections with Councillors and Tenant Reps.
6. Tenant Involvement Generally	Involving more Tenants	First principles of Tenant engagement are to provide meaningful involvement and clear purpose, with a variety of options to suit the individuals concerned. In terms of "meeting based" engagement this is generally through the structure that has been agreed and in place for sometime. This has resulted in a small number of regular attendees but recognised maybe others excluded by the requirements placed on Tenant Representatives. Lancaster have Groups, street voices, etc but have also included an approach similar to the "School Governors" approach.	Consider enabling nominated individuals to attend the Tenants' Forum.	This could be developed using the approach to appointing Street Voices but by targeting areas. Further consideration of this required to look at ensuring representation by area, and regard to Equality And Diversity and meaningful representation.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	(D) Agenda Item 8
Date of Meeting: 14th March, 2013	
Reporting Officer: Policy Review Officer	
Title: Allotment Review Recommendations	
Summary and Conclusions:	
A review of the recommendations from the allotment review which was undertaken in 2011 is on-going and Members have invited the Assistant Director of Community Services to report on the progress being made.	
Recommendation:	
Members are invited to note the information.	

Report

Councillor Doughty and the Policy Review Officer met with the Assistant Director of Community Services to review the implementation of the recommendations made by this Committee following the allotment review in 2011. This was reported to this Committee on 31st January and Members requested that the Assistant Director of Community Services be invited to this meeting to provide a detailed report of the progress on the recommendations from the Scrutiny review so that this Committee could be satisfied that the recommendations had been followed through.

The recommendations are attached as **Appendix 2**.

Members have also requested the figure of the number of Tenants paying by direct debit. I have been informed by the Client Accountant that currently there are 107 Tenants paying by direct debit which is 16% of the total number of Tenancies.

Background Papers

Nil

APPENDIX 2

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has undertaken a review of allotment provision to:-

1. Reduce waiting time for allotments.
2. Ensure that the provision of allotments is self-financing.

Summary

The Council currently has provision for 750 allotment plots on 17 sites which exceed the typical Local Authority provision of 15 plots per 1,000 households.

The number of people currently on the waiting list for allotment plots is almost 500 and the turnover of allotment plots since April 2009 is only 150 indicating that Residents may be on the waiting list for up to eight years.

In 2010/11 the cost for providing the allotment service was £88,380 of which £33,200 was recovered in rent so the total cost to the council was £55,180. £50,000 of these costs was associated with:

1. Grounds maintenance which includes the removal of rubbish.
2. Collection of rent.
3. Provision of water.

A significant reduction in the Council's formula grant means that subsidising allotment provision is not sustainable and the allotment income needs to cover the cost of provision.

Recommendations

The Scrutiny review has examined the provision of allotment plots and the cost of that provision and has made the following recommendations to be implemented by 1st April 2012:-

Recommendations to reduce the waiting list

- Vacant plots are let on an "as seen" basis and a temporary rent reduction should be considered for heavily contaminated plots. Offers of vacant plots should be restricted to two and if neither is accepted the Resident should be removed from the waiting list. The time to respond to an offer should be restricted to three weeks.
- The number of plots per household should be restricted to two for future Tenants. Tenants may hand over a single plot to a family member when they terminate their Tenancy provided that the recipient is on the waiting list.

Recommendations to reduce service costs

- The allotment service should be funded by the income from the rents. The proposed increases in rent identified in the budget strategy will cover the cost of delivering the service.

- Waste generated by gardening activities is the responsibility of the allotment holders and they should remove it. The Council should consider alternative cost effective options for removing fly-tips and bulky waste.
- The Council should set a fixed rent for a standard size allotment and a higher fixed rent for larger allotments. The Council should accept “direct debit” and card payments for allotment rent to reduce external charges. If Tenants want to continue to use other methods then these payments should incur a surcharge to cover the additional costs.
- The Council should encourage allotment holders to make their own provision for collecting water to reduce the volume used at the stand pipes. The supply of water to the stand pipes could be restricted in winter to prevent freezing.

Waiting list

There is not a statutory number of allotment plots that Local Authorities have to provide but most Authorities use the arbitrary figure of 15 per 1000 properties which was recommended in the 1969 Thorpe report. The Council provides 750 allotment plots which is equivalent to 23 plots per 1000 properties so we exceed the recommended number. Despite this we still have a significant number of Residents on the waiting list and have contacted those Residents to confirm their interest and as a result the number on the waiting list has been reduced from 644 to 493.

The 750 plots are let to 600 households with some households letting 4 plots. The reasons for this are attributed to historic low demand for allotments, however, demand has increased significantly and it would be fair to restrict households to a maximum of two plots.

The review recognised that the process for managing and re-letting allotment plots was complex and it was agreed that we should review the letting procedure for future leases to include:

- Vacant plots are let on an “as seen” and a temporary rent reduction should be considered for heavily contaminated plots.
- Residents should be allowed three weeks to respond to an offer and if there is no response after three weeks the Resident will be removed from the waiting list.
- If a Resident rejects an offer they will only be offered one more plot and if that is rejected they will be removed from the waiting list.
- Plots may be handed over to a family member provided that person is on the waiting list and with written agreement from the Council. If a Tenant has multiple plots only one of the plots may be handed over. The Council should produce a clear procedure for the process of cancelling a Tenancy agreement for non-payment of rent or for dereliction of a plot.
- Restrictions on keeping livestock so that at least 75% of all allotments are cultivated. It is recognised that small number of plots are not suitable for cultivation and these will be exempt. Suitability will be assessed on an individual basis.
- The Council should develop a clear procedure for cancelling a Tenancy agreement for non-payment of rent or for non-compliance with terms and conditions.

Cost of service

1. The cost of grounds maintenance for 2010/11 was £26,230 and over 80% of this cost was for removal of rubbish from allotment plots. There are two categories of rubbish removal one is the provision of trailers to remove the accumulation of waste generated by typical allotment activities. The review concluded that waste generated in this way is the responsibility of the allotment holders and they should be encouraged to dispose of their own rubbish. To support this transition the Council continue to provide a restricted number of trailers at specific times of the year and these should be used for disposing of bulkier items.

The other category is the removal of rubbish from allotment prior to letting and the clearance of fly-tips, the cost of this disposal is significantly disproportional to the rent value of the plot and the Council should consider other methods of removing the waste or in exceptional circumstances leave the plot vacant.

2. In 2010/11 the recharge cost to the Borough Treasurers was £12,550 which includes the collection of rent. Currently the rent for each allotment is charged on individual size and although the calculation is electronic we have to generate individual invoices, which is inefficient. The Council should introduce a fixed rent for a standard size allotment and a higher fixed rent for larger allotments.

It is proposed that we introduce four rent bands for allotment plots based on approximate size. The budget strategy proposes that the cost of a standard plot should be £86 in 2012/13 and on the basis the cost of each band would be:

1. Small = 40 to 200 square yards = £43
2. Standard = 201 to 400 square yards = £86
3. Large = 401 to 600 square yards = £129
4. Very large = 601 to 800 square yards = £172

Any plots over 800 square yards should be sub-divided

Currently there are a number of methods for collecting rent and for some the Council incurs external charges. The use of direct debit and card payments do not incur external charges and the Council should move to this method of collection. If tenants want to continue to use other methods then these payments should incur a surcharge to cover the additional costs.

3. The cost of supplying water is included in the rent for the plot and on average is equivalent to a third of the current rent. The Council has undertaken a monitoring exercise to identify areas of high usage or wastage to try to reduce water charges. The output from this exercise has indicated that there are significant variations in water usage. Damage to the water supply caused by wear and tear, freezing weather acts of vandalism has led to a significant amount of leak repair and taps replacement work being undertaken. Tenants should be encouraged to find alternative supplies such as "rain water butts" and work towards reducing water usage at the stand pipes. In addition the isolation of stand pipes in freezing weather should be considered to reduce the number of burst pipes.

The allotment service should also consider applying for capital funding to replace existing water systems with a more efficient method of supplying water.

The review recognised the internal recharges for allotments where significant because as with other Council departments allotments have to bear their share of the Council's overheads. Although these costs will be reduced as the Council reduces its budget it is clear that more significant savings would be made if allotments were self-managed and the Council should consider any requests for self-management.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	(D) Agenda Item 9
Date of Meeting: 14th March, 2013	
Reporting Officer: Policy Review Officer	
Title: Street Cleansing	
Summary and Conclusions:	
To 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 Streetcare Team have worked in partnership with Cumbria Police to undertake an exercise to reduce the amount of dog fouling on streets and public land.

The Council is currently exploring the use of technology to help to reduce the number of bins we are replacing. We have recently ordered 1,000, 120 litre bins which have been chipped which will allow us to monitor whether the bin is being used by the property for which it was ordered. The cost of replacement bins is in excess of £40k pa.

Mechanical Biological Treatment plant (MBT) is now running and I will arrange a visit at this meeting.

Background Papers

Nil

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	(D) Agenda Item 10
Date of Meeting: 14th March, 2013	
Reporting Officer: Policy Review Officer	
<p>Title: Performance Management</p> <p>Summary and Conclusions:</p> <p>To provide Members with the Council's performance management report for quarters 1-3.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Members are invited to agree that performance information be presented to this Committee; and 2. Consider the report and determine whether further action is required. 	

Report

In recent years performance management information has been reported to the Audit Committee. The Executive Director has agreed that it would be more appropriate for the information to be presented to this Committee because you are better placed to initiate a performance review if required.

The Council's Key Priorities for 2012/15 are:

1. **Provide good quality efficient and cost effective services while reducing overall expenditure.**
2. **Continue to support housing market renewal including an increase in the choice and quality of housing stock and the regeneration of our oldest and poorest housing.**
3. **Work to mitigate the effects of the recession and cuts in public expenditure and their impact on the local economy and secure a sustainable and long term economic recovery for our community**
4. **Continue to improve and enhance the built environment and public realm, working with key partners to secure regeneration of derelict and underused land and buildings in the Borough.**

The proposed actions for 2012/13 are listed below although some of the actions will take longer than one year to complete.

KP 1:

- Complete the all-weather soccer centre. **This was due to be completed in December 2012 but has been subject to delays and will be completed in the first quarter of 2013/14.**
- Renegotiate the Council's catering contract. **New contract specification is being drafted**
- Carry out a Survey of Tenants and Residents (STAR survey) to understand the expectations and aspirations of our tenants. **Complete and results have been published**
- Review recycling collections to maximise recycling income and mitigate the impact of a reduction in the value of recycling rewards.
- Actively encourage all Members to access the Modern Councillor online e-learning facility'

KP 2:

- A two year project to carry out Group Repair Work to 240 properties in sub areas A and E including:
 - Chimney stack repairs
 - Door and window replacement
 - Rendering and new rain water goods
 - Cavity wall insulation
- Identify appropriate sites in partnership with Accent Housing to build 27, 3-bedroom social houses.

KP 3:

- Transfer management of Waterside House to BAE Systems as part of the lease agreement. **Complete**
- Complete refurbishment at Phoenix Park Business Centre. **Complete**
- Agree local arrangements to mitigate the impact of the Council Tax reduction scheme, which replaces the current Council tax Benefits. **Complete and is covered in the budget**

KP 4:

- Complete the external refurbishment of 102 Abbey Road. **This project is complete.**
- Two year project to construct a roof on level C of the multi storey car park. **This is currently being reviewed and it is unlikely that it will continue**

Key performance Indicators

Table 1 is a selection of existing indicators and Table 2 shows income against budget.

Local indicators

Indicator	Description	Q3 2011/12	Q3 2012/13	Change
9	Percentage of Council tax collected	83.42	83.31	↓
10	Percentage of NNDR collected	88.19	86.97	↓
12	Average number of days sick per member of staff	6.03	9.44	↓
NI 191	Residual waste per household	401	388	↑
N1192	% of waste recycled, composted	38.1	37.7	↓
	Weight of waste recycled and composted	8255	7827	↓

The Council Tax and NNDR figures were low at the end of the quarter but have since recovered.

The sickness figure is worse than we typically see in the third quarter and should be monitored closely.

The percentage of waste recycled has is marginally lower and the tonnage is 5% lower and this will impact on the value of the recycling rewards.

Income

Table 2 shows the income figures for quarters 1- 3 against the current budget and provides a comparison with the figures from the same period in 2011/12.

Income quarters 1-3

		2011/12	2012/13
Service		£s	£s
Crematorium	Budget	26,4600	450,000
	Actual	276,949	369,497
Cemetery	Budget	74,423	67,560
	Actual	50,668	61,940
Parking	Budget	609,000	489,233
	Actual	469,655	462,193
Recycling	Budget	573,750	573,750
	Actual	424,333	574,085

Bulky waste	Budget	27,000	58,500
	Actual	34,710	52,625
PLC 1	Budget	562800	483,930
	Actual	438,991	457,723

The income is subject to seasonal variation which distorts the figures but despite this the income is lower than expected.

Background Papers

Nil