

Chichester District Council

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

17 November 2015

Report from the Corporate Plan Task & Finish Group

1. **Contacts**

Mrs P Dignum, Chairman of the Corporate Plan Task & Finish Group
Tel: 01243 538585 Email: pdignum@chichester.gov.uk

2. **Recommendations**

- 1) **That the committee notes this report from the Corporate Plan Task and Finish Group and is satisfied that the Council is achieving satisfactory levels of performance against the targets and activities in the 2015/16 Corporate Plan mid-year progress report.**
- 2) **That the concerns of this Group reflected in paragraph 4.6 regarding the Council's underachievement of the recycling target and the need to have a fuller debate of new ideas at a higher level as a step towards improvement of the figures are forwarded to the Cabinet Member for the Environment.**

3. **Background**

- 3.1 The Task and Finish Group met on 2 November 2015 to consider the Corporate Plan mid-year progress report from April to September 2015. The aim was to review the Council's performance, identifying individual areas where performance was below that expected, and to reduce risks to an acceptable level.
- 3.2 Members of the Group were Mrs P Dignum (Chairman), Mrs P Plant, Mr N Galloway and Mr S Morley.

4. **Monitoring and Review**

- 4.1 The Group was asked to review the Council's levels of performance in achieving the aims and targets set, to identify poor performance, and to suggest action plans where necessary to reduce any risk to a satisfactory level. We considered a mid-year report, produced from the Council's Covalent performance management system, to look more closely at those marked with a red octagon, signifying a project overdue or performing below its targeted level.
- 4.2 **C159 Housing Condition Stock Modelling**
This was originally scheduled to finish in June 2014 however it was delayed due to several local authorities joining to achieve cost savings. The report was completed in March 2015, has been considered, and will inform the new Private Sector Renewal Strategy which will be considered by Cabinet in March 2016 after an 8-week consultation period.

Mr Dunmall, Housing Operations Manager, helpfully increased our knowledge of the wider picture by answering questions about housing standards (especially cold homes in rural areas), the accreditation schemes for landlords (guaranteeing high standards for students and others) and the desire for higher energy efficiency. He demonstrated that though the housing stock modelling was behind its original completion date, there were good reasons and much valuable extra work in several fields was going on during the period.

The Group concluded that the red rating related only to the fact that completed work had not yet gone to committee; there were no real concerns, but admiration for the hard work of the housing department.

4.3 **SD HS 17 Private Sector Renewal Policy**

The Stock Condition survey was undertaken in March 2015; completion was scheduled by end of July 2015. It will go to Overview and Scrutiny this month and to Cabinet in March 2016. Tackling the poorest housing in the district and bringing empty properties back into use is an ongoing and demanding activity. Mr Dunmall assured us his team kept a close eye. The red rating was caused not by failings in standards but because it had not yet come to committee so the Group had no real concerns about this.

4.4 **LPI 212 All Reported Crimes - Chichester**

This indicator is part of our priority in the Corporate Plan to support our communities as crime plays a part in people's feelings about safety. The police target was zero increase in crime over the previous year, but the Chichester area had had an increase of 3.3%. There were 3 reasons: firstly, the method of recording violent crime had changed; secondly we shared the national trend in increasing numbers of sexual offences reported and thirdly, one individual offender had been responsible for a number of offences in the north of the district, but was now in custody.

The Council works in partnership with the police and a number of other organisations in tackling crime. The crime figures are therefore not the result of Council policy or activity alone. The Group accepted the results as they stand, but wanted to praise the Council's efforts to keep the public safe. Mr Mildred, Corporate Policy Advice Manager, underlined the role and value of the community wardens, their location and partnership funding. No immediate action was required.

4.5 **LP1 234 The percentage of people who are maintaining positive lifestyle changes as a result of referral to the Wellbeing Hub after 3 months**

The target was 80%, surpassed in the past, but the 2nd quarter it was 75%. Mrs Thomas, Community Wellbeing Manager, explained clients were phoned after 3 months (and in future after 6 months) to check whether lifestyle changes had been maintained. Unfortunately data had been corrupted, giving a distorted and inaccurate picture; this would not happen again. Another factor was a change in the type of person being referred, some having a deprived background and other problems; clients were not always in the right frame of mind to start a programme of self improvement and did not always follow up advice. Mrs Thomas made clear the high value many placed on the service offered; and how useful it was to be able to cross-refer with other projects within the Communities team such as "Think Family".

The Group felt this was a valuable service without real concerns; it required no further action.

4.6 LPI 192 The percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting

Our 2015 target is 42%, but the achieved figure is 39.25%. By 2020 the EU requires 50%, and Mr Riley, the Contracts Manager (in writing) said the aim by 2030 would be 70%! Mr Riley stated that the Council actually collected 500 tonnes more of dry recycle last year, but residual waste had increased, bringing the recycling percentage down. This was true elsewhere, the reason perhaps being the end of recession. The Inter Authority Waste Group, a group of districts, boroughs and WSCC, were seeking answers to the problem. A specialist waste management consultant employed by WSCC produced ideas, which had been brought to a focus group in early October 2015.

The Group discussed this keenly, with Mrs Plant giving her experience of the dramatic effects in another authority of collecting heavy food waste separately, a system needing two years to implement fully with much "education" of the public. Members of the Group asked about costs, vehicles required and related subjects..

There was no criticism of the refuse department for its red rating but rather an understanding of current problems and a desire to develop suggestions further. These included collecting textiles and small electrical equipment, making green bins cheaper or free, smaller waste bins, collecting waste less often, as well as collecting food waste separately. Growth in asbestos fly-tipping was discussed, with the Group aware of the reasons why waste of this kind could not always be removed in 3 days.

There was a recommendation made that this subject be explored further by members, groups or committees, as the future implications of the need for higher recycling percentage needed wider recognition, debate and action.

4.7 LPI 163b To increase the survival rates of companies after 3 years to align with SE actual

The red rating refers to 2010-2013 data, the most up-to-date data available. While the survival rate for Council businesses is higher than the South East outturn (so we achieved the aim already) the target set of 61.9% was not reached. We were working on old figures as data is a year in arrears, and it was felt we should wait for this year's figures due in December then follow this up.

4.8 The Group considered that while there were six red high risk areas of performance, there were satisfactory explanations in each case which did not reflect adversely on the Council's performance, some being outside its control or near completion; none posed a risk to the Council at present.

However, future recycling targets were going to generate problems unless planning and action were begun immediately. Therefore the Group recommends that this be highlighted to Cabinet for action.

No further meetings were deemed necessary. The Group would like to thank the officers for their time and knowledgeable help in investigating more deeply into the concerns, and would like to record their appreciation of departments' successes, often exceeding the targets set.

5.0 **Appendices**

None.

6.0 **Background papers**

None.