

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR SERVICES
17 NOVEMBER 2011**

Present: Councillors Cartwright (in the Chair), Dowling, Gurney and Turner

Lead Members in attendance: Councillors Birch, Chowney, Kramer (until 7.50pm), Scott and Webb

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Stevens, Waite and Wilson.

11. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at this meeting.

12. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings held on 1 and 29 September be approved as a true record.

**13. FINAL REPORT ON SCRUTINY REVIEW OF GROUNDS
MAINTENANCE SPECIFICATION**

This item was moved up the agenda at the request of the Chair, with agreement by the committee.

Councillor Dowling presented the report, as Chair of the review team. The review had been undertaken to assess potential changes to specifications for the re-tendering of a new grounds maintenance contract.

Members queried the length of the contract, asking if better value could be gained by a longer term. Virginia Gilbert, Head of Amenities and Leisure, explained that, generally, equipment had a five year life span, therefore it was prudent to award contracts for five years, ten years etc.

Members briefly discussed the options regarding bringing the grounds maintenance contract back in-house. However, once clarified, it was clear that an external contractor could provide better value.

Councillor Cartwright asked that information regarding consortium working by councils, and any potential benefits such as reduced cost in purchasing equipment, be reported back to the committee.

RESOLVED that:

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- 1. the committee agree the review team's report; and**
- 2. the committee recommends that a report is submitted to Cabinet on 28 November 2011, seeking delegated authority to proceed to tender the new joint contracts for grounds maintenance and arboriculture with Rother District Council subject to the successful negotiations on legal and cost sharing arrangements.**

14. QUARTER TWO PERFORMANCE AND FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT

Mark Horan, Policy and Partnerships Officer, presented the Corporate Plan Part III.

The report detailed performance by the staff in Environmental Services and Regeneration, Homes and Communities Directorates against the 2011/12 targets and performance indicators set out in Part II of the Corporate Plan.

Members discussed slippage with the Council's communications and website target, together with the Contact Centre. They also asked for clarification around White Rock Theatre footfall figures, registration for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) landlords, severe winter weather measures and homelessness prevention.

The committee paid particular attention to recycling and waste collection. There were some concerns regarding contamination of waste within recycling volumes. Richard Homewood, Corporate Director Environmental Services, replied that there may be a need to consider enforcement action for persistent offenders, in addition to educational and promotional initiatives currently ongoing.

Councillor Cartwright asked for an update in relation to the efficiency and effectiveness of the newly acquired 'Poovers' used for clearing dog waste.

Members asked for an update regarding ongoing proposals for the Old Town Museum. Virginia Gilbert, Head of Amenities and Leisure, commented that the Old Town Hall Museum Group were still in discussion and an update would be available after their conclusion. This was expected to be by January 2012.

The committee revisited the concerns raised at their last meeting, concerning derelict buildings situated around the borough, in the ownership of East Sussex County Council (ESCC). Councillor Scott, Lead Member for Environment and Highways, explained that pressure had been put on to ESCC, as a result of which, some remedial works had already been undertaken. The next step would be to consult with residents as to how to

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proceed with these buildings; one possibility might be to sell the properties on. Members asked that they be forwarded a copy of the letter from ESCC and that a reply be sent asking for the dates when the work referred to would be done.

Members also expressed their disappointment that ESCC had recently decided to give notice on the Parking Agreement it currently holds with Hastings Borough Council. The committee asked that their thanks be forwarded to members of staff within this service area for their continuing efforts. Councillor Cartwright asked for an update on the proposal for district councils to be able to take responsibility for local roads (including on-street parking) through the Sustainable Communities Act.

RESOLVED that:

- 1. the Committee's comments on Quarter 2 performance be addressed by the relevant Lead Member(s) with appropriate action and report back; and**
- 2. staff in the Regeneration Homes & Communities and Environmental Services Directorates be thanked for their hard work and achievements in this quarter.**

15. MONITORING OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CABINET DECISIONS

Katrina Silversson, Scrutiny and Electoral Services Officer, submitted a report on the recent Cabinet Decisions made since the last formal meeting, highlighting areas that fell within the Committee's remit.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

(The Chair declared the meeting closed at 8.15pm)