

**SCRUTINY PANEL
MINUTE EXTRACT
13 DECEMBER 2016**

100. Half-Yearly Performance Report including progress on Strategy Plan Action Plan

Matthew Sterling, Assistant Chief Executive, and Councillor Young, Portfolio Holder for Culture and Regeneration introduced the report. The report requests the Scrutiny Panel to review and comment on the Half Yearly Performance Report including progress on the Strategic Plan Action Plan ahead of the Cabinet meeting on 1 February 2017.

Matthew Sterling provided the Panel with a half-year update on the key performance indicators. This included highlighting two previously difficult targets that are currently on track; the staff sickness in number of days and the level of rent collected. With regard to the amber schemes, which could still end the year at its target, this included the amount of household waste reused, recycled and composted, and the number of net additional homes provided. There are two schemes that are categorised as red, which are the number of planning appeals allowed against Colchester Borough Council's decision to refuse and the amount of residual household waste per household.

With regard to the Strategic Plan Action Plan, Matthew Sterling highlighted that the lease had been signed with Curzon Cinema's, and that two neighbourhood plans had been adopted. In addition to this, Matthew Sterling highlighted the £100,000 invested in promoting Colchester; this has led to campaigns that showcase heritage in the town centre and the hot washer that has been used to clean the streets in the Town Centre. The Panel were also informed that the Creative Business Centre had now been opened, with all vacancies filled and a waiting list established.

The following questions were raised by Councillors;

- Councillor Hogg – Questioned whether it is possible to compare the sickness rate level with other authorities.
- Councillor Coleman – Questioned whether the new grounds maintenance contract had improved.
- Councillor Arnold – Asked for further information about the planning applications that were overturned at appeal; in addition Councillor Arnold requested information on the performance of other authorities.

- Councillor Coleman – Requested further information on the fixing the link scheme.
- Councillor Arnold – Questioned the progress on developments in the eastern part of Colchester.
- Councillor Scordis – Welcomed the litter warrior scheme and requested further information on regeneration plans for the Hythe area.
- Councillor Coleman – Suggested that it would be advantageous to publicise the twenty nine fixed penalty notices that had been issued.

Matthew Sterling and Councillor Tim Young, provided the following responses to the queries by Councillors;

- In response to Councillor Hogg, Matthew Sterling stated that it is possible to compare with other local authorities, but this depends on the way in which the sickness rate is reported by that authority; full comparisons can be provided at the end of year. The target of 7.5 days would ensure that Colchester Borough Council is one of the better performing authorities in Essex.
- Matthew Sterling confirmed that the performance of the grounds maintenance contract had improved; Ann Hedges confirmed that the issues at the start of the contract were a result of the handover period taking place during the busiest time of the year as the previous contractor did not wish to continue until a quieter period. Following this, the contractor has been performing as required.
- In response to Councillor Arnold, Matthew Sterling stated that there were a total of nine applications that were overturned, of which seven were officer decisions and two were Planning Committee decisions. Councillor Young confirmed that there was no pattern with the appeals that were overturned, but officers are examining the appeal decisions as the planning inspectorate is allowing for the appellant more often. Advice will be provided to the Committee following analysis of the decisions. Further information on how the performance compares with other local authorities can be provided.
- With regard to the fixing the link scheme, Matthew Sterling stated that it relates to the walking link between the train station and the centre of town which provides improved signage to direct people to both locations. The first stage of the link has been implemented, and further information on the next stages can be provided following the meeting.
- In response to Councillor Arnold, Councillor Young stated that Colchester Borough Council are seeking out and being approached by developers for that area. Negotiations will continue and information will be shared with Councillors when an agreement is near. Councillor Young stated that progress on this is expected in the New Year.
- Matthew Sterling welcomed the comments regarding litter warriors and highlighted that enforcement has also been taking place during the year with 29

Fixed Penalty Notices being issued since April. With regard to regeneration further information can be provided after the meeting. Councillor Young stated that the work undertaken by Hythe Forward and Hythe Business Network, which Councillors are aware of will be the most up to date information. Councillor Young also stated that it should be possible to share news about the car breaking site in the near future.

RESOLVED that the Half-yearly Performance Report including progress on Strategic Plan Action Plan be noted.