

CITY SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL

Notes of meeting held on: 10th September 2012

Present: Cllrs Stephen Bonallie (Chair), Michael Essl, Stuart Porthouse, Lynda Scanlan, Peter Wood

Jim Diamond, Karen Lounton (Deputy Registration Services Manager), Les Clark, Colin Curtis & Liz Craig

		Action
1.	<p>Welcome and Apologies</p> <p>Councillor Bonallie welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p> <p>Apologies were received from Cllrs Steven Foster, Neville Padgett & Kath Rolph.</p>	
2.	<p>Notes of the last meeting</p> <p>The notes from the last meeting were agreed as a true record.</p>	
3.	<p>New Issues Referred from the Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>No issues were referred to this panel.</p>	
4.	<p>Policy Review – Tell Us Once for Bereavement Service</p> <p>Cllr Bonallie welcomed Karen Lounton, Deputy Registration Services Manager to the meeting. Karen had come along to give members an update on the Tell us Once Service including feedback from staff and customer questionnaires and MI from DWP.</p> <p>12 staff from the contact centre and registrars completed a questionnaire on the TUO Bereavement Service. They were asked if this contributes to the service 10 strongly agreed and 2 agreed. One member of staff commented that customers thought they had to pay for the service, so she stresses that the service is free and the take up is better and families are very grateful.</p> <p>20 families were contacted by telephone that had registered a death in May this year, 16 agreed to provide feedback on the service. 15 Strongly agreed and 1 agreed on the following asked: prompt service, dignity, trust service, catch all service. Comments made by family members included it was a valuable and really helpful service, when their mind was not in the right place. Karen reported the feedback was very positive and she would be sharing</p>	

this with her staff.

Karen reported she has tried to look at process with end users, council tax and benefits realisation. Spoken to lady in billing section of council tax, informed of deaths on a daily basis ensuring any credits are issued quickly and a significant reduction in letters been sent in error after death.

TAKE UP RATES FOR BEREAVEMENT / BIRTH TUO

DATE (week ending)	BEREAVEMENT	BIRTH
8/7/12	43%	63%
15/7/12	56%	76%
22/7/12	53%	65%
29/7/12	46%	60%
5/8/12	66%	81%
12/8/12	58%	56%
19/8/12	65%	70%
26/8/12	42%	54%

There are plans to distribute leaflets to doctors surgeries by end of September. Handing leaflets to all funeral directors who come into bereavement services counter or crematorium.

Coroners TUO – Take up 9 customers, interesting feedback from staff, customers angry.

Cllr Essl asked how many deaths were recorded in Sunderland in a month. Karen replied that there are 3000 deaths recorded in Sunderland per annum and around 3000 births.

Cllr Bonallie thanked Karen for her update.

5. Refuse Collection – Update

Cllr Bonallie welcomed Les Clark & Colin Curtis to the meeting. Les updated the panel on the DCLG bid for weekly refuse collections and discussed the scale of savings needed over the next few years and the future provision of services.

The DCLG are offering 250 million across England to support local authorities who have gone to fortnightly collections and want to come back to weekly collections, local authorities who wish to retain their weekly collections and adding food waste collections to the service.

Sunderland registered an Expression of Interest in February 2012 and the outline bid was submitted in May, with the final bid being submitted by 17th August. The outcome of the bid will be

announced by the end of October and the funding will start then.

Sunderland have bid for 4.8 million to cover the revenue costs for running the service, 2 million of which is capital to buy 10 new refuse collection vehicles and replace wheelie bin stock, the funding will also be used to engage, communicate and incentivise the public to recycle. The funding is for 2.5 years and the Council have to commit to a further 2 years (making it a 5 year programme).

Following the outcome of the bid, the panel will meet again and plan what we could look at. There are still issues with regards to bulky item collections and recycling incentive programmes.

Cllr Porthouse asked if commercial properties and multi occupancy flats were involved in recycling. Les Clark replied that Commercial Waste was not a statutory requirement for the local authority; do have a small market share across the city. Some of the larger companies like Argos, M & S use national contractors like Biffa & Sita. The Council doesn't offer recycling of glass and paper to businesses as this is collected by their waste collection contractors. Cllr Porthouse stated there were a number of pubs and clubs in Sunderland and should the glass bottles not be recycled.

Les reported the Council can talk to individual businesses however private companies don't have targets for landfill reduction like the local authorities do. Some companies are starting to get into it now and have glass collections.

Cllr Porthouse asked if the council had considered the automatic refuse collection vehicles which they use in Canada and other countries. Les replied that there is not a local authority in this country that uses the automated vehicles. The system does work in a controlled environment but is upto customers to position bins in the correct place and the vehicles to purchase are very expensive and when analysed it did not come out with overall productivity and savings in man power. At present it takes 15 seconds to empty a bin.

Cllr Essl asked if the bid was unsuccessful how much danger would the weekly collection be in. Les replied we will need to find the efficiency savings and that a fortnightly collection will not suit everyone. Will take a liberal approach on access to services, bulky waste collection and wheelie bin replacement and have a number of different options.

Cllr Bonallie asked when items are taken for recycling where do they go to. Les reported that waste is monitored quarterly, this data includes where it went to and if there was any general waste

	<p>that had materials extracted from this before being processed.</p> <p>Cllr Porthouse asked about bulky waste collection, individual households can have 8 bags collected 3 times a year which is excellent, will that be compromised. Les reported that not all residents are aware of this and that depending on the outcome of the Bid in October the Scrutiny panel would need to look into things like this and make recommendations.</p> <p>Cllr Porthouse asked about the multi occupancy flats and who do the bins belong to, can the refuse be recycled and are we doing anything with Gentoo about this. Les replied that the bins belong to the council and that as the flats only have one chute and the bags of waste are sealed it would be difficult to recycle and it is not feasible to put in 3 chutes in the flats for paper, bottles, cans, etc.</p> <p>Les reported in 2014 all refuse in the city will go to the efw plant at Teesside rather than landfill and that less than 5% of waste will go to landfill.</p> <p>Agreed to visit the Beech St Depot in mid October in the morning around 10am and to organise the next panel meeting in November.</p> <p>Cllr Scanlon reported that a resident had been turned away from the Beech St Depot because they were on foot and not in a car. Colin replied that this should not have happened and that the attendant should have taken the waste off the person on foot.</p> <p>Cllr Bonallie thanked Les and Colin for their information.</p>	
<p>6.</p>	<p>Issues to feedback to the Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>Cllr Essl asked if Cllr Bonallie could raise the 20 Mph zone around schools at the Scrutiny Committee and recommend the policy is relaxed to include other schools (ie Richard Avenue Primary)</p> <p>Cllr Porthouse asked if Cllr Bonallie could raise the issue of parking and road safety, Cllr Porthouse to email the details to Cllr Bonallie.</p> <p>Cllr Bonallie agreed to raise the issues at the Scrutiny Committee on Thursday.</p>	<p>Cllr Bonallie</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>AOB/Member items</p> <p>Cllr Bonallie reported that the Scrutiny Committee would be having an informal meeting in October to discuss how things are going</p>	

	<p>with the new arrangements for Scrutiny and asked members if they could email any comments/issues back to him.</p> <p>Cllr Porthouse asked what other services were included in the City Services remit. Agreed to re-circulate the appendix with details for each of the 6 Scrutiny panels.</p>	<p>LC</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>Date of next meeting</p> <p>It was agreed to visit the Beech St Depot in mid October in the morning around 10am and to organise the next panel meeting in November after the outcome of the DCLG Bid.</p> <p>Action: to circulate possible dates to members</p>	<p>JD/LC</p>