



Cabinet 7 May 2008

Report from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 23 April 2008

At this meeting the Committee also considered Post Office Network Change: Proposed Closures in St Edmundsbury (Report Y699) and a separate report appears on this Cabinet agenda (Report Y731).

**(1) Overview and Scrutiny Committee Minutes of 5 March 2008 (Minute 61):
Updated Rural Action Plan 2008 to 2011**

1.1 Cabinet will recall that at its meeting on 5 March 2008 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommended adoption of the updated Rural Action Plan for 2008 to 2011 (Report Y645 to Cabinet on 19 March 2008). At that Committee meeting Members also recommended that officers be given delegated authority to make minor amendments to the Action Plan, but this had been omitted from the report to Cabinet and the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting. Therefore, at its meeting on 23 April 2008, when adopting the minutes, Members added the following recommendation to Cabinet:-

1.2 **RECOMMENDED:** That officers be given delegated authority to agree minor amendments to the updated Rural Action Plan for 2008 to 2011, as detailed in Report Y606, as amended.

(2) Staff Survey 2007: Ipsos MORI Final Report and Presentation

2.1 Ipsos MORI were appointed to undertake the 2007 Staff Survey. The four week survey period ended in December 2007, and since then officers had been working with Ipsos MORI on analysing the results. Ipsos MORI attended this meeting of the Committee to present the key findings from the Survey and answer Members' questions.

2.2 Members were very pleased to note that the survey gave a largely positive picture of a Council which was regarded by staff as effective, engaged and concerned about the welfare of its employees. Report Y698 provided the data from the survey in detail, and the findings showed that when compared with normative data for other local authorities the Council was in line with, or outperforming, other local authorities on most measures. Areas of particular positivity included advocacy as an employer, commitment to helping the Council achieve its priorities and communication. The few areas where St Edmundsbury achieved more negative results than the local authority average included certain aspects of job satisfaction, such as job security and opportunities for career progression.

2.3 An action plan focusing on key areas of change is being drawn up in consultation with Corporate Directors, Heads of Service and other staff. The Head of Human

Resources and Organisational Development will present the final Action Plan to the Committee in the Summer, following which it will be recommended to the Cabinet.

(3) Review of the Reduction in Number of Animal Wardens from Two to One

- 3.1 Each year the Overview and Scrutiny Committee receives a list of the Dynamic Review – Innovation, Value and Enterprise (DR-IVE) cost reductions implemented in that year, and makes an assessment as to which would benefit from a post implementation review by the Committee, in order to ascertain their effect on services after one year. In July 2007 the Committee considered the list of changes implemented in the 2007/2008 budget, and decided to examine the decision to reduce the number of animal wardens from two to one.
- 3.2 On 23 April 2008 the Committee considered a report which set out the number of complaints in respect of dogs and other animals received by Environmental Health and Housing Services in the last five years. The report showed that the annual totals were broadly similar over that period, and an assessment of changes made with the service set out why that was the case.
- 3.3 Whilst the figures and service analysis showed that the reduction in number of animal wardens had not had a detrimental effect on the service in terms of the complaint figures, the Committee noted that from 6 April 2008 the Police would no longer have a responsibility to accept stray dogs, leaving local authorities with sole responsibility for dealing with stray dogs. The Committee, therefore, requested that officers carry out a further review of the Animal Warden Service in 12 months' time to assess the impact of the legislative changes in respect of stray dogs, but that the results of the review be brought to the Committee only if any issues of concern are identified by officers.

(4) Cabinet Forward Plan – April to July 2008 and Committee's Work Programme

- 4.1 The Committee examined the Cabinet's Forward Plan of key decisions for the period April to July 2008 but did not ask for any additional information on this occasion.
- 4.2 Turning to its own work programme, the Committee noted that, apart from the rolling forward of the Evening Economy Review, the 2007/2008 work programme had been completed. A work programme setting meeting had taken place on 14 April 2008, at which a draft work programme had been discussed, and this draft would be brought to the first meeting of the Committee for 2008/2009, in June 2008, for adoption. Cabinet members will be consulted on the draft work programme at the quarterly briefing between Scrutiny Chairmen and Vice Chairmen, and the Leader and Deputy Leaders, planned for 12 May 2008.

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