

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK

CORPORATE PERFORMANCE PANEL

Minutes from the Meeting of the Corporate Performance Panel held on Wednesday, 24th August, 2016 at 6.00 pm in the Committee Suite, King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn

PRESENT: Councillor G Wareham (Chairman)
Councillors J Collop, C J Crofts, I Gourlay, G Hipperson, H Humphrey,
A Morrison, D Pope (substitute) and Mrs J Westrop

Portfolio Holders

Councillor B Long, Leader and Portfolio Holder for Environment
Councillor Mrs K Mellish, Portfolio Holder for Human Resources,
Facilities and Shared Services

Officers:

Lorraine Gore, Assistant Director
Ray Harding, Chief Executive
Becky Box, Personnel Services Manager
Jo Stanton, Revenues and Benefits Manager
Martin Chisholm, Business Manager

CP27: **APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

RESOLVED: Councillor H Humphrey be appointed Vice-Chairman for the meeting.

CP28: **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors B Anota, Lord Howard, D Tyler and R Bird.

CP29: **MINUTES**

The minutes from the Corporate Performance Panel held on 18 July 2016 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to Councillor C J Crofts being added as attending as substitute.

CP30: **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor I Gourlay declared a pecuniary interest in item 9: Council Tax Discounts for Empty and Unfurnished and Uninhabitable Properties and left the meeting when this item was debated.

Councillors G Hipperson, C J Crofts, J Collop, K Mellish and G Wareham in Item 9.

CP31: **URGENT BUSINESS UNDER STANDING ORDER 7**

None.

CP32: **MEMBERS PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 34**

None.

CP33: **CHAIRMAN'S CORRESPONDENCE (IF ANY)**

None.

CP34: **CAR PARKING MACHINES (REQUESTED BY COUNCILLOR COLLOP)**

The Panel received a presentation from the Business Manager and were invited to comment/ask questions, a summary of which is set out below.

Councillor Collop outlined his case as to why he had requested that the item be placed on the Agenda.

In response to questions from the Panel on overpayments from car parking machines not giving change, the Chairman, Councillor Wareham reminded Members that the Business Manager had advised during his presentation that there was no technology available to allow car parking machines to give change anywhere in the UK.

Following further questions on credit and debit credit card payments, the Portfolio Holder for Human Resources, Facilities and Shared Services explained that a presentation on the replacement of pay and display machines had been given to a previous Panel meeting and explained that if the Council replaced the machines now it would incur a cost to the Council taxpayer.

The Portfolio Holder for Human Resources, Facilities and Shared Services explained that overpayments were utilised through the budget for resources and gave examples of toilet cleaning, street cleansing and refurbishment of the Bus Station. Councillor Collop commented that the overpayment could be used specifically for King's Lynn. He added that the King's Lynn Area Consultative Committee could determine how the money could be specifically spent to enhance King's Lynn. The Leader, Councillor Long reiterated the comments made by the Portfolio Holder and added that the overpayment was placed in the Council's General Fund and was spent on providing services for the residents of the Borough.

The Business Manager explained that payment could be made by a credit/debit card via a mobile phone, however there was a cost per transaction to the Council. The Panel was informed that there was a variety of options for payment as set out below:

- Mobile phone with credit/debit card.
- Multi Storey Car Park – pay on exit.
- Ensure users had correct change to pay with coins.

CP35: **2016/2017 Q1 PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND ACTION REPORT**

The Personnel Services Manager presented the report which contained information on the corporate performance monitoring undertaken during Q1 2016/2017.

The Personnel Services Manager drew the Panels attention to section 3 – Key points from the Corporate Performance Monitoring Report Q1 2016/17.

Members were informed that additional performance monitoring of indicators consistently not achieving quarterly targets was undertaken by Management Team on a monthly basis. The indicator CE11 – percentage of supplier invoices paid within 30 days, had been monitored closely as it had not achieved the target of 94% by 1% each quarter during 2015/16. It was highlighted that as part of the 2016/17 annual target setting process the target for this indicator was changed to 93%. Performance levels had improved with 96% being reported for Q1 2016/17.

The Personnel Services Manager advised that the Action Report explained the considerable drop in performance (66%) for indicator CE6 – percentage of freedom of information requests given final response within deadline. As the quarterly figure was calculated on a cumulative basis it was unrealistic to expect this indicator to achieve the 2016/17 annual target of 95%.

In response to questions from the Panel regarding CE6: % of freedom of information requests given final response within deadline, the Personnel Services Manager explained that there was no delay in processing requests with Eastlaw taking over the work and that the drop in performance was due to staffing issues which were now being addressed. The Chief Executive advised that there was no additional cost incurred with Eastlaw providing the FOI service and that the requests received ranged from freelance journalists, students or local residents.

Following questions from the Panel on CE11:% of supplier invoices paid within 30 days, the Assistant Director explained that whilst extracting the statistics on invoices during the year delay could occur.

However, she explained that a lean review had been undertaken and the system would move to e-invoicing to speed up the process.

The Chief Executive responded to questions on CE3: Unintentional priority homeless acceptances per 1,000 households and advised that the Council was doing everything it could to avoid costly bed and breakfast temporary accommodation and explained that this was a national problem and the Council was putting measures in place to manage the situation as effectively as possible.

The Revenues and Benefits Manager responded to questions relating to CE14: No of days to process new benefit claims and explained that the average time to process a claim was between 19 and 24 days.

RESOLVED: The Panel agreed the actions outlined within the Action Report.

CP36: **COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNTS FOR EMPTY AND UNFURNISHED AND UNINHABITABLE PROPERTIES**

The Vice-Chairman, Councillor Humphrey took the Chair for this item.

The Democratic Services Officer read out the legal advice received in response to Members declaring an interest for this agenda item.

Councillor Gourlay left the meeting.

Councillors G Hipperson, C J Crofts, J Collop, K Mellish and G Wareham remained in the meeting but took no part in the debate/decision.

The Leader, Councillor Long commented that the declaration of interest on certain items occurred on an annual basis and suggested that advice be sought from the Monitoring Officer regarding a dispensation being obtained.

In presenting the report, the Revenues and Benefits Manager explained that the Council had powers to reduce or remove the council tax discount for empty/ unfurnished and uninhabitable properties. The report outlined those powers and presented options for the Panel to discuss and recommend, along with some issues and questions for the Panel to debate.

Members' attention was drawn to the following sections of the report:

- Executive Summary.
- Issues.
- Rationale for the Proposal.
- Options Considered.
- Preferred Option.
- Questions and Issues for the Panel.

The Revenues and Benefits Manager responded to questions from the Panel in relation to the News Homes Bonus and explained that the bonus not only applied to new homes built but also bringing empty/derelict buildings back into use.

The Chief Executive responded to questions on the monies received from the Council Tax Discounts for Empty and Uninhabitable Properties and the amounts received by the Borough Council, Norfolk County Council and the Police.

The Revenues and Benefits Manager responded to questions on the number of dwellings brought back into use and advised that the number was based on a working estimate at the time the report was written.

RESOLVED: The Panel supported the preferred option 2 and recommend this option to Cabinet.

CP37: **ENTERPRISE ZONES - DISCRETIONARY BUSINESS RATES DISCOUNTS**

The Revenues and Benefits Manager presented the report and explained that the report detailed the options for a discretionary business rates discount within the Enterprise Zone and asked the Panel to agree a preferred option to go to Cabinet and Council for approval.

The Panel was provided with background information.

The Revenues and Benefits Manager outlined the options considered as set out at section 5 of the report.

Members were advised that Option 3 was the preferred option. It supported businesses occupying properties within the Enterprise Zone whilst avoiding the issue of having a more generous reduction for unoccupied properties within the Enterprise Zone compared to outside it.

Option 3 also supported the KLIC, reducing the business rates liability and allowing them to focus their resources on encouraging new, small, start-up businesses who will hopefully, in time, move into bigger units within the Enterprise Zone. The nature of the leases for those officers meant that they may be unoccupied on a more regular basis.

It was explained that the discretionary business rates discount for properties in the Enterprise Zone was a new policy and must be approved by Cabinet and Council.

The Revenues and Benefits Manager outlined the additional proposal to extend further the exemption period for unoccupied/industrial properties.

The Panel was advised that the decision to award the discount was fairly straightforward as the cost was fully reimbursed by Central Government.

The Revenues and Benefits Manager responded to questions from the Panel on the following issues:

- Existing businesses relocating to KLIC.
- Other business rates reductions and reliefs for businesses located outside the Enterprise Zone.
- Discretionary Rate Relief Fund which businesses could apply for.

The Chief Executive informed the Panel that a number of enquires had been received from businesses currently operating outside West Norfolk regarding KLIC.

In response to a question on how businesses on the Enterprise Zone could be helped with planning, regulatory and other administrative, the Chief Executive suggested that a response be emailed direct to the Panel.

RESOLVED: The Panel supported the preferred option 3 and recommend this option to Cabinet.

CP38: **BOROUGH COUNCIL'S EFFICIENCY PLAN**

The Panel received a Powerpoint presentation from the Assistant Director. A copy of which is attached to the Minutes.

The Assistant Director responded to questions on what the cumulative figure would have been if the Borough Council had increased council tax by £5. She explained that when the Financial Plan was approved in February 2016, the funding calculation had been based on the core spending power and had included the opportunity to increase council tax by £5. If the Council had determined to apply the £5 increase the cumulative figure for the first year would have amounted to £200,000.

CP39: **WORK PROGRAMME 2016/2017**

The Panel noted the Work Programme for 2016/2017.

The Leader reminded the Opposition Members that if they wished an item to be considered by any Panel, they would need to submit the item in accordance with the schedules which had been circulated in order for officers to prepare reports.

CP40: **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next scheduled meeting of the Panel would be held on Thursday 22 September 2016.

CP41: **REPORT (FOR NOTING PURPOSES ONLY)**

The Panel noted the following report:

- Complaints against the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016.

The meeting closed at 7.26 pm



Multi-Year Funding Settlement

Lorraine Gore
Assistant Director (S151 Officer)



The Multi-Year Funding Offer and Efficiency Plans

- Local Government Finance Settlement announcement 18 December 2015 - Offer to local government to 'fix' for 4 years (subject to efficiency plan)
- Final settlement announcement 8 February 2016

'Firstly, although the statutory settlement is for 2016 to 2017, I set out indicative figures to allow councils to apply for a 4 year budget, extending to the end of the Parliament. Such a change permits councils to plan with greater certainty'

Statement by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government
The Rt Hon Greg Clark MP



Background

- Financial Plan 2015/2020 approved at Council Meeting on 25 February 2016
- Council agreed to take up the option to 'fix' the four year settlement subject to publication of an 'efficiency plan'
- Consultation on New Homes Bonus closed on 10 March 2016 – Government still analysing the feedback



Background

- Consultation on Self-sufficient local government: 100% Business Rates Retention opened on 5 July 2016 and closes on 26 September 2016
- Business Rate Reform Fair Funding Review: Call for evidence on Needs and Redistribution. Discussion paper issued July 2016. Responses to the discussion paper by 26 September 2016 with consultation on the principles for needs assessment in the autumn of 2016 and final consultation on the formulae in the summer of 2018.



Background

- Revaluation of Business Rates from 2017 – draft list to be published on line on 30 September 2016
- ‘Efficiency Plan’ to support the multi-year funding settlement to be agreed by Council and published by 14 October 2016 – to be considered by Cabinet at the meeting on 7 September 2016



The Multi-Year Funding Offer and Efficiency Plans

- Multi-Year Offer applies to
 - Revenue Support Grant (RSG)
 - Rural Services Delivery Grant
 - Transitional Grant (not applicable to BCKLWN)
- Excludes
 - New Homes
 - Retained Business Rates



The Multi-Year Funding Offer and Efficiency Plans

For BCKLWN Multi-Year Offer 2016/2020 applies to

- Revenue Support Grant (RSG) and Rural Services Delivery Grant £8m
- Excludes New Homes Bonus and Retained Business Rates £37m



The Multi-Year Funding Offer and Efficiency Plans

- DCLG advised that core commitment by Secretary of State of a minimum offer
- No mandated template
- Expect to include
 - How benefits your Council and Community
 - Collaboration with local neighbours and public sector partners
- Financial Sustainability not just efficiency plan – books not going to be balanced just by efficiencies – shape of organisations will change
- On going monitoring as part of medium term financial plan



The Multi-Year Funding Offer and Efficiency Plans

- Cornerstone of the efficiency plan is the Medium Term Financial Plan
- Clear links to the Council's corporate plan
- Key partnerships
- Reference to ongoing and planned projects and programmes to reduce costs/generate additional income
- Need to be about more than just money
- Need not be any more than an 'abridged version' of Council's key/existing public documents



Financial Sustainability

Corporate Business Plan

The six priority aims within the Corporate Business Plan are:

1. Provide important local services within our available resources
2. Drive local economic and housing growth
3. Work with our communities to ensure they remain clean and safe
4. Celebrate our local heritage and culture
5. Stand up for local interests within our region
6. Work with our partners on important services for the borough



Financial Sustainability

Medium Term Financial Plan

Continue to examine all operational service areas to identify achievable revenue cost savings through delivering services in different ways, reductions in service level, increasing income and reviewing discretionary expenditure.

Some of the identified areas include:

channel shift

joint and shared working arrangements

sharing office space



Financial Sustainability

Medium Term Financial Plan

Identify capital investment opportunities to maximise the use of our assets, generate a revenue return, in excess of that achieved from traditional banking investments, promote housing development, increased council tax base and new homes bonus, promote local economic and business growth and increased business rates.

Some of the identified areas include:
major housing development project,
commercial investment and development,
Rationalise public assets (One Public Estate)



Financial Sustainability

Medium Term Financial Plan

- Invest early win revenue savings and reserves in the income generating major projects
- As a lower quartile Council, increase Band D council tax by £5 per annum from 2017/2018 in line with government expectations

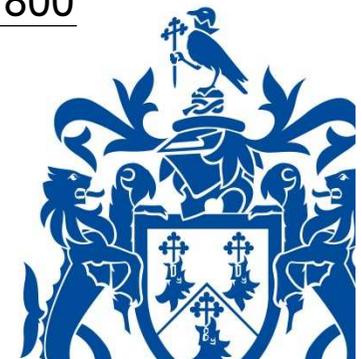


Summary of Savings

Target savings of £3.1m required by 2019/2020

	Estimate 2016/2017	Projection 2017/2018	Projection 2018/2019	Projection 2019/2020
	£	£	£	£
Revenue Cost Reductions/Increased Income/Efficiencies	425,930	1,261,950	1,658,000	1,960,550
Major Projects	21,000	247,600	655,400	1,148,500
£5 Council Tax Increase	0	137,910	275,580	413,750
TOTAL	446,930	1,647,460	2,588,980	3,522,800

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Financial Sustainability Partnership Working

The Council works closely with a wide range of partners in the public Sector and beyond. These joint working arrangements are one of the key priorities identified in our Corporate Business Plan.

The Council is working with all Norfolk District Councils, the County Council, NHS, Police and new Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership to deliver a One Public Estate (OPE) programme for Norfolk.



Financial Sustainability Partnership Working

The Council is working with Norfolk County Council, District and neighbouring Councils to collaborate and deliver services in the most effective way, including progressing the implementation of the East Anglia devolution agreement for Norfolk and Suffolk.



The offer of a four year funding allocation provides the Council with the opportunity to plan service delivery and changes to services with a greater degree of confidence.

The overall reductions in the Council's Settlement Funding Assessment set out in the four year settlement remain extremely challenging.



Questions

