

**BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK****CORPORATE PERFORMANCE PANEL**

**Minutes from the Meeting of the Corporate Performance Panel held on Tuesday, 7th January, 2025 at 4.30 pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn PE30 5DQ**

**PRESENT:** Councillors Long (Chair), Blunt, Collingham, Jones, Nash, Osborne, Rose and Spikings.

**PORTFOLIO HOLDERS:**

Councillor Beales – Leader of the Council

Councillor Morley – Portfolio Holder for Finance

Councillor de Whalley – Portfolio Holder for Biodiversity and Climate Change

**OFFICERS:**

Kate Blakemore – Chief Executive

Alexa Baker – Monitoring Officer

Becky Box – Assistant Director

Siobhan Cleeve – Alive West Norfolk

Michelle Drewery – Assistant Director

Debbie Ess – Corporate Performance Officer

Honor Howell – Corporate Governance Manager

Jane Mitchell – Procurement and Contracts Manager

Jo Stanton – Revenues and Benefits Manager

**CP81            APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bhondi, Ryves and Sandell.

**CP82            MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** The minutes from the previous meeting were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**CP83            DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Blunt declared a Pecuniary Interest in item CP97: Council Tax Discounts and Premiums for Empty Properties and Second Homes Resolution and left the meeting for this item of business.

**CP84            URGENT BUSINESS UNDER STANDING ORDER 7**

There was none.

CP85            **MEMBERS PRESENT PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 34**

There was none.

CP86            **CHAIR'S CORRESPONDENCE**

There was none.

CP87            **CALL INS**

There were no call-ins to consider.

CP88            **CABINET REPORT - TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME**

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The Chief Executive presented the report and reminded the Panel that one of the recommendations from the Peer Review in 2023 was to establish a transformation programme. Since 2023 work had been carried out informally and this report set out how the process would be formalised and how work would be carried out going forward.

The Chief Executive presented the emerging framework and it was noted that the next stage would be to create a list of projects, programmes and priorities.

Three pillars of change had been identified which were linked to the Corporate Strategy and also included some cross cutting themes. Examples of the types of projects that could be carried out under each pillar was provided to the Panel.

Information on governance framework was also provided and it was highlighted that a Programme Board would monitor performance and provide strategic oversight.

The Chief Executive explained that staff had been engaged in processes and responsible officers had been identified to take the three pillars of work forward.

The plan was to start the process from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 and the programme was intended to run for two years.

The Chair thanked the Chief Executive for the report and invited questions and comments from the Panel, as summarised below.

In response to a question from Councillor Collingham, it was clarified that this was separate to the work of the Member Major Projects Board.

The Chair asked about the impact of Local Government Reorganisation and the Chief Executive stated that at this stage Cabinet were being asked to agree the framework and individual projects and programmes would then follow and those that ensured they put the Council in a strong position for the future, realised efficiencies and modernised the workforce would be progressed.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Beales added that long term benefits still needed to be looked at, along with more efficient ways of working and the Cabinet would prioritise and consider the projects to be progressed. He provided the Panel with an update on recent discussions relating to Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation and how the Devolution Programme did not require a delay to Elections as Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation were two different things and he was working closely with other District Councils to make this point. The Leader of the Council explained that the Transformation Programme would strengthen the Councils position and ensure that the needs of residents were being met.

The Chair agreed that it was important to collaborate with others to ensure that the Council were future proofing, becoming more efficient and modernising.

The Vice Chair, Councillor Blunt commented that, along with the work required on Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation, this additional transformation work would require additional resources and it was important that there was support from Councillors. He welcomed the proposal for a cross party working group.

The Leader of the Council commented that it was important to identify what was possible to take forward and consider this against Political priorities. He referred to the proposal for a cross party group and asked the Panel to consider if they felt that this should be politically proportional, or if Membership should be based upon those that had an interest and could commit.

The Chair agreed that Members serving on the Group should have an interest, but felt that cross party representation was required. He commented that the Group did not necessarily need to be politically balanced, but required representation from all Political Groups.

The Chair proposed an amendment to the recommendation that the Transformation Board Membership be politically representative, rather than politically balanced so that it reassured that there would be cross party representation, but provided flexibility. This was agreed by the Panel.

**RESOLVED:** That the Corporate Performance Panel support the recommendations to Cabinet with one amendment (highlighted in bold), as set out below.

CABINET RECOMMENDATION: That Cabinet Resolves:

- To note the contents of the report and the emerging Transformation Programme.
- To establish a politically **representative** member representation on the Transformation Programme Board to be chaired by the Chief Executive.

CP89

**CABINET REPORT - PROCUREMENT STRATEGY AND CONTRACT STANDING ORDERS**

[Click here to view the recording of this item on You Tube](#)

The Monitoring Officer presented the report which introduced a new set of Contract Standing Orders which captured the recommendations from the ongoing Procurement Transformation Project and changes introduced by the Procurement Act 2023. The Monitoring Officer also presented the new Procurement and Contract Management Strategy which set out the strategic direction for the delivery of the Procurement and Contract Management function.

The Monitoring Officer explained that an officer handbook would be produced and published on the new Intranet. This would be available to Members so that they could become familiar with processes.

The Monitoring Officer highlighted the requirement to have a set of Contract Standing Orders as part of the Constitution and that the Procurement and Contract Management Strategy was an operational document and included a vision on what the Council wanted to achieve to support the Corporate Strategy.

The Monitoring Officer highlighted three key changes relating to thresholds, increasing the profile of contract management and the National Policy Procurement Strategy Government Framework.

The Chair thanked the Monitoring Officer for the report and invited questions and comments from the Panel, as summarised below.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Councillor Morley commented that this suite of documents would make the processes easier to follow and deliver better outcomes.

The Vice Chair, Councillor Blunt asked what review mechanisms would be put in place and the Monitoring Officer explained that Contract Management Plans would be a requirement and monitoring could take place via Key Performance Indicators. With regard to the additional resources that the new processes would require, it was noted that because the thresholds would be increased, officer resource would be available to work with departments and undertake monitoring as required.

The Chair, Councillor Long commented that the Council needed to spend public funds efficiently and acknowledged that thresholds needed to be increased, but consideration needed to be given to repeat awards of contracts and the cumulative effect. The Council needed to ensure that they were getting best value and that there was fair competition. The Monitoring Officer explained that the Procurement Team would be carrying out a lot more spend analysis and market testing to ensure that the Council continue to achieved best value. Information would also be included in the officer handbook.

**RESOLVED:** That the Corporate Performance Panel support the recommendations to Cabinet, as set out below.

Cabinet recommends to Full Council:

1. The adoption of the Contract Standing Orders attached as Appendix 1 into the Constitution from and including 24 February 2025 as a replacement to the current Contract Standing Orders.

Cabinet resolves:

2. To approve the Procurement and Contract Management Strategy attached as Appendix 2.
3. Authority be delegated to the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance to make revisions to the Procurement and Contract Management Strategy to reflect relevant changes within the revised National Procurement Policy Statement issued under section 13(3)(c) of the Procurement Act 2023

CP90

**CABINET REPORT - SOCIAL VALUE POLICY**

[Click here to view the recording of this item on You Tube](#)

The Monitoring Officer presented the report which proposed the adoption of a Social Value Policy to codify the Council's approach to meeting legislative requirements under the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 and the Procurement Act 2023.

The Panel were directed to page 109 of the Agenda which provided examples of Social Value and the Monitoring Officer provided an example of the health, wellbeing and intervention work which Alive West Norfolk undertook.

The Monitoring Officer explained that framework would be developed to determine priorities, outcomes and how they would be delivered and the Policy being proposed today was the start of this process.

The Chair thanked the Monitoring Officer for the report and invited questions and comments from the Panel, as summarised below.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Councillor Morley referred the Panel to Appendix 2 of the report which showed the value of social value and commented that it would be good to have a holistic approach and mechanisms in place to measure value.

The Chair, Councillor Long provided an example of a project which had provided social value outcomes and commented that it could impact the cost of contracts if additional stipulations were included.

The Vice Chair, Councillor Blunt commented that social value was subjective, and asked how it would be calculated. The Monitoring Officer explained that calculation tools were available and political priorities would be considered.

Councillor Collingham was concerned that this would require an increase in resources, at a time when officers were already busy and the Monitoring Officer referred to the previous Agenda item and the reduction in work relating to the increase in thresholds, which would free up officer time to support the Social Value Policy.

**RESOLVED:** That the Corporate Performance Panel support the recommendations to Cabinet, as set out below.

**CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS:** Cabinet recommends to Full Council:

1. The adoption of the Social Value Policy attached at Appendix 1.
2. Authority be delegated to the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance to make revisions to the Social Value Policy to reflect updates within the National Procurement Policy Statement issued under section 13(3)(c) of the Procurement Act 2023.

THE PANEL ADJOURNED FROM 5.50PM TO 5.55PM FOR A COMFORT BREAK

CP91

**CABINET REPORT - CAPITAL AND REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT**

[Click here to view the recording of this item on You Tube](#)

The Assistant Director presented the Budget Monitoring Report for Quarter 2, 1<sup>st</sup> April to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024 explaining that previously this report would have been considered by the Audit Committee, but since the Terms of Reference of the Committee had changed, it was necessary to bring this report through the Panel and Cabinet process. There were no recommendations to consider, other than to note the report, but going forward suggested actions would be brought forward for Cabinets consideration.

The Assistant Director explained that work was ongoing to reduce the deficit and draw down from reserves and this would be included in the next report along with detail of turnover savings.

The Panel noted that there was no update to the section of the report relating to Capital because the Capital Programme was currently under

review and the outcomes of the review would be included in future reports.

The Chair thanked the Assistant Director for the report and invited questions and comments from the Panel, as summarised below.

The Chair asked the Portfolio Holder how confident he was that year end targets would be achieved and the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Councillor Morley anticipated that it would be close to target and more information would be provided in the next period monitoring report once work on budget setting had been completed.

The Panel noted that the reports were also published on the Council's Mod Gov System for all Councillors to view.

Councillor Collingham asked about the impact of increased National Insurance Employer contributions and the Assistant Director confirmed that this would come into effect in the next financial year. It was noted that there was no rebate from Government on this, however Government had stated that it would be considered in the Local Government Settlement. The Assistant Director explained that the provisional settlement had been received, but the final settlement was awaited and would hopefully be confirmed in time to feed into the budget setting process.

**RESOLVED:** That the Corporate Performance Panel support the recommendations to Cabinet, as set out below.

CABINET RECOMMENDATION: To note the contents of the report.

CP92

**CABINET REPORT - MEMBERS ALLOWANCES 2024/2025**

[Click here to view the recording of this item on You Tube](#)

The Assistant Director presented the report which proposed that the cost of living increase be applied to Member's Allowances for the 2024/2025 year. It was explained that previously the increase in allowances mirrored the staff pay award, but because the officer pay award was not one flat rate a proposal was required to be agreed by Council. The calculation had been worked out on the overall increase of the staff pay budget.

The Chair thanked the Assistant Director for the report and invited questions and comments from the Panel, as summarised below.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Beales commented that this was the most straight forward approach and the Panel would be considering, at a future meeting, the report of the Independent Members Remuneration Panel regarding Members Allowances going forward.

The Chair, Councillor Long agreed with the methodology for the increase and felt that it was the proper approach.

Councillor Rose referred to the amount that Members could claim for mileage and was informed that this was in line with HMRC rates, tax liability and what staff could claim.

**RESOLVED:** That the Corporate Performance Panel supports the recommendation to Cabinet, as set out below.

**CABINET RECOMMENDATION:** That Council agrees an increase of 4.1% for all Member Allowances for the year 2024/25 with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024.

CP93                    **PANEL WORK PROGRAMME**

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Councillor Nash suggested that an Informal Working Group be established to look at Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation. The Chair, Councillor Long commented, that this could be useful in the future, but was premature at the current time.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Beales commented that the process was moving at pace at the moment and all Districts were working together. He explained that he would keep Members informed and involved as much as possible. He stated that he supported Devolution, but did not support the postponing of Elections.

Councillor Collingham commented that it was important that Members were kept up to date so that they could inform their constituents and Parish Councils.

The Chief Executive explained that the next milestone would be to see if this area was included as part of the Priority Programme.

**RESOLVED:** The Panel's Work Programme was noted.

CP94                    **CABINET FORWARD DECISIONS LIST**

**RESOLVED:** The Cabinet Forward Decisions List was noted.

CP95                    **SHAREHOLDER COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME**

**RESOLVED:** The Shareholder Committee Work Programme was noted.

CP96                    **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Corporate Performance Panel was scheduled to take place on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2025 at **5.00pm** in the Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn.

CP97

**CABINET REPORT - COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNTS AND PREMIUMS FOR EMPTY PROPERTIES AND SECOND HOMES RESOLUTION**

[Click here to view the recording of this item on You Tube](#)

Councillor Blunt declared a Pecuniary Interest and left the meeting for this item of business.

Councillor Spikings left the meeting at this point.

The Revenues and Benefits Manager presented the report which summarised the current position and made recommendations for the discounts and premiums for empty properties, uninhabitable properties and second homes.

The Panels attention was drawn to the technical detail contained in the report, the Government mandated exceptions and the financial implications. It was noted that this resolution needed to be considered in advance of the budget setting process.

The Revenues and Benefits Manager highlighted the additional Government Guidance which had been appended to the report.

The Chair thanked the Revenues and Benefits Manager for the report and invited questions and comments from the Panel, as summarised below.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Councillor Morley commented that discussions were ongoing with Norfolk County Council on the distribution of additional funds which would be received.

Councillor Collingham commented that she hoped that additional funds would come back to the Council and local residents could benefit.

Councillor Osborne commended officers on the useful information that was included on the website and the additional work required to contact those that would be affected by the proposal.

The Chair, Councillor Long commented that long term empty properties could be a blight on the landscape and attract anti social behaviour, but there were sometimes genuine circumstances on why a property could not be brought back into use and the Revenues and Benefits Manager explained that there was discretion to waive the premiums in

exceptional circumstances and each case would be considered on its own merits.

**RESOLVED:** That the Corporate Performance Panel support the recommendations to Cabinet as set out below.

The following discounts and premiums are recommended to Council for 2025/2026:

Class A Second Homes Discount for 2025/2026:

- No reduction, i.e. a 0% discount;

Class B Second Homes Discount for 2025/2026:

- No reduction i.e. a 0% discount, plus
- An additional premium of 100%

Class C Empty / Unfurnished Discount 2025/2026:

- 0% for both the initial and follow on periods

Long-Term Empty Property Premiums (Levy):

- 100% for properties empty between one and five years,
- 200% for properties empty longer than five years, and
- 300% for properties empty longer than ten years.

Class D Uninhabitable Properties:

- 25% for 12 months starting on the day the property becomes uninhabitable; then:
- 0% once the 12 month period has expired;

Cabinet recommends to Council that the Exceptions Policy as summarised below and detailed at Appendix 3 is agreed.

Cabinet and Council to note the government guidance of November 2024 as included at Appendix D.

**The meeting closed at 6.38 pm**