

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK

CORPORATE PERFORMANCE PANEL

Minutes from the Meeting of the Corporate Performance Panel held on Monday, 17th July, 2017 at 5.30 pm in the Education Room - Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn PE30 5DQ

PRESENT: Councillor G Wareham (Chairman)
Councillors B Ayres, P Beal, J Collop, Mrs S Fraser (substitute), G Hipperson, G Howman, H Humphrey (Vice-Chairman), D Pope and D Tyler

Portfolio Holders

Councillor A Lawrence, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community
Councillor P Hodson, Portfolio Holder for Systems and Economic
Development

Councillor Mrs K Mellish, Portfolio Holder for Human resources,
Facilities and Shared Services

Officers:

Debbie Gates, Executive Director Head of Central & Community
Services

Lorraine Gore, Assistant Director

Honor Howell, Assistant Director

Becky Box, Policy, Performance and Personnel Manager

Jo Stanton, Revenues and Benefits Manager

Under Standing Order 34:

Councillor D Pope

CP1 **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2017/2018**

RESOLVED: That Councillor G Wareham be appointed Chairman for the Municipal Year 2017/2018.

CP2 **APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2017/2018**

RESOLVED: That Councillor H Humphrey be appointed Vice-Chairman for the Municipal Year 2017/2018.

CP3 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors N Daubney (substitute Councillor Mrs Fraser), J Moriarty and A Morrison.

CP4 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED: The minutes from the Corporate Performance Panel held on 21 March 2017 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

CP5 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

CP6 **URGENT BUSINESS UNDER STANDING ORDER 7**

There was no urgent business.

CP7 **MEMBERS PRESENT PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 34**

Councillor Pope was present under Standing Order 34 for all items on the Agenda.

CP8 **CHAIRMAN'S CORRESPONDENCE (IF ANY)**

There was no Chairman's Correspondence.

CP9 **CIC AREA OFFICES**

The Assistant Director explained that the purpose of the report was to review the level of use of the Downham Market and Hunstanton offices by customers and agree an option for the long term viability of the offices.

The key issues were outlined as set out in the report.

The Leader, Portfolio Holder and Assistant Director responded to questions relating to:

- Area Offices being a point of sale for the food waste kitchen caddy liners. It was noted that the Council would soon stop selling the liners as a change in food waste recycling technology enabled customers to now use plastic bags in their food waste bins.
- Department of Work and Pensions withdrawing from the Council area offices.
- Hunstanton Office used by elderly population. Was there a compromise by devolving service to Town Hall? The Panel was advised that this option had already been considered and that with regard to complex enquiries trained advisers would be required and this option was therefore not viable.
- Library service could provide more information. It was explained that the Borough Council already worked closely with library

staff at both Downham Market and Hunstanton as well as other libraries throughout the Borough.

- Community Information Points in other rural points of the Borough operated with trained volunteers.
- Visiting Officers available to visit elderly and vulnerable people to provide assistance.
- Face to Face appointments available.
- Resources from both area offices would be utilised more effectively in King's Court answering the telephone as currently there was often/sometimes a 25 minute wait time for telephone calls to be answered.
- Local services for local people.- no difference in service level for reporting environmental issues.
- Once the sale of caddy liners ceased, could a review be undertaken and a report brought back to the Panel?
- Consultation exercise that had been undertaken.
- Public to be made aware via the website, etc of potential closure of area offices.

Under Standing Order 34, Councillor Pope addressed the Panel and commented that with the library service available to provide information in rural areas this would assist those customers. He added that he did not support the closure of the area offices and made reference to the Corporate Business Plan priorities and improving local services and therefore suggested that the service remain as the current arrangements. In response, the Assistant Director advised that people with disabilities and the elderly tended to contact the Council via telephone and could therefore continue to do so. The Council had to provide a service with available resources which were reducing year on year.

RESOLVED: The Panel requested that the report be brought back to the Panel for further discussion and alternative options to be put forward by Members within two months.

CP10

COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT: DEVELOPMENT OF THE DRAFT SCHEME FOR CONSULTATION 2018/2019

In presenting the report, the Revenues and Benefits Manager reminded Members that the Council must agree a Council Tax Support (CTS) Scheme for its working age residents every year. The report outlined options for the CTS Scheme for 2018/2019 for the Panel to discuss. The agreed draft CTS Scheme would then be presented to Cabinet on 6 September 2017 so it can be opened up to public consultation.

The Revenues and Benefits Manager responded to questions relating to:

- Collection Rates. It was explained that Council Tax had increased the previous year and had no negative impact on the CTS or collection rates.
- Consultation undertaken and number of responses received. Members were advised that every effort was made to encourage the public to respond to the consultation exercise. The Panel was invited to suggest any method to engage with the public to encourage a greater response rate.

RESOLVED: The Panel recommend to Cabinet that Option 2 is the draft CTS Scheme for 2018/2019 to go to consultation in September and October 2017.

CP11 **COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNTS FOR EMPTY/UNFURNISHED AND UNINHABITABLE PROPERTIES FOR 2018/2019**

The Revenues and Benefits Manager explained that the Council had the discretion to reduce or remove discounts for certain properties including empty/unfurnished and uninhabitable properties. The report considered removing the discounts for those properties.

The key issues were outlined as set out in the report.

The Revenues and Benefits Manager responded to questions relating to:

- What happened to properties if subject to probate. It was explained that during any probate process no payment was required for a property not in use. It was noted that there was a hardship relief fund available with delegated authority to the Leader to consider applications and award hardship relief when appropriate.
- Clarification of uninhabitable property. The Panel was advised that uninhabitable properties were those which had significant structural defects, for example, walls, ceilings etc. It was noted that there were currently 79 uninhabitable properties within the Borough.

Councillor J Collop commented that when a property was subject to probate he would like to seek an exemption from payment straight away and that he would like to see a clause that in exceptional circumstances the Council adopted a lenient approach.

RESOLVED: The Panel decided that they did not wish to make any changes or recommendations.

CP12 **NON-DOMESTIC RATES - DISCRETIONARY HARDSHIP RELIEF**

The Revenues and Benefits Manager explained that at the Budget on 8 March 2017 the Chancellor announced the Government would make

available a discretionary fund of £300m over four years from 2017/2018 to support those businesses facing the steepest increases in their business rate bills as a result of the 2017 Revaluation. Every Billing Authority had been awarded a share of the £300m based on the increases in their rates bills, and Billing Authorities were free to decide on a scheme to allocate this to their rates payers.

The report outlined the options considered and the preferred option for a Discretionary Revaluation Relief Scheme.

The Revenues and Benefits Manager responded to questions relating to:

- Option 3 – The Preferred Scheme.
- How the available funding would reduce over the 4 year period.
- The number of businesses likely to apply for revaluation relief.
- Working group of Norfolk Authorities considering the general principle of having a consistent scheme (banded scheme), where increases for occupied properties was phased in over the four years.
- Other Government relief schemes available for small businesses. Details were published on the Borough Council's website.
- The scheme would be implemented on 31 August 2017 if approved by Council.

RESOLVED: The Panel supported the recommendation to Cabinet as follows:

- 1) The new Discretionary Revaluation Relief Scheme for Year 1 (2017/2018) is a banded scheme where a fixed amount of relief is awarded for occupied properties based on the amount the ratepayer's bill has increased as at 1 April 2017.
- 2) The principle of a banded scheme is retained in Years 2, 3 and 4 with delegated authority given to the s151 Officer, in consultation with the Leader, to review and decide the bandwidths and the value of the relief given to each band, and
- 3) Delegated authority is given to the Leader to consider individual applications for the new Discretionary Revaluation Relief scheme that do not meet these criteria.

CP13 **PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK - UPDATE**

The Policy, Performance and Personnel Manager provided an update via a PowerPoint presentation.

RESOLVED: 1) That the update report be noted.

2) The links out where to find more information are set out below and would be published in the Members' Bulletin:

Performance Management Framework

http://insite.west-norfolk.gov.uk/corporate_documents/Council%20Policies/Performance%20Management%20Framework%202012%20v1-1.pdf

Directorate and Service Plans

http://insite.west-norfolk.gov.uk/corporate_documents/Service%20Plans/Forms/AllItems.aspx

Monitoring Reports

http://insite.west-norfolk.gov.uk/corporate_documents/Performance%20Monitoring/Forms/AllItems.aspx

CP14 **2016/2017 FULL YEAR PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT AND ACTION REPORT**

The Policy, Performance and Personnel Manager reminded Members that the corporate performance monitoring report was in place to monitor progress against agreed performance indicators for the year. The report contained information on the corporate performance monitoring undertaken during 2016/2017.

The key issues were noted as set out in the report.

The Policy, Performance and Personnel Manager responded to questions relating to:

- CE1: % of known licensable HMO's with a current licence. The Panel was reminded that the Council's Strategic Manager would be attending the meeting on 30 August 2017 to give a presentation on the work relating to HMO's.
- CC2: Average number of working days lost due to sickness absence per FTE employee. Members were advised that a review of the sickness absence policy was being undertaken and progressing within the timescale.
- EP3c: % of decisions on applications for major development that have been overturned at appeal, measured against total number of major applications determined. The Policy, Performance and Personnel Manager undertook to check with the Assistant Director if this was a Government target. Members were reminded that the Panel could invite officers to the meeting to provide an overview of the targets set.

RESOLVED: The Panel reviewed the performance monitoring report and agreed the actions outlined in the Action Report.

CP15 **CORPORATE PERFORMANCE MONITORING - TARGET SETTING FOR 2017/2018**

The Policy, Performance and Personnel Manager presented the report which provided an overview of the corporate performance monitoring indicators and associated targets which had been set for the 2017/18 year.

The Panel's attention was drawn to key issues detailed in the report.

The Policy Performance and Personnel Manager and Leader responded to questions relating to:

- CE1 % of known licensable HMO's with a current licence.
- CE5 Number of households living in Temporary Accommodation. It was noted that Cabinet approval had been given to convert office accommodation to provide emergency temporary accommodation to help alleviate the problem.
- CC9 % of customer satisfaction with the on-line forms: The target was set at 80% because firstly, 80% is still felt appropriate given the overall trend of not increasing targets where performance levels were satisfactory and given resource levels. Secondly, the focus was to encourage customers to use the OneVu account (indicator CC12) rather than e-forms.

RESOLVED: The Panel reviewed and noted the Council's proposed performance indicators and targets for the 2017/18 year. Performance against these targets will be reported to this Panel via the quarterly Performance Monitoring Report and associated Action Report.

CP16 **2016/2017 Q4 CORPORATE BUSINESS PLAN MONITORING REPORT**

The Policy, Performance and Personnel Manager presented the report which contained information on the progress made on the key actions up to the end of Quarter 4 2016/2017.

It was explained that there were currently 43 agreed actions being undertaken to progress the Council's Corporate Business Plan. The 2016/2017 Q4 monitoring report indicated that 86% of the actions were progressing well, 5% had been completed, 7% were slightly behind schedule and 2% were significantly behind schedule (20 actions had been completed from Q4 2015/2016 to Q4 2016/2017).

There were no questions from the Panel.

RESOLVED: The Panel reviewed the Q4 2016/2017 Corporate Business Plan monitoring report.

CP17 **NOMINATION TO OUTSIDE BODIES AND PARTNERSHIPS - HUNSTANTON SAILING CLUB DEVELOPMENT SUB-COMMITTEE**

RESOLVED: That Councillor J Collop be appointed as the Borough Council's representative on Hunstanton Sailing Club Development Sub-Committee.

CP18 **PANEL WORK PROGRAMME 2017/2018**

The Panel noted the Work Programme for 2017/2018.

CP19 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Corporate Performance Panel will be held on 30 August 2017.

The meeting closed at 7.18 pm