

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK

CORPORATE PERFORMANCE PANEL

Minutes from the Meeting of the Corporate Performance Panel held on Wednesday, 27th November, 2024 at 4.30 pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn PE30 5DQ

PRESENT: Councillors Long (Chair), Bhondi, Blunt, Collingham, B Jones, Nash, Osborne, Rose, Ryves, Sayers and Spikings.

PORTFOLIO HOLDERS:

Councillor Morley – Portfolio Holder for Finance

Councillor Moriarty – Portfolio Holder for Planning and Licensing

PRESENT UNDER STANDING ORDER 34: Councillor Lintern.

OFFICERS:

Stuart Ashworth – Assistant Director, Environment and Planning

Alexa Baker – Monitoring Officer

Kate Blakemore – Chief Executive

Becky Box – Assistant Director, Central Services

Martin Chisholm – Assistant Director, Operations and Commercial

Michelle Drewery – Assistant Director, Resources

Tommy Goode – Director of Business Development, Alive West Norfolk

Matthew Henry – Assistant Director, Property and Projects

Debbie Ess – Corporate Performance Officer

Honor Howell – Corporate Governance Manager

Jane Mitchell – Procurement and Contracts Manager

Mark Whitmore – Assistant Director, Health, Wellbeing and Public Protection.

CP66 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Beales and Sandell.

CP67 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED: The Minutes from the previous meetings were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

CP68 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There was none.

CP69 **URGENT BUSINESS UNDER STANDING ORDER 7**

There was none.

CP70 MEMBERS PRESENT PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 34

Councillor Lintern for item CP75 as she was a Member of the Informal Working Group.

CP71 CHAIR'S CORRESPONDENCE (IF ANY)

There were none.

CP72 CALL INS (IF ANY)

There were none.

CP73 UPDATE ON CYCLING DEVELOPMENT AND CYCLE HIRE SCHEME

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The Panel were provided with an update on Cycling Development and the Cycle Hire Centre at Lynnsport which had been funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. It was noted that funding had been awarded for cycle hire and cycling development and an outline of the schemes progressed had been set out in the report, which included learn to ride sessions and a Halloween event. It was noted that development work had been positive, but the cycle hire take up had been poor.

The Chair thanked the Director of Business Development at Alive West Norfolk for their report and invited questions and comments from the Panel, as summarised below.

Councillor Spikings commented that ensuring that cyclists were safe, especially at night and over the winter, was important and she asked if some of the remaining funding could be used to promote cycle safety, including purchase of high-vis and lights. Councillor Spikings also commented that the provision should be rolled out into communities and not limited to Lynnsport. The Director of Business Development, Alive West Norfolk acknowledged that Lynnsport was perhaps not the right place for the hire scheme and other areas would be explored to increase take up as the scheme was not sustainable in its current form. In relation to promoting cycle safety and the provision of safety equipment, it was explained that this was not prescribed as part of the current funding arrangement, but could be investigated.

Councillor Sayers promoted the importance of active travel and safety. He noted that investigations were ongoing into procuring a disabled cycle and he asked officers to be mindful of the turning circle on some disabled bikes and how some narrow streets and cycle paths were currently unable to accommodate them. Councillor Sayers commented

that infrastructure to support the types of cycles being used was required. The Director of Business Development explained that a variety of models of cycles were being looked at.

Councillor Collingham commented that the cycle hire scheme was a good scheme to support, however other locations needed to be considered to increase take up and she suggested Hunstanton and Sandringham.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Councillor Morley commented that he had concerns about the use of the funding and advised the Panel to have a wider look at the scheme and see if it could be provided elsewhere.

Councillor Spikings felt that the scheme had potential and would like to see other options explored. In response to a question from Councillor Spikings it was confirmed that there had been no loss of cycles.

Councillor Ryves commented that alternative locations needed to be explored to enhance the tourism offer of the area.

RESOLVED: 1. The Corporate Performance Panel noted the report.
2. Officers to explore alternative venues for the cycle hire scheme and keep the Panel updated as required.
3. Officers to investigate if the remaining funding could be used to promote cycle safety, and the Panel to be kept updated as required.

CP74

CABINET REPORT - QUARTER 2 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT

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The Corporate Performance Officer presented the report which updated on progress against the Council's Corporate Strategy and key performance indicators up to the period 30 September 2024. Information was provided on the actions which had been completed and the indicators for which ratings had changed.

Members of the Senior Leadership Team were present at the meeting to provide detail on their indicators which were currently not meeting target and the Chair invited each Assistant Director to present their update.

The Assistant Director for Environment and Planning provided the following update in relation to the indicators which were not meeting target:

- % of new enforcement cases actioned within 12 weeks of receipt (red). It was noted that a new target had been proposed by the previous Government as a way of measuring enforcement performance. Although just below the target work was ongoing to

improve in this area, and performance this quarter was currently above target.

- Number of new homes delivered in the Borough to meet the housing need target (red). It was explained that the Council had a limited amount of influence over this although the council was building homes, but it was also dependent on private developers delivering.
- % of non-major planning applications provided with an extension of time (amber). It was explained that this was not formally a national target but had been brought in by the organisation to try and speed up processes. Although just below target in Quarter 2, in the current quarter the target was being met.

In response to questions from Councillor Spikings, The Assistant Director for Environment and Planning explained that the target relating to determination of non major planning applications within eight weeks referred to mainly delegated decisions. About 92% of those decisions were estimated as being delegated, with the remainder of decisions made by Planning Committee.

Councillor Spikings praised the staff in the Planning Department and noted that vacancies and issues recruiting staff meant that officers were working hard and she was impressed with the Team. The Chair reiterated the positive comments made by Councillor Spikings. He also referred to the targets relating to enforcement action and commented that it was important that the public knew that the Council were taking action and he looked forward to seeing the target improve.

The Assistant Director for Health, Wellbeing and Public Protection provided the following update:

- % of housing adaptations completed within time (red). It was explained that the team were still working through the backlog due to the Covid Pandemic, but the waiting list had been halved during the last year, so significant progress had been made. It was noted that urgent cases were still being prioritised. The Assistant Director commented that he did not feel the target would be met by the end of year, but it was moving in the right direction.

The Chair acknowledged that it was important that urgent adaptations were prioritised to assist with discharges from Hospital. In response to a question from the Chair relating to the use of AI, the Assistant Director explained that it was not used at this time, but work was ongoing with Norfolk County Council on how it could be used in the future.

The Assistant Director for Operations and Commercial provided the following update:

- Establish EV Charging points at Austin Street East Car Park (amber). It was explained that these were now in place and would be marked as complete in the Quarter 3 Monitoring Report.
- Continue work on the Tree Strategy, Management system and associated actions (amber). The Assistant Director explained that the

system was now going through the procurement process, however this had no impact on the work and maintenance relating to trees and was purely an electronic management system which would be used to modernise the record keeping system and provide information to the public.

- % and total tonnage of food waste collected and treated (red) and % and total tonnage of mixed recycling collected and treated (red). The Assistant Director explained that there could be many reasons for the reduction in the amount of recycling collected including that producers were using less packaging. A campaign on food waste had recently been carried out including promoting the service, offering caddies and food waste bags to increase take up. Work had also taken place in schools.

Councillor Spikings asked if the Council would be providing Christmas Tree disposal as it had previously and the Assistant Director explained that this was being investigated. It was also noted that they could be chopped up and put in the garden waste bins for collection.

Councillor Sayers referred to the target relating to converting street lighting to LED and it was explained that work was ongoing to tie this into the maintenance programme so that units could be upgraded at the same time repairs were required. The Assistant Director, Property and Projects offered to provide an update to one of the Panels on the maintenance scheme as required.

Councillor Collingham referred to the percentage of waste enforcement cases referred to the Community Safety and Neighbourhood Nuisance (CSNN) Team and it was explained that there were two elements to this, one was domestic cases carried out by the clean up team, and more complex commercial cases relating to fly tipping cases were referred to CSNN.

It was highlighted that the reduction could be because teams were being more proactive and gathering intelligence, and some of the big perpetrators had had action taken against them.

Councillor Collingham asked if the introduction of the booking system at the recycling centres was likely to have an impact on fly tipping and it was explained that this would be monitored.

Councillor Ryves referred to the amount of reports of fly tipping, which had increased and it was explained that this was a monitor only target. The increase could have been because of the summer period.

In response to a further question from Councillor Ryves it was clarified that from an enforcement point of view, action could be taken on private land, however it was not the responsibility of the council to clear fly tipping from private land.

Councillor Jones thanked all involved for keeping the alleyways in North Lynn clean and tidy and this comment was reiterated by the Chair.

The Assistant Director for Resources provided the following update:

- Agree arrangements for approved 100% premium on second homes for implementation from 1 April 2025 (amber). It was explained that this was being progressed and checks and monitoring systems were being looked at. Parish Clerk briefing sessions relating to precepts had also been held. Negotiations were also ongoing with Norfolk County Council on how the additional funds would be distributed.
- Review and determine impact of government changes to Internal Drainage Board funding (amber). The Council were part of the Special Interest Group relating to levy payments. It was explained that these were currently collected through Council Tax and one off Government settlements had been received in the past, but the change of Government had paused this scheme and it was currently unknown what support would be offered going forward. Meetings with IDB's to discuss future risks and challenges were also being held.
- Develop a digital Strategy (amber). This tied in with the Transformation Programme and work was ongoing to produce the Digital Strategy.
- Refresh our financial assistance programme with review of existing and new service level agreements and associated funding. The Assistant Director confirmed that this work had now been completed and would deliver a saving.
- Reduce revenue expenditure by 5%. This work was ongoing and efficiency proposals were being looked at. The Assistant Director was confident that savings would be achieved, but were not likely to impact achievement of the target until the end of the year. The Assistant Director explained that the 2023-2024 figure had been updated to reflect changes to the calculation and instead of being recorded as 2.15% it should have read 6.3%.
- Number of days to process housing benefit and council tax support changes of circumstances. The Assistant Director explained that there had been issues with the system, which had impacted the number of days. A partial fix had now been implemented which it was hoped would allow a catch up on cases. It was noted that Housing Benefit changes were prioritised as these had a direct financial impact on customers. It was also noted that any changes were backdated to the claim submission date.
- % of supplier invoices paid within 30 days (amber) and % of local supplier invoices paid within 10 days (amber). The Assistant Director explained that a review of procedures would take place to try and make the process more efficient.

Councillor Ryves asked if Internal Audit had a role in overseeing processes and the Assistant Director explained that they did Audit financial processes and had recently carried out an Audit on Accounts Payable. If concerns were raised an Audit could be scheduled.

The Monitoring Officer provided the following update:

- Develop and deploy a climate change assessment tool for council policies and projects (amber). The Monitoring Officer explained that this was soon to be considered by the Senior Leadership Team as part of an overall decision impact tool which would bring together all the factors that needed to be considered as part of the decision making process such as social value, the environment and equalities.
- Create a Community Orchard at South Lynn (amber). Funding options were currently being looked at and the Planning Application would be submitted soon. It was anticipated that the planting window for 2025 would be achievable.

The Assistant Director for Property and Projects provided an update as follows:

- Progress the Building Conditions Survey to review property assets and valuations which will inform a new Asset Management Strategy and Plan (amber). This target had not been met due to loss of resources within the team and would be looked at as soon as possible. Restructuring of the Team was also taking place.

The Assistant Director for Central Services provided the following update:

- % of calls answered within 90 seconds (amber). The Assistant Director explained that there were many factors that could impact the ability to answer calls within the target time, including the complexity of the calls, resources available and council activity which could generate additional calls, for example election time and council tax billing. The Chair commented that 90 seconds was a hard target to hit and commended the work of the team in dealing with calls promptly.
- % of meeting minutes produced within 3 working days of meeting (amber). The Assistant Director commented that this target was only slightly off target and changes had been made within the team to address resource issues. The Chair reminded officers and other Chairs of the importance of providing comments on draft minutes in a timely manner.

Councillor Spikings referred to the minute taking target and commented that there were so many different types and lengths of meetings which could impact the target and she felt that the team worked very well. The Chair reiterated the comments made by Councillor Spikings.

The Chair thanked officers for their updates and invited further questions and comments from the Panel, as summarised below.

Councillor Spikings referred to the food premises ratings and the target to achieve three or above. She commented that standards needed to be high and that the target should be to achieve four or above. The Assistant Director agreed to see if this could be considered and explained that the role of the Council was to work with businesses to help them improve and take action if there were concerns relating to food safety. In response to a further question from Councillor Spikings it was confirmed that it was not compulsory for premises to display

ratings and he encouraged customers to check the ratings online. There was a link to the FSA register on the Borough Council's website.

Councillor Jones asked about numbers of people attending Food for Thought, which was run by Lily and the number of customers using the Help Hub and asked if a breakdown of the amount of users, by Ward, could be provided. The Assistant Director explained that data relating to individuals could not be shared, but the number of customers helped could be provided if required.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Licensing, Councillor Moriarty, referred to the planning targets relating to the extension of time and commented that individual circumstances also needed to be considered. He also commented that staff recruitment and retention was a national issue and he endorsed the comments made earlier by Panel Members on how well the team worked.

Councillor Spikings referred to the amount of staff on long term sick leave and asked what the Council did to support employees. The Assistant Director, Central Services explained that each case was looked at individually in terms of support required and each situation managed and addressed appropriately. It was acknowledged that sometimes recovery periods were required, but the Council maintained contact and provided support as required. The Assistant Director informed the Panel of the Employee Assistance Programme, prevention work and that the sickness absence Policy was in the process of being refreshed. The Assistant Director also reported that the Council had recently rolled out an online GP Appointment System for staff. Councillor Spikings commented that she was pleased to see that staff were being supported.

RESOLVED: 1. That the Corporate Performance Panel support the recommendations to Cabinet as set out below.

That Cabinet reviews the Performance Management Report and comments on the delivery against the Corporate Strategy.

2. That Assistant Directors not present at the meeting are requested to provide a written update to the Panel on targets which were underperforming.

CP75

REPORT OF THE TAXI TESTING INFORMAL WORKING GROUP

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Councillor Ryves, Chair of the Informal Working Group provided an overview of the work of the Group, including the meetings held, issues found and support provided by officers. He provided information on the

recommendations which the Corporate Performance Panel were asked to consider for onward recommendation to Cabinet.

Councillor Ryves and Councillor Long thanked the officers for supporting the Informal Working Group.

Councillor Lintern, Member of the Informal Working Group, addressed the Panel under Standing Order 34 and commented that the Group had reviewed systems and processes and hoped that their recommendations would provide for a robust mechanism for awarding the next contract.

Councillor Nash thanked the Procurement and Contracts Manager and Executive Director for supporting the group and felt that the Informal Working Group had provided common sense recommendations that would improve accountability. He also hoped that the recommendations from the Group would be considered during other contract processes.

RESOLVED: The Corporate Performance Panel support the recommendations from the Informal Working Group for onward recommendation to Cabinet in terms of preparation for the next tax testing contract:

1. The Informal Working Group make the following recommendations to the Corporate Performance Panel (“CPP”) for onwards recommendation to Cabinet in terms of preparation for the next tax testing contract:

- a. The new tender to be advertised on Delta E-Sourcing and Find-A-Tender, and the Council’s own website. Any contractor wishing to apply shall be advised to register on Delta. Direct invitations from the Delta tender box shall not be sent.
- b. All correspondence after the competition is opened to be sent through the Delta portal. All enquiries received outside the portal are to be redirected through Delta.
- c. To consider and discuss with the legal team, including in the Contract Standing Orders, the ability to invite bidders to tender.
- d. In line with the new Procurement Act 2023 for under threshold procurements, checks would be put in place to ensure that businesses were bona fide businesses. Financial information could be requested, but businesses showing a loss in accounts would not be excluded from then being awarded a contract. The reason for requiring financial information was purely to evidence that the business was legitimate.
- e. Questions and criteria to be included in the tender process would need to be agreed with officers, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Licensing.
- f. It would not be left to the discretion of one officer if additional stations were brought forward to become testing stations after the initial contract was awarded. Consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Licensing would be required.

Whilst not strictly falling within the terms of reference of the IWG, this additional recommendation was made for CPP’s consideration:

- g. Should an external review of Council processes be required, it should be instructed in writing by an officer independent of the originating matter and not involved in any previous internal review.

2. The Taxi Testing Informal Working Group has now concluded its work and is disbanded.

CP76 **JANUARY 2023 TO DECEMBER 2023 REPORT ON USE, OR NON-USE OF RIPA POWERS**

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The Assistant Director presented the report which provided information on the Council's use, or non-use of its powers under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) 2000. It was noted that there had been confirmation from the Commissioners Officer that the Councils procedures were robust and appropriate.

In response to a question from the Chair, it was explained that CCTV was not covert and therefore not included in the powers, however other agencies did make use of the Councils resources and this was monitored by the Council to ensure it was appropriate.

The Chair was reassured that the Council had received confirmation from the Commissioner that the processes used were acceptable.

RESOLVED: The Panel considered the details of the report and noted the effectiveness of the RIPA Policy.

CP77 **PANEL WORK PROGRAMME**

The Panel noted that written responses from Assistant Directors who were not present to provide detail of Corporate Performance Monitoring would be sought and circulated to the Panel.

RESOLVED: The Panel's Work Programme was noted.

CP78 **CABINET FORWARD DECISIONS LIST**

RESOLVED: The Cabinet Forward Decisions List was noted.

CP79 **SHAREHOLDER COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME**

RESOLVED: The Shareholder Committee Work Programme was noted.

CP80 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Panel was scheduled to take place on 7th January 2025 at 4.30pm in the Town Hall, King's Lynn.

A Joint Panel meeting was also scheduled to take place on 3rd December 2024 at 4.30pm in the Town Hall, King's Lynn.

The meeting closed at 6.24 pm