

Minutes of a meeting of the **PERFORMANCE MONITORING PANEL** held in Meeting Room 1, Council Offices, Priory Road, Spalding, on Tuesday, 8 November 2016 at 6.30 pm.

PRESENT

B Alcock (Chairman)
M D Booth (Vice-Chairman)

G R Aley
C J T H Brewis
T A Carter
P C Foyster

R Grocock
J L King
J D McLean
A M Newton

A C Tennant
J Tyrrell

In Attendance: The Place Manager, the Corporate Improvement and Performance Manager, the Democratic Services Officer and the Portfolio Holder Governance and Customer.

Apologies for absence were received from or on behalf of Councillors J R Astill, R Clark and G K Dark.

21. **PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW REPORT - QUARTER 2 2016/17**

With the permission of the Chairman, this item was considered as the first item of business at the meeting.

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Director Strategy and Governance which provided an update on Council performance for the period 1 July 2016 to 30 September 2016. Areas where performance had improved since the previous period (Q1 2016/2017) were brought to Members' attention, as were areas of concern where performance was below expected levels or was considered to be worsening.

Quarter 2 saw increased levels of performance against the majority of indicators compared to the performance seen in quarter 1. Performance was rated as good with 62.5% of indicators being green which indicated good performance. There were 3 amber indicators and 3 red indicators which in total made up the remaining 37.5% of indicators.

Areas of success highlighted within the report included: Housing Re-Let Times; Commercial Property; Staffing; Planning; Revenues; and Working Days Lost to Sickness per FTE.

Areas of concern highlighted within the report included the following:

Action By

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Missed Waste Collection Rate

The average incidence of missed waste collection was still above the monthly target however Quarter 2 showed a significant improvement against the previous quarter. Performance was improving and it was hoped that the results for Quarter 3 would be within target.

Housing Benefit LA Error Rate

The Housing Benefit error rate currently stood at 0.54% against a target of 0.48%. In September, work commenced to implement a clearance strategy to deal with the backlog of outstanding work relating to the processing of claims, with a third party (Civica) being commissioned to help with this process. Performance figures had shown a decline, which was to be expected. This area was now subject to a weekly senior management scrutiny between Compass Point Business Services and South Holland District Council, to ensure that the position was improved.

The Panel considered this information and the following answers were provided in response to members' questions:

- Penalties incurred for missed targets - There were two thresholds above the target amount. If the upper threshold was exceeded, administration monies received for processing would be lost, if the lower threshold was exceeded, part of these monies would be lost. The aim was to hit the 0.48% target by the end of the financial year
- Could the risk be quantified? - Officers did not have this information available. Panel members would be provided with exact figures in due course.
- Clearing easier cases first to reduce backlog could be at the detriment of claimants whose cases were more complex - Officers stated that this was an issue to be clarified with officers at CPBS tasked with resolving the backlog issue. Officers would liaise with them to obtain guidance.
- There could potentially be a number of reasons why the current position had been arrived at e.g. resourcing/training/processes etc. Managers at CPBS had been tasked with understanding the reasons for the situation. In any event, the backlog clearance had to take no longer than three months.
- With regard to the monitoring of errors, Civica would be identifying errors that were found. The situation was being monitored daily by managers at CPBS. Senior officers at SHDC, East Lindsey District Council and CPBS were monitoring Civica's work on a weekly basis. In addition, the

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current workload of existing staff was also being monitored for any mistakes. A review of the service would be undertaken in January.2017.

- What was the cost to the Authority of Civica undertaking this work? - Officers did not have details of these costs, but Panel members would be provided with figures in due course.
- The Housing Benefit error rate of 0.54% was a percentage based on the value of all claims. The total number of claims was not known – Panel members would be advised of the figure in due course.
- Consideration should be given to the cost involved to bring the error rate below 0.48%, weighed against the amount of the penalty.
- Members' main concern was that the issues around the Housing Benefit error rate was a recurring problem with similar problems over the last couple of years. A real solution needed to be found.

In addition to concerns raised, members also requested that the following changes be made to performance reports in the future to enable better understanding of the information and trends:

- Figures rather than percentages would give a clearer picture. Members were advised that in some cases, if numbers were low, it could be easy to identify individuals. Also figures were reported by percentage nationally, and these were used for comparison purposes. However, it was agreed that numerated and denominated figures could be provided in future reports.
- In some instances, it would be useful to provide information on issues in order to see previous trends.

AGREED:

- a) That the report of the Executive Director Strategy and Governance be noted; GP
- b) That the Chief Executive and the Executive Director Strategy and Governance be made aware of the Panel's concerns in relation to the Housing Benefit LA Error Rate issues identified within the report; CM, GP
- c) That officers ascertain the following information and feed back to Panel members:
 - i. Quantification of risk of missing targets; GP
 - ii. The cost to the Authority of Civica undertaking its work to process outstanding claims;

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- iii. The total number of claims upon which the Housing Benefit error rate was calculated.
- d) That the following information be provided in future performance monitoring reports:
 - i. Numerated and denominated figures;
 - ii. Where necessary, information showing previous trends

(Councillor Newton left the meeting during discussion of this item as she was a Board Member at Compass Point Business Services (East Coast) Ltd).

(The Corporate Improvement and Performance Manager and the Portfolio Holder Governance and Customer left the meeting following discussion of the above item.)

22. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 August 2016 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

The following issues were raised:

- Crime and Disorder update – (b) That within their own wards, Councillors be requested to promote the Community Safety Survey, engagement events and the reporting of all crime.
 - Members requested that more information be provided on these initiatives. EH, CM
- Crime and Disorder update – (c) That the Lincolnshire Community Safety Partnership’s 2015/16 Community Safety Report be circulated to Panel members after it had been considered by the Board.
 - Members questioned when this would be available and were advised that the Community Safety Partnership would be meeting soon and it was hoped that the report would be available shortly. EH, CM
- CCTV update – Work on the CCTV system was still not complete in Crowland. Members requested that an update on the current position be provided. EH, CM
- Network Rail – All members had been invited to attend a briefing with Network Rail, prior to the meeting of Council on 26 September 2016 to raise issues of concern. Many Panel members had attended and they stated that they were satisfied with the responses they had received from the

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representatives, relating to ongoing issues.

AGREED:

- a) That the minutes of the Performance Monitoring Panel meeting held on 30 August 2016 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record; and
- b) That responses be received to outstanding issues raised by the Panel in relation to the Crime and Disorder and CCTV updates.

23. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS.

There were none.

24. QUESTIONS ASKED UNDER STANDING ORDER 6

There were none.

25. TRACKING OF RECOMMENDATIONS

There were none.

26. ITEMS REFERRED FROM THE POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANEL.

There were none.

27. KEY DECISION PLAN

Consideration was given to the Key Decision Plan issued on 19 September 2016.

AGREED:

That the Key Decision Plan issued on 19 September 2016 be noted.

28. REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTED PLANNING DECISIONS

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Director Place which reported on the recent review of implemented planning decisions and requested that the Panel consider the findings.

The Probity in Planning guidance, issued by the Local Government Association, highlighted that the report of the Audit

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Commission 'Building in Quality' recommended that councillors revisit a sample of implemented planning permissions to assess the quality of the decisions. Such a review should improve the quality and consistency of decision-making, strengthening public confidence in the planning system, and could also help with review of planning policy. It further stated that review by the Panel should include examples of a broad range of categories, such as major and minor development, permitted departures, upheld appeals, listed building works and enforcement cases.

In order to revisit a number of implemented planning permissions, the Performance Monitoring Panel undertook a tour on 15 September 2016, visiting a number of different sites throughout the district. Sites were chosen to represent a range of types and sizes of development and decisions, in accordance with the Protocol. It included a range of large and small-scale residential developments, at differing stages of completion, as well as a completed solar farm and single wind turbine. Following the tour, a debriefing session was held to review the day and draw conclusions, and these were detailed at section 3.2 of the report.

All Panel members that had attended agreed that it had been a very worthwhile exercise, well-structured, and that there had been a good variety of applications to consider. It was felt that the review should continue on a bi-ennial basis.

One common issue that had arisen whilst visiting some of the new developments was with regard to the finishing off of footpaths. It was understood that it was not possible to do this with roads, but footpaths should be finished off as quickly as possible. The Place Manager advised that this consideration could be picked up within the second and fourth recommendations detailed within the report. The Panel was advised that the conditions were imposed by LCC and that in its review of conditions, the Authority needed to make these changes. It was necessary for conditions to be worded correctly.

Members were advised that the Policy Development Panel were aware of the Panel's Review of Implemented Planning Decisions, and that they were keen that both Panels work together to assist with good design. It was agreed that this could happen, with the Policy Development Panel's consent, in the following way:

- That two members of the Performance Monitoring Panel join a Task Group set up by the Policy Development Panel to review public open spaces (Councillor Alcock and Councillor Newton volunteered to do this if required);
- That alongside the issues already agreed by the Policy

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Development Panel for consideration by the Review of Public Open Spaces Task Group, recommendations made following the Tour also be addressed, particularly those relating to open space and the finishing off of pavements in new developments.

AGREED:

- a) That the following actions, arising from issues considered during the tour, be recommended to the Planning Committee
- i. That consideration of evidence on viability of housing schemes is more transparent and robustly challenged to ensure the delivery of schemes as originally approved. It is suggested that the District Valuer (or equivalent) is contacted with a view to exploring member training on viability;
 - ii. That greater consideration is given to the design and layout of housing development through the exploration of the potential for a specific Supplementary Planning Document to be produced as part of the emerging Local Plan. This should also seek to address design responses to increase floor levels on the basis of flood risk;
 - iii. That consideration is given to effective long-term open space management and the mechanisms for successfully delivering of site contributions in lieu of on-site provision. This could be achieved through a revised Supplementary Planning Document on Open Space, as part of the emerging Local Plan, as well as through the Council's commercialisation agenda;
 - iv. That planning conditions are reviewed to ensure that they are precise and enforceable. For example, there is concern as to at what point developers should complete the finished surfacing of roads that serve development;
 - v. That an up-to-date 'Enforcement Plan' is produced with a view to supporting effective and timely enforcement;
 - vi. That members are encouraged to undertake their own, or exceptionally, request Committee undertake site visits, where there is considered to be a significant impact, for example wind and solar farms.

PN

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- b) That it be recommended to the Planning Committee that the Review of Implemented Planning Decisions tour continue on a biennial basis;
- c) That the Performance Monitoring and Policy Development Panels work together in order to promote design, and that with the Policy Development Panel's consent, this be undertaken as follows:
 - i. That two members of the Performance Monitoring Panel join a Task Group already set up by the Policy Development Panel to review public open spaces
 - ii. That Councillor Alcock and Councillor Newton be members of this joint Task Group;
 - iii. That alongside the issues already agreed by the Policy Development Panel for consideration by the Review of Public Open Spaces Task Group, recommendations made by the Performance Monitoring Panel following the review of implemented planning decisions also be addressed, particularly those relating to open space and the finishing off of pavements in new developments.

CM, PN

29. PERFORMANCE MONITORING PANEL WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Manager Governance, which set out the Work Programme of the Performance Monitoring Panel. The Work Programme consisted of two separate sections, the first setting out the dates of the future Panel meetings along with proposed items for consideration, and the second setting out the Task Groups that had been identified by the Panel. The following issues were raised:

- A discussion regarding drainage in the South Holland area, with attendance by a representative from a local board and national strategic partnership had been expected at the meeting. It was confirmed that this would now take place at the next scheduled meeting.
- A report detailing how the Authority would undertake enforcement in the future, through a coordinated Authority-wide approach to enforcement and undertaking of preventative educational measures would be presented to the next scheduled Panel meeting. The Place Manager provided members with an overview of enforcement undertaken by various departments across the Authority, and this information was tabled at the meeting.

PJ

ES

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- There were a number of issues detailed within Appendix B to the report that had been identified as potential Task Groups by the Panel. The Chairman would liaise with the Democratic Services Officer to consider if any of these could be removed.

CM

AGREED:

- a) That both sections of the Panel's Work Programme, as set out in the report of the Executive Manager Governance, be noted; and
- b) That the Chairman liaise with the Democratic Services Officer to consider whether any issues detailed within Appendix B of the report could be removed.

(The meeting ended at 8.22 pm)

(End of minutes)