

Minutes of a meeting of the **PERFORMANCE MONITORING PANEL** held in Meeting Room 1, Council Offices, Priory Road, Spalding, on Tuesday, 16 May 2017 at 6.30 pm.

PRESENT

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

G R Aley  
J R Astill  
C J T H Brewis  
T A Carter

P C Foyster  
J L King  
J D McLean  
A M Newton

A C Tennant  
J Tyrrell

In Attendance: Eddy Poll (Chairman of Anglia (Northern) Regional Flood and Coastal Committee), Karen Daft (Chief Executive of Welland and Deepings Internal Drainage Board), Nick Morris (Operations Director of Welland and Deepings Internal Drainage Board), the Executive Director Place, the Executive Manager - People and Public Protection, the South Holland Place Manager, the Environmental Services Manager, the Communities Manager, the Democratic Services Officer, the Portfolio Holder for Place and the Portfolio Holder for Communities and Facilities.

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

**44. MINUTES**

**AGREED:**

- a) The minutes of the Joint Performance Monitoring Panel and Policy Development Panel meeting held on 24 January 2017 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.
- b) The minutes of the Performance Monitoring Panel meeting held on 7 February 2017 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**45. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS.**

There were no declarations of interest.

**46. QUESTIONS ASKED UNDER STANDING ORDER 6**

There were no questions asked under Standing Order 6.

**47. TRACKING OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

There were no responses of the Cabinet to consider.

**Action By**

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**48. ITEMS REFERRED FROM THE POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANEL.**

There were no items referred from the Policy Development Panel.

**49. DRAINAGE IN THE SOUTH HOLLAND AREA**

With the permission of the Chairman, this item was brought forward on the agenda.

The Chairman welcomed the representatives and introduced the Panel to them and its purpose.

An overview of the Welland and Deepings Internal Drainage Board (IDB) and its function was given by Karen Daft, Chief Executive and Nick Morris, Operations Director.

Welland and Deepings Internal Drainage Board

The Welland and Deepings Internal Drainage Board was an autonomous public body under the direct control of the Board members. The Board had 12 elected members and 13 appointed members.

The Board's area covered approximately 34000 hectares from Frampton/Kirton in the north to Werrington (near Peterborough) in the south. They had 25 staff who helped to maintain 390 miles of open watercourse which included 14 pumping stations and 3 tidal sluices.

An overview of the RFCC was given by its Chairman, Eddy Poll.

Regional Flood and Coastal Committee

Regional Flood and Coastal Committees (RFCCs) helped to provide governance for the Environment Agency Flood and Coastal Erosion risk management functions and covered all flood risks that were not the responsibility of the water companies.

The RFCC had a £380million programme over six years funded by the Environment Agency (EA)/Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). The readiness of the Committee to react to adverse weather conditions depended on accurate weather forecasting, which nowadays was better than it had ever been.

The Panel considered the following points:

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- A survey on secondary lines of defence (known as relic lines of defence) had been carried out with the willingness of the farmers and they were seen to be in a good condition.
- The IDB was responsible for dyke piping and filling regardless of whether they owned the land, and once notified about a request, consent would be issued. Dykes were filled on behalf of the County Council too, which included Bourne and Grantham.
- The co-operation between all local IDBs was good.
- The proportion of electrical pumps to mechanical ones, in case of electricity failure during adverse weather, was one diesel pumping station (the main one) and the rest were electrical. If the electricity supply was unavailable, the contingency was to attach a tractor via a PTO shaft to keep one pump going until generators kicked in. Emergency procedures were set up for adverse conditions. Welland and Deepings IDB had a 12inch emergency pump and were looking to get a smaller one too.
- Welland and Deepings IDB had a rolling programme to dredge rivers, usually done every 5 to 6 years dependent on whether it was a heavy silt area or not. The River Welland was under the responsibility of the Environment Agency. Forty Foot drain was undergoing a 'hoovering' project to pick up the heavy silt. This would hopefully be introduced to more areas.
- The biggest risks to the IDB were funding and complacency. If complacency was reversed, then there would be more issues on funding.
- Insurance costs for householders were higher due to flood risk – the EA had very accurate maps and these could be used when getting an insurance quote, but couldn't be used if doing an online quote.

The representatives were thanked for their overview and left the meeting at 7.10pm, along with Councillor Newton.

### **50. KEY DECISION PLAN**

Consideration was given to the Key Decision Plan issued on 27 April 2017.

#### **AGREED:**

That the Key Decision Plan issued on 27 April 2017 be noted.

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**51. PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW REPORT - QUARTER 4 2016/17**

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Director Strategy and Governance which provided an update on Council performance for the period 1 January 2017 to 31 March 2017. Areas where performance had improved were brought to members' attention, as were areas of concern where performance was below expected levels or was considered to be worsening.

The Executive Manager for People and Public Protection informed members that performance had decreased since Quarter 3, 11 indicators green (46%) 1 amber and 10 red indicators (42%).

Areas of success highlighted within the report included:

- An improvement in customer complaint handling (closed 54 complaints, 8 upheld for Stage 1, 3 Stage 2 complaints but none upheld).
- 100% of the 50 Commercial Property Occupancies were let which was pleasing.
- 96% of planning applications determined within the agreed time (194 out of 202).
- Revenues and Benefits team turnaround after a poor start to the year - the LA error rate had finished at 0.42%, below the target of 0.48%, hopefully avoiding a fine, although clarification wasn't yet available.

Areas of concern highlighted within the report included the following:

- Housing Void Figures – still remained high on a key to key basis of 32 days, over the 28 day target, but a marked improvement on 45 days. This would improve following the Place Review and implementation of agreed recommendations from the Voids Task Group.
- Average wait time in seconds was 107, which was due to revenues and benefits calls with Council Tax bills going out in March. Better training of staff taking calls would help. There was a high turnover in staff – which was common in call centre businesses. Floor walkers had been introduced to move towards a digital cashless provision and there had been 1300 less visits to the cash office since this had been introduced. A service review had taken place within Compass Point addressing a lot of these issues.
- Environmental Services – 99.95% of bins had been collected, although there was a higher missed waste collection rate compared to Q4 in the previous year. Out of

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1,018,500 collections, only 521 were classified as missed bin collections.

- Sickness – there was a reduction of people off work due to long term sickness, down from 14 to 8, which was an improvement and was being managed. However this figure was driven by long term sickness due to serious illness, but support was being provided.

The Panel considered the following points:

- How was a complaint defined within the data? The Corporate Improvement Team dealt with complaints, and if it was more than a general service issue, e.g. missed waste collection, it moved onto a Stage 1 complaint. All complaints were recorded.
- The red areas in re-let sections were too high – this would hopefully be turned around with the Place Service review.
- Definition of homeless – Members requested that this definition be determined.
- New affordable homes – information data was only on provision, not performance .

PA  
CM

### AGREED:

That the report of the Executive Director Strategy and Governance be noted.

## 52. SWIMMING POOL AND LEISURE FACILITIES CONTRACT TASK GROUP

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Director Place, updating the Panel on progress of recommendations from the Task Group.

The Executive Director Place informed members that focus had been on cleanliness and maintenance, and frank conversations had taken place with the Contractor about expectations. They had responded well to feedback. Five Improvement Required Notices had been served and action had been taken immediately. Monitoring visits were taking place regularly and records were being kept for an audit trail. As per section 1.8 of the report, a dedicated cleaner had been appointed and this had made a big difference. Changing room floors had been replaced, and the programme to replace the floor in the school changing area would take place in the May half term.

There had been investment in the contractor's digital platforms to improve marketing and the ways that customers could get in

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touch. Positive promotion of key activities was underway.

Service improvements had been made and through the changes to the contract management, these would be sustained in the future. There was a year left to run on the current contract so work would take place over the Summer and Autumn to prepare for future arrangements.

The Portfolio Holder Communities and Facilities re-iterated the changes that had taken place. He also noted that better signage had improved the wearing of overshoe protectors. Improvements to the outside areas of the site were also being looked into to support more positive feedback in the future.

The Panel considered the following points:

- Legal advice had been sought with regard to when the contract came up for renewal and an extension would only be an option in extenuating circumstances. A full tender process would be needed.
- An options appraisal had commenced.
- It was likely that a single contractor would be responsible for the running of the site and all operational elements, including cleaning and maintenance.
- Publicity to let users know of the remaining flooring works would take place so that users were aware.
- 1Life would use their National PR team to assist. There was an app available to assist promotion.
- Comments on the whole had been positive and recognised the improvements made to the wet and dry facilities.
- Bookings at Peele Leisure were strong and their PR was good.
- The contract procedure manual would be completed within the next couple of months.

**AGREED:**

- a) That the report of the Executive Director Place be noted; and
- b) That a progress report be made to the Panel in six months time.

Councillor King left the meeting at 19.40.

RW, EH  
CM

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**53. FINAL REPORT OF THE RE-LETTING OF VOID PROPERTIES TASK GROUP**

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Manager Governance to approve the final report of the Re-Letting of Void Properties Task Group, prior to its consideration by the Cabinet.

The Chairman of the Task Group, Councillor Aley, gave an overview of the report and thanked all those involved in the work of the Task Group. The scope of the review was to consider performance and to make recommendations on how to improve it. The following comments were made in relation to specific sections within the Final Report:

- 5.1 - The Task Group had spoken with many officers and they had all been most helpful.
- 6.2 - Summary of findings – a huge spreadsheet was used to record all the information and this needed to be addressed.
- 6.6 - Choice Based Lettings – this system was not currently operated by South Holland District Council, but may be looked at in the future.
- 6.8 - Marketing of properties – this needed addressing to promote properties better and make the re-let procedure quicker.
- 7.2a - There should be one Voids team but as yet there had been no discussion on how this could operate.
- 7.2c - Websites and Facebook could be used to market void properties.
- 8.1 - There were no financial implications at this time.

A follow up report providing an update on progress in actioning recommendations should be considered at the meeting of the Performance Monitoring Panel on 7 November 2017.

The Panel considered the following points:

- There were an average of 26 properties being handed back each month.
- Some properties were long term voids but these were usually down to the area they were in e.g. bad neighbours, unpopular area.
- The Environmental Services Manager commented that 1 bedroom flats in Spalding were proving hard to let as they did not meet strategic housing needs because they were within the sheltered housing section. Marketing was key and needed addressing.

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- The Council should look at their stock as a whole and not be afraid to sell off unwanted properties and invest in what and where was popular.
- The figure in Section 6.4 of 250 on the housing waiting list was not a fair reflection – this only focused on those with an acute and pressing need. Those less in need were not included in the figures. Councillor Brewis suggested the figure needed to be nearer 1000. If the list was too high it made the administration costs too high.
- Section 7.2c - Stronger wording was needed, use 'undertaken' rather than 'investigated'.
- Section 7.2d - Possibility to review current contracts that impacted upon voids timeline.

The Executive Director Place confirmed that the Council did not collect what was owed in damages until after a tenant had left, thus making it nearly impossible to recoup as they had disappeared. The Place review being submitted to Full Council suggested that, to avoid this situation happening, tenants should be managed through a housing management plan, having regular checks during a contract, like a private tenancy would. Energy Performance Certificate assessments were currently done in house. Asbestos surveys required specialist action therefore this was not currently done in house.

Councillor Brewis noted that the work of the Task Group had been very rewarding with all members involved having a shared interest in improving performance.

Councillor Booth mentioned that Gerry McKeivitt had submitted useful comments and that his suggestions should be considered.

### **AGREED:**

- a) That subject to more robust wording being used, as detailed within the discussion, the final report of the re-letting of Void Properties Task Group be approved for presentation to the Cabinet; and
- b) That a follow up report providing an update on progress in actioning recommendations should be considered at the meeting of the Performance Monitoring Panel on 7 November 2017

ES  
CM

GM  
CM

## 54. **PERFORMANCE MONITORING PANEL WORK PROGRAMME**

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Manager Governance, which set out the Work Programme of the

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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.

**AGREED:**

That both sections of the Panel's Work Programme, as set out in the report of the Executive Manager Governance, be noted.

**55. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT**

There were no urgent items.

(The meeting ended at 8.15 pm)

(End of minutes)