

Minutes of a meeting of the **POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANEL** held in the Meeting Room 1, Council Offices, Priory Road, Spalding, on Tuesday, 28 February 2017 at 6.30 pm.

PRESENT

A R Woolf (Chairman)
J D McLean (Vice-Chairman)

D Ashby
J R Astill
M D Booth

R Clark
H Drury
L J Eldridge

A Harrison
J L Reynolds

In Attendance: The Corporate Improvement and Performance Manager, the Interim Housing Landlord Services Manager, the Business Intelligence Officer and the Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies for absence were received from or on behalf of Councillors G K Dark, C N Johnson, J L King, M J Pullen and J Tyrrell.

32. MINUTES

The minutes of the following meetings were agreed as a correct record:

- a) Policy Development Panel – 20 December 2016;
- b) Joint Performance Monitoring Panel and Policy Development Panel – 25 October 2016; and
- c) Joint Performance Monitoring Panel and Policy Development Panel – 22 November 2016.

33. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS.

There were none.

34. QUESTIONS ASKED UNDER STANDING ORDER 6

There were none.

35. TRACKING OF RECOMMENDATIONS

There were none.

36. ITEMS REFERRED FROM THE PERFORMANCE MONITORING PANEL

There were none.

Action By

POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANEL - 28
February 2017

37. KEY DECISION PLAN

Consideration was given to the Key Decision Plan, published on 20 February 2017.

AGREED:

That the Key Decision Plan be noted.

38. POLICY REGISTER - UPDATE SCHEDULE FOR POLICIES

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Director Strategy and Governance which provided an update on review schedules of Council policies.

The Policy Register, which highlighted policies that were overdue, those that were being reviewed and those that had been approved, had been presented to the Panel at its last meeting in December 2016. At this meeting, a forward plan of policy updates had been requested, with a view to bringing all of the policies into an approved state.

The Panel was provided with a summary of South Holland District Council's policies:

- Currently 26 of the 36 policies within the Policy Register were approved and within their operating periods. All of these policies had review dates profiled in order to ensure that the policies remained in an authorised state;
- Whilst financial policies and associated documentation was held within the policy register (as attached to the report), scrutiny over timelines and adherence was within the remit of the Governance and Audit Committee;
- The Safeguarding Policy was a new policy and would be presented to full Council in June 2017;
- The Data Retention Policy was not currently being updated as there were core interdependencies with the digitalisation and electronic working elements of the Moving Forward programme. The policy was being drawn up in line with the Council's ambitions of utilising new technologies and working methods. This work was being prioritised by a newly formed internal Information Governance Board, and a draft would be presented to the Panel on 25 July 2017;
- There were currently ten policies which were showing as overdue. All of these policies had review dates profiled in order to ensure that these policies were brought up to date as quickly as possible;
- Using the proposed timetable of policy review, it was

EH, GP, LE

GP, TR,
CM

POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANEL - 28
February 2017

anticipated that all policies would be within their operational timescale by September 2017; and

- Policy health-checks and development would become standing items within the Corporate Improvement and Performance workshops that were going to take place on a six weekly basis. This would ensure that relevant parties were identified on policy reviews, to ensure that future dates were not breached.

The Panel considered the information, and it was agreed that the Policy Register be monitored by the Panel as follows:

- That the Policy Register be added as a standing item to the Policy Development Panel's agenda, but consideration of issues at the meeting only take place where there were areas of concern or where more information was required;
- That the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Policy Development Panel meet with the Corporate Improvement and Performance Manager 3 to 4 weeks prior to each Panel meeting to monitor progress of the policy reviews, to identify any areas of concern and any areas where more information was required;
- That a column be added to the Policy Register to reflect officer responsibility for items; and
- That the Policy Register be laid out in date order showing dates for final Panel approval.

It was agreed that once the Register was up to date, it would be easier to track when policies were due for review, and to feed into the process.

AGREED:

- a) That the report of the Executive Director Strategy and Governance be noted; and
- b) That the Policy Register be monitored by the Policy Development Panel as follows:
 - i. That the Policy Register be added as a standing item to the Policy Development Panel's agenda, but consideration of issues at the meeting only take place where there were areas of concern or where more information was required;
 - ii. That the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Policy Development Panel meet with the Corporate Improvement and Performance Manager 3 to 4 weeks

CM, GP

POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANEL - 28
February 2017

prior to each Panel meeting to monitor progress of the policy reviews, to identify any areas of concern and any areas where more information was required;

- iii. That a column be added to the Policy Register to reflect officer responsibility for items; and
- iv. That the Policy Register be laid out in date order showing dates for final Panel approval.

39. ADDRESSING LONG TERM EMPTY HOMES

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Director Place, which provided an update on the current situation with regard to progress made on addressing long term empty homes. The report provided an overview of the following:

- Performance in returning empty homes back into use
- Empty Homes and the New Homes Bonus scheme
- South Holland Empty Homes Strategy 2014-16

Members considered the information detailed within the report, and the following issues were raised:

- Could Councillors be provided with a list of empty homes within their wards in order that they could provide officers with any local knowledge?
 - Officers would first confirm if there were any data protection issues with regard to sharing this information. Members would either be provided with these details or at least numbers of properties per ward. Local knowledge would be helpful and members were encouraged to provide this.
- The table within Appendix A referred to a planned action to develop access to public and privately led Empty Homes lease and repair schemes. Progress was at amber – the Authority was working with a number of housing associations to facilitate access to 'lease and repair schemes'. South Holland was a partner of the government-backed national Empty Homes Loan Scheme, but that scheme had folded in October 2014. Members requested information on the process, which officers agreed to provide.
- Members asked whether there were any incentive schemes still being offered. Officers agreed to provide members with details.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANEL - 28
February 2017

- Members queried whether the figures provided in section 2 of Appendix A were correct. Officers agreed to provide clarification.
- The Panel was of the opinion that the situation with regard to long term empty housing was improving and that officers were working hard to deal with the issue. It was therefore felt that, unless there was a marked change, that updates to the Panel be provided annually rather than every six months.

AGREED:

- a) That the update report be noted;
- b) That, unless there was a marked change in performance of bringing long term empty housing back into use, that updates to the Panel change from six monthly to annually;
- c) That Councillors be provided with details of empty properties within their wards or numbers of empty properties, and that they be encouraged to provide any local knowledge to assist officers in addressing long term empty homes;
- d) That Panel members be provided with information on the process around developing access to public and privately-led Empty Homes 'lease and repair' schemes;
- e) That Panel members be provided with information on any incentive schemes being provided; and
- f) That Panel members be provided with clarification on the figures detailed in section 2 of Appendix A to the report

MC, CM,
PS

MC, CM,
PS

40. FINAL REPORTS OF THE REDUCTION IN PRINTING AND POSTAGE TASK GROUP

Consideration was given to the report of the Shared Executive Manager Governance, which requested that the Panel consider for approval the final report of the Reduction in Printing and Postage Task Group.

The Policy Development Panel had established the Task Group on 5 July 2016, and the following scope had been agreed:

- To review the use of printed materials and postage regarding committee agendas
- To review the use of printed material produced by the South Holland Centre

POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANEL - 28
February 2017

- To review the use of printed materials produced in relation to electoral information, council tax and business rates
- To review the use of printed materials by officers
- To formulate a policy
- To make recommendations for reduction in use of printed material

Three separate reports were produced by the Task Group, covering the following areas:

- Printing and Postage of Committee Agenda Packs
- Printing and Postage of External Items
- Printing of Officer Agenda Packs

A summary of the Task Group's findings, conclusions and recommendations for each of these areas was included within each of the reports provided to members.

Consideration was given to each of the reports, and the following issues were raised:

Printing and Postage of Committee Agenda Packs

- Members were in favour of the recommendations. However, in view of the fact that, as a result of the recommendations, more reliance was to be placed on digital options, it should be ensured that IT available to members was reliable and worked as it should.
- The Panel requested that an additional recommendation be added – That where possible, agendas and associated reports be produced in black and white in order to reduce the cost of colour printing.

Printing and Postage of External Items

- Upon discussion, it was clear that improvements were in the pipeline however, it was necessary to ensure that any digital solutions were robust before being promoted to users.

Printing of Officer Agenda Packs

- Members were in favour of the recommendations.

AGREED:

That the final reports of the Reduction of Paper and Postage Task Group be approved for presentation to the Cabinet as follow:

CM

POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANEL - 28
February 2017

Printing and Postage of Committee Agenda Packs

That the following recommendations be agreed:

- a) That further training should be provided to members and officers on the use of the Mod.Gov application to review and annotate agendas;
- b) That Meeting Rooms 1 and 2, plus the Council Chamber, should have fixed projectors or display equipment installed, and that use of these becomes commonplace within all meetings;
- c) That as part of the ICT refresh, collaboration software is deployed (e.g. Microsoft Lync) to enable individuals in any location to be able to share information or video conference between their devices;
- d) That from 1 May 2017:
 - Recipients should opt-in to receive paper copies of agendas;
 - Any agendas being posted are sent second class;
 - Planning agendas are not automatically printed for those not on the Committee;
 - Democratic Services no longer produce spare copies of agendas for members use or copies for officers use;
 - The full Council agenda is reduced in size by including electronic links to committee minutes; and

That the following recommendation be added:

- e) That where possible, agenda and associated reports be produced in black and white in order to reduce the cost of colour printing.

Printing and Postage of External Items

That the following recommendations be agreed:

- f) That South Holland District Council actively pursues an online/paperless approach for Council Tax and Business Rate bills;
- g) That further investigation is required on how the eCitizen service can be configured to provide a more positive user experience;

POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANEL - 28
February 2017

- h) Further integration is required between the My Council and eCitizen service to provide a single customer logon; and
- i) That the South Holland Centre investigates implementing an up to date online booking system that offers better reporting/customer management and works across all types of web browser or device.

Printing of Officer Agenda Packs

That the following recommendations be agreed:

- j) That Portfolio Holders and senior managers encourage all areas under their control to move to a paperless agenda;
- k) That internal meeting rooms should have fixed projectors or display equipment installed, and that use of these becomes commonplace within all meetings;
- l) That a selection of internal meeting rooms have video conferencing equipment capable of connecting to external locations, or individuals using video/audio capability of their own devices;
- m) That as part of the ICT refresh, collaboration software is deployed (e.g. Microsoft Lync) to enable individuals in any location to be able to share information or video conference between their devices; and
- n) That from 1 May 2017, recipients should opt-in to receive paper copies of agendas.

41. POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANEL WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Manager Governance, which set out the Work Programme of the Policy Development 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 Group that had been identified by the Panel.

The Paper and Postage Costs Task Group had now concluded its work and it was agreed that the outcomes should be informally revisited in a year's time. The Chairman of the Task Group would present this report to the Panel.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANEL - 28
February 2017

The Chairman commented that the Public Open Spaces should start its work shortly. He also requested that Panel members consider any further issues they would like to add to the Work Programme for the future, and that these be considered at the next meeting.

AGREED:

- a) That both sections of the Panel's Work Programme, as set out in the report of the Executive Manager Governance, be noted;
- b) That Councillor Astill provide the Panel with a report in a year's time, detailing progress on the recommendations of the Paper and Postage Costs Task Group; CM
- c) That the Public Open Spaces Task Group commence its work shortly; and CM
- d) That Panel members bring forward any further issues to be included on the Panel's Work Programme, and that these be considered at the next meeting. CM

42. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

43. EXEMPT MINUTES OF THE JOINT MEETING OF THE PERFORMANCE MONITORING PANEL AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANEL HELD ON 25 OCTOBER 2016

The exempt minutes of the joint meeting of the Performance Monitoring Panel and Policy Development Panel held on 25 October 2016 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

AGREED:

That the exempt minutes of the joint meeting of the Performance Monitoring Panel and Policy Development Panel held on 25 October 2016 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

(The meeting ended at 8.18 pm)

(End of minutes)