

Minutes of a meeting of the **PERFORMANCE MONITORING PANEL** held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Priory Road, Spalding, on Tuesday, 9 November 2021 at 6.30 pm.

PRESENT

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

T A Carter  
A C Cronin  
J L King  
J D McLean

N H Pepper  
P A Redgate  
A C Tennant  
J Tyrrell

S C Walsh  
D J Wilkinson  
A M Newton

In Attendance: The Assistant Director – Corporate, the Assistant Director – Leisure and Culture, The Senior Change and Performance Business Partner, the Head of Environmental and Operational Services, the Head of Customer Contact (PSPS), the Communities Manager, the Democratic Services Team Leader, the Democratic Services Officer,

Apologies for absence were received from or on behalf of Councillors C J T H Brewis and G P Scalese

17 **MINUTES**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the Performance Monitoring Panel held on 8 September 2021.

**AGREED:**

That the minutes be signed as a correct record.

18 **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS.**

There were none.

19 **QUESTIONS ASKED UNDER STANDING ORDER 6**

There were none.

20 **TRACKING OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

There were none.

**Action By**

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

There were none.

**22 KEY DECISION PLAN**

Consideration was given to the Key Decision Plan issued on 1 November 2021, and the following points were raised:

- Members queried the approval sought to purchase S106 rented dwellings and asked how many properties this related to and where they had been located.
  - The question would be referred to the relevant officer and the information circulated to members of the Committee.
- Members asked whether the Corporate Enforcement Policy feedback related to a general policy or a specific policy.
  - The question would be referred to the relevant officer and the information circulated to members of the Committee.
- Members enquired about the location of properties A,E and F which were to be acquired before January 2022. Where had the properties been located and had the acquisition date been realistic?
  - The question would be referred to the relevant officer and the information circulated to members of the Committee.
- Members noted progress had been made regarding the appointment of an Employer's Agent Services consultant but questioned whether resources had existed within the council's current establishment. Members asked for further clarification from relevant officers.
- Members asked which land assets had been referred to regarding new potential housing sites. Had the Holbeach Depot site been considered/offered for housing prior to the disposal decision?
  - The Chairman responded that sites had been considered for both HRA and Welland Homes. A better outcome had been anticipated through the sale of the Depot.
- Members requested more detailed and descriptive information be included in the Key Decision Plan which

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provided clarity for the meeting. The need for referrals to officers outside of the meeting would be alleviated.

### **AGREED:**

That the Key Decision Plan issued on 1 November 2021 be noted.

## **23 Q2 PERFORMANCE REPORT 21/22**

Consideration was given to the report of the Assistant Director – Corporate and Portfolio Holder Corporate and Communications, which provided an update up how the Council was performing for the period 1 July 2021 to 30 September 2021.

The officer stated that: no major changes had been seen from Q1 to Q2; complaint response times had improved; staff hours dealing with fly-tipping had reduced; call response performance had reduced.

The Head of Customer Contact PSPS delivered a presentation to the Panel which outlined the challenges that had been experienced, mitigations that had been put in place, and the future plans for the Contact Centre. This included:

- Causes of performance pressures:
  - the Covid-19 response;
  - customer contact behaviour had changed: call times, email levels and administration had increased due to front facing office closures and an unprecedented demand had persisted;
  - increased calls compared to pre-pandemic levels had been seen for Housing by 109%; Housing repairs by 26%; and Waste and Recycling by 35%;
  - ongoing Covid support which related to Grants, and Test and Trace;
  - increased staff turnover;
  - office closures, staff absences and Covid isolations.
  
- Mitigations in place included:
  - recruitment activity and training programmes had taken place;
  - remedial processes had been implemented;
  - a triage call-back system had commenced;
  - transformation processes had been underway;
  - office based delivery had returned which had focussed on resolving customer queries upon the

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first point of contact.

- Future plans included:
  - the telephony and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system to be replaced which would improve communications according to customer demand and contact behaviour changes;
  - a service alignment focus was needed to provide greater resilience and consistency of customer service;
  - digital opportunities to be explored;
  - the availability of the service for those who could not engage digitally needed to be maintained. Front facing customer service had been an expensive channel however a consistent service needed to be provided for all residents: digitally and in person/telephone.

The Head of Customer Contact (PSPS) concluded that high performance and service delivery levels had been achieved over the previous five years and the current pressures had not been consistent with their usual high standards. Statutory services had been maintained from the start of the pandemic which some other authorities had not achieved. Customer Satisfaction and Quality had maintained well above 90% target. Although the forecast for Q3 and Q4 had shown a risk, which had been based on performance at the end of Q2, aggressive measures had been put in place to overcome the pressures that had been experienced.

The Panel considered the update and made the following comments:

- Members asked whether call handling times comparisons had been made between those answered at SHDC contact centre and those answered at the Manby contact centre.
  - The Head of Customer Contact PSPS confirmed that call duration times had been monitored and had been comparable.
- Members noted that call handling times of 120 seconds had not been met and asked whether this had been realistic. If calls had become more complex, should the target be revised?
  - The Head of Customer Contact PSPS stated that the target had been to answer 80% of calls within 120 seconds. The customer service ethos had been to focus on the fulfilment of the current customer/call which had therefore impacted call answering times. Where multiple requests had been presented on the

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same call, call duration had been elongated however customer need had been satisfied. Analysis would be carried out to establish the nature of customer calls which would inform future strategies in the recovery and post-pandemic period.

- Members questioned the increases in some of the call types, such as housing and housing repairs which had increased by 26%. Had the new Northgate system increased call handling times and supported the contact centre?
  - The new Northgate system had been positively received by staff. An increased number of enquiries had been received for emergency repairs, perceived emergency repairs as well as planned maintenance. The Northgate system had been embedded and PSPS would be working with the Housing team to understand their service standards in order to manage customer expectations. Longer call duration times had reflected thorough handling.
- The Chairman stated that intelligence was needed to understand why calls and handling times had increased but also acknowledged this would be a complex process.
- Members commented on the increase of fly-tipping calls and queried whether direct digital reporting to Waste Services had been implemented to reduce the impact on the Contact Centre
  - The Head of Customer Contact PSPS confirmed that the 35% increase in Waste and Recycling contact covered a collection of areas of which fly-tipping had been a small element. The arrangement regarding calls would be investigated and feedback circulated to the Panel.
  - The Head of Environmental and Operational Services confirmed that digital options for the reporting of fly tipping were being investigated.
- Members asked whether the number of customer enquiries resolved at the first call attempt had been known, and how many had led to follow-up calls. Statistics were needed.
  - The Head of Customer Contact PSPS responded that this information had not been available on the current system however the new CRM system would capture and report on this data.

AH, AT

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- Members asked whether emails had been used as a contact method to avoid second calls.
  - The Head of Customer Contact PSPS responded that customers had the option of registering a 'My Account' on the system which enabled progress updates to be received. The replacement of the CRM system would necessitate the wider capture of information at the first point of digital contact to reduce the need for a second contact. The Contact Centre also needed to respond to South Holland residents who were not digitally enabled or confident.
- Members questioned when improvements had been expected from remedial activities which had already been put in place.
  - The Head of Customer Contact PSPS reported that incremental improvements had been seen in the last ten days. Most calls had been answered within 240 seconds. Further investment had been needed in training to achieve objectives.
- Members asked whether staff attrition had a common cause.
  - The Head of Customer Contact PSPS responded that staff attrition had not been caused by a single factor and that people had left employment for a multiple of reasons. Recruitment efforts had been in place.
- Members asked for the breakdown of complaints noted on the report which were to be circulated.
  - Officers confirmed these would be circulated shortly.
- Members requested a star rating of risk be added to the report which reflected the hierarchy of financial risk of each item.
- Members noted that the report stated the council remained on target to receive 100% subsidy and asked whether officers had been confident of this outcome.
  - The officer confirmed this was the case and that performance had been good. The reporting indicators had been reviewed to include an increased context of risk in the future.

CG, AT

**AGREED:**

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- a) That the Q2 Performance Report 21/22 be noted; and
- b) That a Contact Centre update be presented in 6 months.

AH, AT

**24 REFUSE COLLECTION FROM PRIVATE DRIVES UPDATE**

The Panel received a verbal update from the Head of Environmental and Operational Services on refuse collection from private drives.

The Head of Environmental and Operational Services stated the key points of the policy.

- The purpose of the policy had been to:
  - set out the official policy of non-collection of waste from unadopted roads;
  - state exceptions where an indemnity could have been considered.
- the policy had not been set up to address existing issues but sought to limit the prevalence of new ones. The policy sought to support both residents and developers which clarified the council's position on waste collections from private drives.
- indemnities had been utilised for appropriate exceptions:
  - a new development in Holbeach had been facilitated by an indemnity which had also supported SHDC to undertake safe waste collections;
  - a further indemnity had unlocked a development in Spalding;
  - an increase in indemnity requests had been received. Many requests had not included an appropriate use of the indemnity and therefore had not progressed;
  - further guidance of the appropriate use of the indemnity was to be published in order to support both residents and developers.

The officer concluded that the policy had achieved its objectives and ensured SHDC had safely delivered the waste collection service.

The Panel considered the update and made the following comments:

- The Chairman commented that the further guidance had still been in development.
  - The Head of Environmental and Operational Services confirmed this had been the case. Development had included input from other council

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departments which ensured the best outcome for residents, developers and SHDC as the waste collection authority.

- Members questioned whether the policy would lead to improvements. A different approach existed when Planning applications had been considered which included private drives.
  - The Head of Environmental and Operational Services confirmed that work had taken place with the Planning department which addressed concerns ahead of the publication of the further guidance.
- The Chairman commented that the policy and further guidance from Environmental Services strengthened the Planning system and curtailed the development of private drives.
- Members referred to the guidance which had stated that a limit of six houses be considered/built where private drives had been unavoidable, however cases beyond this had occurred. Members sought clarification whether the guidance limited the collection of waste to a maximum of six properties on private drives and had developers been informed.
  - The Head of Environmental and Operational Services clarified that the verbal update had related to the policy which had been adopted a year ago. The point now raised had related to draft additional guidance produced in collaboration with Planners and had been in the process of refinement prior to publication.
- Members asked whether the guidance would be relevant to existing private drives where planning consent had been obtained.
  - The Head of Environmental and Operational Services confirmed that indemnities which qualified for consideration were to be listed in the further guidance document which would assist applications prior to planning submission. Indemnities for existing private drives would be considered where stated exceptions had been evident. Collaboration with Enforcement colleagues had occurred where long standing issues had existed.
- Members queried which individual/body the enforcement action would be taken against, if the waste collection point had not been maintained.

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- The Head of Environmental and Operational Services replied that the guidance clarified this matter and that details of the responsible person/company needed to be obtained.

**AGREED:**

That an update be presented to the Panel in 6 months.

CP, AT

**25 SIR HALLEY STEWART PLAYING FIELD TASK GROUP**

The Communities Manager attended to give an annual verbal update regarding the Sir Halley Stewart Playing Field Task Group.

The officer outlined the remit of the Task Group:

The Task Group had been established in December 2013 in response to concerns raised by the Charity Commission over the perceived level of public benefit derived from the Playing Field, a registered charity.

Detailed legal advice concluded that the Council had been acting lawfully.

The Task Group scope had been *“to consider whether it is possible for the Council to extend and widen public access to the Field within the terms of the Deeds and to make recommendations back to the Council”*

The Task Group had made 15 key recommendations which had been addressed, which included:

- increased promotion and widening of use which had met charitable aims;
- improved booking process which had captured recommendations;
- that appropriate fees and charges had been set; and
- that maintenance and compliance had been managed.

Benefits had included:

- that access to the Playing Field had been widely available for sporting purposes;
- the Council had remained compliant with Charity Commission guidance; and
- that unreasonable costs had not been incurred.

A wide range of sporting and leisure users had been attracted to the site prior to 2020, these had included: Pinchbeck United; Aintree Football Club; ladies teams; Santa Fun Runs; Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue; and Spalding Baptist Church, amongst others.

The Communities team had organised and delivered two annual

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events on the site which had:

- promoted sports clubs and groups across the district;
- promoted the field for future use.

For 2020/21:

- Covid restrictions had led to cancellations;
- the South Holland Outdoor Festival ran by the Communities team in July 2021 had been well attended; and
- football had returned, with restrictions in place as required.

Future work included actions which related to:

- review of fees and charges which included utility costs;
- review of digital bookings options;
- promotion of the site; and
- engagement of local clubs and groups.

The Panel considered the update and made the following comments:

- Members stated that online booking searches for the site had not delivered appropriate results and welcomed an improved digital profile. Members questioned how people could find the site online if they had not known it had been owned by the council.
  - The officer stated that booking information had been evident at the site through signage. Direct promotion to clubs had included specific booking details. Website key words would be reviewed to improve internet search results.
- Members asked whether a long-term strategy for the field had been considered. Had 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> generation pitches been considered?
  - The officer confirmed that the field had been left in trust to the people of South Holland and that the council had been bound by the trust. Community minded partners had been supportive in developing the use of the site which had contributed to meeting these aims;
  - the activities needed to be sports and leisure based; and
  - a district-wide piece of work was to be completed regarding pitch demand which included both indoor and outdoor facilities.
- Members suggested footage and images be used in

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advertising which demonstrated examples of site use.

- The officer confirmed that promotion utilised targeted marketing in both digital and physical formats which had facilitated stronger engagement. The officer would check that signage at the field had clearly stated what the field could be used for and how the site could be booked.

EH, AT

**AGREED:**

That the verbal update be noted.

EH, AT

**26 SWIMMING POOL AND LEISURE FACILITIES CONTRACT TASK GROUP**

The Panel received a verbal update regarding the Swimming Pool and Leisure Facilities Contract Task Group from the Communities Manager.

The officer introduced the verbal update with an overview which included:

- that recommendations from the final report of the Swimming Pool and Leisure Facilities Contract Task Group had been in place since approval by Cabinet in November 2016;
- that six-monthly updates had been brought to the Performance Monitoring Panel, which reported on:
  - monitoring of the Leisure Contract which had ensured improved cleanliness and maintenance;
  - regular site inspections and monthly contract monitoring meetings that had taken place; and
- that a competitive tender process took place in 2018 and a new leisure provider (Parkwood Leisure) and leisure contract had been in place since March 2019. The contract included clear specifications on cleanliness, maintenance and staffing levels and had robust sanctions and penalties in place.

The officer outlined the journey the industry had taken as a result of the pandemic. This had included:

- that all facilities had closed from 20 March 2020;
- gym and fitness facilities had reopened on 25 July 2020;
- lane swimming had commenced on 1 September 2020;
- further restrictions had been imposed in November 2020;
- the national Covid tiered system had been in place from 2 December 2020;
- a third national lockdown had been in place from 30

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December 2020;

- leisure facilities had reopened on 12 April 2021, some restrictions had still been in place;
- full reopening followed on 19 July 2021; and
- the Council had been supported to sum of £203,045 through the National Leisure Recovery Fund (NLRF).

The officer updated the Panel on Q1 and Q2 performance:

- Q1 participation figures commenced from reopening on 12 April 2021 and had shown an increase by 152% to September 2021;
- memberships had increased by 43% from May to September 2021. Targets had been met/exceeded but had not yet reached pre-pandemic levels;
- gym classes and sports activities had returned; participation in gym activities had reduced but this had previously shown an increase whilst other activities had not been available, and had since rebalanced;
- pool usage had increased and school swimming sessions had returned;
- increased activity had occurred at the Peele Leisure Centre since schools had returned in September;
- monitoring of health and safety compliance had taken place;
- inspections had taken place and observations had included:
  - that staff had been welcoming, friendly and knowledgeable;
  - high standards of cleanliness had been evident;
  - a tidy and acceptable appearance had been noted;
  - and
- Customer feedback had been reviewed and comments had been shared.

The next steps included:

- that the contract be monitored and standards maintained;
- continued financial assistance to the provision of leisure services. The NLRF funding had continued to support recovery but pre-pandemic attendance levels had not yet been achieved; and
- through the partnership and funding, opportunities be sought to improve physical and mental health which had been given greater prominence since the pandemic.

Members thanked the officer for the update and made the following comments:

- How often and by whom had customer feedback been

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monitored and reviewed?

- Officers replied that weekly reviews had taken place during a challenging contractual period; this had moved to monthly reviews when significant improvements had been achieved. All comments had been tracked and action monitored. Negative reviews had been referred to the contractor and spot-check inspections by the council could be triggered. Feedback had been encouraged at site: verbally; through feedback forms; email; and social media channels. Inspections had been completed by a senior officer who had been accompanied by relevant in-house experts as necessary.
- Members stated that a lot had changed since the contract had commenced. The council had needed to support the company financially. What was the future of leisure provision in South Holland and what could be learned from the new strategic partnership?
  - Officers replied that evidence gathering and positive conversations had taken place before the pandemic regarding future options. The recovery period had concentrated on increasing attendance and confidence. The priority for future leisure and culture projects had been to work with the new strategic partnership team so that learning could be shared.
- The Chairman stated that the authority had a responsibility to make a provision to improve the health and wellbeing of residents and it had been essential that the future of the provision be known. The Assistant Director – Leisure and Culture was requested to attend the next meeting to update the Panel on progress made.
  - The Assistant Director – Leisure and Culture replied that leisure and culture had been one of the ten top priorities across the partnership.
- Members stated that the café bar at the Castle Complex had remained closed and had been missed by the community. Would this be reopened?
  - Officers replied that the previous catering offer had not been viable due to low usage. Officers were working with key users to establish alternatives such as hot and cold vending machines. Alternative arrangements had been discussed with the Bowls Club for pre-match meals. A contract variation would be needed if the service was to be permanently withdrawn.

PP , AT

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- Members asked whether the percentage capacity for the two Spalding sites had been known.
  - Officers confirmed that the information would be shared.
  
- Members stated that there had been a lack of promotion and this had become a common theme. A particular concern had been expressed for the Long Sutton Peele site where promotion had not been evident despite usage not being at capacity. Who had the responsibility for promotion, and could the Long Sutton usage figures be shared?
  - The responsibility for promotion had been with the contractor and this had been included in the contract. Partnership working with the council and sharing of intelligence had taken place. The Peele usage figures would be shared.
  
- Members stated that the contractor needed to adhere to the contract regarding catering and marketing.
  
- The Chairman stated that the marketing element of the contract needed to be reviewed. The company needed to use their best endeavours to maximise the use of the premises, which included promotion.
  
- Members asked for the length of contract and whether a break or renewal clause had existed.
  - Officers confirmed the contract had been for five years, and there was a two-year extension option. Break clauses had also existed.
  
- Members stated that the contract needed to be reviewed urgently and sought clarification of the enforcement officer.
  - The Assistant Director – Leisure and Culture confirmed that the responsibility had been within his team and the Communities Manager would have dealt with enforcement issues. Meetings had been arranged with the contractor and were to take place in due course. Offers and promotions had taken place and wider promotion for the New Year and Spring had been planned which encouraged new memberships.
  
- The Chairman requested written reports for future updates.

EH, AT

EH, AT

**AGREED:**

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- a) That the comments from the Panel be noted and referred to relevant officers; and
- b) That a further update be provided in 6 months' time, and that all future updates be provided as written reports.

EH, PP

**27 CORPORATE ENFORCEMENT UPDATE**

Consideration was given to the report of the Assistant Director Wellbeing and Community, which provided an update on enforcement activity across the Council.

The Communities Manager introduced the report with an overview which had included:

- that the policy had a wide range of legislative powers and enforcement across council services which included: Environmental Protection; Licensing; Food, Health and Safety; Communities; Planning; Housing; and Building Control;
- confirmation of the incremental enforcement approach which had been taken: compliance; advice and warnings; appropriate and proportionate enforcement action;
- that a Corporate Enforcement Policy update would be delivered to the next Policy Development Panel meeting;
- that enforcement activity for 2020/2021 had been included in the report; and
- recommendations of the report had been to provide quarterly updates.

The Panel considered the update and made the following comments:

- Members stated that fly-tipping reports had not been followed up. Known problem areas had existed in the district, particularly near fast-food outlets on the A17, where CCTV had been needed. Had there been a robust attempt to improve?
  - The Communities Manager requested details of any specific incidents that had caused concern regarding follow up. Evidence had been needed for action to have taken place. There had been challenges around the security of temporary cameras however advancements in technology had provided a solution for their use in Q4. Proposals had been developed which allowed specific fly-tipping incidents to be dealt with through Fixed Penalty Notices rather than court action.
- Members stated that improved detection and enforcement

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needed to be considered. Resources had been needed and included within council budgets. Where new fast-food sites had been proposed, it was suggested that planning conditions needed to consider the disposal of branded waste.

- Various points were made by members around the culture of littering and fly-tipping. Prevention measures, which included signage, had been successful in neighbouring districts. Enforcement responsibilities had been within the remit of local authorities and needed to be utilised where necessary. Members thanked the Spalding Wombles volunteers for their work in the district.
- Members commented that the early presentation of waste had caused problems in the district and that increased resources had been needed to deal with the issue.
  - The Communities Manager responded that action had been difficult where waste had been presented early at communal collection points where individual identities had not been clear. Warning letters had been sent to residents in the vicinity of communal areas where no individual perpetrator had been identified.
- Members asked whether the 81 fixed penalty notices and the court fines issued had been paid?
  - The Communities Manager stated that court fine cases had been followed from issue date through to payment and that fixed penalty fines had been individually tracked and payment pursued. Payment status updates for the 81 Fixed Penalty Notices issued had not been available as cases had straddled different financial years. Performance data for Fixed Penalty Notices issued for specified financial years could be interrogated if required.
- Members queried why training had not taken place to increase the number of qualified officers needed to undertake animal establishment inspections.
  - The question would be referred to the relevant officer and the information circulated to members of the Committee.

DH, AT

### AGREED:

- a) That the content of the report be noted;

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- b) That data within the report be provided to Members on a quarterly basis as part of the Performance report; and
- c) That the comments be noted with the following recommendations:
  - action be taken to address issues raised; and
  - performance improvements to be demonstrated in the following 6 monthly report; and
  - that the policy be strengthened to aid improvements.

EH, CG

EH, AT

**28 PERFORMANCE MONITORING PANEL WORK PROGRAMME**

Consideration was given to the report of the Assistant Director – 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 date 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 Democratic Services Team Leader discussed updates to the Work Programme:

**Appendix A**

It was noted that that:

- the Budget Scrutiny Meeting previously scheduled for 5 January 2022 had been moved to 27 January 2022;
- following Superintendent Housley's attendance at Special Performance Monitoring Panel on 15 November 2021, the Crime and Disorder update previously scheduled for 9 November 2021 had been moved to January 2022;
- regular six monthly updates for Economic Development and Inward Investment; Marketing/renovation of Industrial Units; and the Northgate System, had been scheduled for March 2022; and
- required actions from the current meeting be taken forward to January 2022.

**Appendix B**

- the South Holland Centre Task Group was underway and had been added to the appendix.

**AGREED:**

That the report be noted.

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**29 ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT**

There were none

(The meeting ended at 8.51 pm)

(End of minutes)