Minutes of a meeting of the **POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANEL** held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Priory Road, Spalding, on Tuesday, 16 November 2021 at 6.30 pm.

PRESENT

A R Woolf (Chairman)
G P Scalese (Vice-Chairman)

J Avery	M Hasan	G T D Rudkin
F Biggadike	J L King	S-A Slade
M D Booth	J D McLean	S C Walsh
R A Gibson	P A Redgate	

In Attendance: The Assistant Director - Strategic Projects, Head of Public Protection, Programme Manager and Strategic and Operational Property Manager, the Information Governance Officer, the Climate Change and Environment Manager, the Democratic Services Team Leader and the Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies for absence were received from or on behalf of Councillors A C Beal and J L Reynolds

Action By

17. MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the Policy Development Panel held on 21 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.

21. ITEMS REFERRED FROM THE PERFORMANCE MONITORING PANEL

There were none.

22. KEY DECISION PLAN

Consideration was given to the Key Decision Plan dated 1 November 2021.

AGREED:

That the Key Decision Plan be noted.

23. POLICY REGISTER UPDATE

The Panel gave consideration to the Policy Register.

The Chairman noted that:

- updates on several policies were to be presented at the current meeting; and
- as a result of SHDC's new strategic partnership with Boston and East Lindsey District Councils, some of the policies were to merge across the new partnership and others were to remain place-based with South Holland District Council. This would be an evolving process and a structure was to be produced in due course.
    - The Programme Manager – Commercialisation stated that when policies became due for review, this would take place at SHDC but that opportunities would also be identified for any policies that could be reviewed across the partnership. Sovereignty would be maintained but efficiencies and synergies would be sought with the other two authorities.
- The Chairman noted that the design of reports across the partnership was to be synchronised in due course.

The Panel considered the Policy Register and gave the following comments:

- Could the policies be highlighted that were due to be reviewed across the partnership?
    - The Chairman confirmed that future iterations of the report would state which policies were to be reviewed jointly or on a stand-alone basis. CG

AGREED:

That the report be noted.

24. DATA PROTECTION POLICY

Consideration was given to the report of the Assistant Director – Governance which asked the Panel to note the revised Data

Protection Policy.

The Information Governance Officer introduced the report and stated that the Data Protection Policy had been approved by Cabinet on 29 May 2018 which had included the following key points :

- that the new draft Data Protection Policy, Data Security Breach Procedure and Response Procedures for Data Subject Requests be approved and adopted; and
- that the Shared Executive Manager and Data Protection Officer be authorised to make amendments to the Policy and Procedures so far as was necessary to reflect legislative changes, emerging guidance and to incorporate links to other relevant documents.

The Information Governance Officer stated that the minor amendments to the Data Protection Policy had reflected:

- changes made to departmental names;
- changes made to legislation; and
- that intranet links had been included.

The following changes had been made to the document since publication of the agenda:

- EEC had changed to EEA on the front page; and
- For simplicity, a stated number of countries had been removed and replaced with 'member states of the EU and the free countries of the European Trade Association'.

The Chairman confirmed that a Task Group had existed which had been dormant; the policy had been reviewed annually; and that the policy amendments had been minor.

AGREED:

1) That the recommended revisions to the Data Protection Policy be noted; and

2) That, as in line with the delegation agreed at Cabinet on 29 May 2018, the Data Protection Officer make amendments to the Policy and Procedures so far as is necessary to reflect legislative changes, emerging guidance and to incorporate links to other relevant documents.

25. DRAFT CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY

Consideration was given to the report of the Climate Change and Environment Manager to gain Member input into the draft Climate Change Strategy prior to wider public/stakeholder consultation.

The Climate Change and Environment Manager introduced the report which provided background to the Draft Climate Change Strategy for the geographical area covered by the new South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership (SELCP). The Strategy had looked beyond the partnership's operations and had considered the wider issues of Climate Change within local communities.

The officer presented a background of the role and report:

- The role of Climate Change Environment Manager for East Lindsey had commenced in April 2020 when a new corporate priority for Climate Change and the Environment had been established;
- an Environment Policy had been implemented which set out the framework for the corporate priority;
- the strategic alliance with Boston in Autumn 2020 had prompted a similar process and Boston had adopted an Environment Policy;
- carbon reduction plans had been a priority for Boston and East Lindsey;
- climate change had not been within South Holland's Corporate Strategy, but the emergence of the new partnership had given the opportunity for South Holland to be included in the Strategy at an initial level and developed over time. The Strategy was in the draft and developmental stages, and further opportunities for feedback had been made available.

Pending approval of the strategy at Cabinet on 14 December 2021, a South Holland consultation process would commence in January 2022.

Members considered the report and made the following comments:

- The Chairman thanked the officer for the presentation. Members acknowledged the Draft Climate Change Policy had emerged from the new partnership and had been much welcomed;
- Members asked whether consultation feedback and learning obtained from Boston and East Lindsey authorities could be shared with South Holland.
    - The Climate Change and Environment Manager confirmed this would be possible, and that when available, the online consultation link would be sent to members. Initial findings were to be presented to Cabinet on 14 December 2021.
- Could consultation in South Holland involve a physical

presence at market stalls? This method of consultation had previously delivered successful results.
    - The Climate Change and Environment Manager confirmed this would be possible.
- The Chairman asked whether the consultation involved businesses as well as the general public. Had there been an optimum number of stakeholders that needed to be involved?
    - The Climate Change and Environment Manager replied that businesses had been a key area. The knowledge of Economic Development teams would be needed to establish key business contacts. The business community had embraced this approach in Boston.
    - Regarding stakeholders, there had not been a pre-defined set-up. Meetings had been taking place with the Place Based Climate Change Network who had assisted commissions with planning –templates and guidance had been provided for steering/task and finish groups. Themes needed to be established which identified how many people needed to be involved.
- Members questioned whether the aim to achieve net zero carbon footprint would have involved consultations with haulage contractors?
    - The Climate Change and Environment Manager responded that the current work had been around establishing the key sectors, which in this geographical area, had included transport. The officer stated that the approach had focussed on how companies had evolved to embrace new technology and how business could be supported in this regard. Council initiatives which needed to be considered included:
        - working with the County Council regarding transport planning:
        - working with industries and businesses in terms of innovation; and
        - that information and learning would be shared.

The Climate Change and Environment Manager advised that the issues raised at the meeting would be taken on board, and that members could raise any further comments/issues with her directly.

AGREED:

That the issues raised by the Policy Development Panel be noted prior to consideration of the Draft Climate Change Strategy at Cabinet in December 2021.

26. FUEL CARD POLICY

With agreement of the Chairman, this item would be discussed at the next meeting of the Panel.

27. CORPORATE ENFORCEMENT POLICY

Consideration was given to the report of the Assistant Director - Regulatory to seek approval of a revised Corporate Enforcement Policy.

The Head of Public Protection introduced the report which had included the following general overview:

- the policy covered a broad range of powers which included enforcement and compliance;
- it had applied to regulatory and enforcement activities carried out on behalf of the Council: such as in Environmental Health; Planning; and Building Control;
- the policy had been reviewed every three years and the last major review had occurred in 2018;
- the proposed changes listed in the report had been minor and the application of the policy had remained unchanged;
- consultation had taken place with relevant council departments. Public consultation had not been required as the changes had been minor.

The Head of Public Protection advised the Panel that recommendations 3 and 4 within the report had been included in error as these recommendations only applied to Cabinet (the report was due to be considered there on 14 December 2021)

AGREED:

1) That the revised Corporate Enforcement Policy be noted; and

2) That the revised Corporate Enforcement Policy be recommended to go forward to Cabinet.

28. INDUSTRIAL UNITS LETTING POLICY

Consideration was given to the verbal update of the Industrial Units Letting Policy which was provided by the Strategic and Operational Property Manager.

The Strategic and Operational Property Manager reminded the Panel that the following items had previously been brought to the Panel with regular updates:

- the rationale behind the need for a new Industrial Units Letting Policy;
- initiatives taken to improve unit condition and planned maintenance; and
- how officers were engaging with tenants given the ongoing pandemic.

An update on new lettings was presented:

- the Lettings Policy had been adopted in September 2020;
- the drive to update the whole estate had been positive;
- 34% of the estate had completed new leases;
- 54% had engaged proactively with the council and had been in varying stages of pre-completion;
- an element of uncertainty which had resulted from the pandemic had applied to around 6% of the estate. A proportion could become vacant by March 2022, which would enable lettings to new tenants; and
- that new business had been on an upward trend and the council had received 42 new enquiries in recent months. The situation had been considered healthy.

The Panel considered the verbal update and made the following comments:

- The Chairman asked what the timeframes for the policy were;
    - The Strategic and Operational Property Manager stated that extensive dialogue continued with tenants to enable new leases to be granted that suited both the Council and its tenants needs, for example, on lease term. It was expected that all new leases in the new modern lease form would be in place by March 2022;
    - The Assistant Director – Strategic Projects stated that:
        - the new Policy, and with it the new precedent lease, would mean that the basis of how estates were managed would reflect a modern commercial approach;
        - so far, new leases had been granted for either a 3 or 6 year term; and
        - that break clauses had been included which had allowed tenants an element of flexibility.

AGREED:

That the verbal update be noted.

29. ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY POLICY

Consideration was given to the verbal update of the Asset Management Strategy Policy which was given by the Assistant Director – Strategic Projects.

The Assistant Director – Strategic Projects stated that:

- An update of the policy had been included in the Policy Register;
- The existing document now needed to be updated to reflect the priorities of the new S&ELCP partnership and work towards this was underway. This would include:
    - How Council assets would be used and where appropriate, let including resourcing of key work streams;
    - New management responsibilities in place to reflect the new roles and responsibilities through the S&ELCP;
    - common approaches to asset management across the three councils;

An update on the document had been reported to the Governance and Audit Committee, and approval of a draft was to be sought by the end of the financial year. The Panel would be updated with progress through the Policy Register; and officers would provide the Panel with an update at its March meeting. RH, AT, MW

AGREED:

1) That the verbal report be noted; and

2) That an update on the Asset Management Strategy Policy be provided to the Panel meeting on 23 March 2022.

30. UNTIDY SITES POLICY DOCUMENT HANDBOOK

Consideration was given to the verbal update on the Untidy Sites Policy Document Handbook which was given by the Assistant Director – Strategic Projects.

The Assistant Director – Strategic Projects introduced the update and thanked Councillor Booth and Councillor Redgate for their contribution to the document. The update included the following key points:

- that the Untidy Sites Policy Document Handbook had been a new policy. It was still in draft and was 90% completed;
- a policy of this nature had not existed within Boston or East Lindsey.
- Research had found policy documents where enforcement was the main emphasis, but none existed which had specified interventions which this policy had aimed to address for English Council. Officers would continue to look for other examples;
- sites had come forward for development in Donington and Holbeach but others had been problematic due to ownership and viability issues;
- the intention was to bring the draft policy to the Policy Development Panel on 18 January 2021, to include:
    - an overview of why the policy was needed;
    - the policy aims, which included the need for a single process reference document;
    - that a single point of contact was needed; communications would be captured through SHDC website electronic forms and a dedicated email address;
    - the process for how complaints would be managed which would be monitored by a new Performance Indicator;
    - input received from Ward members and Executive Members;
    - links to relevant legislation;
    - sample site information;
    - a flow chart for information capture which included best practice cases;
    - the process setting out how landowners would be informed of the policy and opportunities that may exist to work collaboratively with the Council; and
    - how site review work might be funded;

The Assistant Director – Strategic Projects concluded that the document would be the first of its kind which included implementation, intervention and enforcement in one policy.

Members considered the update and made the following comments:

- Members welcomed the policy and thanked officers and councillors who had worked on it.
- Members who had worked on the policy thanked the Assistant Director – Strategic Projects and stated that the policy had been ambitious and demonstrated how seriously the Council was wishing to deal with the issue. Opportunities existed for the policy to be implemented

across the partnership and to become a strategy across South Lincolnshire.

- Members stated that developers for Holbeach and Donington sites had already come forward and there had been developer interest for sites at Long Sutton, all of which had been positive.
- Members stated that untidy sites had been an issue for residents which had included The Bull and Monkie site, the site of the old Post Office Sorting Office, and the Johnson Hospital site. Would the policy address these long-standing problems?
    - The Assistant Director – Strategic Projects responded that the policy had not been in place to solve specific issues but that it had set out a process to be followed which would assist engagement between officers and landowners. The process would encourage positive engagement where opportunities existed, and make it clear to landowners that there were a range of enforcement options open to the Council if they did not engage, and continued to own sites that were causing nuisance and attracting anti-social behaviour.
- Members questioned whether adequate resources would be in place to handle the potential increase in enquiries when the policy was eventually implemented.
    - It was not anticipated that this would be highly resource-intensive, but a threshold would exist in the process to prioritise cases and establish the resource needs/person dealing with matters.

AGREED:

1) That the verbal update be noted; and

2) That the Untidy Sites Policy Document Handbook be planned to be presented to the Panel at its next meeting on 18 January 2022. — RH, AT, MW

31. POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANEL WORK PROGRAMME

The Panel considered a report by the Executive Manager for Governance, which set out the work programme of the Panel. The work programme consisted of two sections, the first setting out the dates of future panel meetings along with proposed items for consideration, and the second setting out Task Groups that had been identified by the Panel.

Regarding Appendix A, the Chairman noted that:

- The Untidy Sites and Safeguarding policies be added to the January Work Programme;
- the Unreasonable Behaviour and Vexatious Policy was due for review but policies in general were being reviewed to establish whether they applied across the partnership or with individual authorities. The Senior Change and Performance Business Partner would ensure that the Policy Register was updated when the position was clarified; and
- in light of no further progress with regard to the proposed Planning Reform, the Planning Design Task Group Final Report and the update on Planning Reform would be moved to a future meeting.

Regarding Appendix B, the Chairman noted that:

- In order to proceed with the Planning Design Task Group and the Community Infrastructure Levy Task Group, further information on the Government White Paper on Planning Reform was required. A decision would need to be made at a future meeting as to whether these items should remain on the Work Programme; and
- the South Holland Centre Task Group had commenced its work in September 2021, and had been productive.

AGREED:

That the Work Programme be noted.

32. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT.

There were none.

(The meeting ended at 7.37 pm)

(End of minutes)