

Minutes of a meeting of the **JOINT PERFORMANCE MONITORING PANEL AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANEL** held in the Marquee Suite, Springfields Events & Conference Centre, Camelgate, Spalding, PE12 6ET, on Thursday, 22 July 2021 at 6.30 pm.

PRESENT

A R Woolf (Chairman)

B Alcock  
F Biggadike  
M D Booth  
C J T H Brewis

T A Carter  
R A Gibson  
J D McLean  
N H Pepper

J L Reynolds  
G P Scalese  
S C Walsh  
D J Wilkinson

Apologies for absence were received from or on behalf of Councillors J R Astill, J Avery, A C Beal, A C Cronin, M Hasan, J L King, P A Redgate, G T D Rudkin, S-A Slade, A C Tennant and J Tyrrell

In Attendance: The Strategic Advisor and the Democratic Services Manager

**5. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

Councillor Woolf was elected as Chairman.

**6. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest.

**7. SOUTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCILS PARTNERSHIP**

The Strategic Advisor (SA) introduced the report and advised that he would go through the Business Case, Structure and Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) in order, taking questions following a brief introduction of each. The questions/key points raised and answers provided were as follows:

**Business Case:**

- Concern was raised about joining a 'ready-made' partnership/alliance and nervousness was expressed regarding being 'left behind' as a lot of joint work had already been started – where would this leave South Holland staff?
  - The SA advised that lots of opportunities were still available and already a baseline had been set with

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- PSPS working across the three authorities.
  - The business case identified a number of opportunities for the partnership, subject to further Member decision and scrutiny.
  - Progress had been made by the Strategic Alliance which was a positive indication of the partnership.
- A serious look at leisure and market provision within the district was requested by members with reassurances that this work would move quickly.
  - The SA confirmed that each Council would have an Annual Delivery Plan setting out clear priorities and timescales and this would go to each respective authority's Annual Council meeting for approval.
  - Some early opportunities had already been identified in the work ELDC had been leading which would be advantageous for SHDC, this would be shared with Members.
- Concern was raised as to whether there would be sufficient resilience to be able to finalise three sets of draft accounts in a timely manner.
  - The Deputy S151 officer advised that PSPS, as a provider, were still bedding into Boston and East Lindsey and acknowledged the fact that South Holland was still waiting for the draft financial statements, the deadline of which was the coming Friday.
- How would cross border refuse collections work – would South Holland continue to use bags?
  - The SA confirmed that there was nothing contained within the document for transformation and change and nothing setting out changes to services. There was no reason why bags would change.
  - The Environment Bill would have a cost impact so where there were opportunities over three councils it would make sense to look at them.
  - Opportunities could exist for depots, fleet maintenance and where the partnership councils shared a border.

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- Would South Holland's meeting rooms be set up for agile working.
  - The SA advised that agile working still needed to be worked through. There was a need to consider the most effective way to use technology. It was important that the senior team was able to operate in an agile way across the partnership in support of Members and local communities.
- On Page 93 it talked about investment in resources – what conversations have already taken place?
  - The SA confirmed, with regard to investment in systems, that PSPS had an existing transformation plan to get the three councils on all the same systems – this would be a huge advantage. This decision would come back to members for a decision on the way forward.
  - The reason why a 'whole approach' was asked for was that it provided the biggest benefit and opportunity for value for money
- On Page 31 of the Business Plan it was requested that more towns were included as opposed to just Spalding and Holbeach and on Page 89 it mentioned both scrutiny panels but it was requested that this include Governance and Audit also – this was noted and agreed.

**Structure**

The SA advised that there was resilience in the structure and 18 officers would be available to the partnership. The structure showed a scale of ambition that would be able to influence attracting additional resources into the area. The structure provided sound financial management and corporate governance.

- Members asked for assurances that there would be a willingness to amend and review the structure and that the authority shouldn't be bound to it. The district council should be fully manned and fully delivering. The morale of the staff was questioned along with a request for reassurance that work would be undertaken to improve it – it was hoped that performance and delivery would also improve as a result.
  - The SA responded that the staff affected had come

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together as a team and they already had worked together previously. He confirmed that the structure was a proposed structure which has been designed to support the Members ambitions. It was a good first attempt, but it needed to be tested by going live. It provided the opportunity for a 'safe landing space' for each of the senior management team. There would be no redundancies – it was important for those officers who came from Breckland to land safely.

- Any structure must be able to deliver the political priorities, ambitions and outcomes for each council and therefore the structure would always be capable of refinement and change.
- Assurance was sought that there would be a senior officer in South Holland.
  - The SA confirmed that it had been 10 months since the previous CEX had left the authority and it had been quite a long and unsettled period. The authority was also one Executive Director down. Christine Marshall had covered all 3 roles. Rob Barlow was a resident of South Holland.
  - It was proposed that Christine Marshall would be the Deputy Chief Executive and S151 Officer and Mark Stinson would be the Monitoring Officer. Therefore the 3 most senior staff would either be South Holland staff or South Holland residents which put the authority in a strong position.
  - The SA confirmed that there would be 4 DCEX's – one at each authority and one to support the other 3.
  - Delegations to the DCEX need to be considered for each authority.
- Confirmation was requested as to whether the position of the 4<sup>th</sup> DCEX was currently vacant and whether all three authorities would be included in the selection process. Concern was raised as the 'Place' element felt light and surprise that this had not been included in Community Leadership. There did not appear to be a lot in the Delivery team but only 2 Assistant Directors in Growth – it felt unbalanced, and it was difficult to judge until more information was available

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- The SA advised that within the Growth Portfolio was more responsibility for the core services – there was a need to ensure specific officers would work on delivery and not get mixed up in other work. This mirror the current roles within the SHDC structure but at a larger scale.
- The MO confirmed that the appointment process would be through a member appointment Panel with 2 members from each of the three councils. He confirmed that there was still work to do with these bodies and changes to the constitutions would be required. However, it was anticipated that most if not all current officers would be matched to a suitable post and be slotted in. Where there wasn't a slot-in, and for future appointments to the shared management team, these would be member appointments.
- Members raised the need to build a greater partnership with Internal Drainage Boards more. If growth and more house building was required, then the government should be lobbied to use IDB's.
  - The SA advised that the partnership would cover 40% of Lincolnshire and this provided the opportunity for a different seat at the table. There was now the opportunity to make and influence changes.
- Members asked whether all staff had been informed and queried how the more junior staff felt about it?
  - The SA confirmed that they were not proposing sharing any more staff other than senior staff at this stage.
  - All existing Heads of Service/Managers would remain based in their existing authority. He confirmed that at this stage nothing would change, and staff were aware through a series of regular updates from the Leader and Senior Staff.
- Members requested a better system on keeping them involved and queried how communication would work with all political parties.
  - The SA advised that the Memorandum of Agreement listed how this would work. He added that scrutiny should work together but confirmed that he was not necessarily recommending joint scrutiny and individual

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scrutiny and local ways would dominate.

- The SA noted that CEX briefings with opposition parties was an extremely useful exercise and helped to prevent a lot of misunderstandings by involving and informing.

**Memorandum of Agreement (MOA)**

The Monitoring Officer introduced the MOA and informed all present that it was the same agreement that had been in place with Breckland. There still needed to be an external review of the Agreement but he was comfortable that it was a robust document.

- Members questioned whether, as in 8.3 of the MOA, 12 months was sufficient notice to leave the partnership.
  - The MO advised that it had been 6 months with Breckland and an earlier draft of this Agreement had been 24 months. 12 months was considered reasonable – 24 months was certainly a very long notice period.
- Members questioned the sharing of costs as detailed in 13.1.
  - The MO advised that this had been the case with the Breckland partnership.

The SA thanked all present for the open and transparent discussion. He advised all present that external views were still being sought to ensure the document was robust prior to sign off.

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

There were none.

(The meeting ended at 8.23 pm)

(End of minutes)