

Minutes of a meeting of the **POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANEL** held in Meeting Room 1, Council Offices, Priory Road, Spalding, on Tuesday, 5 December 2017 at 6.30 pm.

PRESENT

J D McLean (Vice-Chairman)

D Ashby  
J R Astill  
F Biggadike

M D Booth  
A Harrison  
J L King

A M Newton  
E J Sneath  
J Tyrrell

In Attendance: The South Holland Place Manager, the Housing Options Manager and the Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies for absence were received from or on behalf of Councillors R Clark, J L Reynolds and A R Woolf.

**25. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

In the absence of the Chairman, the Vice Chairman, Councillor McLean took on the role of Chairman.

Councillor Harrison was elected as Vice Chairman for the duration of the meeting.

**26. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Policy Development Panel held on 3 October 2017 were agreed as a correct record.

**27. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS.**

There were no declarations of interest.

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

There were no questions asked under Standing Order 6.

**29. TRACKING OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

There were no tracking of recommendations to consider.

**30. ITEMS REFERRED FROM THE PERFORMANCE MONITORING PANEL**

There were no items referred from the Performance Monitoring Panel.

**Action By**

**POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANEL - 5**  
December 2017

**31. KEY DECISION PLAN**

Consideration was given to the Key Decision Plan published on 27 November 2017.

**AGREED:**

That the Key Decision Plan be noted.

**32. POLICY REGISTER**

The Panel gave consideration to the Policy Register that was dated 27 November 2017.

The following points were made:

- The Equalities Policy was reviewed on a three year cycle. Much of it included Government regulations which the Authority was required to follow. The Policy could be reduced in size by referencing regulations followed. Consideration should also be given to undertaking the same process with other policies where regulations were followed.
- Policy review cycles could change by only reviewing policies where government guidelines changed.
- Consideration should be given to how frequently non-statutory policies should be reviewed.
- The Chairman and Vice Chairman should continue to review the Policy Register with the appropriate officers at a separate meeting preceding each Panel meeting.
- The structure and monitoring of the Register had improved over the last year.
- The South Holland Common Housing Allocations Policy had to be reviewed every three years – it had last been reviewed in 2013, and its Risk Level was High. Members requested that an update on progress of the review be provided to Panel members.

**AGREED:**

- a) That the Policy Register be noted;
- b) That the issues raised by the Panel for reviewing individual policies be taken forward; and
- c) That an update on progress of the review of the South Holland Common Housing Allocations Policy be provided to Panel members in due course.

CP

CP

**POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANEL - 5**  
December 2017

**33. HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION**

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Director Place which explained the processes and issues around Houses in Multiple Occupation (HIMOs), which would assist in forming a clear terms of reference for a task group, should the Panel wish to set one up.

Appendix A to the report provided a summary of the current requirements for licensed HMOs (which the Authority had a statutory duty to licence), how this would change when the Government enacted legislation (Housing and Planning Act 2016) in April 2018, and issues around non-licensed HMOs. Information was also provided on current staffing arrangements, processes, inspections, licensing, enforcement and other considerations.

The following issues were raised:

- Inspections/surveillance – Members commented that by advising owners of HMOs when inspections would take place, those wishing not to operate within the guidelines could do so by providing a false impression at the visit. Officers advised that legally, the Authority was required to give notice of an inspection. However, where there was any intelligence around the operation of HMOs, officers could act on this. Officers were regularly ‘out and about’ in the process of doing their work, and where any issues were identified, action would be taken accordingly.
- Members were advised that there was a public register of licensed HMOs, and it was requested that this be added to the Council’s website.
- Members asked whether the Authority was ready for the proposed changes to legislation in 2018. Officers responded that two additional members of staff had been employed in order to deal with the extra work that would be involved.
- In view of the changes in regulations, and the additional work involved for officers, members felt that any involvement the Panel had should wait until the new regulations were in operation.
- Members highlighted that they were not overly familiar with the process surrounding HMOs and licensing as there was crossover with other functions, particularly planning. They confirmed that they would appreciate an update report providing more information on the legislative process surrounding HMOs.
- Members highlighted that their primary areas of concern relating to HMOs centred on parking and refuse issues;

**POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANEL - 5**  
December 2017

unscrupulous landlords; licensed and unlicensed HMOs; and the interface between licensing and planning permission.

It was agreed that officers report back to the Panel after new legislation had come into force next year, and that the report provided information on areas of concern raised by members, provided members with the knowledge required to understand the issues, and the current situation following implementation of the new legislation. The Chairman of the Panel would liaise with officers regarding a convenient date for the report to be presented to the Panel.

**AGREED:**

- a) That officers report back to the Panel after new legislation had come into force in 2018, the Chairman of the Panel to liaise with officers regarding a suitable date for this to take place;
- b) That the report provide information on areas of concern raised by members, provide members with the knowledge required to understand the issues, and that the position following implementation of new legislation be laid out; and
- c) That the public register of licensed HMOs be added to the Council's website.

PS

PS

**34. 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 Groups that had been identified by the Panel.

The Panel was advised that the work of the Open Spaces Task Group had now commenced, and was progressing well.

The first meeting of the Data Protection/Data Retention Task Group was to be held on 11 December 2017. It was agreed that Councillor Harrison replace Councillor Newton on the Task Group.

**AGREED:**

- a) That both sections of the Panel's Work Programme, as set out in the report of the Executive Manager – Governance, be

**POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANEL - 5**  
December 2017

noted; and

- b) That Councillor Harrison replace Councillor Newton on the Data Protection/Data Retention Task Group.

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

There were no urgent items.

(The meeting ended at 7.10 pm)

(End of minutes)