

Minutes of a meeting of the **POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANEL** held in Meeting Room 1, Council Offices, Priory Road, Spalding, on Tuesday, 24 September 2019 at 6.30pm.

PRESENT

J D McLean (Vice-Chairman)

J R Astill
F Biggadike
J L King

P A Redgate
J L Reynolds
G T D Rudkin

S C Walsh

In Attendance: The Place Manager, the Planning and Building Control Manager, the Housing Manager Landlord, the Human Resources Manager and the Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies for absence were received from or on behalf of Councillors J Avery, M D Booth, H Drury, S-A Slade, E J Sneath and A R Woolf

15. POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANEL

Consideration was given to the minutes of the Policy Development Panel meeting held on 25 June 2019.

AGREED:

That the minutes be signed as a correct record.

16. JOINT MEETING OF THE PERFORMANCE MONITORING PANEL AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANEL

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting of the Joint Performance Monitoring Panel and Policy Development Panel held on 16 July 2019.

AGREED:

That the minutes be agreed as a correct record.

17. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS.

There were no declarations of interest.

18. QUESTIONS ASKED UNDER STANDING ORDER 6

There were no questions asked under Standing Order 6.

Action By

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19. TRACKING OF RECOMMENDATIONS

There were none.

20. ITEMS REFERRED FROM THE PERFORMANCE MONITORING PANEL

There were no items referred from the Performance Monitoring Panel.

21. KEY DECISION PLAN

Consideration was given to the Key Decision Plan dated 13 September 2019.

AGREED:

That the Key Decision Plan be noted.

22. POLICY REGISTER

The Panel gave consideration to the Policy Register dated 6 September 2019.

The Housing Manager Landlord was in attendance to provide a verbal update on the status of the Asset Management Strategy. He advised that work was underway on the Asset Management Strategy however, the status currently showed as overdue on the Policy Register. He explained that the major reason for this was the continued vacancy for the post of Strategic Property Manager. He advised that work was progressing on some areas of the Strategy however, there was a need to work jointly with colleagues in Delivery to draft the Asset Management Strategy.

In addition, there was an added resource issue as the Property Asset Services Manager was shortly due to leave the Authority, and this post was currently being re-advertised.

In the meantime, priority items were being dealt with first. Work on the Strategy would be brought forward as soon as was possible.

Following the update, the following issues were raised:

- Member asked whether the fact that the revised Strategy had not been approved was causing any operational problems.
 - Officers confirmed that although the delay caused a minor issue with regard to future planning, it was not

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causing any operational issues.

- Members commented that, over the period they had been scrutinising the Policy Register more closely, there had been a great improvement in the Register, and the status of the policies detailed within it.

AGREED:

That the Policy Register be noted.

23. ADDRESSING LONG TERM EMPTY HOMES

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Director Place which provided the Panel with an update on the current position of Empty Homes, work undertaken and the future development of an Empty Homes Strategy.

As the position on the number of long term empty homes was currently quite static, and performance was similar to other authorities, the report laid out proposals for moving forward with regard to how information on empty homes could be reported in the future, as follows:

- It was suggested that, going forward, the consideration of performance be undertaken by the Performance Monitoring Panel.
- The Authority did not currently have an Empty Homes Strategy, but wanted to have one, to address properties that could be brought back into use. The suggestion was that the Authority should have in place a Policy that sustained its current performance, whilst being mindful of other areas with private sector housing that also required focus. It was suggested that a draft Empty Homes Strategy be presented to the Panel for consideration and feedback, at the appropriate time.

Members considered the report, and the following issues arose:

- With regard to the strategy, it was suggested that time frames for various stages within the process should be included.
- In response to a member's question asking whether there was any correlation between the rural nature of South Holland and the location of empty homes, officers advised that they were not aware of a pattern, but could look into this to ensure information was captured, if necessary.
- Members agreed that the suggestions to refer monitoring of empty homes to Performance Monitoring Panel, and that the

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Policy Development Panel consider the draft strategy, were sensible.

AGREED:

- a) That the progress made on addressing Long Term Empty Homes be noted;
- b) That performance on Empty Homes be monitored by the Performance Monitoring Panel; and
- c) That further reports to the Panel would relate to the development of an Empty Homes Strategy.

CM, JK

JK, PS

24. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY

Following a request at the last meeting of the Policy Development Panel, the Planning and Building Control Manager was in attendance to provide information on the Community Infrastructure Levy.

The Planning and Building Control Manager that the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) was a levy that local authorities could choose to charge, relating to new developments. The CIL option had been considered by the South East Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee, whilst considering the Local Plan, but the option had been rejected in favour of S106 agreements. He stated that the Committee's position with regard to the CIL was evidence-based, and that constitutionally it was their decision to make.

Members considered the information provided and the following issues were raised:

- Members asked how they, and Parish Councils, could feed into the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) with regard to their communities' own priorities, and how a consensus would be reached if there was a difference of opinion?
 - When considering the Supplementary Planning Document, the Joint Strategic Planning Committee would use the opportunity to engage with members, Parish Councils, infrastructure providers and the public to identify what their priorities were. Until such time as the SPD was adopted, applications would continue to be dealt with on a case by case basis. If there was a policy in place (the Supplementary Planning Document), officers would have a stronger base from which to negotiate.

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- Members commented that smaller villages were suffering from not having a CIL in place.
 - The Planning and Building Control Manager stated that this was a fair point, as those villages that did have much planned development in their area would be less likely to benefit from planning gain. These areas would have an opportunity to make their case when applications came forward. CIL could possibly be of benefit to smaller villages, but this depended on priorities and overall levels of money secured. As mentioned before, there would be an opportunity, while considering the Supplementary Planning Document for priorities to be identified, and it was important that to engage with parishes throughout the process.

The Vice-Chairman stated that it would be useful to set up a Task Group, but that at present, it would be difficult to set a clear scope for it. He was of the view that there were two options for the Task Group to consider – whether CIL or SPD was a preferred option. The Task Group should also look at the arrangements with regard to funds being more available for villages.

Members also commented that with regard to CIL, that there were a number of different issues to be looked at and consideration should perhaps be given to liaising with authorities that had taken CIL forward and reporting this information back.

AGREED:

- a) That the update provided by the Planning and Building Control Manager be noted.
- b) That a Task Group be set up to consider the facts on the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), with a view to reporting on a preference; that the Task Group start its work, and membership be agreed, at an appropriate time in the future; and that a scope be set at the first meeting of the Task Group.

RW, PN
CM

25. POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANEL WORK PROGRAMME

The Panel considered a report by the Executive Manager – Governance setting 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

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been identified by the Panel.

At the last Panel meeting, the following issues had been raised under consideration of the Work Programme:

- Public Open Spaces Task Group – At its last meeting, Councillors had stated that they felt that this Task Group had stalled, and that it was awaiting a report back following consultation with Parish Councils. It had been agreed that, as it was a joint Task Group with the Performance Monitoring Panel (PMP), that the Chairman of that Panel be approached to see if they would be happy for it to be encompassed into a new Task Group looking at Planning Design, that would be set up as a Policy Development Panel Task Group. If not, the Planning Design Task Group could be set up as a joint Task Group the with PMP.
- Leisure Facilities Task Group – This was a joint Task Group with the PMP which reported to Cabinet in 2014 and tracking of recommendations considered by the Policy Development Panel (PMP) in February 2015. At its last meeting, it had been agreed that, in consultation with PMP, this Task Group be removed from the programme.

Regarding the above points, the following issues were raised:

- The Panel was advised that the PMP Chairman had been contacted regarding these two items, but that no further progress had been made. Feedback would be provided to the next Panel meeting.
- The Chairman requested that a separate column be added to the Work Programme to reflect when Task Groups were dormant. He requested that the Open Spaces Task Group and the Leisure Services Task Group be shown as dormant until agreement had been received from the PMP Chairman.
- Members commented that with regard to the proposed Planning Design Task Group, officers were undertaking work in this area and an update was therefore requested to members of the Task Group.

CM

AGREED:

That the Work Programme be noted.

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

There were no urgent items.

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27. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

DECISION:

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 involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 4 of part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

28. HONORARIUM POLICY

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Director Strategy and Governance and the Portfolio Holder Governance and Customer, which asked Panel member to consider a new Honorarium Policy.

South Holland District Council had an Honorarium Policy in place, which was last amended in June 2008. The current policy only allowed an honorarium to be given if the post holder was undertaking the full duties of a higher graded post. Human Resources practice was now that covering the full duties of another post was actually a secondment and was treated in that manner. The new policy had been revised to ensure that it was fit for purpose and reflected the Council's current and future workforce.

The following issues were raised:

- Members questioned how the process could be fair and consistent across the whole Authority, as it was down to managers to nominate staff.
 - Officers advised that managers would need to submit an application form for each individual, and that this was considered by a Director and the Human Resources Board for consistency. Individual officers could submit a formal or informal grievance if they wished.
- Members commented that the policy was similar to those within the private sector. With regard to a budget for the scheme, it was important that this would sufficient for the policy to operate effectively.

AGREED:

That the Honorarium Policy be recommended to full Council for approval.

CB

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(The meeting ended at 7.18 pm)

(End of minutes)