

Minutes of a meeting of the **PERFORMANCE MONITORING PANEL** held in Meeting Room 1, Council Offices, Priory Road, Spalding, on Wednesday, 29 January 2020 at 6.30 pm.

PRESENT

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

J R Astill  
A C Beal  
A C Cronin

R Grocock  
J L King  
N H Pepper  
P A Redgate

G P Scalese  
S C Walsh  
D J Wilkinson  
A M Newton

In Attendance: Councillor T A Carter, the Executive Director Strategy and Governance, the Executive Manager Information, the Executive Manager for People and Innovation, the Head of ICT and Digital, the Head of Customer Contact, the Place Manager, Environmental Services Manager, the Housing Landlord Services Manager and Senior Change, Innovation and Performance Business Partner, the Property Asset Services Manager, the Community Safety and Enforcement Manager, the Principal Planning Officer and the Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies for absence were received from or on behalf of Councillors C J T H Brewis and A C Tennant.

**38 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

Notification had been received that Councillor A M Newton was replacing Councillor C J T H Brewis for this meeting only.

**39 MINUTES**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting of the Performance Monitoring Panel held on 12 November 2019.

**AGREED:**

That the minutes of the meeting of the Performance Monitoring Panel held on 12 November 2019 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**40 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS.**

Councillor Newton informed the Panel that although she did not have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, in the interests of transparency she wished it to be recorded that she was a Director

Action By

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of PSPS.

**41 QUESTIONS ASKED UNDER STANDING ORDER 6**

There were none.

**42 TRACKING OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

There were none.

**43 KEY DECISION PLAN**

Consideration was given to the Key Decision Plan issued on 8 January 2020.

**AGREED:**

That the Key Decision Plan issued on 8 January 2020 be noted.

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

There were none.

**45 DIGITAL WORK PROGRAMME PROGRESS UPDATE**

With the agreement of the Chairman, this item was moved forward on the agenda for consideration.

Officers provided members with a presentation which provided an update on the Digital Work Programme, which would affect all sections of the Council. It covered the following areas:

SHDC's digital ambition; Digital recruitment; Environmental Services - Digital ambition, including Programme Status; Tenants' Online Handbook and Tenants' Portal, including Programme Status; GIS Mapping; Scan stations and payments machines; Details on customer contact; SHDC Digital Pipeline Status; and Information on Customer Contact – Analog v Digital.

Members considered the information provided within the presentation, and the following issues arose:

**Digital ambition/Digital recruitment**

- Members understood that implementation was not as far advanced as it should be and asked for an explanation.

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- Officers responded that the digital programme had experienced some delays due to recruitment challenges, but with a digital team and dedicated programme management now in place, the programme was fully under way. Given the challenges appointing to posts within the digital team, the authority was looking at ways to improve the way in which recruitment was undertaken, with the assistance of the Human Resources and Communications departments, and this was now beginning to bear fruit.
- Members noted the response, and requested that any recruitment issues be reported back to the Panel.
- With regard to SHDC's web platform, members asked how the current status compared to market leaders.
  - Officers advised that the GOSS platform was used, and that this was an industry standard used by many other councils. The authority worked with them a great deal, and it was trying to streamline processes alongside GOSS.

### Environmental Services

- Members commented that it was clear that, moving forward, more customer contact with the authority would be undertaken through digital means. However, there was still a need to retain current systems to provide a means of contact for those that chose not to interact digitally, or who had poor Wi-Fi connectivity.
  - Officers confirmed that new technology would run alongside existing, more traditional contact channels such as phone and face-to-face enquiries.
- Members asked how savings could be quantified?
  - Officers advised that in the first two months, 1200 jobs were dealt with via tablets, and as more data became available, so the opportunity to quantify savings would increase.
- Members questioned whether savings could be achieved if digital improvements making it easier for the customer to make contact with the council increased demand – would savings due to internal efficiency be lost by customer contact in other ways? This question would need answering at a later

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date, when more data was available.

- Members asked what the effect on productivity would be?
  - Officers commented that early intervention could prevent some issues becoming bigger problems. Productivity could be considered in the future, when the system had been in operation for longer.

### Progress to date

- Members commented that it would be useful to have a more detailed report with regard to progress, to show whether projects were on track or not.
- Members also stated that reporting had to be open and honest around areas where performance was poor, but also areas of success should be identified.
  - The Portfolio Holder commented that tasks within the work programme would be changeable, due to commitments, and that this should be borne in mind when considering progress.

### Tenants online handbook and portal

- Members observed that some areas of the district had difficulty in accessing a good Broadband service. It was vital that the authority looked at its infrastructure, how it would move forward in this respect, and that necessary resources were allocated where necessary.
  - Officers were aware of connectivity issues, and stated that the online provision was an additional offer to residents, which would run alongside existing streams. However, issues with Broadband and infrastructure were part of the remit going forward, and work was being undertaken in this area.
- Members commented that the Tenants' Portal was very easy to use.
- Members asked whether, with regard to the tenant reporting system, customer services had access to the Northgate system?
  - Officers advised that there was limited viewable

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access however, work would be undertaken with the expansion of Northgate which is set to amalgamate existing systems the within the Housing department. Northgate can be fully integrated with the Goss platform which will give access to the Customer Services Team. Housing Landlord Services Manager to provide broader end to end service.

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- Members responded that this issue should be looked at with some urgency, as it had been a problem for some time.

### Reporting and Direction

- Members requested that updates be provided to the Panel on a six-monthly basis for the duration of the programme.

### Scan stations etc.

- Members requested that information on the proportion of total transactions (transactions compared to previous usage) be provided.
- Members commented on the geographical location of the scan stations – currently these were only sited in Spalding. Were outlying areas missing out, and could the facility be expanded further.
  - Officers responded that the machines could be rolled out however, there were verification policies in place for the machines in Spalding which meant that a member of staff needed to be available to verify information before scanning can be done. This would need to be considered if the machines were to be made available more widely.

Sarah  
Barsby

### Customer contacts

- Members commented that over a number of years, there had been changes in the way face-to-face and phone contact services had been provided. Going forward, any changes to customer contact needed to be open and justifiable with regard to why they were being proposed, and members wished to be kept informed.
- Members asked whether there would be a move towards an android or iOS app?
  - Officers advised that this was currently not the case. All sites were currently easy to find and accessible through mobile phones, and there was therefore no

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current need to introduce an app.

Customer Contact Analog v Digital

- Members commented that a percentage, rather than numbers for this information would be more useful.

**AGREED:**

- a) That the presentation, and the information provided be noted; and
- b) That further information be provided to the Panel in due course, as identified during the discussion.

**46 Q3 2019-20 PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW REPORT**

Consideration was given to the report of the Portfolio Holder for Governance and Customer which provided an update on how the Council was performing for the period 1 October 2019 to 31 December 2019.

The Quarter 3 2019-20 Performance Report detailed in Appendix A aimed to provide members, businesses and residents with an overview of how the Council was performing against a number of key strategic indicators, These indicators included the delivery of frontline services, financial performance and progress made towards achieving the overarching aims and objectives of the Council, as set out in the Corporate Plan. In addition, the covering report highlighted areas of improved and high performance and also where performance was challenging.

Areas of success included:

- Continued strong performance from the customer Contact Centre;
- A significant number of flytips reported within the district;
- The Council's digital online presence continued to improve

It was noted that under areas for improvement, the net income of EHC at the end of quarter 3 was under the amount forecasted at the start of the financial year. This had been attributed to increased marketing and costs relating to the recent re-brand. The team hoped to convert a number of leads resulting from the recent marketing campaign into quarter 4, and it was anticipated that the income position could be recovered before the financial year end.

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The Panel considered the report, and the following issues were raised:

- Members noted that after a period of improved sickness performance, that the statistics for the current quarter had worsened. It was important that this downward trend should not continue. Commentary on the causes for the quarterly performance was requested, to understand the reason for any downturn.
- With regard to Economic Growth, members questioned what 'new homes enabled' was.
  - Officers replied that this was indicator represented the number of new homes delivered in district that the authority had enabled through direct intervention.
- Members asked how broad the authority's intervention was - more commentary on this was required.
- With regard to data on Information and Feedback, members questioned why, when the number of complaints and FOIs had decreased, had the response time had gone up.
  - Officers responded it was likely that this reflected the complexity of some complaints, but that further clarity would be sought.
- With regard to insulation levels, members questioned what percentage of housing stock met the decent homes standard. Was this an indicator?
  - Officers responded that insulation levels were not included within the decent homes standards. However, the authority was planning on installing increased insulation in its housing stock.
- Members requested more information on this issue.
- Members also stated that, with regard to energy efficiency, officers need to ensuring that all housing stock was as energy efficient as they could be, and that a policy be adopted in this regard.
- With regard to fly tipping, members were advised that the Council could not attend ones that were on private land. The performance figures only reflected the fly tips that the Council could attend.
  - Members responded that data needed to include the number of fly tipping incidents reported, and that it should reflect the numbers that the Council could actually deal with. All reports should be included so that a true picture could be seen.

Corey  
Gooch

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- Members also requested information on the cost of recovery (officer time, external expenses etc).
- Officers replied that this was available, and that there was an industry standard of the cost of clearing each fly tip.
- With regard to houses in temporary accommodation, members requested that trends on these figures be provided.

**AGREED:**

- a) That the content of the report be noted; and
- b) That officers note comments raised by members during the discussion, and feed back information as requested.

(Councillor A Newton left the meeting following discussion of the above item.)

**47 EMPTY HOMES**

Members agreed that issues regarding Empty Homes had been addressed in the previous minute.

**48 REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTED PLANNING DECISIONS**

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Director Place which asked the Panel to consider the updated record on findings from the tour of sites which had been undertaken as part of the review of implemented planning decisions.

Members commented that it was a generic report but hoped that it would prove useful to the Planning Committee and the Planning Team. Many of the points raised were appropriate for many sites, and not only the ones that had been visited.

It was agreed that the report be presented to the next meeting of the Planning Committee for their consideration.

**AGREED:**

That the report be presented to the next meeting of the Planning Committee for their consideration.

**49 INDUSTRIAL UNIT UPDATE**

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Director Place which provided members with an update on the current use of industrial sites. The Panel had requested an overview of the



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current position, including information on their current use. The Panel was advised that a Lettings Policy was to be considered at the next meeting of the Policy Development Panel, after which it would be presented to the Cabinet.

Members considered the information within the report, and the following issues arose:

- Members commented that it was good to see that a local agent would be managing the lettings, and asked how this decision had been made.
  - Officers responded that they had been selected from the approved list of suppliers. Members requested that they be provided with information on how the decision had been made.
  
- Members asked whether any leases had been allowed to lapse, and whether there were any issues with sub-letting.
  - Officers responded that they were in the process of ensuring that all tenants had an up to date lease, and that all tenants were being served with new heads of terms.
  
- Members commented on the current state of some industrial units, that there had been poor management, and that this needed to improve.
  - Officers responded that a serious piece of work looking at these issues was well underway. Consideration was being given to levying service charges to assist with the upkeep of surrounding space. Members responded that there were a number of commercially sensitive issues regarding industrial units and that the authority had neglected this area. It was agreed that a further report to update on progress be presented to the Panel in six months time.

Anita  
Goddard-  
Gill

### **AGREED:**

- a) That the report be noted; and
  
- b) That a further update report be provided to the Panel in six months time.

## **50 PUBLIC TOILET REPORTS**

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Director Place and the Portfolio Holder for Communities and Facilities

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which provided an update on the progress of feasibility works concerning the replacement or refurbishment of public toilets.

Following work undertaken by the Public Toilets Task Group, a final report had been presented to the Cabinet and its recommendations had been agreed. Option 2 had been agreed – to re-configure the current buildings to create individual cubicles which would reduce the potential for anti social behaviour, to include automatic locking doors, and to create a more modern and easy to clean facility.

Following a site visit to a facility in Wisbech, (operated by Fenland District Council), where the Healthmatic system had been installed, it became apparent that the authority had reported a number of issues that had arisen since the installation of the facilities approximately six years ago, and these were detailed within the report. A site visit to the Danfo option had not been made as the nearest location was Southend-on-Sea.

The report provided information on each of the options (Healthmatic, Danfo or refurbishment) for either 2 disabled units or 2 toilets and 1 disabled toilet.

The Panel considered the information, and the following points were raised:

- Members commented that the pods had been recommended as the best way forward however, it now appeared that they could develop problems and maintenance was complex – had the original recommendation been the right one?
- The Place Manager advised that she was a member of the Town Centre Programme Board which was looking at public toilet provision. A balance was required, and it was important to engage with wider stakeholders to discuss issues around public facilities, including toilets.
- The figures quoted within section 5.3.2 of the report were estimated, and more work was required before committing to such large amounts of expenditure.
- Members commented that it would be important to ensure that the cleaning regime that had been introduced was maintained, that that the facilities were kept in as good a state as possible.
- Members requested that once research had been undertaken, that the Panel be advised of the situation before final agreement was reached.

Anita  
Goddard-  
Gill

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**AGREED:**

- a) That the report be noted; and
- b) That once further research on the options available had been undertaken, that the Panel be advised of the situation.

**51 PERFORMANCE MONITORING PANEL WORK PROGRAMME**

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Manager 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 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.

With regard to the Public Open Spaces Task Group, which was shortly due to start its work, members commented that information from the previous Task Group that had not concluded could be used to inform the way forward. This was to be provided to members of the Task Group prior to the first meeting, where the scope would be set.

**AGREED:**

- a) That the Work Programme provided by the Executive Manager Governance be noted; and
- b) That information from the previous Public Open Spaces Task Group be provided to members of the newly formed group, prior to the first meeting.

**52 UNTIDY SITES**

Members stated that they wished to discuss the report relating to untidy sites in detail, and it was therefore agreed that full consideration of the report be undertaken following exclusion of the press and public.

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

There were no urgent items.

**54 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Christine  
Morgan

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**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 involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 6 of part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

**55 UNTIDY SITES**

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Director Place which provided an update on untidy sites within the district, as requested by the Panel at its meeting on 12 November 2019.

Appendix A (exempt) detailed derelict building where the council held records where reports had been received from residents. It outlined the types of reports that had been received, the legislation that could be used if appropriate and proportionate, and what action was currently being taken, where recent reports had been received.

Officers currently had a cross departmental approach when dealing with derelict buildings. Work was currently underway to ensure officers had a clear process when dealing with reports relating to derelict buildings.

Members considered the information within the report, and the following issues were raised:

- Members asked where responsibility for the inspection of properties in a dangerous state lay.
  - Officers responded that Building Control undertook this role. They received reports in a number of ways – via the emergency telephone line, general enquiries and normal inspections. A record was made of when a building was inspected.
- Members asked whether the GIS system could be used to feed into the process to show all of the untidy sites.
  - Officers replied that the current system already allowed for these to be mapped.
- Members requested that they be sent a link to this.
- Councillor questioned whether the list at Appendix A was up to date, as some reports that members had made regarding specific sites were not included.

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- Officers responded that the list was up to date. However, work was currently underway to link up with where information was dealt with and how this was fed back to one central point. A centralised database would remedy the situation.
- Members stated that it would be useful to know what was holding up progress, as some of the properties had been in a poor state for a long time. What could the Council do with these properties?
- Members requested that a report be compiled, highlighting what options the authority had, how properties could be brought back into use, and providing an update on individual buildings, and that this report be presented to a meeting of the Panel as soon as possible.
- Members commented that they provided information on untidy sites, but were not then informed of actions and progress – information which they could then inform the public of.
  - Officers agreed that more information needed to be provided to members.

Dee  
Bedford

Members congratulated the Community Safety and Enforcement Manager on her efforts to date.

**AGREED:**

- a) That the report be noted; and
- b) That information be compiled, highlighting what options the authority had, how properties could be brought back into use, and providing an update on individual buildings, and that this report be presented to a meeting of the Panel at the earliest opportunity.

(The meeting ended at 9.20 pm)

(End of minutes)