

Minutes of a meeting of the **PERFORMANCE MONITORING PANEL** held in This will be a meeting held in line with The Local Authorities & Police & Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority & Police & Crime Panel Meetings) (England & Wales) Regulations 2020, on Wednesday, 9 September 2020 at 6.30 pm.

PRESENT

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

J R Astill
C J T H Brewis
A C Cronin
R Grocock

J D McLean
N H Pepper
P A Redgate
G P Scalese

A C Tennant
S C Walsh
D J Wilkinson
M Hasan

In Attendance: Executive Manager Delivery, Communications Manager and Democratic Services

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

19. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Notification had been received that Councillor M Hasan was replacing Councillor J King for this meeting only.

20. MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the following meetings:

- a) Performance Monitoring Panel – 8 July 2020
- b) Performance Monitoring Panel – 13 July 2020

The following point was raised:

The Chairman requested an update regarding the item from the minutes of 29 January 2020, 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. Member had requested information on the cost of recovery (officer time, external expenses etc) for fly tips attended by the Council.

Action By

PERFORMANCE MONITORING PANEL - 9
September 2020

AGREED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Performance Monitoring Panels held on 8 July 2020 and 13 July 2020 respectively will be signed by the Chairman as a correct record as soon as reasonably practical after the meeting.

21. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS.

There were none.

22. QUESTIONS ASKED UNDER STANDING ORDER 6

There were none.

23. TRACKING OF RECOMMENDATIONS

There were none.

24. ITEMS REFERRED FROM THE POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANEL.

Members were advised there was nothing to report.

25. KEY DECISION PLAN

Consideration was given to the current Key Decision Plan.

AGREED:

That the Key Decision Plan issued on 2 September 2020 be noted.

26. MARKETING OF INDUSTRIAL UNITS

Consideration was given to the report of the Interim Property Asset Services Manager setting out the rationale and methodology for using external letting agents to provide targeted and additional resource to support the letting of vacant industrial units. In addition, the use of external commercial property resource to support the Council with the management of its five industrial estates. .

Members considered the update and the following issues were raised:

- The Chairman suggested that Parish Council notice boards

PERFORMANCE MONITORING PANEL - 9

September 2020

- be utilised to display the availability of locally available vacant industrial units. The Executive Manager – Property & Development welcomed this suggestion and would look how best to take this forward as units become available.
- The Chairman commented on the marketing process flow-chart regarding the notice given and process when a let property was about to become vacant in particular how officers plan to deal with ensuring the unit is returned in a decent condition ready for a new tenant. The Executive Manager Property & Development advised that the process would typically be an inspection around 2months prior to the end of the lease, a schedule prepared and served on the tenant confirming works needing to be done and then close to the end of the lease a further inspection to determine whether this had been completed. In the event that it hadn't the tenant on vacation would be recharged for the works outstanding. It was confirmed that this would be covered in a new standard form of lease and noted in the new Lettings Policy. The Chairman commented that this was welcome news regarding the new agreements, however the arrangements for vacating under the existing and hence older style agreements needed to be monitored effectively.
 - Members raised concerns regarding industrial units being used for storage rather than for businesses use. The Executive Manager – Property & Development confirmed that he was already aware of this concern and was monitoring proposed new lettings closely. Under the proposed new Lettings Policy officers will be given greater flexibility to let to a wider range of uses and consider a range of matters that would ensure that the right uses for what are effectively business use units. However it was important to note that the Council relied on the income from these units and if storage was the only potential letting use at that time this would need to be taken into account.
 - Members asked whether Covid-19 has affected lettings or tenants' ability to pay rent, and were advised that thanks to the availability of grants administered by the Council and regular communications with tenants, there has been so far very little apparent impact.
 - Members asked whether there were opportunities to regain properties if tenants were not adhering to the letting agreement criteria, and were advised that the new lease agreement would specifically deal with this. Through effective estate management, new lease terms and by building good working relations with tenants the Council was looking to have effectively managed and operated

PERFORMANCE MONITORING PANEL - 9

September 2020

estates.

- Members commented on whether the ability to let units had reduced as a consequence of the pandemic and were advised that although the current valuation work conducted had not indicated change in values compared to the beginning of the year, it was still too early to tell what the true impact of the pandemic would be on future lettings and income levels.
- There was also no indication of lack of interest in the units, and tenants had generally not fed back any concerns about their future occupation. Members requested an update regarding additional industrial units planned for Crease Drove in Crowland. They also expressed disappointment at the development fronting the Council's Pinnacle Close estate appearing to be more of a retail offer rather than industrial and asked whether the Council, as adjacent landowner, had any control over this. Members were advised that there was c15,000 square feet of new build industrial space at Crease Drove for which the Council had secured planning consent however the process for procuring a building contractor was paused pending more certainty on the ability to let these units once built. It was noted that Asset Officers were working with their Inward Investment colleagues to determine next steps. On the matter of the Pinnacle Close frontage unit the Executive Manager – Property & Development confirmed that this site was not in the ownership of the Council so other than through the planning process had no control over how that site came forward for development and its use.

AGREED:

That the contents of the report be noted.

27. DIGITAL WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to the presentation from the Communications Manager which identified the factors which had affected the Digital Work Programme due to Covid-19.

It laid out the immediate priorities and covered the following points;

- How the Communications Team were dealing with issues internally and working with partners (specifically benefitting from bringing the Digital Team into the Communications Team).
- How Communications had responded to the needs of the community continuing to improve services. This specifically related to the use of digital platform

PERFORMANCE MONITORING PANEL - 9

September 2020

what3words in order for residents to report fly tipping locations without the need to leave their personal details. Members were particularly pleased with this development.

Members commented on the co-ordinated concept project between SHDC and Breckland Council for fly tipping, regarding the budget, expenditure and resources between the two authorities. Fly tipping was a contentious issue for residents and Members voiced concerns regarding how much of the budget and expertise had been allocated to SHDC since the start of the project, and whether any value for money could be identified. Members were aware that most of the budget available had been allocated to wages.

The Programme Delivery Manager agreed that anything the Council did should show a tangible benefit. There was a new flexible way of working compared to the concept and what had been put in place. In order to identify value for money, several factors had to be taken into account; immediate savings identifiable, how many fly tips were reported, collection rates, in-house talent and skills and the focus of the project. If the project was over and above the in-house skills, then a cost would arise in hiring expertise. Those costs then needed to be reviewed in order to assess whether they would generate a return.

The Chairman requested an update to be covered in the next report to identify where the money had been spent and whether SHDC had received value for money.

Members thanked officers for the continued hard work in responding to the situation, ensuring value for money and keeping services running, in particular the collaboration with the Programme Delivery Manager and the CIP Team.

AGREED:

That the presentation be noted.

28. PERFORMANCE MONITORING PANEL WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Manager Governance (Deputy Monitoring Officer) which set out the Work Programme of the Performance Monitoring Panel.

The report identified the following Issues:

- Appendix A set out the dates of future Panel meetings along with proposed items for consideration.
- Appendix B set out the task groups that have been

PERFORMANCE MONITORING PANEL - 9
September 2020

identified by the Panel.

Members considered the update and the following issues were raised:

- The Sir Halley Stewart Playing Field Task Group needed to be reviewed by January 2021.
- PMP and PDP had requested that a special Joint Meeting be held to discuss the setting up of the South Holland Building Consultancy prior to it being considered by Cabinet.

AGREED:

That the Panel gives consideration to the report and identifies the following issues for discussion:

- a) That the Work Programme provided by the Executive Manager Governance be noted;
- b) That the Sir Halley Stewart Playing Field Task Group undertake its review by January 2021; and

That a special Joint Meeting of the Performance Monitoring Panel and the Policy Development Panel be arranged to discuss the setting up of the South Holland Building Consultancy, prior to it being considered by Cabinet..

29. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT

There were none.

(The meeting ended at 7.52 pm)
(End of minutes)