

Minutes of a meeting of the **PERFORMANCE MONITORING PANEL** held in line with The Local Authorities & Police & Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority & Police & Crime Panel Meetings) (England & Wales) Regulations 2020, on Tuesday, 10 November 2020 at 6.30 pm.

PRESENT

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

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

J L King
N H Pepper
P A Redgate
G P Scalese
A C Tennant

J Tyrrell
S C Walsh
D J Wilkinson

In Attendance: The Chief Executive (PSPS Ltd), the Director (Acting), the Executive Manager Growth, the Executive Manager Governance, the Housing Landlord Services Manager, the Environmental Services Manager, the Community Development Manager, the Communities Manager, the Planning and Building Control Manager, the Democratic Services Manager, the Business Intelligence Officer and the Democratic Services Officer.

30 MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting of the Performance Monitoring Panel, held on 9 September 2020.

The Chairman commented that the request by the Panel for the number of all fly-tipping incidents (not only those that the Council had a duty to clear, but to include those on private land) had not been resolved as required. The aim was to understand the full magnitude of the problem. However, the issue was addressed within the Quarter 2 Performance Report later in the agenda and would be dealt with at that point.

AGREED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Performance Monitoring Panel held on 9 September 2020 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record, as soon as reasonably practical after the meeting.

31 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS.

There were none.

Action By

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32 QUESTIONS ASKED UNDER STANDING ORDER 6

There were none.

33 TRACKING OF RECOMMENDATIONS

There were none.

34 ITEMS REFERRED FROM THE POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANEL.

There were none.

35 KEY DECISION PLAN

Consideration was given to the Key Decision Plan issued on 27 October 2020.

AGREED:

That the Key Decision Plan issued on 27 October 2020 be noted.

36 Q2 PERFORMANCE REPORT 20/21

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Manager for Growth, which provided an update on how the Council was performing for the period 1 July 2020 to 30 September 2020.

The Quarter 2 2020-21 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 in an ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The reported indicators provided an indication of performance and business intelligence as compared to the previous year. This enabled a view of how key services had performed, whilst the organisation had continued to respond to the challenges and pressures that the pandemic had presented to both the organisation and the district as a whole.

The report did not include the suite of performance indicators to the same scale and breadth as presented to the Panel in previous years. This was because, in many cases, the focus of many council services and their attendant resources had shifted away from pre-March 2020 'business as usual activity', and were instead focused on a different range of areas directly aligned to supporting the Council with its pandemic response.

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The report therefore sought to provide a summary of performance in key areas which reflected the current performance of the Council in a number of critical areas, whilst the organisation remained focussed on supporting its communities, residents and local businesses in extra-ordinary times. The narrative within the report sought to provide supplementary commentary to support the data, and several service managers were in attendance to assist with any further issues not covered within the report.

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

Sickness data

- The Performance and Business Intelligence Report showed a significant number of working days lost to sickness, and that these did not include COVID related sickness as this was recorded separately. Could officers provide any further background?
 - Officers responded that current sickness data showed that 4% of staff were currently classed as sick. However, further clarity would be sought on these figures, and whether Covid-related illness was recorded separately or was included in these figures, and this information would be reported back to Panel members.

CB

Media Impressions

- Members asked for an explanation on the meaning of 'Media impressions'.
 - Officers advised that this was the reach achieved by social media posts on Facebook and Twitter, and the number included the number of reads, shares and re-tweets.

Grants for Growth

- Members stated that it was good to see that the number of Grants for Growth applications accepted had only decreased by one, in comparison to the same time last year.

SH, MH

Furlough/Universal Credit data

- Members noted that the number of furloughed employees for the period stood at 10,400. Further data for both furloughed individuals and those on Universal Credit, such as the age profile, was requested for comparison purposes.

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Fly-tipping

- Members were all in agreement that fly tipping was a terrible scourge on the countryside and for private landowners. There had been a large increase in cases – what actions were being taken to deal with the problem?
 - Officers responded that the Environmental Services Team were tracking reports closely, and were working with the Enforcement Team to ensure that any areas repeatedly being targeted were picked up, and also to identify any hotspots that the team were previously unaware of. It was acknowledged that the incidence of fly tipping was increasing, and officers were working with Lincolnshire Waste Partnership on how to promote positive social media with regard to educating the public in the use of the Waste Recycling Centres to dispose of their waste correctly.

- Members commented that the average clearance time was reasonable however, there were some extremes. Volume of fly-tips, and speed of reaction to clearing them were the two main issues – was sufficient resource being directed to the problem? Appropriate resourcing was important as fly-tipping was becoming more of a problem for the Authority and private individuals.
 - Officers replied that there had only been one extreme case of fly-tipping which had impacted upon the data however, this was the exception. In fact, clearance times were better for this year than at the same point the previous year. Location and severity were the main reasons why clearance could take longer. Some fly-tips involved the removal of hazardous material and required the involvement of specialist contractors. The clearance of fly-tipping was a function that had been brought 'in house' and time frames had improved. It was felt that no additional resource was required as there was the ability in place to respond to incidents where needed.

- Members asked what the authority could do to assist private landowners with regard to fly-tipping on their land.
 - Officers advised that the authority could not remove fly-tipping from privately-owned land however, it would advise landowners to look into any of the various commercial options available to them.

- It was stated that, in the past, there had been a reciprocal arrangement between Lincolnshire County Council and a

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number of adjoining authorities, which allowed items to be accepted at each other's waste recycling centres – this had assisted residents in areas on the boundaries of the district to take items to centres over the border that may be closer than the centres within their own districts.

- Officers responded that they would take this forward with Lincolnshire County Council to open up discussions with relevant adjoining authorities.
- Members stated that it would be useful to compare the Quarter 2 figures to the Quarter 1 figures, rather than comparing to the same time the previous year.
 - Officers had the Quarter 1 information available, and advised that for that period, the average number of days to collect was 4.6 days, and the total number of fly-tips was 307.
- In response, members requested that when the Quarter 3 information was presented to the Panel, that for all areas, it would be helpful for the Quarter 2 figures to be provided as well, in order to compare and understand any shift in performance caused by the Covid pandemic.
- Members asked whether the Authority had successfully prosecuted anyone with regard to fly-tipping?
 - Officers did not have specific fly-tipping statistics to hand, but stated that the Authority had a range of tools and powers to deal with fly-tipping. Only severe cases went through the court process however, due to the Covid pandemic, many courts were not currently hearing some cases. Officers stated that they could provide information on fixed penalty notices issued for any other measures taken during the period compared to last year.
- Members responded that 2-3 years of high level statistics would be useful. They also commented that it was important to get on top of the fly-tipping problem, and that a few well-publicised prosecutions might have an effect.
 - Officers replied that both the Community Safety and Enforcement reports were due to be presented to the next meeting of the Panel, and that they would include fly tipping enforcement data in more detail, and would also include 3 year of comparison data.
- Members asked that their thanks and compliments be passed on to the recycling and refuse collection staff for way they had provided their service during the Covid period.

Universal Credit/Tax base

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- Members noted that there had been an increase in the number of people claiming Universal Credit – did this automatically affect the tax base on which the Council Tax was based? This information would be of interest to Parish Councils?
 - Officers responded that it did have the potential to impact on the tax base. The council tax base, the number of properties and the number of council tax bands was unlikely to change however, the prospect of collection of council tax could potentially be impacted. With regard to Universal Credit, working-age claimants went directly to the DWP, and PSPS gained information from an increase in Universal Credit claims through Council Tax support, which would then be delivered to eligible claimants. PSPS had been tracking any increase, and there had been an 18% rise in benefits claimants since April 2020. An increase from November onwards had also been forecast as a result of the furlough scheme ending however this had been extended to the end of March so the potential increase had been delayed. The other factor that had an impact on collection was regarding enforcement activity – in Quarter 1, the Council had made a decision not to conduct enforcement activity or to seek to recover unpaid council tax, due to the pandemic. In Quarter 2, some ‘soft’ recovery activity had been undertaken. The recovery process had therefore been delayed, and some courts had just started listing for hearing. The potential impact as a result of a delay in collection would not be clear until at least Quarter 3.
- Members responded stating that they believed, historically, where a household claimed housing benefit, the household was removed from the Council Tax base – was this still the case?
 - Officers were not aware of this and would need to check the situation and circulate to members.

SH

Anti-Social Behaviour

- Members noted that the figures for anti-social behaviour appeared to be exactly the same for the current year as last year – was this correct?
 - Officers responded that this was correct however, the make-up of the information was significantly different due to operating in a different way. There were currently no identified trends. Quarter 1 had more concerns raised relating to issues closer to people’s homes, due to the lockdown, rather than concerns in

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public spaces. However, the crime statistics that would be included within the Crime and Disorder update report due at the January meeting would allow the Panel to identify any particular trends around criminal activity or incidents.

- Members asked whether, for the Authority to pursue an incident of anti-social behaviour, there was a requirement for a member of the public who had witnessed the event to come forward and report it, rather than Councillors making the Authority aware of situations.
 - Officers advised that they always welcomed feedback from members with any intelligence they may have however, in order that the Authority could respond directly to an incident or progress a situation, the incident needed reporting in the correct way. This was to ensure that any victim of the anti-social behaviour had the support they needed, and also so the Authority could gather more detail that would help to build a case and provide sufficient evidence, should it go to court.
- Members confirmed the message that this was an evidence-based situation and that the Authority relied on the public reporting any incidents to the Council, rather than only advising their local councillor.
 - Officers confirmed that this was the case and that contact details were available on the Council's website.

Void properties

- Members asked why there had been an increase in void properties over the period.
 - Officers responded that they would have expected lower numbers of properties becoming void, but there had in fact been an unexpected sharp increase in voids and the reasons for this had therefore been looked into. There appeared to be an increase in the number of people giving up their accommodation with the council to seek accommodation in a more supported setting. Officers were looking into these reasons in order to gain some intelligence to assist with provision. One of the biggest increases in the reasons given for leaving was people going into care – this had to be understood more fully with regard to the type of care they were moving to. Many customers relied on formal or informal networks of support and the pandemic had made it very difficult for those relying on informal networks, such as friends and neighbours, due to the various restrictions that had been imposed on individuals. Tenants leaving

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accommodation for a more supported setting had therefore resulted in more void days, and the type of properties involved, which tended to be sheltered housing, often took longer to let than general needs stock. In addition, more time was required between various tradesmen undertaking their work at a void property, in order to follow the current Covid safe working practices. The knowledge gained from the unexpected rise was helping the Council to understand and shape the needs of its particular tenants, and sessions with sheltered housing customers were being undertaken to help understand and respond to any issues.

- There were a small number of voids that were void for a very long period – what was the reason for this?
 - The longest void periods were within the least-desirable stock – these were predominantly a number of bedsits within the sheltered housing stock where there was traditionally low demand in comparison to one bedroom bungalows. Customers often had to be more actively sought to fill these properties. In response, the void standard on these properties was being increased and the properties were re-decorated and re-carpeted before being offered for let. The Council was contacting a number of eligible individuals and discussing their particular needs in order to make them a better option, but were also looking at the long-term viability of these types of property within the housing stock. There was a substantial need for housing currently, and it was important that the Council had suitable accommodation to offer individuals for their needs.
- Members responded that the bedsit was located within sheltered housing and would not be attractive to the older age group however, this type of accommodation would be more suitable, and more popular with younger people.
 - Officers agreed and stated that this was a piece of work that officers were bringing forward. Many of the units had been there for many years and had fulfilled the needs of the community at the time however, requirements and aspirations changed over time and the Council's offer needed to move in line with this.

AGREED:

That the report be noted.

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37 SWIMMING POOL AND LEISURE FACILITIES TASK GROUP UPDATE

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Director Commercialisation (S151) which provided members with an update on the Swimming Pool and Leisure Centre.

Following the approval of the recommendations of the Swimming Pool and Leisure Facilities Contract Task Group, by the Cabinet in November 2016, six monthly progress updates had been provided to the Panel, with the last update on 11 September 2019 which covered the first six months of the new contract with Parkwood Leisure.

As a result of Government instruction due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the facilities closed to the public on 20 March 2020 and remained closed until approval to re-open was granted from 25 July 2020. Some activities were, and remained, restricted but a phased approach to re-opening had been carried out in the three months since, and details of this were included within the report, along with how the facilities had adapted to comply with Covid requirements.

The report provided information on participation at the facilities pre-Covid, which showed increased participation levels and a continued increase in total membership. It also laid out how the effects of the pandemic had been addressed, both during lockdown and post lockdown.

Members were advised that the report had been submitted prior to the second lockdown, and the facilities were once again closed from 5 November 2020 as a result of this.

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

- Members commented that it was very encouraging to receive a report which showed much improved results prior to the lockdown caused by the pandemic, and that since re-opening, there was renewed interest in attendance again. Over the years there had been many difficult reports, but the new contractor appeared to have turned the situation around and this could be seen through the improved results within the report.
- At 1.7.4 of the report, it was stated that following the resumption of Indoor Bowls on 7 September 2020, the Indoor Bowls National Governing Body guidance had stated that

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league matches would not recommence until January 2021. However, it was clarified that the league had actually re-started on 5 October 2020, although this had now paused due to the second lockdown.

- Members commented that the café had not operated since the start of the second lockdown.
 - Officers advised that there had been no formal notification of this, and that the Council were working with Parkwood and the contractor of the café.
- In line with the terms of the contract, the Council had had to pay out a substantial amount of money to keep the leisure facilities running during the period of lockdown. Members commented that whilst it was good to see the positive results, there would need to be close scrutiny going forward.
- The report stated that on average, 3-5 actions came out of the inspections that were usually minor points around housekeeping, or maintenance issues. Members asked whether there were any issues that were outstanding, or were they dealt with promptly? Had there been any requirement for the Council to levy a penalty against the contractor for an issue not being dealt with?
 - Officers advised that during an inspection, the officer from the Council was accompanied by a duty manager from Parkwood and if any issues were raised, the majority of them could be rectified at the time. If they could not, a list of actions were rolled over to the next inspection and these were then checked to ensure they had been dealt with. No penalties have been incurred.
- Members asked whether usage figures were available for the outgoing contractor so that comparison could be made with the data from Parkwood.
 - Figures from the previous year could be given however, Parkwood measured their usage differently to the previous contractor and the figures would not give a direct comparison. Improvement in Parkwood's performance could be seen by comparing month on month from the start of the contract. It had been hoped to compare month to month of the current and previous year however the issues caused as a result of the pandemic did not make this straightforward.
- Members requested that in the next six-monthly report, an

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explanation be provided around how each contractor's ways of measuring performance differed, and that any large anomalies that could affect figures be highlighted. The Panel needed to compare performance from one year to the next.

EH,RR

- Had the new leisure contractor undertaken any detailed user surveys and could these be shared with the Panel?
 - Part of the agreement between the Council and Parkwood had been that annual user surveys would be undertaken. This had not been possible in the current year due to the Covid pandemic however, going forward, these would be undertaken annually and the results shared with the Panel.
- Members asked whether it was still possible for users of the facilities to provide comments and feedback, and what happened to this feedback?
 - Officers advised that any verbal comments were added to a comments book, that there were feedback forms for users to complete, and there was the opportunity to provide feedback via social media. All comments were reported back in the monthly contract reports.

EH,RR

AGREED:

That the report be noted.

38 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.

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

- Members stated that there were a large number of items due to be considered at the January meeting of the Panel.
 - Officers responded that they had identified that it was indeed a large agenda and two suggestions were put forward – 1) that some of the items be re-scheduled to the March meeting, or later in the year; and/or 2) that some of the items due to come

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forward to the January meeting be updated by way of a short presentation, rather than providing a full report.

- Members commented that an update on the Digital Work Programme was due and reminded officers that as part of this, financial information was required with regard to how much of the funding had been used, what it had been used for and whether value for money had been achieved.
- Members commented that with regard to the Sir Halley Stewart Playing Field Task Group, either an annual report, or a meeting of the Task Group was required.
 - Officers stated that it had been the recommendation of the Task Group, with the approval of the Panel, that the meeting should reconstitute on an annual basis to ensure that the Council remained compliant with the regulatory provisions of the Charity Commission. Of the original Task Group, only two members were still Councillors and it was suggested that the Panel decide whether it wished to receive a report to the next Panel meeting, or whether it wished to form a new Task Group.
- Members agreed that an update report be presented to the next meeting of the Panel before a commitment was made to set up a new Task Group. It was requested that the report include an update on all the issues raised by the original Task Group.
- Members commented that the last Review of Implemented Planning Decisions took place in September 2019 and the next one was due in September 2020. It was clear that this had not been possible, due to the pandemic, but it was requested that this be scheduled for 2021, from April onwards.

AGREED:

- a) That the Work Programme provided by the Executive Manager Governance be noted;
- b) That officers liaise with the Chairman regarding items due for discussion at the next meeting of the Panel, and that consideration be given to either providing verbal updates, or rescheduling some of the items;
- c) That the Digital Work Programme update include financial information relating to how much funding had been used, what it had been used for and whether value for money

RB,CM,MS

SG

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had been achieved;

- d) That with regard to the Sir Halley Steward Playing Field Task Group, an update be presented to the Panel, to include all issues raised by the original Task Group, in order that the Panel could decide whether a new Task Group was required; and
- e) That officers arrange a new date for the Review of Implemented Planning Decisions, to take place in spring/summer 2021.

EH

CM,PN

39 ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT

There were none.

(The meeting ended at 7.40 pm)

(End of minutes)