

Minutes of a meeting of the **POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANEL** held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Priory Road, Spalding, on Tuesday, 28 February 2023 at 6.30 pm.

PRESENT

A R Woolf (Chairman)

J Avery
A C Beal
F Biggadike

R A Gibson
J D McLean
J L Reynolds

G T D Rudkin
S Timewell
S C Walsh

Apologies for absence were received from or on behalf of Councillors H J W Bingham, M D Booth, M Hasan, G P Scalese and S-A Slade

In Attendance: The Assistant Director - Wellbeing and Community Leadership, the Strategic Lead, Prosperous Communities, the Housing Services Manager, the Business Intelligence and Change Manager, the Strategic Property Manager, the Democratic Services Officer and Councillor E J Sneath.

58. MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the Policy Development Panel meeting held on 13 December 2022.

AGREED:

That the minutes of the 13 December 2022 Policy Development Panel meeting be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

59. ACTIONS

Consideration was given to the update on actions which arose from the 13 December 2022 Policy Development Panel meeting and the tracking of previous outstanding actions.

AGREED:

That the update to the actions be noted.

60. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS.

There were none.

Action By

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61. QUESTIONS ASKED UNDER STANDING ORDER 6

There were none.

62. TRACKING OF RECOMMENDATIONS

There were none.

63. ITEMS REFERRED FROM THE PERFORMANCE MONITORING PANEL

There were none.

64. KEY DECISION PLAN

Consideration was given to the Key Decision Plan dated 20 February 2023.

AGREED:

That the Key Decision Plan dated 20 February 2023 be noted.

65. SPALDING CEMETERY

Consideration was given to the verbal update of the Strategic Property Manager regarding the future of Spalding Cemetery.

The Strategic Property Manager presented the update to Panel; and the Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing, Conservation and Heritage was in attendance to answer member questions.

The Strategic Property Manager introduced the update by relaying the following improvements that had taken place at Spalding Cemetery:

- paths, roads and monuments had been renovated;
- signage had been updated;
- trees and vegetation had been maintained;
- circa 20 car park spaces had been made available at the far end of the cemetery which had widened accessibility;
- a new one-way system to assist navigation and parking had been implemented; and
- some roads now had restricted access for SHDC vehicles only, in order to increase the longevity of the road system.

Regarding the future of Spalding Cemetery, the Strategic Property Manager stated that:

- extra capacity for future burials/internments would need to

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- be sought;
- the number of burials that had taken place from 2017 to 2021 were as follows:
 - 36 in 2017;
 - 35 in 2018;
 - 42 in 2019;
 - 46 in 2020; and
 - 42 in 2021.
- ashes internments ranged from 22 to 52 from 2017 to 2021;
- the clearance of vegetation had released 22 additional spaces which had resulted in a total availability of 200, plus reservations;
- at the current burial rate, it was anticipated that capacity would be reached in 5 years;
- burial prices had been reviewed and would increase; SHDC alignment with the higher fees charged at Boston and East Lindsey would be attained over a three-year period;
- burial prices for non-SHDC residents would increase significantly in order to prioritise SHDC residents;
- SHDC worked closely with Parish Councils regarding cemetery options across the district; current Parish Council burial plot capacities were as follows:
 - Gedney: 300;
 - Sutton Bridge: 750;
 - Long Sutton: 20;
 - Gedney Hill: 176;
 - Crowland: 60;
 - Whaplode: 80;
 - Holbeach: 2000; and
 - Gosberton: 60.
- the creation of a working group with membership of both officers and councillors, for the purpose of researching potential areas for expansion, would be beneficial. If approved, a working group could commence by Summer 2023.

Members considered the verbal update from the Strategic Property Manager and made the following comments:

- Members welcomed the capacity responses from Parish Councils which were mostly positive however not all Parish Councils had responded with the requested information. Members asked whether the capacity of 80 at Whaplode included the extended burial area.
 - The Strategic Property Manager believed that the stated figure for Whaplode represented the whole

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availability at the site, but this would be checked.
Any differential would be circulated to the Panel.

- Members referred to the future extension requirements of Spalding Cemetery and stated that the lead-in period to locate and prepare a new site for burials was at least 4 years. As the estimated capacity at Spalding Cemetery was 5 years, it was imperative that the working group commenced early in the new administration.
- Members noted the 5-year estimated capacity of Spalding Cemetery and questioned whether the increased number of households in the district, due to strong housebuilding activity, had been considered within the estimates.
 - The Strategic Property Manager stated that:
 - the increased number of households could impact cemetery demand estimates;
 - it was acknowledged that extension of the Spalding Cemetery could take a few years to complete;
 - nonetheless, the plan was to address the issue in advance and for a strategy to be in place.
- Members queried when the proposed increased fees would be introduced and stated that the increase for non-residents should be fully and immediately effective, rather than being stepped over a three-year period.
 - the Strategic Property Manager responded that the increase was proposed within the 2023/24 budget setting process;
 - whilst the aim was to achieve S&ELCP fee parity as soon as possible, a stepped approach over three years had been taken due to the large disparity which existed; and
 - burials for non-residents had reduced.
- Members asked whether a piece of land adjacent to Chiltern Drive had been considered for extension of the cemetery.
 - The Strategic Property Manager responded that:
 - specific areas for expansion had not yet been investigated;
 - a working group would be able to investigate all possibilities; and
 - a Capital Budget allowance had been requested to fund surveys.

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- Members requested that councillor membership of the proposed working group be taken from the Policy Development Panel and that both the Portfolio Holder for Assets and Planning, and the Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing, Conservation and Heritage be made aware that the matter required urgent attention. Members strongly recommended that the working group be set up as soon as the new administration was in place.
 - The request was noted at the meeting by the Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing, Conservation and Heritage and would be relayed to the Portfolio Holder for Assets and Planning.

AGREED:

That the verbal update be noted.

66. SHDC POLICY REGISTER AND THE S&ELCP POLICY REGISTER

The Panel gave consideration to the SHDC Policy Register and the S&ELCP Policy Register.

The Business Intelligence and Change Manager introduced the report by stating the following action undertaken for policies which were due for review:

- the Taxi Licensing Policy and Sexual Establishments Policy Statement were due to go forward to the Licensing Committee for consideration in March 2023;
- the Climate Change Strategy was in review and completion was anticipated by July 2023;
- the Freedom of Information Policy and the Unreasonable Behaviour and Vexatious Requests Policy were to be reviewed as part of a wider service review which was underway; and
- the Industrial Units Letting Policy and Housing Tenancy Management Policy were coming forward to the current Policy Development Panel meeting.

The Business Intelligence and Change Manager concluded that the SHDC Policy Register and the S&ELCP Policy Register were on schedule and up to date.

AGREED:

That the SHDC Policy Register and the S&ELCP Policy Register be noted by the Panel.

67. HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY

Consideration was given to the report of the Assistant Director – Wellbeing and Community Leadership which asked the Panel to consider the adoption of the Lincolnshire Districts Health and Wellbeing Strategy and associated action plan as a framework for improving health and wellbeing across the Country and to commit to working closely with partners in the public, private and voluntary sector to implement the strategy and positively impact on health outcomes for residents of Lincolnshire.

The Strategic Lead, Prosperous Communities introduced the item by referring members to the Executive Summary on page 59 of the agenda. The following key information was outlined within the report:

- the background of the strategy;
- the role of district councils;
- the following five key elements of the Lincolnshire Districts Health and Wellbeing Strategy:
 - housing and homelessness;
 - activity and wellbeing;
 - environment and climate;
 - economic inclusion; and
 - community empowerment.
- ongoing work since the development of the strategy; and
- conclusion and next steps.

Members considered the report and made the following comments

- Members welcomed the strategy and noted its current journey of scrutiny and subsequent adoption by all seven district councils of Lincolnshire. What was the timeline for completion of this process?
 - The Strategic Lead, Prosperous Communities stated that the process was scheduled to be completed by the end of April 2023.
- Members requested that each section of the strategy include a summary of how outcomes would be measured and reviewed.
 - The Strategic Lead, Prosperous Communities responded that Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) would be set after the current process of strategy adoption by all seven Lincolnshire districts had been completed. The implementation of action plans would follow, and governance would be overseen by

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- a 'Healthy Living Board'; and
 - The Assistant Director – Wellbeing and Community Leadership added that the overarching strategy would enable the formation of multiple projects which would be monitored by a suite of KPIs. It was anticipated that clear examples of impact could be demonstrated after the strategy had been in place for 12 months.
- The Chairman requested that the strategy come back to the Policy Development Panel for review of initial performance against KPIs, 12 months from adoption.
- Members asked for more information regarding the formation and membership of the new strategy board.
 - The Assistant Director – Wellbeing and Community Leadership responded that:
 - the Healthy Living Board had convened on two occasions and was chaired by an East Lindsey District Councillor;
 - SHDC Portfolio Holder representation was made by Councillor E Sneath;
 - the Board was multi-agency and included representations from: Public Health England, Integrated Care Board, NHS Trusts, housing providers, mental health trusts and Active Lincolnshire; and
 - details of the work of the Board, including KPIs, would be shared with the Panel in due course.
- Members stated that residents were not satisfied with the NHS health provision in Spalding - a proposed new surgery had been delayed and subsequently postponed. Members stressed that districts in the south of Lincolnshire needed to receive equal focus to those elsewhere in the county and that improvements were required. Had the NHS been involved in the formation of the strategy and what was their proposed level of input/activity in Spalding?
 - The Strategic Lead, Prosperous Communities confirmed that the following NHS representations had taken place:
 - the Healthy Living Board had worked in partnership with GP surgeries in the formation of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy;
 - the ambition of Integrated Care Systems across the country to improve population health had seen the establishment of

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- nineteen Primary Care Networks (PCN) in Lincolnshire; all PCNs had been invited to participate in the delivery of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy at a local level, and seven PCNs in the Lincolnshire sub-region had joined to date;
 - on a regional level, engagement was ongoing with the Health Inequalities leads and Integrated Care Boards.
 - The Assistant Director – Wellbeing and Community Leadership added that ‘preventative’ work undertaken by district councils to improve health outcomes endorsed a collaborative working relationship with partners including PCNs. Partnership work was underway with Active Lincolnshire and progress on projects to challenge South Holland health profiles would come forward to the Panel in due course.
 - Members noted the difficulties in securing appointments with General Practitioners (GPs) and questioned whether the monitoring of performance of this area was featured within the strategy.
 - The Strategic Lead, Prosperous Communities responded that:
 - the Health and Wellbeing Strategy would not monitor clinical aspects but rather covered wider social and economic determinants, such as debt advice, which influenced health outcomes. Such activity relieved pressures at GP level to improve access for clinical appointments; and
 - concerns regarding care could be reported to Healthwatch.
 - Members referred to the debt advice work mentioned and asked whether this incorporated partnership working with the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) and whether the district was to benefit from any of the £8million funding that had been granted to the CAB from Aviva.
 - The Strategic Lead, Prosperous Communities confirmed the following activity and collaborative support:
 - engagement was ongoing with all three CAB branches within the S&ELCP area, and this work was considered key to the health and wellbeing of residents;
 - district councils received CAB data to

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- understand trends;
 - SHDC core funded the CAB via Welland Homes;
 - SHDC assisted the CAB to lever funding so that free impartial debt advice could continue to be offered;
 - engagement with the CAB at a regional level occurred through the Financial Inclusion Partnership which focussed on the link between health and alleviation of debt issues; and
 - a response regarding the Aviva funding would be circulated after the meeting.
- Members referred to the 'drug and alcohol treatment' in Appendix 5, and asked whether the Rough Sleeper Accommodation (RSA) fund contributed towards delivery of the strategy?
 - The Assistant Director - Wellbeing and Community Leadership would check the status of the RSA funding stream for South Holland and circulate the information to the Panel.

AGREED:

That after consideration of the Lincolnshire District Council's Health and Wellbeing Strategy, the comments of the Policy Development Panel be noted prior to the strategy moving forward to Cabinet for approval.

68. INDUSTRIAL UNITS LETTING POLICY

Consideration was given to the report of the Assistant Director - General Fund Assets which informed the Panel of the update to the policy on letting of the industrial units within SHDC.

The Strategic Property Manager introduced the report which outlined proposed revisions to the Industrial Units Letting Policy and encompassed planning legislation changes effective from September 2022. The following changes afforded SHDC greater flexibility with new tenants prior to the granting of longer leases:

- updates had been made to the service charge, Tenancy At Will, marketing and vetting of applicants;
- the addition of the waiting list; and
- the stipulation that the utilisation of units for storage would not be permitted and that units were required to be used for the creation of employment.

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Appendix A detailed the revised Industrial Unit Lettings Policy which outlined the following areas:

- the key points of the policy;
- marketing;
- new applicants;
- rent and incentives;
- agreement of a new lease;
- yield up;
- rent arrears; and
- implementation and review;

The Strategic Property Manager stated an addition of 'B class' to Key Point 3 of Appendix A, which was not included within the report:

'Tenants can only use in line with the user classes act and the following amendment in 2020. The defined use of the Council's estates will fall under the B or E class g i, ii, iii may in some cases be permitted to apply to widen the planning use of a unit to F2 (b) local community use...'

Members considered the report and made the following comments:

- Members requested that the first sentence of point 4 of the Key Points on Appendix A be clarified.
 - The Strategic Property Manager agreed that this would be amended as follows: 'tenants must employ eligible local people to work in the units or from the units in order to promote the local authority'.

AGREED:

That following consideration of the key points, rent incentives and rent arrears of the amended Industrial Units Letting policy, the comments of the Panel be noted.

69. HOUSING TENANCY MANAGEMENT POLICY

Consideration was given to the report of the Assistant Director - Housing which asked the Panel to consider the updated Housing Tenancy Management Policy.

The Housing Services Manager introduced the report by stating that the Housing Tenancy Management Policy had been adopted by Cabinet in 2020 and had been updated to reflect operational practice and changes in legislation. The key updates were stated at point 2 of the report.

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AGREED:

- a) That following consideration by the Policy Development Panel, the Housing Tenancy Management Policy be noted; and
- b) That the Policy Development recommended the adoption of the Housing Tenancy Management Policy to Cabinet.

70. POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANEL WORK PROGRAMME AND DRAFT PARTNERSHIP SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

Policy Development Panel Work Programme and Draft Partnership Scrutiny Work Programme

The Panel considered a report by the Interim Assistant Director – Governance (Monitoring Officer) which set out the Work Programme of the Policy Development Panel and the draft Partnership Work Programme 2023/24

The Policy Development Work Programme consisted of two sections:

- Appendix A set out dates of future Panel meetings along with proposed items for consideration. The Work Programme would be further populated when the 2023/24 schedule of meetings were approved.
- Appendix B set out Task Groups that had been identified by the Panel. A further meeting of the South Holland Centre Task Group had been scheduled for 13 March 2023.

The draft Partnership Scrutiny Work Programme 2023/23 was set out at Appendix C.

AGREED:

That the Policy Development Panel Work Programme and the draft Partnership Scrutiny Work Programme 2023/24 be noted.

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

The Chairman thanked Policy Development Panel members for

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the enablement of his Chairmanship during the current administration and wished members well for the future.

(The meeting ended at 7.38 pm)

(End of minutes)