

Policy and Performance Advisory Committee

Minutes of meeting held in Remote Meeting - via Microsoft Teams on 29 June 2020 at 3.30 pm.

Present:

Councillor Joe Miller (Chair).

Councillors Liz Boorman (Deputy-Chair), Robert Banks, Nancy Bikson, Christine Brett, Roy Burman, Isabelle Linington, Milly Manley, Christine Robinson, Adrian Ross and Steve Saunders.

Officers in attendance:

Millie McDevitt (Organisational Effectiveness and Performance Lead), Jo Harper (Head of Business Planning and Performance), Nick Peeters (Committee Officer), Kate Richardson (Strategy and Partnership Lead for Sustainability) and Leigh Palmer (Head of Planning First).

Also in attendance:

Councillor Matthew Bird (Cabinet member for sustainability), Councillor Chris Collier (Cabinet member for performance and people and Leader of the Labour Group), Councillor Zoe Nicholson (Deputy Leader of the Council and Leader of the Green Group) and Councillor Emily O'Brien.

1 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2020 were submitted and approved, and the Chair was authorised to sign them as a correct record.

It was confirmed that there had not been a requirement to produce minutes from the informal 2 June briefing but that the notes could be referred to for clarification on any points if required.

2 Apologies for absence

There were none.

3 Urgent Items

There were none.

4 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

5 Written Questions from Councillors

There were none.

5a Portfolio Progress and Performance Report 2019/20- Quarter 4 (1 January - 31 March 2020)

Millie McDevitt, Performance and Programme Lead, presented the report which included the impact of the pandemic on the organisation and the district.

It was agreed that, following the meeting, responses would be provided to the following questions:

- The number of rough sleepers in the district and estimates for the ongoing cost of supporting homelessness through the provision of accommodation.
- The number of disabled facilities grants applications.
- Clarification on the percentage figure for revenue collection
- The specific milestones for the Newhaven Enterprise Zone referred to in the report.
- Clarification on what approach was being taken by the Ethical Collection Team.
- An update on the viability stage of the Seaford Health Hub scheme and the cost to the Council of that stage.
- The number of instances of fly-tipping and the impact of the pandemic on the levels of household recycling compared to residual household waste.

Members wished to forward their commendation to the teams that supported benefit enquiries and the processing of benefit and disabled facilities grants claims during a uniquely difficult period. The staff who supported the Coronavirus Response Team were also commended for their tireless work.

It was confirmed to Members that the period the Performance Report related to only included the first three weeks of the pandemic, and the figures for the first quarter of 2020/21, including instances of fly-tipping, would be different.

Councillor Manley proposed that the Cabinet member for Recycling, Waste and Open Spaces be asked to discuss the potential use of household waste and recycling centres by residents on foot or bicycle with the County Council in an effort to reduce vehicle emissions. The proposal was seconded by the Chair, Councillor Miller.

RESOLVED to:

- 1) Note the report; and
- 2) Recommend to the Cabinet that the Cabinet member for Recycling, Waste and Open Spaces be asked to communicate with East Sussex County Council, to discuss the use of household waste and recycling centres by residents in the district, on foot or bicycle.

6 Requested reports due for consideration by the Cabinet on 9 July:

6a Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy Framework

Jo Harper, Head of Business Planning and Performance and Kate Richardson, Strategy and Partnership Lead presented the report.

Councillor Ross, Chair of the Emergency Climate Change Panel, updated the Committee on the Panel's work. The Panel had fed into the Sustainability Strategy Framework and asked that the Team consider following areas in particular:

- The acceleration of the process of engagement with the community; and
- Clarification that rather than formal consultation, there would be a process of engagement on the framework document with the community to assist the development of the strategy.

Although concern was expressed that new ideas and firm targets had not been introduced as part of the current draft and that, an additional and unnecessary period of consultation could be needed, the Committee was generally supportive of the content and format of the Framework, and the approach being taken. It was confirmed by officers that the approach set out in the report referred to a period of engagement rather than formal consultation and that a balance had been sought between providing a fully formed final Strategy and a document that evolved and allowed all stakeholders an opportunity for input.

The following points were clarified by officers

The air monitoring station in Newhaven was operational and was sited on the A259 at the top of the pedestrian High Street

The period of public engagement would include expert Panel meetings starting towards the end of July and on through to the beginning of September. The main route to engaging with the public would be the Community Forum and an expression of interest had been received for its facilitation. The expression of interest request included the requirement to work with youth groups and other community interest groups. Town and parish councils would also have an opportunity to be part of any Community Forum.

RESOLVED to support the recommendations in the report, in full.

6b Approval of the Revised Local Development Scheme

Leigh Palmer, Head of Planning, presented the report.

Members highlighted the following points:

Concern was expressed at the increase in expected housing numbers for the district as determined by the Government's new methodology. It was explained that the rationale behind the Government's directive for housing numbers aimed to provide a level playing-field for housing delivery across all authorities. The Council's Local Plan (part 1) had previously aligned with that of the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNP) who now had its own adopted Plan. As a result, Lewes District Council's Local Plan fell between emerging Government policies and the housing requirement had increased significantly. The Council would open to challenge if it was unable to demonstrate why it could not meet the expected numbers for delivery.

A request was made by the Committee for updates on those developments where adequate progress was not being made, and for developers to be held to account in instances where lack of viability was used as a reason for not providing previously agreed numbers of affordable housing. It was clarified that planning permissions counted towards housing delivery numbers and the consent lasted for three years, with associated delays. The Planning Service acted as a critical friend when monitoring affordable housing delivery by developers and this could result in alternative sites being sought. Members' concerns over the increase in housing delivery numbers was noted and would be kept under review.

The Committee also expressed concern over staff resources in the Planning Service and whether they were sufficient to meet the demands for housing delivery and whether there was cross-boundary work with other authorities to manage demand - Assurances were provided that the staffing would be appropriate to meet demands for delivery of the emerging Local Plan. It was also confirmed that 'duty to cooperate' meetings took place regularly with neighbouring planning authorities with discussion including unmet housing need. Members were advised that the housing delivery number was a starting point and further examination of the figure would take place.

RESOLVED to support the recommendations in the report in full.

6c Recovery Planning report

Jo Harper, Head of and Business Performance, presented the report.

During discussion the following points were highlighted:

The focus of the July Recovery Summit would be on Lewes District and would

include town and parish councillors, as well as county and district councillors. Statutory and voluntary sector partners would also be included, along with representatives from the business community.

The reduction in vehicle use during the pandemic was one of many themes being discussed. It was noted that a large majority of the Authority's staff had been working from home and it was anticipated that this would continue, decreasing car journeys and emissions.

The Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES) was chosen as a specialist to provide the lead on community wealth building and as the only consultancy in the field working with local authorities. The decision taken in November 2019 (as a Leader's decision during purdah) had already committed monies from the sustainability fund. CLES had been asked to make significant adjustments to its proposals, in order to encompass Covid-19 related recovery issues.

A 'lessons learned' exercise was being undertaken to reflect on the lockdown period and the Council's response. The exercise was being documented to ensure an effective response in the event of a spike in Covid-19 cases. The Council continued to work with the voluntary sector; meetings were still being held to ensure that the appropriate level of support was being provided.

It was recognised that the approach to recovery was not a single-agency activity and it was confirmed that collaborative work was being undertaken at County level also.

The Committee noted and supported the reduction in air traffic as a result of the epidemic. Members were keen for the reduction to continue and asked that local tourism be supported where possible as an encouragement for 'staycations'.

RESOLVED to note the Report.

7 Cabinet Forward Plan

The Chair, Councillor Miller, introduced the Cabinet Forward Plan. The Committee asked that the following items from the Plan be made available for consideration at the next scheduled meeting:

- Wave Leisure Trust Annual Review 2019/2020
- Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule Review
- Denton Island Bowls Club
- Commercial Investment Strategy

RESOLVED to note the Cabinet Forward Plan.

8 Work Programme

The Chair, Councillor Miller, introduced the Policy and Performance Advisory Committee work programme for 2020/21.

RESOLVED to note the Committee's Work Programme.

The meeting ended at 5.20 pm

Councillor Joe Miller (Chair)