

Policy and Performance Advisory Committee

Minutes of meeting held in Ditchling and Telscombe Rooms at Southover House, Southover Road, Lewes, BN7 1AB on 16 September 2021 at 3.30 pm.

Present:

Councillor Joe Miller (Chair).

Councillors Liz Boorman (Deputy-Chair), Banks, Christine Brett, Roy Clay, Isabelle Linington, Laurence O'Connor, Adrian Ross, Steve Saunders and Richard Turner.

Officers in attendance:

Philip Brown (Property Lawyer), Jane Goodall (Strategy and Partnership Lead, Quality Environment), Homira Javadi (Chief Finance Officer), Bryn Mabey (Customer, Communications and Engagement Lead), Nick Peeters (Committee Officer), Leighton Rowe (Development Project Manager), Julie Quanstrom (Neighbourhood First Manager) and Tim Whelan (Director of Service Delivery).

18 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 June 2021 were submitted and the Chair was authorised to sign them as a correct record.

19 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Councillors Robinson, Bikson and Gauntlett with Councillors O'Connor and Brett acting as substitutes.

20 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

21 Urgent Items

There were no urgent items, however, Councillor Saunders highlighted a recent Governance Review meeting where the progress of the Policy and Performance Advisory Committee over the previous year had been considered.

22 Written Questions from Councillors

None were received.

23 Update on the Waste Service

Jane Goodall, Environment Lead, presented the report. Support was provided by Sean Towey, Head of Environment First, Bryn Mabey, Communications

Lead and Julie Quanstrom, Head of Neighbourhood First. During discussion the following points were highlighted:

- The charges levied by East Sussex County Council (ESCC) at household waste and recycling sites were in response to financial constraints. ESCC had carried out a piece of work which indicated fly-tip items as those which would not be charged for at its sites. Sites had been closed during lockdown. The view taken by ESCC was that people should not have been travelling during this period and as a result, would not be using the facilities.
- Work was being undertaken to review the material being taken to bring-sites. The sites did attract trade waste, fly-tipping and contaminates and there was concern that the bring sites were not being used correctly. However, the number of sites had reduced following the introduction of kerbside recycling.
- In-cab waste management software had been introduced the previous October, with cameras expected to be provided in all waste vehicles as part of the next Fleet procurement, by April 2024.
- Recycling food waste was promoted throughout the year and in particular during the autumn period.
- Training was provided to new staff on all aspects of waste. Annual refresher training was provided to all staff. Vehicle crew had monthly meetings with team leaders.
- Concern was expressed that too much emphasis was placed on recycling and that more work should go into encouraging the reduction in items, such as plastic, that became recyclables. It was recognised that there should be continued focus on the 'reduction' message to residents.
- There were a number of businesses in Lewes that provided packaging-free refill facilities and should be promoted as sustainable alternatives.
- The Waste Service responded to incidents of contamination in recycling through its communications strategy. It was suggested that the strategy could be more proactive in recognising seasonal trends.
- An itemised report on material fly-tipped was produced on a monthly basis. The number of incidents in Lewes was relatively low, however there was an environmental impact when they occurred.
- A traffic management company had been employed to deliver clearance of litter on the A27. The maintaining of the levels of litter removal required close working with partner organisations such as Kier and Highways England.
- Litter picking groups were supported by the Waste Service and provided

with litter bags, litter pickers and high visibility jackets. Litter picking events and programmes were also promoted by the Communications team.

- Recycling of batteries had associated fire-risks and posed operational issues. Residents were signposted to sites, such as supermarkets, where batteries could be checked for recyclability.
- The waste survey data highlighted that, where food was recycled, other items were more heavily recycled. The ability for residents to compost depended to a degree on the availability of outside space. Further communication on the ability to recycle soft plastics was requested.
- The transportation and disposal of residual waste and recycled material from ESCC managed sites was an ESCC responsibility. ESCC was being encouraged to open household waste and recycling sites on bank holidays, but this is subject to planning consent which is considered difficult to achieve.
- The removal of waste bins and replacement with recycling bins at council flats had been completed. Bin replacements at privately owned flats had also been completed.
- Where there were incidents of bins not being left for collection on the correct days, those residents were communicated with and provided with information on collection days.
- Information on waste services was included with annual council tax bills. All residents would be provided with a physical copy of their waste and recycling calendar in November 2021. A letter highlighting the Council's key reduction and sustainability messages would also be included.
- The issue with enforcing littering offences and serving a fixed penalty notice was having an enforcement officer to witness the incident.

Resolved to note the report and to recommend that a strategy for the reduction and reuse of materials be considered.

Councillors Brett and Clay joined the meeting during discussion on the item.

24 Corporate Plan - Achievements and forward look

The Director of Service Delivery, Tim Whelan, presented the report. During discussion the following points were highlighted:

- The number of council homes built out and due for delivery would be clarified.
- It was felt by Members that the report should be clarified to reflect that the £34.1 million funding was provided by the Government and was distributed by the Council as opposed to delivered.

- Members felt that reference to the Works building in Lewes should be included under Community Wealth Building in the report.

Resolved to note the report.

24a Portfolio progress and performance report quarter 1 - 2021/2022

Tim Whelan, Director of Service Delivery, presented the report. During discussion the following points were highlighted:

- Housing related phone call wait times were not included as a performance indicator. The data was collected through contract monitoring. The contractor, Mears had three operatives who took calls from residents in Lewes, whereas Customer First had 12 staff in the Contact Team. There was a piece of work underway to look at bringing the Mears calls back in-house. The current contract was due for renewal in January 2023. Members felt that officers in housing repairs who dealt with residents should have knowledge of the local area.

Resolved to note the report.

24b Finance update - performance quarter 1 - 2021/2022

Homira Javadi, Chief Finance Officer, presented the report. During discussion the following points were highlighted.

- There were two sets of additional Government funding – a Covid of grant of equal amounts. It was confirmed that the remaining balance of the fund was not ringfenced. There not been any demands as yet but any significant variations were being monitored.
- The local Energy Scheme referred to under projects in the report, was an indicative reference.

Resolved to note the report.

24c Medium term financial strategy

Homira Javadi, Chief Finance Officer, presented the report. During discussion the following points were highlighted:

- There were early indications of a sharp rise in interest rates. There were Government schemes to mitigate the impact. The inflationary context around the supply and demand of materials was a concern. Both these areas would require careful monitoring.
- It was prudent to build contingency and resilience into the budget within the current, uncertain environment. Particularly in relation to contracts.

Resolved to note the report.

24d Housing Development Update

The Committee **Resolved** to exclude the press and public whilst discussing this item and the exempt appendix at item on the agenda as otherwise there was a likelihood of disclosure of exempt information as defined in schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, paragraph 3 – Information relating to the financial and business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

Leighton Rowe, HEDP Development Project Manager, presented the report.

Resolved by a majority to support the recommendations in the Cabinet report subject to the following amendment to recommendation 3) being considered by the Cabinet:

- 3) That the two HRA assets identified, in accordance with the business case as set out in (Exempt) appendix 2 to the Cabinet report, are not disposed of but improved and brought back into council house use, to support two families in Lewes, as part of the council's corporate goal.

Note: Councillor Saunders left the meeting following discussion on the item.

25 Forward Plan of Decisions

The Chair, Councillor Miller, introduced the Forward Plan of Cabinet decisions. Members requested that the following items be considered at the next meeting of the Committee:

- Recovery and reset programme
- Climate change and sustainability strategy annual progress report
- Newhaven Town Deal - Business Case Update

Resolved to note the Forward Plan of Cabinet decisions.

26 Policy and Performance Advisory Committee Work Programme

The Chair, Councillor Miller, introduced the Policy and Performance Advisory Committee work programme for 2021/2022. Councillor Miller highlighted the recent meeting of the Governance Review Working Group whose work had included a one-year review of the Policy and Performance Advisory Committee. The Group had asked that Committee members provide their views directly, or by email, to be received by the 24 September, on how the Committee had progressed after its first year

The following comments were provided by members of the Group and

Committee members:

- It was felt that the Committee had worked well over the previous year, but it was noted that more than 50 percent of the recommendations from the Committee to the Cabinet had not been accepted.
- Wider input and engagement from all Council members into the Committee's work would help form the work programme.
- Opportunities to take a deep-dive review of policy and service areas, as well as district-wide issues would provide better engagement.

Resolved to note the work programme.

27 Date of Next Meeting

Members discussed the proximity of the date of the next meeting to Bonfire celebrations in Lewes. It was agreed that, provisionally, an alternative date of the 3 November would be considered and at an earlier time.

Resolved that the date of the next meeting is provisionally scheduled for **Wednesday 3 November**, the time to be confirmed.

The meeting ended at 5.40 pm

Councillor Joe Miller (Chair)