

Policy and Performance Advisory Committee

Minutes of meeting held in Ditchling and Telscombe Rooms at Southover House, Southover Road, Lewes, BN7 1AB on 3 November 2021 at 2.00 pm.

Present:

Councillor Joe Miller (Chair).

Councillors Liz Boorman (Deputy-Chair), Banks, Nancy Bikson, Christine Brett, Roy Clay, Christine Robinson, Adrian Ross and Richard Turner.

Officers in attendance:

Philip Brown (Property Lawyer), Lee Banner (Transformation Programme Manager), Peter Sharp (Head of Regeneration) and Nick Peeters (Committee Officer)

Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2021 were submitted and the Chair was authorised to sign them as a correct record.

Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Linington and Saunders.

Declarations of Interest

There were none.

Urgent Items

There were none.

Written Questions from Councillors

There were none.

Requested reports due for consideration by the Cabinet on 11 November 2021

It was confirmed by members that, as part of the call-over process, the following reports would be included in discussion by the Committee:

6(a) Recovery and Reset

6(c) Newhaven Town Deal

Resolved that the officer recommendations in the following Cabinet report be

supported in full:

6(b) Climate change and sustainability strategy - Annual update 2021

33a Recovery and Reset

Lee Banner, Transformation Programme Manager, presented the report. During discussion the following points were highlighted:

- The print savings identified from the roll-out of the Modern.Gov application and the ceasing of the printing of agendas and minutes (including postage), were approximately £16,000 for each authority. This project would also allow a review of the print facilities/resources to be undertaken with possible further efficiencies/savings. The option of locally printed papers was being considered for those Members currently unable to use a device.
- Customer First was involved in a reshaping exercise which looked at the service provided, the cost of the service and how the service interacted with customers. One area being explored was better use of technology, including artificial intelligence, to deal with process driven enquiries and freeing up staff to deal with more complex, value adding activities. The Service would still maintain a strong connection with customers.
- Further information on the Initial Forecast Gap, detailed in 2.1 of the Cabinet report, would be provided to the Committee. The main contributor for the funding shortfall was the Pandemic, however, there were other factors and this detail would be provided to the Committee also.
- The work on exploring options for identifying a single system to manage Environmental Health and Licensing activity was just about to start. The first phase was to engage with current users of the current systems, which were a number of years old. The market would be assessed to understand what was available in order to deliver back office efficiencies and allow staff to undertake more complex work. Mobile technology was being explored for areas such as inspections and monitoring.
- Year 1 savings and costs would include up-front costs, which would be built into a business case.
- The Revenues/Benefits system project was at the stage where a preferred contractor had been identified. Soft-market testing had been undertaken to identify what was needed. Significant efficiency savings had been identified as a result of the project. It was anticipated that the new system would be rolled out in December 2022.
- The reshaping of services included work with Human Resources to minimise redundancies. The exercise would explore opportunities for staff to be confirmed in post, to secure promotion opportunities or to be redeployed into other areas. Another strand of the exercise would be

freeing staff to spend time dealing with more complex areas of their work.

- Members expressed concern that, as a result of previous transformation programmes, remaining staff had found themselves in stressful environments, which led to a high turnover of staff.

Resolved to note the report.

33b Climate change and sustainability strategy - Annual update 2021

This report was not requested for inclusion in discussion by the Committee (see minute 33). Members had previously resolved to support the officer recommendations in the report in full.

RESOLVED to support the officer recommendations in the Cabinet report in full.

33c Newhaven Town Deal

Peter Sharp, Head of Regeneration, presented the report. During discussion the following points were highlighted:

- The Towns fund was different to other forms of Government funding. Newhaven had been selected on a short-list by the Government and the 'Our Town Investment Plan' was put together by the Newhaven Town Deal Board, involving community, business and public sector representatives (including cross-party work). The projects identified were those that were considered the best within the parameters of the Towns fund. The publishing of a summary of the business cases would be considered.
- Government had provided quarterly deadlines for the submission of cases. The deadline for the first two business cases was the 14 January, with the funding being received in March 2022.
- The funding process, through which local authorities were required to demonstrate that value for money was included in projects, had been in place for some time through the Green Book.
- Discussion also briefly covered the recently announced Levelling Up Fund. All areas of the District were looked at for potential projects. The challenge within this fund was to find areas that met the criteria. The Regeneration Team was keen for any projects that had flexibility and could be delivered in a short timeframe to come forward. Looking ahead, part of the work of the Regeneration team is to try and identify a list of 'shovel ready' projects across the District for future funding opportunities.

Resolved to note the report.

Forward Plan of Cabinet Decisions

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

- Council tax reduction scheme
- Draft budget proposals 2022/23
- Council tax base and non-domestic rate income for 2022/23
- Portfolio progress and performance report quarter 2 - 2021-2022
- Finance update - performance quarter 2 - 2021-2022
- Community Infrastructure Levy Recommendations for Spending
- Asset Management Plan
- Housing development update

Resolved to note the Forward Plan of Cabinet decisions.

Policy and Performance Advisory Committee Work Programme

The Chairman, Councillor Miller, introduced the Committee's work programme. Members requested that the following items be considered for inclusion:

- An update on the Newhaven Town Deal
- An update on planning issues to include:
 - Lewes District Council's relationship with the South Downs National Park Planning Authority
 - The Local Plan
 - The Planning Improvement Plan (25 recommendations for the Planning Service)
 - The impact of sewerage and flooding resulting from development.

Resolved to note the Committee's work programme.

Date of Next Meeting

To note that the next meeting of the Policy and Performance Advisory Committee is scheduled to be held on 30 November 2021, at 2.30pm, at Southover House, Lewes.

The meeting ended at 3.10 pm

Councillor Joe Miller (Chair)