

Policy and Performance Advisory Committee

Minutes of meeting held in Room 209/210 Marine Workshops, Railway Quay, Newhaven BN9 0ER on 31 October 2024 at 5.00 pm.

Present:

Councillors: Christine Brett (Chair), Janet Baah (Deputy-Chair), Graham Clews, Ezra Cohen, Nikki Fabry, Cathy Gallagher, Charlotte Keenan, Paul Keene, Paul Mellor and Daniel Stewart-Roberts.

Officers in attendance:

Philip Brown (Property Lawyer), Nigel Jones (LDC Service Manager), Kate Richardson (Sustainability Lead), Seanne Sweeney (Community Services Lead) and Sean Towey (Head of Environment First).

Also in attendance:

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36 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on the 19 September 2024 were submitted and the Chair was authorised to sign them as a correct record.

37 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Clarkson and Davies. Councillor Gallagher was a substitute for Councillor Davies.

38 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

39 Urgent Items

There were none.

40 Written Questions from Councillors

There were none.

41 Environment First - verbal update

Sean Towey, Head of Environment First, Nigel Jones, Lewes District Council Service Manager and James Warren, Senior Team Leader, provided an update on the Waste Service. During the update the following points were highlighted:

- Training encompassed not only manual handling but supporting staff with health and safety issues when working in and out of vehicles. Staff in the service, including those based at the Robinson Road depot, were provided with a full range of support for dealing with all areas of their work including liaising with the public. Operationally, a business-as-usual service was being provided.
- There was a fleet replacement programme which was expected to be completed by 2030 with the aim of being carbon-free by 2030 or earlier if possible.
- One area of focus was dealing with the challenge of contaminated recycling. The team was working with Neighbourhood First and Homes First to reduce the levels of contaminants.
- A deep-dive into the structure of the street-cleansing operations had been undertaken with routes and rounds being defined, and all street-cleansing teams combining for monthly blitzes of areas previously identified as hot-spots.
- In terms of refuse, the service was building on the success of the back-to-bin roll-out. Staff were being supported through the transition and CCTV cameras had been placed in all vehicles to identify areas where further staff training may be needed.
- Food waste was now being collected by a dedicated electric-vehicle fleet. A tipping-base had been identified closer to Lewes which would reduce the distance vehicles travelled. Environment First continued to promote the food-waste collection service to residents.
- Environment First used Whitespace, a digital platform, to provide real-time information in vehicles during collections. Its use has supported the service and residents through removing ambiguity when resolving issues with missed bins. The platform also allowed the identification of contaminated waste and any anti-social behaviour.
- Operationally, the clear-up after Bonfire Night would be dealt with using electric vehicles which would reduce noise levels in residential areas.
- The workshops were operating successfully in keeping the service's vehicles on the roads. Although its use presented mechanical challenges for the team, the use of hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO) as fuel for non-electric vehicles continued. It was anticipated that there would be challenges including the use of the fuel during freezing temperatures. There were additional costs for the use of HVO.
- Health and Safety and the welfare of staff was a key priority for the service. Members were welcome to visit the Robinson Road depot and see the

operational work being done. Engagement with residents and communities was another key area and included education through schools and communications.

- The number of bins in the initial roll-out was 28,265, followed by 2948 customers asking for a change in bin size equalling distribution of 31,213 bins with an average cost of £19.95 per bin, including delivery.
- There were 2900 instances where different size bins were requested, or customers had moved and had retained bins from previous addresses. The total delivery costs were £56,530 which equalled £2 per bin. There were 12 formal complaints specifically about the rollout from January to September, which was considered very low. The number of formal complaints about second bins, gull bags, crews not tipping etc was a total 9 for the same period. One complaint progressed to stage 2.

During discussion, the following points were highlighted:

- The electric food-waste vehicles had a range of approximately 80-90 miles. The street fleet on order for 2025 had a longer range of approximately 215 miles. The payload on the new electric vehicles would be reduced but this was not expected to be an issue once operational. Moving vehicles around as required would improve efficiencies. All of the workshop technicians had received initial training with a number of technicians receiving more involved training.
- Several methods were being employed to encourage residents to use the correct bins for general waste, recycling and food waste. The uptake of the food waste service was being monitored and the service was being promoted in areas where the uptake was considered low.
- Members noted the professionalism and high quality of service provided by staff in Environment First to residents and councillors with enquiries.

Resolved to note the update.

42 Summary of requested reports due for consideration by the Cabinet on the 7 November

The Chair, Councillor Brett introduced the report and advised Members that it was for information purposes only and provided a summary of the recommendations in the Cabinet reports on the agenda.

Resolved to note the report.

42a Climate and Nature Strategy Annual Update Report

Kate Richardson, Sustainability Lead, presented the report which detailed the new Climate and Nature Strategy and Action Plan for publication. During discussion the following points were highlighted:

- A net increase in emissions from the roll-out of heat-pumps was a result of the amount of electricity required for their operation. They remained a more efficient system, and it was not anticipated that the emission levels would increase significantly above current levels.
- The Council purchased electricity in advance at a fixed rate for a fixed period of time. The supplier had recently changed and the new supplier would be in place for the next 18 months. It was hoped that the Council would focus on producing as much energy itself as it could through low-carbon schemes, or purchase energy directly from a sustainable energy provider such as a solar farm.
- The new procurement policy was improving the Council's position in addressing scope 3 emissions. Improved staff knowledge on monitoring contacts and recognising what information was needed from potential service providers and suppliers was needed.

Resolved to support the officer recommendations in the Cabinet report, in full.

42b Community Grants Programme

Seanne Sweeney, Community Services Lead, Business Planning and Performance, presented the report which provided detailed of the funding recommendations to the Cabinet of the cross-party Grants Working Group. During discussion, the following points were highlighted:

- Monitoring processes were in place to ensure grants were being correctly managed when provided. For larger grants, grant agreements that included frequency of meetings with grant recipients and reporting mechanisms, were prepared.

Resolved to support the officer recommendations in the Cabinet report, in full.

43 Forward Plan of Cabinet Decisions

The Chair, Councillor Brett, introduced the Forward Plan of Cabinet decisions, which outlined those reports due for consideration by the Cabinet at its future meetings.

Resolved to note the Forward Plan of Cabinet decisions.

44 Policy and Performance Advisory Committee Work Programme

The Chair, Councillor Brett, introduced the Committee's work programme, which detailed the items due to be considered at future meetings and provided an opportunity for Members to request any areas or issues they wished the Committee to look at in further depth.

Resolved to note the Committee's work programme.

45 Date of Next Meeting

Resolved to note that the next meeting of the Policy and Performance Advisory Committee was scheduled to be held on the 26 November 2024, 5pm at Marine Workshops, Railway Quay, Newhaven, BN9 0ER.

The meeting ended at Time Not Specified

Councillor Christine Brett (Chair)