

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4

Minutes of the meeting of the Regulatory and Support Services Committee
held in the Council Chamber, The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely
on Monday 5th December 2016 at 4:30pm

P R E S E N T

Councillor Anna Bailey (Chairman)
Councillor Christine Ambrose Smith
Councillor David Ambrose Smith
Councillor Sue Austen
Councillor Mike Bradley
Councillor Peter Cresswell
Councillor Julia Huffer
Councillor Carol Sennitt
Councillor Alan Sharp

OTHERS PRESENT

Jo Brooks – Director, Operations
Nicole Pema – Human Resources Manager
Adrian Scaites-Stokes – Democratic Services Officer
Ian Smith – Principal Accountant
Hetty Thornton – Performance Management Officer
Dave White – Waste Services Team Leader

46. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no questions received from members of the public.

47. **APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Neil Hitchin and Jo Webber.

48. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

49. **MINUTES**

It was resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 12th September 2016 be confirmed as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman.

50. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

Councillor Sue Austen joined the meeting at this point, 4:34pm.

51. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC INCLUDING REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PRESS**

It was resolved:

That the press and public be excluded during the consideration of items 7 to 10 because it was likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during the items there would be disclosure to them of exempt information of Categories 1, 2 and 6 Part I Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as Amended).

52. **WASTE OPTIONS**

The Committee received an exempt report (R146, previously circulated) which considered the service provision for the waste collection and street cleansing service beyond the current contract term.

The Waste Services Team Leader reminded the Committee as to the background to the waste service, the establishment of the Working Party and the work done to formulate its recommendations. Part of the work had consisted of a consultation exercise and an updated summary of the results was tabled. The results showed that 85% of the public considered the waste service excellent or good. However, as the current contract was nearing its close, options for the future service had been considered. The Working Party had proffered a recommended approach to address this issue and sought the Committee's approval of it.

In response to questions received from Members of the Committee, it was revealed that a number of schemes had been looked at, costs would be kept down as much as possible, financial estimates had been based on current figures and 296 responses had been received following the consultation.

Councillor Anna Bailey was disappointed with the consultation response and urged further efforts to encourage more replies, including a renewed effort to go door-to-door and obtain the views of the parish councils. Other suggestions offered by the Committee included use of parish magazines or newsletters, and telephone or email surveys.

It was resolved:

That the approach recommended by the Waste Services Review Working Party as detailed in paragraph 4.4 be agreed.

53. **FUTURE DELIVERY OF THE COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS SERVICE**

The Committee received an exempt report (R147, previously circulated) which considered the future delivery of the Council's Communication and Public Relations Service.

The Director, Operations reminded the Committee of the interim arrangements in place to deliver the Communication and Public Relations Service. It had been a very busy and challenging time for the Council recently and the service had been tailored to suit those circumstances. Although there had been some teething problems, generally the feedback on the service had been positive. The future provision of this service had to be considered and proposals were made in respect of that.

It was resolved:

That the proposal detailed in Appendix 1 and summarised in Paragraph 5.1 for the future provision of the Council's Communication and PR Service be approved.

54. **APPOINTMENTS, TRANSFERS AND RESIGNATIONS**

The Committee received an exempt report (R148, previously circulated) which provided details of staff appointments, transfers and resignations for the period 1st September to 30th November 2016.

The Human Resources Manager advised the Committee that there had been 7 appointments, 0 transfers and 5 leavers over that period. 1 post had been deleted.

It was resolved:

That the content of the information report be noted.

55. **EXEMPT MINUTES**

It was resolved:

That the Exempt Minutes of the meeting held on 12th September 2016 be confirmed as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman.

Items open to the Public

56. **REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SCHEME AND APPRAISAL FORM**

The Committee received a report (R149, previously circulated) which considered changes to the Performance Management Scheme and Appraisal Form.

The Human Resources Manager reminded the Committee that back in September it had been reported that there had been a number of problems with the Performance Management Scheme. A subsequent survey of managers had led to a number of proposed changes. These included re-designating 'satisfactory' to 'good', as the difference between the assessment ratings of 'excellent' and 'satisfactory' was deemed too great. It would now be the responsibility of employees to arrange their annual appraisals, as well as their managers. If an employee was to submit their annual appraisal paperwork late, they could only achieve a 'good' rating as a maximum. Similarly if an employee became unsatisfied with their manager's response, they could escalate it to their senior manager.

The appraisal form itself had also undergone some changes as a result of managers' comments. The changes were outlined in paragraph 4.4 of the report. It was also noted that the appraisal form was unsuitable for manual workers, therefore a simplified version would be available for them to use instead.

Councillor Anna Bailey reminded Members that the new scheme had been introduced as a result of the Corporate Priorities and this had been its first year of operation. The Moderation Panel had found difficulty with the quality of the forms submitted, as some departments had taken it more seriously than others. It was felt that the scheme would get better, but the feedback received from managers had prompted some changes.

Councillor Sue Austen thought people had been concerned about the 'satisfactory' designation. If it was replaced with 'good' then there would be no incentive for improvement. If the manager failed to organise the appraisals would they also be down rated? This was confirmed as being correct, as staff would have to escalate the issue to senior managers.

Councillor Anna Bailey acknowledged the ratings were a 'hot topic' and had been discussed previously. There was some concern that the designation of 'satisfactory' had negative connotations. The staff needed to be comfortable with the terms used and that they were a true and accurate reflection of staff performance. The rating description would remain the same, it would just be a change in the rating designation.

The changes to the appraisal form made it more streamlined and consistent. This was part of the important process of linking staff performance with the Council's improvement. If anyone missed the appraisal deadline they should not be able to obtain an excellent or outstanding rating. These key changes should be explained to all the staff, especially about the appraisal deadline.

Councillor Peter Cresswell had read reports in the media about the change from 'satisfactory' to 'good', which had been absurd. Compliments were then paid to the Human Resources Officer for doing a first class job.

It was resolved:

That the changes that have been made to the Performance Management Scheme and appraisal form for 2016/17 (Appendix 1) be supported.

57. **PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT – SIX MONTH UPDATE REPORTS**

The Committee received a report (R150, previously circulated) which considered the mid-year performance outcomes.

The Performance Management Officer advised the Committee that the report gave an update on the mid-year performance for a number of service areas. This year, for the first time, the relevant Service Delivery Champions had been actively involved, which had been a positive step. Only a couple of services were behind with some of their targets and interventions had been put in place to help.

Legal Services

Councillor Anna Bailey noted that Legal Services were understaffed and asked what was being done to address the situation. The Director, Operation, revealed that jobs had been advertised, interviews undertaken and two trainees would be starting shortly.

Building Control

Councillor Anna Bailey thanked the service, as there had been some major issues it had to deal with, and it had managed to hold together brilliantly.

Environmental Services

Councillor Anna Bailey noted that the fee income from Care and Repair was slipping slightly. It was also noted that the target date to investigate selling technical advice had passed with no update given. The Performance Management Officer stated that the target had been set too early and a full report on that would be given at the year end. Councillor Bailey continued and noticed that the percentage of responses to planning consultations had gone very well and wondered whether the target times could be improved on. This could also apply to general licensing consultation response times. Thanks were given for the officers who had dealt fantastically with a pest control problem, as reported by the Service Delivery Champion.

Housing and Community Safety Services

Councillor Anna Bailey questioned how the collection of rents was going in comparison to the amount of rents due and asked that the relevant figures be included in reports, as that would provide really useful statistics.

Planning Services

Councillor Anna Bailey noted the massive increase in planning income. Listed building visits had not gone as well and the question was asked whether that was due to a resource issue.

Waste Services

Councillor Anna Bailey thought the 61.5% recycling rate being achieved was awesome and thanks should go to the waste team. The level of resolution of street cleansing complaints was disappointing again. Even though the baseline figure was low, even this was not being achieved. A contract was in place for street cleansing to be completed and it was queried whether this service had been monitored. The provider of the next waste contract would be expected to do much better and a standard should be set for them.

Councillor David Ambrose Smith suggested that street sweepers should be used in all locations, full time, to tackle the street cleansing problem.

Councillor Christine Ambrose Smith commended the Clean Neighbourhood Enforcement Officer for his helpfulness in assisting with the dog fouling issue in Littleport.

The Director, Operations, explained that continuous meetings had been held with the Service Delivery Champion, Councillor Julia Huffer, to highlight the street cleansing issue with Veolia. Their performance with this had been woeful. Unfortunately there was no contract provision for penalties if this was not completed satisfactorily. The issue was monitored and data collected, which was used when discussing the matter with Veolia. The Council did have some small equipment for use in street cleansing, that Veolia were encouraged to use.

Customer Services

Councillor Anna Bailey thought the initiative to develop Service Delivery Champions amongst the staff was fantastic, as they would become more expert in their chosen services. The Service had done well on abandoned call rates and the amalgamation of Customer Services with the Anglia Revenues Partnership staff was very ambitious.

Information and Communication Services

Councillor Mike Bradley considered a lot of the Council staff was not that computer literate, as they looked to the Service Desk to solve their problems. More training was needed to bring staff skills up to an acceptable level.

Human Resources

Councillor Anna Bailey was pleased that the sickness rates, which had been much worse than the private sector, were now at a comparable level. A lot of effort had gone into achieving that.

It was resolved:

- (i) That the six month performance updates be noted;
- (ii) That the comments from Service Delivery Champions for the following services be noted:
 - Performance Management
 - Building Control
 - Legal Services

- Environmental Services
- Licensing
- Housing and Community Safety
- Planning
- Waste Services
- Customer Services
- ICT
- Human Resources.

58. **PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT – REVISED REPORTING TEMPLATE**

The Committee received a report (R151, previously circulated) which considered the revised Service Delivery Plan template and updated guidance on performance management.

The Performance Management Officer advised the Committee that a lot of changes had taken place over the last year. There was a need for a 'corporate thread' to link staff to the Corporate Priorities. This had led to a simplified process of performance reporting, which was set out in the revised template. This had combined the initial two forms into one and came with updated guidance.

Councillor Mike Bradley reckoned a good job had been done but asked that relevant numbers be included with future reports.

Councillor Anna Bailey considered the new guidance to be excellent and thanks were offered to the Performance Management Officer and Director, Operations for their work on it.

It was resolved:

- (i) That the new performance reporting template be agreed;
- (ii) That the revised guidance on performance management be agreed.

59. **BUDGET MONITORING REPORT**

The Committee received a report (R152, previously circulated) which considered the budget monitoring information for services under the Committee's remit.

The Principal Accountant advised the Committee that the figures represented the financial situation as at the end of September. There was a significant current under spend, due mostly to the increase in planning income. The capital expenditure was expected to come in on budget.

Councillor Anna Bailey queried the waste contract contribution, as savings had been made but were not highlighted. Was this sum cancelled out by the investments made?

The Principal Accountant explained that extra costs had been incurred via that contract.

It was resolved:

- (i) That the Committee had a projected year end under spend of £61,000 compared to its approved revenue budget of £5,358,043 be noted;
- (ii) That the Committee had a projected capital programme outturn of £1,232,444 be noted.

60. **FORWARD AGENDA PLAN**

Councillor Anna Bailey reminded the Committee that future agendas would include the Public Relations rolling plan.

The Committee received it forward agenda.

61. **MINUTES**

The Committee received the minutes of the Transformation Programme Sub-Committee meeting held on 27th September 2016.

The meeting closed at 5:45pm.