



EAST  
CAMBRIDGESHIRE  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

## AGENDA ITEM NO. x

Minutes of a meeting of the Operational Services Committee held in the Council Chamber, The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2019.

### **PRESENT**

Cllr David Ambrose Smith (Chairman)  
Cllr Victoria Charlesworth  
Cllr Lis Every  
Cllr Julia Huffer  
Cllr Mark Inskip  
Cllr Paola Trimarco  
Cllr Jo Webber  
Cllr Christine Whelan

### **OFFICERS**

Jo Brooks – Director Operations  
Maggie Camp – Monitoring Officer  
James Khan – Head of Street Scene  
Adrian Scaites-Stokes – Democratic Services Officer  
Anne Wareham – Senior Accountant

#### 26. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no public questions.

#### 27. **APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

Apologies were received from Councillor Amy Starkey.

#### 28. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### 29. **MINUTES**

It was resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2019 be confirmed as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman.

#### 30. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

#### 31. **ADOPTION OF AMENDED PRESS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS PROTOCOL**

The Committee considered a report, U110 previously circulated, that detailed the Council's amended Press and Public Relations Protocol.

The Monitoring Officer advised the Committee that the key amendments were highlighted under paragraph 4.1 of the report. If the Committee was minded to approve the amended Protocol it would be circulated to all Members.

A query was raised about paragraph 3.5 of the Protocol, which stated that only 'Chairs and Lead Officers' be sent relevant press releases and it was proposed that all Members should receive a copy of all press releases. It was also questioned paragraph 6.2, where permission should be sought to photograph or record Council business, as this appeared to be contrary to recent Local Authority Regulations on openness. It was therefore proposed to remove that paragraph from the Protocol. Both proposals were agreed by the Committee.

It was resolved:

That the amended Press and Public Relations Protocol as detailed in Appendix 1 with the following amendments be approved:

- All press releases to be forwarded to all Members;
- Paragraph 6.2 be deleted.

### 32. **CLIMATE CHANGE IDEAS FORUM**

The Committee considered a report, U111 previously circulated, that outlined the introduction of the Climate Change Ideas Forum and how it would work to inform the Council's Environment and Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan.

The Director, Operations reminded the Committee that Council had agreed to declare a climate emergency. Following this, action had been taken to set up an Ideas Forum. Its format had been written and tested and would go live on the Council's website the day after the Committee meeting. There would be a dedicated email address where people could submit their ideas. People could also use an online form or could telephone in, where the Customer Services Team would take their comments. The forms would be passed onto the Customer Services Manager to respond and create a database. This was just the start. Future Committee reports would now include a Climate Change Assessment section.

In response to Members questions, the Committee was informed that the ideas would help produce the Strategy but there would be an intention to continue afterwards, as the issue was always involving. A report on the public reactions to the new Forum would be presented at the January Committee meeting. A press release to promote the Forum was already written but had not yet been released due to the General Election, but would be published soon afterwards. People submitting ideas would receive an instant acknowledgement. If the ideas related to other organisations beyond the Council then a follow-up response would be made. The Strategy and Action Plan would then be put in place once the Committee had adopted them.

It was resolved:

That the content of the report be noted.

### 33. **WASTE COLLECTIONS FOR PRIVATE AND UNADOPTED ROADS**

The Committee considered a report, U112 previously circulated, that provided an update on the assessments made on private and unadopted roads.

The Head of Street Scene advised the Committee that the report included further information on the impact of the Policy on properties. Site visits had been made to all the affected roads and a risk matrix had been created, in accordance with the tabled paper. Each road had received a Red Amber Green (RAG) rating in accordance with that matrix. A number of the properties were on unadopted or private roads but were presenting their waste bins on an adopted road. The Green rated properties meant there was no additional work required on the roads but an indemnity from each property was needed. Amber rated properties meant the roads were not up to standard but only minimal remedial work would be needed. Red rated properties, of which there were only 48, meant that substantial work was required to bring the roads up to standard. Collections would continue whilst the work was done and some temporary collection points might be used.

It was resolved:

- (i) That the additional information supplied in regards to the affected private and unadopted roads be noted;
- (ii) That the “Introduction of the Policy for Providing Waste Collection Services to Private and Unadopted roads and project plan” (Appendix A) be approved;
- (iii) That the Director, Operations at ECDC and the Chairman, Operational Services Committee, be delegated authority for all issues arising for the Project Plan.

### 34. **QUARTER 2, 2019 PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR THE WASTE AND STREET CLEANSING SERVICES**

The Committee considered a report, U1138 previously circulated, detailing the second quarter performance of the waste and street cleansing services by East Cambs Street Scene (ECSS).

The Head of Street Scene advised the Committee that all services had over-achieved during the last quarter. Refuse collections had been 100% over July and August, the newly appointed Development Manager was working on education and promotions, and the consultation on sickness absence had been completed. The Company was looking at potential technological solutions to help streamline the services provided. Neighbouring local authorities were using different equipment, so the Company could purchase similar equipment where appropriate. A new vehicle had been purchased and would be used to spread the message about recycling.

The Committee was pleased with the work that the Company was doing with youngsters and how it was treating and developing its staff. Staff retention levels were good but could be put at risk due to working in bad weather over the winter. The Committee offered its thanks to all the staff, as their service had yielded a positive response from the public.

In reply to a number of questions, the Head of Street Scene revealed that the Company did work with other Councils through RECAP (Recycling in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough). Though there was nothing formal in place, County-wide targets might be brought in. A number of in-cab technology options were being considered, some of which were being used elsewhere. Their progress would be checked to see how they worked. The decrease in recycling rates over the summer months was due to the season and took into account garden waste, so recycling rates had a tendency to fluctuate through the year.

It was resolved:

That the performance of service delivery for the second quarter be noted.

### 35. **PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT – SIX MONTH UPDATES**

The Committee considered a report, U114 previously circulated, providing updates on the progress made over the previous six months within the Service Delivery Plans for services under the remit of the Committee.

The Director, Operations highlighted a few issues for each service area. The Performance Measure columns had been included when the Service Delivery Plans were first introduced. Recently elected Councillors would not have seen these, so copies would be circulated. The upward pointing arrows under the Status column indicated the targets were being achieved, the down arrows indicated targets were not being achieved and the horizontal arrows meant the targets were on course to be met.

#### Building Control

No major issues, though the number of properties being built had slightly decreased.

#### Communities and Partnerships

The indicator for management of Section 106 and Community Facilities Grant schemes should be a horizontal arrow, not a downwards one. The intention was to have an annual Parish Council event to engage those councils. The idea was to have a more interactive event which could include outside agencies.

#### Customer Services

The Council's website accessibility score was not up to standard when tested in January 2019, but the issues have been identified and an Action Plan put in place to resolve before the next assessment in January 2020. A check would be made on the statutory deadline for when the website should comply with the relevant Regulations. The single sign-on point on the Self Service Portal had not been achieved. This would need to go to Committee for agreement and associated funding.

### Environmental Services

The income from re-rating food businesses was down on expectations. As the number of visits was purely dependent on the businesses requesting inspections, this target was out of the control of the Department. It was therefore proposed that this target be removed and this was agreed. The indicator for promotional activities for the Domestic Team should be a horizontal arrow, as the team was on track to meet its target for the year.

### Licensing

A second taxi meeting would be held in the New Year, so that target would be met. The appraisals were not due until next year, so that was also on track to be met.

### Housing and Community Safety

The income recovery was always an ambitious target and the 85% recovery was less than had been hoped for. The money would not be written off. The loans were made to individuals who would have their own payments plans, so they could afford the re-payments. If their circumstances changed, then the plans could be re-assessed and re-adjusted. Congratulations were offered to the Department for its pro-active approach which had seen a significant turn-around over the last six years.

### Information Communication Technology

The application review was a significant project and had fallen behind due to other work commitments. The revised Information Security Policy was currently being drafted. The team was now up to capacity, with the recruitment of new staff. It was noticed that the figures relating to the Council systems did not appear to add up. It was asked what systems were being upgraded. These would be checked and a response made to the Committee Members later.

### Performance Management

No comments were made.

### Planning

The sheer volume of applications being received had meant that the 75% validation target was not being met. This was under constant review by the Planning Manager and Director, Operations. Some staff vacancies had occurred but had been filled by existing staff. The Committee were impressed with the Department, as it was considered one of the best in the country. This was due to the hard work of staff and the way it handled the issues it had to deal with.

### Waste Services

The Committee expressed its appreciation for all departments within the Waste service.

It was resolved:

That progress made against priorities of the Council including areas where the service has been under achieving and where outstanding performance was delivered be noted and the following be agreed:

- The target for Environmental Services for re-rating of food businesses be removed.

36. **EAST CAMBS STREET SCENE 2018/19**

The Committee considered a report, U120 previously circulated, detailing the East Cambs Street Scene (ECSS) accounts for 2018/19.

The Senior Accountant advised the Committee that the accounts had already been presented to the Finance And Assets Committee and had been submitted to Companies House.

The Committee had a number of questions that could not be answered at the meeting but answers would be provided afterwards. The questions were:

- Why was there a delay between the accounts being signed off by the Directors on 18<sup>th</sup> July and the Auditors on 11<sup>th</sup> October?
- Should not the figures for cash flow on pages 9 and 18 be the same?
- Why were the figures on page 15 different?

In response to further queries from the Committee, the Senior Accountant explained that there was a typographical error on page 14, as the total figure should match that on page 7. The total figure on page 6 was a timing issue related to pension contributions, so differed from the retained earnings figure. The equity statements on pages 7 and 8 were also affected by the pension contributions. The accounts were for a company of the Council, which had been signed off though there appeared to be errors. The Directors of the Company should be questioned and answers provided for the Committee.

Councillor Mark Inskip then proposed that the accounts should be brought back to the Committee and the relevant Director of the Company should attend to go through them. This was duly seconded and when put to the vote it was declared lost.

It was resolved:

That the East Cambs Street Scene accounts 2018/19 as set out in Appendix 1 be noted.

37. **BUDGET MONITORING REPORT**

The Committee considered a report, U115 previously circulated, that updated Members on the financial position for services under the Operational Services Committee.

The Senior Accountant advised the Committee that not much had changed though the figures were slightly better, as no hotel rooms were now being used by the Housing Department. The Planning Department continued to employ agency staff but were looking to recruit permanent staff.

It was resolved:

- (i) That it be noted that this Committee was currently projected to end the year with an overspend, compared to its planned budget, of £47,500;
- (ii) That it be noted that the Committee had a projected capital programme outturn of £1,557,570.

### 38. **FORWARD AGENDA PLAN**

The Committee were reminded that an additional item, an update on the Climate Change Idea Forum, had been included for the January meeting.

The amended forward agenda plan was noted.

The meeting concluded at 5:47pm.