

Minutes of the meeting of the Regulatory and Support Services Committee
held in the Council Chamber, The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely on Monday
6th July 2015 at 4:30pm

PRESENT

Councillor Anna Bailey (Chairman)
Councillor Christine Ambrose Smith
Councillor David Ambrose Smith
Councillor Mike Bradley
Councillor Vince Campbell
Councillor Peter Cresswell
Councillor Lorna Dupré (as Substitute for Councillor Sue Austen)
Councillor Julia Huffer
Councillor Carol Sennitt
Councillor Jo Webber

OTHERS PRESENT

Councillor Paul Cox
Councillor Lis Every
Councillor James Palmer
Jo Brooks – Director (Regulatory Services)
Lorraine Brown – Conservation Officer
Mark Chadwick – Principal Information Communications Technology
Officer
Liz Knox – Environmental Services Manager
Richard Quayle – Director (Support Services)
Adrian Scaites-Stokes – Democratic Services Officer
Hetty Thornton – Performance Management Officer
Sue Wheatley – Planning Manager

15. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no questions received from members of the public.

16. **APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Sue Austen and Hamish Ross.

Councillor Lorna Dupré substituted for Councillor Sue Austen for this meeting.

17. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

18. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman made the no announcements.

Councillor Christine Ambrose Smith joined the meeting at this point, 4:33pm.

19. **PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**

The Committee received a report, reference Q26 previously circulated, that presented key performance outputs for 2014/15 and the new Service Delivery Plans for 2015/16.

The Performance Management Officer advised the Committee that the report set out the outputs for 2014/15 and the new service delivery plans for 2015/16. These plans had been produced under the new performance management system. A new Licensing Service plan had been produced at the request of Members, so there was no previous separate reporting for this service. The service delivery plans had been developed in line with the five corporate priorities, which were also reflected in the performance measures within the plans.

Councillor Anna Bailey reminded the Committee that at its last meeting she had suggested a number of things relating to the service delivery plans: Service Delivery Champions should be included, actual numbers should be included in the performance targets and the plans had to have consistency.

Planning Services

The Planning Manager reminded the Committee that the planning team dealt with planning applications and tree preservation orders. Most of its work was process driven and included a lot of consultation and notifications. It also had to work with a lot of statutory bodies.

Last year the service had been busy and had to get used to the new structure as well as welcoming new officers, who were easier to work with rather than having to use agency staff as previously. One of the main achievements was the provision of a duty officer to deal with customer queries. The service had met or exceeded a lot of its targets, particularly relating to planning applications and appeals. The service was now trying to work closer with agents to improve the service even more.

A number of challenging targets had not been met, including resolving applications within timescales. Concentrating on dealing with applications quickly made it difficult to measure the quality of the work being produced.

Councillors Lis Every and James Palmer joined the meeting at this point, 4:39pm.

The Planning Manager continued by noting that validations had improved but had not met its target. Some of this was due to several things being out of the control of the service, such as the number or quality of applications received.

Next year some of the targets would remain the same, although some attempt had been made to make them SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, timely). Some new targets had been added and more thought had gone into how to measure development.

Councillor Mike Bradley noted the references to information technology (IT) support and asked whether there were any concerns over this? The Planning Manager stated that this would be dealt with separately and would be dependent on the IT department.

Councillor Lorna Dupré queried the targets for the coming year as they were lower than those achieved last year and whether some statutory targets. This would not lead to improvements in the service and it had to be asked whether there was a culture of improvement. The Committee were informed that though some were national targets they could have been higher than stated, but the Planning Manager did not want to get too hung up on figures as she wanted to provide a quality service.

Councillor Anna Bailey wanted the number of full time employees listed in the plan as well as basic key statistics, such as how many planning applications and appeals were dealt with, to give Members an idea of the volume of work undertaken.

Consistency within the performance update was needed to highlight negative variances as well as positive ones. Monitoring of approved works to listed buildings showed a 0% figure, but it was understood that monitoring was taking place during the works rather than at the end. The empty boxes in the performance report needed to have some information in them. It was concerning that the number of hours for staff development was unknown. The figures relating to the previous Service Delivery Champion should have been included, rather than for the new one. The target for invalid applications received from agents should be reduced to 10%, rather than by 10%.

The Planning Manager assured the Committee that once the staff appraisal process had been completed then the number of development hours would be known.

The Conservation Officer explained that the target for inspections after approved works had been completed had been dropped, as it was very time consuming. Other works being undertaken meant that a balance had to be struck, so visits had been made during the works. Councillor Anna Bailey suggested that Building Control could check over the works instead, so the Council would still keep an eye on such works.

Councillor Peter Cresswell questioned whether the service delivery plans had been developed without any Member involvement. Things within the plans had been picked up, which should have been checked beforehand. The enforcement function was very important and complaints should be dealt with a degree of certainty, so what would be needed to reduce the target from 10 days? The Planning Manager stated that the new Service Delivery Champion had only been in place since the last election, whereas the new plan had been

put together before that. Some complaints received by the enforcement team were dealt with more quickly, some immediately, but it would be difficult to judge whether there would be the capacity to deal with all complaints that quickly. All complaints were therefore prioritised.

Councillor Vince Campbell, Service Delivery Champion for Planning, had been speaking to the Planning Manager and staff. The service had been found to be very enthusiastic and competent and it was expected to be an excellent service.

Environmental Services

The Environmental Services Manager advised the Committee that Environmental Services was split into three teams: commercial team; domestic team; Care and Repair. Last year most of the performance measures were met, despite a turnover of staff and the implementation of the new structure.

The highlights of the last year included the speedy resolution of complaints by the domestic team, which reflected the quality of the staff and the in-house training completed. The commercial team had made one successful prosecution, a very long and complex issue, with two more being put together, as well as achieving high inspection levels. Care and Repair had maintained the level of grants approved and had increased fee income as well as securing some capital funding.

The lowlights of last year included the Green Deal installation programme within Cambridgeshire, which had not been successful across the county. Only 17 homes had been completed, so the target had been too ambitious. This had not been helped by issues with Climate Energy, the company that should have completed the installations but had not. Funding for this programme had been re-negotiated and extended until September.

The service delivery plan for 2015/16 had retained some measures and had some targets increased.

Councillor David Ambrose Smith joined the meeting at this point, 5:07pm.

The new targets that had been set included looking to increase fee income from Care and Repair, the continuation of capital funding from Sanctuary Housing for work on their properties and adjusting the Green Deal target. Work would be done so that the service could discover what local businesses needed, to view potential options on the commercial side.

Councillor James Palmer left the meeting at this point, 5:08pm.

There would be a number of challenges next year, including the need to respond to the growth agenda and to join up services with the planning and licensing services.

Councillor Carol Sennitt, Service Delivery Champion for Environmental Services, had spent some time with the service and thought it was doing a really good job, particularly its inspection work. It was looking to encourage

landlords to take up the Green Deal offer and was awaiting the results of a recent mailshot.

Councillor Lorna Dupré noted that there was some confusion about tracking minor works, pollution was an important function and she questioned the work relating to service requests, as this seemed reactive rather than being proactive. The Environmental Services Manager replied that the service requests could relate to resolving issues about anything. The service did carry out air quality monitoring and would respond to anything untoward, though the air pollution levels were not at that stage yet. If sufficient staff were available then the service could deal with immediate issues. However, officers looked at the whole picture around the district, which meant the service tended to be reactive on a lot of different issues and also that the bulk of work related to complaints.

Councillor Jo Webber asked about the Council's role in the Green Deal programme. The Committee was informed that it worked with Climate Energy, which was supposed to deliver the programme for the Council.

Councillor James Palmer rejoined the meeting at this point, 5:16pm

There was one officer in each of the Cambridgeshire local authorities that dealt with Green Deal. The service was also dealing with the complaints received relating to non-delivery of this programme.

Councillor David Ambrose Smith questioned whether Climate Energy was the right company to deal with this programme. It was suggested that it was not, but it had won the short-term contract and it was impossible to cancel it and then go out to re-tender. Climate Energy was now using other companies to deliver the programme. The service would continue to look at the clauses within the contract, as the service had already stopped that company from taking deposits without getting the work done.

Councillor Mike Bradley suggested that it would be useful to know the numbers of contaminated land that had been remediated and queried why the percentage of inspections of this land was different from other inspections. It was explained that the Council only had one contaminated land officer, so the level of inspections could not be as numerous as the others. This type of land was only dealt with when it appeared through the planning process. The Council did not do the actual remediation, as this was done by others when the land was developed.

Councillor Anna Bailey stated that Members needed the key statistics within the service delivery plan. With regard the Energy Efficiency post, was it self-financing? The Committee was informed that it was covered by an administration charge.

Licensing Services

The Environmental Services Manager advised the Committee that this year this service had seen a major restructure, with a new Senior Licensing Officer appointed. It had developed its own service delivery plan for this year. There

were two main areas to focus on. The first related to a review of the fees and charges made. This review had been delayed because of the restructure but would be completed this year. The second referred to the holding of a Taxi Trade meeting, which had not taken place last year but had now been programmed in.

Street trading pitches would be reviewed, with a view to help increase trade and consequently fee income. Additional performance measures had been included to maximise income and help towards achieving a cost neutral licensing service. Other potential commercial activities would be considered.

There were a number of challenges to face: maintaining a good relationship with the taxi trade; meeting implementation dates of new legislation; working with IT to improve procedures.

Councillor Lorna Dupré wanted to know numbers for the performance measures targets. Councillor Anna Bailey had no idea about the possible number of licences that the service would have to deal with. The target for temporary event notices should read 100%, to ensure people would be covered. The Environmental Services Manager advised the Committee that the target for hackney carriage and private hire licences should be 95%.

Councillor Jo Webber wondered whether some of the administrative licensing work could be done by Customer Services, thereby freeing up the officers for more technical work. The Environmental Services Manager stated that the procedures for temporary event notices would be streamlined and talks were ongoing with IT about that. The service could investigate working with Customer Services on some tasks, such as taxi licensing applications.

Legal Services

The Performance Management Officer advised the Committee that the Legal service had met all its targets for last year except for the Land Registry takeover. The date for this had been put back by the Government, so was out of the service's hands.

Councillor Lorna Dupré wanted an explanation why the recovery of revenue had not matched its 100% target and where some issues had not matched their targets. The Performance Management Officer thought the recovery matter related to situations where this could not be achieved within timescales. Targets not being met by 10% or more would have explanations for them.

Councillor Anna Bailey asked what the implications for moving the Local Land Charges function would be. Statistics were needed to help explain the situation. There was a performance measure to assist the corporate priorities but it would be unmeasurable, so needed to be more specific. In another measure, there was also no explanation about what 'requests' meant. Legal services should also be pushed to improve on the turnaround for Freedom of Information (FOI) requests and more data was needed for this. The Director (Support Services) declared that FOI requests were increasing between 15% to 20% per year.

Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Services

The Principal Information Communications Technology Officer advised the Committee that the Council restructure had affected the performance of the ICT service and a number of targets had not been met. The compliance with the Public Services Network (PSN) had not been delivered due to a lack of resources and three other complex projects being undertaken. This was now being addressed and should be resolved by the end of July, otherwise there was a danger that the Council could lose access to Government departments. Staff training was needed to improve the service, but had not been completed due to the ongoing service review and no budget having been identified to provide it.

The Service Desk had performed well and had met its targets. Actual figures would be included but it was estimated that it had to deal with around 500-600 calls each month. The Council's network was also solid and reliable, as was the Cambridgeshire Public Services Network partnership. The service would be striving to achieve the national standard for data quality within the Local Land and Property Gazetteer.

The service was still undergoing its review but had aspirations to meet the new transformation agenda. With this in mind, a meeting would be held with all Service Leads to ascertain what they would want from the service and what they wanted to achieve by using it.

Councillor Paul Cox, one of the Service Delivery Champions for ICT, thanked the Principal Information Communications Technology Officer for his honest appraisal of the ICT service. It was the only Council service that was totally internal. It would play a key part in the transformation programme but would also have to change to reflect the fast moving ICT market.

Councillor Mike Bradley, the other Service Delivery Champion for ICT, also mentioned the upcoming meeting where Service Delivery Champions and Service Leads needed to state what they required from the service. There were a few issues with the service that had to be addressed. This included the requirement for staff training, the necessity to find funding, issues over the security and protection of data and to become aware of what other local authorities were doing so services could be matched up.

Councillor Julia Huffer was very concerned about the non-compliance with PSN, as without it the Council could be cut off from accessing information. Would any outside body be using it? Could this work be outsourced? The Committee was informed that the ICT service was on its third reiteration of the submission and the final draft was due this week. The Council was responsible for this and could be checked by the outside auditors. The delays in progressing this was due to resources being deployed elsewhere and the loss of some technical support.

Councillor Anna Bailey wanted the service delivery plan to avoid using acronyms, include the numbers of full time employees and show the income amounts. The amounts of expenditure, whilst doing the review, should be more specific and the amount of savings produced should also be shown. With

reference to the servers, what did the 80% figure relate to? How would the service's response to the transformation agenda be measured? Bandwidth figures had been included in two different places within the plan. In reply, it was divulged that the percentage of servers virtualised would be increased to 80% overall. The intention was for the service's response to the transformation agenda to be agreed today and then it could be lifted into the service delivery plan. The figures for the bandwidth performance would be clarified.

It was resolved:

That the outputs presented for 2014/2015 (noting any variances) and the new Service Delivery Plans for 2015/2016, subject to the minor amendments suggested by Members and officers, be approved.

20. **TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME**

The Committee received a report, reference Q27 previously circulated, that set out the Programme Plan for delivering the Council's Transformation Programme.

The Director (Support Services) tabled a set of charts outlining the timescales for the Programme, to re-present the information within the report.

The report set out the programme, which had received significant input from Members and officers. Members' ideas had been discussed with officers and the recommendations had been based on that. Appendix 1 to the report set out the vision, as agreed by the Committee. Details were included about the areas that Members wanted to see developed and the projects were listed with their timescales.

Councillor Anna Bailey congratulated the Director (Support Services) on his presentation, which set out the big programme that would involve all sections of the Council. The first point of customer contact and the first time of contact had been discussed previously, as they were different. The document needed to be reviewed to ensure the right references were being made, as enquiries would not be resolved 100% of the time at the first point of contact.

Councillor Lorna Dupré wanted thought given to elements of the programme around the Council's functionality and for the risks of duplication of data provision, as there was a history of this. The Director (Support Services) suggested that this might be relevant to the 'My Ward' project, which would be similar to the now defunct 'Shape Your Place' programme. This new project would have two aspects: to allow Members to look up information about their areas and an area open to the public. Specific proposals would be developed once Members requirements, the cost elements and the interest of the public were understood.

In response to Councillor Julia Huffer's question, the Committee was informed that the 'Spot the Grot' project would be kept separate. The infrastructure for this was being put in place with realistic timescales.

It was resolved:

- (i) That the attached Programme Plan for the Council's transformation Programme (Appendix 1) be approved;
- (ii) That a further report setting out predicted savings, targets for the programme outcomes and detailed governance arrangements for Members' approval be received.

The meeting closed at 6:24pm.