



EAST  
CAMBRIDGESHIRE  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

## REGULATORY SERVICES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Regulatory Services Committee held in the Council Chamber, The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2019 at 4.30 p.m.

### P R E S E N T

Cllr Anna Bailey (Chairman)  
Cllr Sue Austen  
Cllr Elaine Griffin-Singh  
Cllr Julia Huffer  
Cllr Chris Morris  
Cllr Carol Sennitt  
Cllr Stuart Smith (as a Substitute)  
Cllr Jo Webber

### ALSO PRESENT

Jo Brooks – Director Operations  
Jason Johnson – Team Leader, Building Control  
James Khan – East Cambs Street Scene, Waste Minimisation & Fleet Manager  
Liz Knox – Environmental Services Manager  
Angela Parmenter – Housing & Community Safety Manager  
Rebecca Saunt – Planning Manager  
Adrian Scaites-Stokes – Democratic Services Officer  
Hetty Thornton – Performance Management Officer

#### **55. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no public questions.

#### **56. APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

Apologies were received from Councillor Hamish Ross.

Councillor Stuart Smith attended as a Substitute Member for this meeting.

#### **57. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors Anna Bailey, Elaine Griffin-Singh and Carol Sennitt declared prejudicial interests in agenda item number 6, as they were all landlords.

#### **58. MINUTES**

It was resolved:

That the minutes of the Regulatory Services Committee meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2019 be confirmed as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman.

## **59. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman made no announcements.

*Councillors Anna Bailey, Elaine Griffin-Singh and Carol Sennitt left the meeting at this point, 4:34pm. Councillor Julia Huffer took the Chair.*

## **60. PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING ENFORCEMENT POLICY**

The Committee considered a report, reference T246, previously circulated, that updated members about the Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy consultation response.

The Environmental Services Manager advised the Committee that the report showed the results of the consultation undertaken. 7 representations had been received, 6 positive and 1 negative. Therefore there was no requirement to amend the Policy.

It was resolved:

That the East Cambridgeshire, Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy be approved and implemented.

*Councillors Anna Bailey, Elaine Griffin-Singh and Carol Sennitt returned to the meeting at this point, 4:35pm. Councillor Anna Bailey resumed the Chair.*

## **61. COUNTYWIDE ADAPTATIONS AND REPAIR POLICY**

The Committee considered a report, reference T247, previously circulated, that updated members on the outcome of the countywide Disabled Facilities Grant review and subsequent development of the countywide adaptations and repair policy.

The Environmental Services Manager advised the Committee that the outcome of the recent countywide review, and subsequent development of the Policy, aimed to support people within the 5 council areas covered. The Policy highlighted the importance of public wellbeing and outlined the interventions that could be invoked and aimed for a consistent approach across the county. The main changes were highlighted in paragraph 3.9 of the report. The Committee was asked to note and endorse the Policy.

Councillor Anna Bailey thanked the officers, as a lot of work had gone into producing the Policy. It was noted that the process was not means tested but would be cost effective.

It was resolved:

That the adoption of the Countywide Adaptations and Repair Policy be noted and endorsed.

## **62. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**

The Committee considered a report, reference T248, previously circulated, that provided the end of year performance outputs for 2018/2019 and the new service delivery plans for 2019/2020.

### Waste Services

The East Cambs Street Scene, Waste Minimisation & Fleet Manager advised the Committee that since April 2018 all employees had shown great commitment in turning the service around and this had been an outstanding achievement. Recycling rates had averaged around 57%, with a highest of 64%, and it was expected to maintain that level to 2030. Street Cleansing continues to improve and was anticipated to consistently hit its targets in the future. The employees had worked hard over the past year with better communications aiding their engagement. Collections rates were consistently high, in the high 90s.

The next 12 months would be exciting, with Government changes expected. The aim would be to build on what had been achieved and continue to improve. Education and promotion would be given high priority. Thanks were offered for all the support received over the last year.

Councillor Julia Huffer stated it had been a pleasure to work with the waste service. The staff seemed happier and an extraordinary amount of work had taken place.

Councillor Anna Bailey noted the 60% recycling target but a different figure was shown in different parts of the Service Plan. Those figures needed to be amended to 60%. Thanks were proffered to Street Scene and people were noticing the improved services.

Councillor Jo Webber was concerned about the amount of graffiti appearing in Littleport. Although acknowledging that it was not the responsibility of this Council to clear it up, she asked whether any help available to provide an effective way for businesses to remove it.

The Waste Minimisation & Fleet Manager suggested that some information could be passed on and shared with businesses on this subject. In the future Street Scene could provide a service to remove it for them, on a commercial basis.

The Director Operations thought a three-pronged approach was needed. The first would be to give advice and assistance. The second would be to look at the commercial opportunities for the Company, ensuring that the proper insurance was in place. The third was to provide education and awareness. As part of that, the process had started to produce a Youth Strategy, which would include advice on anti-social behaviour problems including graffiti.

### Building Control Services

The Team Leader, Building Control advised the Committee that the last year had been a 'holding year', as the expected guidance following the Grenfell tragedy was still awaited. Around 300 civil servants were working on it and it

was due within the next 12 months. Over the last year all targets had been hit, even though the team had to be re-structured following the decision of one surveyor to reduce their hours. The re-structure also aimed to retain the existing staff, as recruiting a new surveyor was virtually impossible. The team had achieved ISO9001 status, which was based on good management performance and a customer focus.

The next twelve months will see the department sitting and waiting for the new guidance and any impacts following Brexit. There was no idea how this could affect the work of the department. Overall there was a slowdown in house building, as contractors were scaling back their efforts, so there was a knock-on effect with the associated trades. So far this area had not been too adversely affected. It was hoped that an apprentice post would be created, as there was a new degree award available and this would provide some succession planning. Social media would be used more in the coming year to promote the service being offered.

The Director Operations gave thanks to the Team Leader for his work on the re-structure, which included allowing team members to partake of the management training programme and consequent line management responsibilities. This would allow the department to 'grow its own' and free the Team Leader up for more strategic work. The accreditation achieved was no mean feat and congratulations were given for that success.

Councillor Anna Bailey acknowledged the success in obtaining 79% of the market share of business and this was because the department was performing properly and giving a brilliant service.

#### Planning Services

The Planning Manager advised the Committee it had been a busy year and had seen a lot of new officers joining the department. This high turnover of staff had impacted on some performance targets, though the performance against the CPD should show an upwards pointing arrow.

The determination of applications had increased from the last year, though the number dealt with within 5 days had decreased due to the staff shortages. Applicants were allowed a 24 hour period to rectify applications before being dealt with and this had generated good feedback from the applicants. Targets were mostly up as were enforcement issues, and an Enforcement Officer had just been recruited. There were a number of items on the Department's 'wish list', which include a new design guide. Work had not finished on this yet, as the Department had been so busy, but in another 6 months it would be better. A Tree Strategy had been produced, approved by the Committee, and included an Action Plan for next year.

A review had taken place to gauge what could realistically be achieved next year, so some of the targets had been decreased to make them achievable for the new staff. The Department would look to increase those targets in the future. Some relevant targets had also been included in officers' appraisals. The Department was also looking to reduce the number of documents produced, so not all reports were being printed and more online use was being done. The Conservation Officer would be reviewing the list of buildings of local

interest. In line with Government guidelines there would be a focus on producing biodiversity net gain on developments. Use of social media would be expanded and more work with schools would be done to promote planning as a profession.

The Strategic Planning Department were helping to make the new Design Guide usable, as it was key for officers and developers. Work was ongoing to develop it with a focus on good design.

Councillor Stuart Smith queried the role of parish councils in the buildings of local interest list, as previously some submissions had not been included. The Planning Manager reminded the Committee that these structures were not protected like listed buildings so justification was needed to include them on the list. Listing these buildings would not have any restriction on planning applications.

Councillor Anna Bailey thought the Tree Strategy was very good, as it was a pro-active policy to encourage trees to be included in new developments. The Council was also trying to make some developments deliver a biodiversity gain. Thanks were given to the team for their hard work.

#### Housing and Community Safety

The Housing and Community Safety Manager advised the Committee that one year in following the enactment of the Homeless Reduction Act there had been no major impact on services. This was due to the work that was already being done. The Department was allowed 56 days to deal with any homeless person and only 1 person had been in Band A, so over time they would be on the housing list. Private landlords were now offering their dwellings for our use and this was thanks to the good experienced landlord officer in the Department.

In the next year the impact of the Universal Credit implementation would be monitored with a view for early intervention to prevent issues. Joint working with Customer Services would help provide specialist advice. The district's traveller sites were now cleaner, with rents paid on time and with education work ongoing. Over the next 12 months it was predicted that they would go from strength-to-strength. The Department was also involved in producing the Youth Strategy.

Councillor Stuart Smith asked whether the rough sleepers in Ely were homeless and whether those numbers were included in the statistics.

The Housing and Community Safety Manager stated that there were no homeless people in Ely and the Council was working with the Police to try and remove these people. There had been one genuine rough sleeper, due to a relationship breakdown, but the team had managed to get him back into his accommodation. The Problem Solving Group had swelled from 3 agencies to 25 and was working well together. Information was shared via a secure website.

Councillor Anna Bailey was appreciative of the updates provided by the Department, which proved very helpful. The County Council had started a new approach to housing related support services with the aim to get people into

stable housing environments before working on their problems. Some of this work may head East Cambridgeshire's way. The Housing and Community Safety Manager thought that a lot of the work the County were doing was already being done by the Department.

#### Environmental Services

The Environmental Services Manager advised the Committee that it had been a busy year across all services. There had been a number of staff changes which had affected some of the performance resulting in some targets not being met. This included inspections of low risk food premises and some business inspections. As a result of the consultation around temporary event notices, increased resilience had been made so that the issue was covered better within the team. Public Space Protection orders had been implemented for dog fouling with a communications campaign being planned for next year.

Work would continue on helping low hygiene rated food outlets to help them achieve a 5-star rating. Amendments to the Houses in Multiple Occupation regulations had been instigated with inspections to continue.

Next year grant completions needed to focus on meeting the timescales. Assessors were being trained to do assessments instead of waiting for occupational therapists, thereby speeding up the process. The Department continued to work with the Waste service to deal with fly tips.

#### Licensing Services

The Environmental Services Manager advised the Committee that the new Animal Welfare Regulations had been implemented and the Department would target a number of inspections. Officer time was being freed up from administrative tasks to complete those. Overall income rose, up to 95% recovery of costs, so the budget deficit was closing. The Department was working on becoming paper-free by using text-messaging reminders, particularly to the taxi trade. There would be an increase in fees next year and plans would be put in place to deal with the expected changes in taxi regulations.

Councillor Anna Bailey noted that the recoverable income had not been included in the Service Delivery Plan. The Environmental Services Manager stated that this was looked at on a yearly basis.

*Councillor Carol Sennitt left the meeting at this point, 4:39pm.*

Councillor Elaine Griffin-Singh stated that the excellent performance of the Licensing Department was down to the Senior Licensing Officer's work.

It was resolved:

That the end of year performance outputs and new service delivery plans for the following services be approved:

- Waste Services
- Building Control Services
- Planning Services
- Housing and Community Safety

- Environmental Services
- Licensing Services

The meeting concluded at 4:40 p.m.

DRAFT