
Policy and Resources Committee

MINUTES of the Meeting held in the Council Chamber, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, ME10 3HT on Wednesday, 14 June 2023 from 7.00 pm - 8.26 pm.

PRESENT: Councillors Mike Baldock (Vice-Chair), Monique Bonney, Lloyd Bowen, Ann Cavanagh (Substitute for Councillor Derek Carnell), Tim Gibson (Chair), Angela Harrison, Mike Henderson, James Hunt, Mark Last, Rich Lehmann, Richard Palmer, Julien Speed, Dolley White, Mike Whiting and Ashley Wise.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Billy Attaway, Lisa Fillery, Robin Harris and Larissa Reed.

OFFICERS PRESENT (VIRTUALLY): Jo Millard and Tony Potter.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE (VIRTUALLY): Councillors Hayden Brawn, Alastair Gould, Ken Ingleton and Elliott Jayes.

APOLOGY: Councillor Derek Carnell.

90 **Emergency Evacuation Procedure**

The Chair outlined the emergency evacuation procedure.

91 **Declarations of Interest**

No interests were declared.

Part B Minutes for Information

92 **Performance Monitoring - 2022/23 Quarter 4**

The Information and Business Improvement Manager introduced the report. He explained that table 3, 4th Key Performance Indicator (KPI), Percentage of Household waste sent for reuse, recycling and comp the year end value was 40.70% and the 2022-23 target was 42%.

The Chair invited Members to make comments, which included:

- Regarding the long-term empty homes brought back into use were Swale Borough Council (SBC) still working with the Kent County Council (KCC) housing scheme?;
- asked for clarification as to why the Empty Property Officer post was deleted?;
- were the planning application figures based on the application being received to completion?;
- were the planning enforcement figures based on the enforcement case being logged and then acted upon?;
- the long-term empty homes indicator was something that needed to be dropped so that officers could spend time on planning applications rather than empty homes;
- was good to see the percentage of invoices paid was reaching the target;
- although the planning indicators were below target, the number of minor applications that had been processed were 93.5%, other applications were 96.6% both of which were above target; and
- only 4.4% of major planning applications had lost at appeal which showed that the planning department had worked hard on improving their service.

The Director of Resources responded to points raised and said that the long-term empty homes indicator was about the homes under SBC's own resources which the Council did not have the resources to fund. She added that the Council had tried to fill the post twice and had been unsuccessful both times.

The Information and Business Improvement Manager responded to the planning indicators and clarified that the indicator for planning applications was the number of applications that had been received to the date of decision. The Planning enforcement indicator was based on the number of enforcement cases that had been logged up to the point of an initial response being issued to the complainant.

Further comments on the report were raised;

- Thought that the missed bins figure were low as there was plenty of residents that often reports missed bins each week;
- thought that the indicator for missed bins showed real concern with the contractor and thought the contract needed reviewing;
- was aware that the refuse contractor did not always report missed bins correctly;
- even though the Council had spent a lot of time educating residents on what could be recycled and what could not, there were still instances of residents putting the incorrect waste in their bins;
- was there going to be a Member briefing on the future plans for street cleansing?;
- needed to consider the communication sent out to residents about missed bins and how the Council could improve it;
- the refuse contract was coming to an end, and this might create further problems;
- were there staffing issues within waste contractor?;
- KCC were closing recycling and reuse sites, and this would not help with the recycling figures;
- noted that the different seasons affected the recycling indicators;
- wanted to thank the Environmental Contracts Manager for her hard work on holding the waste contractor accountable for the missed bins;
- what happened to the fines issued to the waste contractor?; and
- why was the safeguarding training not at 100% even though it was mandatory for staff?

The Chief Executive responded to points raised explaining that the waste contractor had issues in retaining drivers whenever there was a nearby delivery company that paid more for drivers. She said that the safeguarding training was mandatory for all SBC staff, but some staff were only on temporary contracts, and as such did not need to complete the training but they were still recorded in the indicator.

The Director of Resources said that there were plans for a Member briefing on street cleansing and the plans SBC had for the future. She added that the fines issued to the waste contractor for missed bins were allocated to the overall environmental budget to minimise the amount of funds that needed to be drawn from the reserves.

Councillor Mike Henderson commented on the indicators that were being reported on and that it was a long time since they had been reviewed. He proposed that a review was undertaken over the next municipal year 2023/24 on the KPI's so that Members could make more informed decisions in the 2024/25 civic year. Councillor Mike Whiting seconded the proposal and on being put to the vote was agreed.

Resolved:

- (1) That the Corporate Performance Management Headlines Report at Appendix I of the report be noted.**
- (2) That a review of the Key Performance Indicators takes place over the municipal year 2023/24.**

93 Membership of Sub-Committees**Resolved:**

- (1) That the membership of the Appointments Sub-Committee, Disciplinary Sub-Committee and Statutory Officers Disciplinary Appeals Sub-Committee as per Appendix I of the report be agreed.**

94 Membership of the Planning and Transportation Policy Working Group

There was some discussion around the election of Chair and Vice-Chair and Councillor Mike Baldock proposed that Councillor Alastair Gould be Chair and Councillor Monique Bonney be Vice-Chair for the first meeting of the Planning Transportation Policy Working Group. This was seconded by Councillor Rich Lehmann and on being put to the vote was agreed.

Resolved:

- (1) That the membership of the Planning and Transportation Policy Working Group as shown in Appendix I of the report be agreed.**
- (2) That Councillor Alastair Gould be elected as Chair for the first meeting.**
- (3) That Councillor Monique Bonney be elected as Vice-Chair for the first meeting.**

95 Membership appointments to joint arrangements**Resolved:**

- (1) That Councillors Tim Gibson and Mike Baldock be appointed to the MKIP board.**
- (2) That Councillor Tim Gibson be appointed to the South Thames Gateway Building Control Joint Committee.**

96 Forward Decisions Plan**Resolved:**

- (1) That the Forward Decisions Plan be noted.**

Chair

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All minutes are draft until agreed at the next meeting of the Committee/Panel