

CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REVIEW WORKING PARTY

Minutes of the meeting held on 16 February 2017 at 7.00 pm in Council Chamber, Council Offices, Cecil Street, Margate, Kent.

Present: Councillor Peter Campbell (Chairman); Councillors Curran, Dexter and Jaye-Jones

In Attendance: Councillor Taylor-Smith

199. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from the following Members:

Councillor Connor;
Councillor Dennis;
Councillor Rusiecki.

200. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

201. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Councillor Jaye-Jones proposed, Councillor Dexter seconded and Members agreed the minutes as a correct record of the meeting held on 22 November 2016.

202. Q3 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT 2016/17

Tim Willis, Director of Corporate Resources introduced the report and said that the report structure had been updated to include a provision for comments on key focus and due dates as suggested by the working party. Mr Willis added that future reports would include information on comparison with benchmarking local authorities and analysing trends as well. In response to the new format Members said that this was a clear approach which was easy to read and follow.

Some expressed some concern regarding the summaries of the targets that included those under 'Cleaner and Welcoming Environment,' 'Supporting Neighbourhoods' and 'Housing Tenants.' They further urged that more positive stories about some of the good work being done by council should be published to inform the public. These could include the upcoming big clean up week in March.

Members further observed that the level of residents not satisfied with the council's performance did not appear to give a good picture. Mr Willis said that officers took note of the public view and were aware that these figures related to the last year and expected the performance figures to change next time the figures are reported. Members noted that sickness absence levels had improved as a result of proactive management action.

Members noted the report.

203. EK SERVICES Q3 PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR TDC

Dominic Whelan, Director of Shared Services led discussion on the topic as he presented his report to Members. Mr Whelan was pleased to report that the level of performance within the Payments team regarding the accuracy of processing of benefits, as reported in the last quarter had improved in line with expectations. This was due to staffing

challenges that have since been resolved by management and performance had gone up to expected levels. He advised the meeting that the payments team was still experiencing some difficult challenges as they had to deal with historical and complex payment cases; this led to a RED indicator in this area for the Quarter. The team was working through a backlog of such cases, but management was confident that the overall performance for the year would remain within target and the backlog of older casework would be reduced.

Mr Whelan further reported that collection levels for council tax were good and similar to this time in the previous financial year. It should be noted that more residents had signed up to the 12 month tax paying arrangement instead of the ten month collection. Business rates were slightly under target, partly as a result of more businesses signing up to the 12 month collection. Mr Whelan also noted that the performance was below the same level last year but he explained that the previous years' collection levels included payments received from GP Surgeries which following appeal had since been awarded a repayment, thereby incurring a £400k pay back by EK Services. There was going to be £1 million more collection this year than in the previous one. ICT and Customer Services were running well.

Changes were being considered for a new operating model for EK Services and an HR restructure consultation was coming to a close shortly; some savings will be realised as a result. Members were advised that changes had been requested to the EKHR service provision to the Council which would see the Health & Safety advisory services function being moved back to Thanet District Council by the end of the financial year. All CExs involved will be part of that decision since this is a partial reduction (not affecting not more than 10% of the EK Services head count) and will therefore not require the involvement of the East Kent Services Board (the three Leaders).

The Chairman then requested that Mr Willis asks the CEx to provide a statement to the working party advising on why the decision to bring back the Health & Safety function in-house was necessary and this would be presented at the next meeting of the sub group.

Mr Whelan said that the digital and customer service initiatives were still on-going. A joint digital event was hosted by EK Services and Age UK which saw 24 members of the public (the over 50s) taking part in Margate and Cliftonville. More events were being planned for the near future.

Members noted the report.

204. EAST KENT HOUSING PERFORMANCE Q3 2016/17

Deborah Upton, CEx of EK Housing (EKH) introduced the report. With regard to rent, she said that how EKH measured performance was to look at the same week for the previous year, and currently EKH had collected more at this week than was case for the same period in the previous financial year. However the income team faced challenges on collection rates due to universal credit and capping cases, particularly in Thanet. They contribute a disproportionately larger amount of arrears in relation to the small number of such cases and this involves a significant work load both in collection and trying to support residents. One member of the income team is on long term sick and this led to drop in collections in the third quarter under review.

It was hoped that by the end of the next quarter the voids performance would have improved. However this was another area that posed some challenge because of the asbestos work which has to be carried out in some of the properties which has implications for the managing empty properties, particularly in Thanet where there is a high turnover of voids especially in the tower blocks.

In response to the above points raised by Ms Upton, the Chairman suggested that a different category could be included in the reporting template to refer to 'voids with

asbestos works.' This would give a clearer picture of voids management across the board. Ms Upton agreed that the report could be separated to show this.

Ms Upton further reported that the performance for heating and hot water had improved. Performance for gas servicing was at 100% and response repairs was also strong. There was a new system for monitoring complaints which sees complaints being monitored centrally. The figures were now back on target as from January 2017 going forwards. Pilots for the new surveys to collect customer satisfaction are ongoing in Shepway and Dover, and the outcome will be reported at a future meeting of the working party.

Currently there were some challenges to the capital programme and this was likely to remain difficult into the next financial year. However once the stock condition data was produced this would significantly improve the management in this area, as it would allow for more accurate production of the capital programme.

Members noted the report.

Meeting concluded: 7.44 pm