

CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REVIEW WORKING PARTY

Minutes of the meeting held on 13 November 2017 at 7.00 pm in Council Chamber, Council Offices, Cecil Street, Margate, Kent.

Present: Councillor Peter Campbell (Chairman); Councillors Connor and Rusiecki

In Attendance: Councillor Crow-Brown

219. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Dexter and Councillor Dennis.

220. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

221. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Councillor Rusiecki proposed, Councillor Connor seconded and Members agreed the minutes as a correct record of the meeting held on 4 September 2017.

222. TDC CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 2 2017/18

Hannah Thorpe, Head of Communications introduced the item, during which it was noted that:

- Similarly to the last quarter, there were 14 targets categorised as red, two amber and 13 green. While the number of targets within each category remained unchanged, some targets had moved between categories during the quarter.
- There was an expectation that some targets would move out of the red category during quarter three.
- The increase in recorded crime was partly due to a change in recording methods by Kent Police.
- There would be a Members Briefing to report to members what action the Council would take to address homelessness within the District.
- Since the annual survey last year there had been a significant increase (up 28%) in public opinion that the Council offered value for money.

The TDC corporate performance report for quarter two of 2017/18 was noted.

223. EK SERVICES Q2 2017/18 PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR TDC

Dominic Whelan, Director of East Kent Services (Shared Services) introduced the report during which it was noted that:

- It was expected that the error rate and time taken to process housing benefit and council tax benefit should improve following the implementation of a new digital benefits solution. This would help to relieve some of the pressure on teams that dealt with these claims.
- Overall, performance regarding housing benefit and council tax benefit applications compared well against national bench marks.
- There was a resourcing pressure within customer services, as staff vacancies had remained unfilled. This was to achieve a budget saving which had now been met. The pressure was expected to be relieved as the vacant posts would be

filled, some satellite sites had been closed and the service was looking to offer apprenticeships.

- Over the last quarter there had been an increase in work relating to the support of universal credit. EK Services were preparing a business case for the provision of this support which could be recharged to the Department of Work and Pensions.
- Since its closure, some of the services provided by the Ramsgate Office had moved to Ramsgate Town Council. The Visitor Information Centre has been able to provide some support to residents now that tourist visitor numbers have dwindled following the end of the summer season.

The EK Services quarter two 2017-18 performance report noted.

224. EAST KENT HOUSING PERFORMANCE REPORT Q2 2017/18

Ms Deborah Upton, Chief Executive of East Kent Housing introduced the report during which it was noted that:

- Universal credit went live across Thanet in September 2017. Any new benefit claims or change to existing claims would initiate a universal credit claim.
- Arrears had increased following the roll out of universal credit, most claimants find themselves in arrears as claimants were often paid at least six weeks following the claim and did not have savings to support them during this time.
- In recognition of the delay in payment, EK Housing had changed its system of chasing for arrears.
- Arrears before universal credit were around £47,000.00, following its implementation they were around £78,000.00.
- The six week delay in payments related only to new universal credit claims. Changes to those already in receipt of universal credit were usually processed within a couple of days.
- A briefing could be given to Members by Mr Gillmore, (Benefits Manager) and a Housing colleague regarding the roll out of universal credit.
- It was expected that all claimants would be on universal credit by 2020. However payment of pensions and some specialist cases would not be transferred.
- The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) were responsible for universal credit claims and payment. A digital service would reduce the workforce required to process and manage universal credit applications.
- The Council and Margate Task Force had been working with local DWP officers to identify local challenges to the roll out of universal credit. Some of the Issues identified had not been reported elsewhere in the country and would be fed back to the central DWP.
- There had been continued improvement regarding void properties and relets, this minimised the loss of potential income from having properties empty.
- All overdue complaints had been dealt with and closed during the second quarter of the year, and a new centralised complaints process went live in October 2017. The individual managing this new complaints process would also be the contact point for Member enquires via the email: memberenquiries@eastkenthousing.org.uk.
- The tenant scrutiny panel had worked with an independent tenant advisor to ascertain how best to engage with tenants. It has been proposed that there would be one East Kent level residents panel that would work alongside the local area boards. Ms Upton offered to provide more detail on these proposals at a future meeting of the working party.

The East Kent Housing Performance Report for quarter two of 2017/18 was noted.

Meeting concluded: 7.50 pm