

CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REVIEW WORKING PARTY

**Minutes of the meeting held on 30 September 2015 at 7.00 pm in Council Chamber,
Council Offices, Cecil Street, Margate, Kent.**

Present: Councillor Glenn Coleman-Cooke (Chairman); Councillors Campbell, Connor and Dennis

In Attendance: Councillors D Saunders and Taylor-Smith

165. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Curran and Councillor Hillman.

166. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

167. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Councillor Campbell proposed, Councillor Connor seconded and Members agreed the minutes to be a correct record of the meeting that was held on 6 July 2015.

168. EK SHARED SERVICES AND EK HUMAN RESOURCES PERFORMANCE

Dominic Whelan, Director of EK Services introduced the agenda item. With reference to the report in the agenda pack, he gave an outline of the performance of EK Services and EK Human Resources for the period April to August 2015. ICT team was performing above set standard even though the team was faced with staff shortage. Mr Whelan said that the organisation was currently undertaking a new staff recruitment drive. Members were advised that there were a number of key projects being undertaken to achieve further performance improvements in the delivery of shared services.

EK Services was conducting a review of the existing cost and financial model; the aim is to provide better granularity on the cost of managing and delivering the service to the partner local authorities and to allow accurate benchmarking and commercial pricing for potential new business, where applicable. They were exploring other potential revenue sources that would bring in additional income to the shared services arrangements for the benefit of the partner local Councils.

EK Services were also progressing well with the implementation of two new technical projects. A single Revenues and Benefits system is being introduced that would bring all three partner Councils onto a common platform that will provide operational improvement, better customer self-serve options as well as delivering savings. A new single telephony system is being procured to replace the existing and obsolete current system.

EK Human Resources were in process of delivering a new Human Resources system that would make it easier for staff to access their personal information, submit claims and apply for leave. The system would also bring payroll in-house. This will provide major benefits to the users such as self-serve claims, reduce paper based transactions and deliver savings over the current payroll provider.

Members sought advice on how Thanet District Council contribution to the overall EK Services budget was worked out. In response, Mr Whelan said that TDC contributed 36.34% and this was worked out at the start of the shared services arrangement in 2011

and was based on the budget spend by each of the partner Councils. The overall budget monitoring was conducted in consultation with the section 151 officers for the partner local Councils.

EK Services were in the process of review their financial model whose results could be available in the next few months. The organisation was also trying to source for new business in order to help reduce the costs each of the partner Councils was paying towards the EK Services budget.

Members asked whether the roll-out of the universal credit would affect the Council's revenue collection. Mr Whelan said that initially there would be minimal impact as the roll-out would initially be limited to single parent cases and that the organisation would be monitoring the situation carefully. A Members Briefing would be held to advise councillors on the new benefits system to be introduced in October 2015.

Members noted that the performance of all the shared services arrangements was generally satisfactory and that there were no major concerns. The report was noted.

169. EK HOUSING - HALF YEAR REVIEW

Brendan Ryan, Chief Executive of East Kent Housing (EK Housing) led discussion on the item. He said that he was pleased with the performance to date as there has been a year to year improvement. The organisation was working on improving the procurement process in order to further improve delivery of capital programme. EK Housing was also working with contractors to improve on customer satisfaction data collection and reporting.

Mr Ryan advised Members that EK Housing and EK Services were working towards integrating the four different ICT systems currently serving the partner local Councils into one platform of service. This would improve performance. E.K Housing were working on a new Delivery Plan which would incorporate partner Councils' and tenants' priorities for the next four years. Members asked whether the proposed demolition of garages at some of the Council properties would actually go ahead and replaced with housing. Madeline Homer, CEx offered to provide a response to Members outside the meeting.

East Kent Housing were also working on a new single ICT system to serve the four partner local Councils. This would replace the current four separate ICT systems. The organisation was concluding work with tenants and the Councils to agree a new set of commitments to be given to tenants for the next four years.

Member noted the report.

170. CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT

Tim Willis, Director of Corporate Resources & Section 151 Officer led debate on the item. Members asked for additional detail regarding what the historical issues were that had been reported under the 'Next Steps' waste collection project (PR061). Madeline Homer agreed to provide a fuller response outside the meeting.

Members noted that there had been some improvement regarding the cleanliness of the Thanet beaches and other public spaces. They were concerned about long term sickness being faced the organisation. Speaking under Council Procedure 24.1 a Member requested for information regarding the specific causes of and the departments affected by the long term sickness. They also asked management to look into how this issue could best be addressed. In response Tim Willis agreed to provide the requested information outside the meeting.

Tim Willis agreed to bring back a report with the breakdown of information as requested by the working party. He advised the meeting that management had reviewed the processing of Freedom of Information Requests (FOIs) and had set up a two stage process to replace the previous three stage process. It was hoped that this would improve the response times of processing these requests.

Members noted the report.

171. DREAMLAND UPDATE REPORT

Nick Dermott, Heritage Development Advisor introduced the joint officer presentation. He gave a historical background to the Dreamland Project. Grant Burton, Capital Development Manager gave a presentation on the key project works that were carried out restore the Dreamland. Tim Willis then provided financial information on the project, including a budget background commentary on the sources of funding that have been used to date to fund the Dreamland. He said that the Dreamland budget had been affected by key events that included the following:

1. The breakdown in relations with the former land owners and subsequent CPO meant they would no longer contribute monies to the scheme;
2. The prolonged length of the Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) process and the spend deadline for Sea Change grant monies meant it could no longer count as match funding towards the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) grant;
3. The potential costs of compensation to the former land owners;
4. The increase in HLF grant from £3m to £5.8m;
5. The latest report detailing an increase in costs associated with the project.

The meeting was further informed of the following on-going costs associated with the Dreamland project:

1. The Council continues to incur on-going costs for the up-keep of the wider Dreamland estate, e.g. maintenance, insurance and general estate management;
2. Under the lease for the Heritage Amusement Park some of these costs can be recharged to the incoming operator, but the Council is liable for the costs associated with the remainder of the cinema building (until tenants can be found) and the car park;
3. Current forecasted costs can be met through income achieved by the car park and from base budget;
4. The car park income is not ring-fenced for the project but is being utilised to finance the initial estate costs.

Madeline Homer advised the meeting that due diligence had been undertaken in order to ascertain the viability of the new operator for the Dreamland and that a budget had been set aside for the CPO compensation. Negotiations for compensation with previous owner were currently on-going.

Members noted the report.

Meeting concluded: 8.40 pm