

CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REVIEW WORKING PARTY

Minutes of the meeting held on 15 February 2018 at 7.00 pm in Council Chamber - Council Offices.

Present: Councillor Campbell (Chairman); Councillors Curran, Dennis, Dexter and Rusiecki

In Attendance: Councillor Crow-Brown

225. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Connor.

226. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

227. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Councillor Rusiecki proposed, Councillor Campbell seconded and Members agreed the minutes as a correct record of the meeting that was held on 13 November 2017.

228. TDC CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 3 2017/18

Hannah Thorpe, Head of Communications introduced the item and made the following comments:

- The overall message was that quarter 3 had seen more green indicators and some amber ones being reported;
- For the Clean & Wellbeing Environment – the performance was within target, particularly with regards to detritus;
- Mechanical sweepers had played a big part in the achievement of good performance indicators;
- Waste & Recycling has the red indicator. But it is anticipated to move out of the red in the next quarter;
- It was worth noting that the quality of recycling material collected by TDC is superior quality compared to neighbouring authorities;
- The Street Cleansing and Enforcement Teams are working well together to tackle littering in public spaces;
- Anti Social Behaviour is only about 4% away from satisfactory performance levels;

- Kent Police could be invited to the next meeting of the working party;
- The targets for tackling homelessness were not satisfactory and the council was working the issue;
- Officers expect an improvement in the processing of complaints as there will be a new staff structure in April;
- The processing of Freedom of Information requests (FOIs) is in the Red. The Interim Head of Legal Services was working on streamlining the processing of FOI requests and this is hoped to improve the performance;
- It was also worth noting that the number of these requests had dramatically increased;
- Staff sickness levels were continuing to improve.

After the presentation, Members made comments and asked questions as follows:

- Inward Investment – Job Creation – How will performance target for this item be reflected in the next quarter since the Council's proposed Local Plan had not been approved?
- The mechanical sweepers were doing a great job regarding cleaning on street. However it was in off-road areas where more work was required to clean up litter;
- Can a member of the public request for an unscheduled street cleaning if litter was reported?
- Why were the performance levels for collection of recycling and dumped rubbish worse off in 2018 as compared to 2014?
- A six weeks wait for collection of bulk waste was too long. Why was it necessary to wait this long?
- Street sweeping performance figures were very good;
- Graffiti incidents across the district were increasing;
- Residents' satisfaction level for street cleaning had gone down in 2018 to 31% from nearly 50% in 2014. Why?
- Standard response times to reports of crime (e.g anti social behaviour)?
- Crime statistics: Members were concerned by the performance figures for this issue. This issue would be reviewed at the Community Safety Partnership Working Party (on 20 February) where Kent Police representatives would be in attendance;
- Homelessness – Was Council working on any specific strategies to address this problem?
- Members sought to understand what would happen if the council missed the deadline for responding to FOIs (i.e 20 days).

In response to Member comments and questions, Hannah Thorpe, Trevor Kennett (Head of Operational Services) and Tim Willis (Director of Corporate Resources) made the following comments:

- The Local Plan issue had no direct impact on the current processing of planning applications as these applications will continue to be processed whilst the Local Plan issue would be resolved separately. There could be implications in the longer term if there continues to be no resolution to the Local Plan;
- Waste and recycling collection: The mechanical sweepers were being used in conjunction with manual sweepers;
- Operational Services respond to sudden incidents of litter that would have been reported by Members;
- Recycling figures have levelled out and were lower than the 2014 because in 2014 that's when the new service had just been introduced;
- Dumped rubbish: There was now a better recording system these incidents than before;
- There has been an increase in demand for bulky waste collection. Bulk waste collection had been reviewed to improve the process by reducing the waiting times before collection;
- Council had introduced a new graffiti cleaning service to assist most households who do not have the means to clean graffiti. This service would also add to council income;
- Operational Services were focusing on verges and general cleanliness around the district;
- Homelessness: East Kent Housing and TDC were working on strategies for minimising voids;
- Additional funding had been allocated to the 2018/19 council budget to tackle homelessness;

- Alternative temporary accommodation will be procured in 2018/19 that offers better value for money, longer term leased accommodation to be used as temporary accommodation. Negotiations with private property owners were still on-going to secure competitive pricing;
- FOIs processing: Council would still process the request even when a deadline would have been missed. Persistent breach of deadlines would potentially attract a fine;
- Responding to FOIs was currently a top priority for Legal Services.

Members noted the report.

229. EK SERVICES Q3 2017/18 PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR TDC

Dominic Whelan, Director of Shared Services introduced the item for discussion and highlighted the following:

- Overall performance by ICT and HR is good. Most income collections performance was also good;
- Business Rates: Business Rates collection for December was slightly below the expected levels. However, this will improve in the next quarter as there were significant payments from two large contributors that were due in December but were actually received in early January 2018;
- Customer Services: The service level remains below target. Mr Whelan explained that the reasons for this have been explained in depth over the past few quarters and are due to ongoing resource pressures within Customer Services. However, the measures outlined by Mr Whelan at the previous quarter report, including re-deployment of staff and apprenticeship programme have had a positive impact on the performance of the call centre with average call waiting time improving from 1minute 53 seconds last quarter to 1minute 34seconds;
- Risks: There was a high level of risk that the performance targets for Customer Services Call Waiting would not be met and EKS had discussions with Tim Willis and Madeline Homer to explore the possibility of re-assessing the targets;
- Key Initiatives: It was worth noting that digital benefits processing system was now operational and there was marked uptake of the new service by customers. The system was intuitive, makes it much easier to upload evidence and is linked to the Risk Based Verification process that means the amount and type of evidence documentation required to be presented by citizens is flexible depending on individual risk scores.

Members noted the report.

230. EAST KENT HOUSING PERFORMANCE REPORT Q3 2017/18

Deborah Upton, CEx of East Kent Housing introduced the item and highlighted the following:

- Universal Credit and Income: Performance started to recover in January 2018;
- In Thanet there were 350 cases of individuals on Universal Credit. There were challenges in processing claims for individuals on Universal Credit as they had to go without payments for the first 45 days of being moved to the Universal Credit system;
- This delay could extend by another six weeks and this may affect tenants ability to pay rent. However EKH has not evicted any tenants affected by the delays caused by switching to Universal Credit;
- To cut down on delays EKH assigned additional staff to support the processing of Universal Credit claims as it takes longer to process such applications than processing housing benefits claims;

- Some study has indicated that it takes about six months for an individual who has moved to Universal Credit to get back from arrears and be up to date with their rent payments;
- There are similar experiences in neighbouring councils;
- Garage arrears have gone down 40% where resources have been increased to support that revenue collection service;
- The performance regarding management of voids is strong;

Contributing to the same discussion, Mark Anderson, Director of Property Services (EKH) added the following comments:

- Capital Programme: There was a 23.69% underspend in the capital programme budget. The original approved council budget was £4.2 million and just over £1 million had so been spent by 31 December 2017. If commitments were added to these figures, then the spend would be £1.6million;
- By financial year end the spend would be circa £2.5-£2.6million. This was because there were still a number of large projects to be undertaken.
- The largest of these projects being Royal Crescent which had an allocation of about £1million on its own;
- There was a need to carry out a feasibility study to determine whether it was appropriate to spend a huge sum of money on this one property;
- As a result this would have to be deferred to 2018/19 financial year;
- Over the past three years, there had been a decrease in percentage of residents responding to the tenants' survey;
- As a result EKH were developing a more effective survey to test tenants' views on the service provided by EKH and services providers contracted by EKH;
- The new survey structure has been piloted in the last three months. This will be reviewed in the coming quarter to determine its effectiveness;
- Gas Servicing: Less than 20% of tenants who receive a service from P&R respond to their survey. EKH had been receiving an increasing number of complaints about the P&R service. EKH were looking into that issue.

Responding to the officer presentations Members made comments and asked questions as follows:

- Can tenants on Universal Credit get direct payments to the landlord?
- Was there a budget for disabled facilities adaptations?
- What was the performance of the disabled facilities modifications?
- Was the performance on track or not?

Ms Upton and Mr Anderson responded as follows:

- Disabled facilities adaptations were demand driven. Residents could refer themselves or were referred by EKH to occupational therapy who would categorise referrals as either requiring minor or major adaptations;
- Minor adaptations would be dealt with fairly quickly;
- Major adaptations were those that would cost over £1,000 and could take longer to complete because of the long lead time to order equipment;
- EKH funded facilities if they were attached to the building and KCC would be expected to fund the mobile specialist equipment;
- However budget cuts have led to reluctance to provide support for mobile specialist equipment;
- Currently there was a waiting list in Thanet;
- There is a budget for this service and the allocation was historical; There has been an increase in demand for this service;

- In 2017/18 financial year, the service a £300,000 budget. The committed spend was £192,300 as at 31 December 2017.

Members noted the report.

Meeting concluded: 7.55 pm