

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Corporate and Customer Services Portfolio Holder's Meeting held on  
Friday, 4 September 2015 at 10.00 a.m.

Portfolio Holder: Peter Topping

### **Councillors in attendance:**

Opposition spokesmen: Henry Batchelor

Also in attendance: Lynda Harford

### **Officers:**

Patrick Adams

Alex Colyer

John Garnham

Richard May

Senior Democratic Services Officer

Executive Director, Corporate Services

Principal Accountant (General Fund & Projects)

Policy and Performance Manager

### **1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

### **2. STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER**

The Principal Accountant (General Fund & Projects) introduced this report, which invited the Portfolio Holder to review the Strategic Risk Register, before it was formally reported to Cabinet on 10 September 2015. He explained that whilst the Corporate Governance Committee was responsible for the risk management strategy, the Executive was responsible for agreeing and owning the specific risks facing the Council.

#### **STR05 – Lack of land supply**

Councillor Lynda Harford explained that 220 homes had been granted consent at Barrington and not 199, as stated in the report. The importance of the A14 upgrade to Northstowe Phase 2 was noted.

#### **STR08 – Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)**

The Executive Director explained that a report would be taken to Cabinet in November to discuss possible implications of the Government's autumn statement and local government finance settlement.

#### **STR03 – Illegal Traveller encampments or developments**

Councillor Lynda Harford expressed concern at EMT's recommendation to reduce the impact score of this risk, as in her view nothing significant had changed.

#### **STR28 – Recruitment & Retention**

It was noted that EMT were proposing that this risk regarding reduced staffing capacity be added to the register. It was hoped that sharing services with other neighbouring authorities could help mitigate this risk. The Corporate and Customer Services Portfolio Holder stated that general discussion on this issue should take place at the Finance and Staffing Portfolio Holder meetings.

The Corporate and Customer Services Portfolio Holder **RECOMMENDED** the Strategic Risk Register to Cabinet.

### **3. TRAVEL TO WORK PLAN 2015-2020**

The Policy and Performance Manager introduced this revised travel plan for South Cambridgeshire Hall, by highlighting the need for a culture change at the Council to meet the targets in the Plan. It was noted that, as a planning authority, there was an expectation that Council staff should lead by example when travelling to work.

### **Working with partners**

This Travel to Work Plan was for South Cambridgeshire Hall and so included officers from partner organisations who were now resident in the building. The Policy and Performance Manager explained that he was liaising with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner on this issue.

### **Homeworking**

It was expected that an increase in home working would help the Council to meet its target. This had been made possible by advances in technology, which allowed remote working and changes in working practices and management. "Hot-desking" also helped to embed a culture of flexible working, which meant fewer staff in the office.

### **Walking and cycling to work**

It was noted that approximately 30-40 staff lived in Cambourne. The Policy and Performance Manager explained that the Council was considering having pool cars to allow staff who lived locally to leave their cars at home but still have access to a vehicle in emergencies.

The Corporate and Customer Services Portfolio Holder requested a progress report in approximately six months' time and he

**AGREED** The Travel to Work Plan for South Cambridgeshire Hall for 2015-2020.

## **4. CUSTOMER SERVICE PERFORMANCE 2015/16 QUARTER ONE**

The Policy and Performance Manager presented this report which updated the Portfolio Holder on the Council's customer service performance in respect of complaints handling, web usage, feedback and customer satisfaction.

It was noted that the number of complaints for the first quarter of 2015/16 (1 April – 30 June 2015) had fallen to 28, which was 26 fewer than the previous quarter.

### **Contact centre**

It was understood that there was a correlation between the increase in the number of calls dealt with solely by contact centre staff and the increase in the waiting time for callers.

The Council was liaising with British Telecom to try and introduce a system that would allow the Council to ascertain how many callers had to wait for over two minutes before being answered. It was possible that the Council would have to introduce its own system.

The Executive Director explained that a dedicated rents line was being piloted before it was formally introduced. The new number would be publicised in the winter edition of South Cambs Magazine.

### **Planning complaints**

It was explained that the 36% response rate of complaints made to Planning and New Communities within the target time reflected the fact that this department was currently understaffed. It was noted that the APAS planning system would have to be down for approximately a week and so it was expected that this would be carried out right after the

next Planning Committee meeting.

**Waste collection services**

The councillors present praised the Council's waste collection services for achieving a high level of residents' satisfaction. It was noted that residents were being encouraged to use the missed bin e-form instead of filling out the formal complaints form.

**Complaints to councillors**

It was noted that many complaints that were made to councillors were resolved without going through the complaints system and this saved officer time.

The Corporate and Customer Services Portfolio Holder recommended that all councillors should visit the Council's Contact Centre to see the professional way that they dealt with a wide range of queries.

The Corporate and Customer Services Portfolio Holder **NOTED** the report.

**5. FORWARD PLAN**

The Corporate and Customer Services Portfolio Holder stated that he would only hold these meetings if it could add value, by determining and discussing matters that could not be discussed by another meeting or group. He then suggested the following areas should be discussed at future meetings:

- The Council's Digital by Default programme.
- IT shared services and performance.
- Corporate Service Plan.

**6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on Friday 23 October at 10am.

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**The Meeting ended at 11.45 a.m.**

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