

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Policy and Performance Portfolio Holder's Meeting held on  
Tuesday, 20 July 2010 at 11.00 a.m.

Portfolio Holder: Tom Bygott

**Councillors in attendance:**

Scrutiny and Overview Committee monitors: -

Opposition spokesman: Hazel Smith

**Councillors also in attendance:** Jose Hales and Douglas de Lacey

**Officers in attendance for whole or part of the meeting:**

Rachael Fox	Customer Service Co-ordinator
Paul Howes	Corporate Manager, Community and Customer Services
Maggie Jennings	Democratic Services Officer
Sally Smart	Principal Accountant Financial & Systems
Jackie Sayers	Scrutiny Development Officer

**1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 May 2010 were agreed as a correct record.

**3. CONTACT CENTRE REVIEW: PROJECT INITIATION DOCUMENT (PID)**

The Portfolio Holder considered the Project Initiation Document attached to the report that would enable the strategic review of options for the future provision of contact centre services to proceed and noted that the current contract with Cambridgeshire Direct would expire on 31 December 2012.

Having considered the contents of the document and agreeing particularly with the details contained in the reference to 'In Scope / Out of Scope', the Policy and Performance Portfolio Holder,

**AGREED** the objectives, scope and indicative timescale for the strategic review of the current contact centre contract as set out in Appendix A to the report.

**4. RECOMMENDATION FROM THE SCRUTINY & OVERVIEW COMMITTEE 24 JUNE 2010**

Jackie Sayers, Scrutiny Development Officer was in attendance for this item.

The Policy and Performance Portfolio Holder **AGREED** to the recommendations from the Scrutiny & Overview Committee of 24 June 2010, with the exception of the last sentence in (a) namely:

- (a) Increase advertising of the complaints process via the Council's website, magazine and existing leaflets. The Council Tax mail-out was rejected as too expensive.

- (b) Develop a process for sharing throughout the Council the learning arising from complaints and compliments.
- (c) Improve the complaints process to ensure that all complaints go through the Customer Service Coordinator, except those with a legal imperative to be handled differently. This would ensure that compensation payments could be centrally monitored.
- (d) Review the complaints process to identify a way to improve the timescales to match best practice.
- (e) Amend the flowchart in the complaints process to show stages 1 and 2 as consecutive.

Paul Howes, Corporate Manager, Community and Customer Services suggested that once the complaints / compliments process had been refreshed, it would be presented to a lunchtime briefing to disseminate the information to council staff and raise awareness of the process. **Action: Paul Howes**

## 5. **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ICT) INTERNAL AUDIT ACTION PLAN**

Geoff Sissons, ICT Support Services Manager was in attendance for this item.

The Portfolio Holder, having considered the action plan, expressed particular concern regarding the issues relating to the Disaster Recovery Plan and Secure Off-site Storage. In response, the ICT Support Services Manager informed the Portfolio Holder that the contract in respect of the disaster recovery plan would expire on 31 March 2011 and consideration would be given to obtaining a revised contract that would include appropriate service requirements with less cost to the council. With regard to secure off-site storage, this council had the facility to use the county council's back-up system with tapes stored in a fireproof safe at the contact centre at Huntingdon; there was however, an area of concern regarding access to the safe. The ICT Support Services Manager had subsequently made initial contact with two suppliers with a view to obtaining an agreement for an off-site tape management service including storage, collection and delivery using more robust containers. Investigation of the options was ongoing as a cost effective solution was required.

Cllr Douglas de Lacey informed the Portfolio Holder that he was concerned about network security procedures and had expected consideration by the Portfolio Holder of an Internal Audit background report relating to the ICT Review that had been referred to at the last meeting of the Corporate Governance Committee held on 29 June.

The Portfolio Holder noted Cllr de Lacey's concerns and requested a more detailed report for consideration at his meeting on 21 September 2010. **Action: Steve Rayment**

## 6. **FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT: POLICY AND PERFORMANCE PORTFOLIO: 2009/10 AND Q1 2010/11**

Sally Smart, Principal Accountant Financial & Systems was in attendance for this item.

The Principal Accountant reiterated the contents of the report detailing the financial performance for the year 2009/10 and the first quarter report for year 2010/11. Particular reference was made to the decrease of £23,140 in net direct costs in 2009/10 when compared to the original 2009/10 estimates and by £9,430 when compared with the revised 2009/10 estimate, and the general underspends and savings in various service areas.

The Corporate Manager responded to a question requesting an explanation on the increase in budget for the Policy & Performance service and was informed that a Place

Survey was due to take place during 2010/11 which involved major expenditure, however, the survey was only undertaken every other year and due to government cutbacks, this survey together with the Housing Tenants survey might not be carried out.

The Corporate Manager informed the Portfolio Holder that Communications fell within the remit of the Northstowe Portfolio Holder. The Principal Accountant agreed to present the financial matters relating to the Communications service to the Northstowe Portfolio Holder as the appropriate portfolio holder. **Action: Sally Smart**

The Policy & Performance Portfolio Holder **NOTED** the contents of the report.

## 7. CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE (CSE) UPDATE

The Portfolio Holder was presented with a current position statement in respect of this major corporate project. It was noted that the project had slipped by two months due to the delay of the external assessor assessing the council's self assessment. This delay could be covered by the contingency built into the project timetable at the outset. It was highlighted that Affordable Homes and Environmental Services had already started addressing areas for improvement and gaps identified before the external analysis had been received and were therefore 'ahead of the game'.

Stage 2 of the process would address the areas for improvement and gaps identified at Stage 1 together with the assessors findings; the information would be logged on individual workplans for each service area. Stage 3 involved the pre-assessment, Gap analysis and correction.

It was noted that a 'Getting Ready Workshop' would not be required and therefore a £600 underspend would be incurred. The Portfolio Holder requested that the £600 be transferred to 'Meeting Criteria' in order to contribute to improving service delivery.

**Action: Paul Howes / Sally Smart**

The Portfolio Holder **NOTED** the contents of the report.

## 8. CUSTOMER SERVICE PERFORMANCE INCLUDING COMPLAINTS/COMPLIMENTS 2009/10 - END OF YEAR REPORT

The Portfolio Holder considered the contents of the report and noted the information provided by the Corporate Manager to the question raised concerning complaints under the breakdown by broad theme of 'staff issues'. It was explained that they may be due to the level of redundancy and restructuring that had recently taken place within the organisation.

The Portfolio Holder noted the contents of the 2009./10 end of year report and commended the officers on the improvements that had been achieved throughout the year.

## 9. CUSTOMER SERVICE PERFORMANCE 2010/11 - Q1

The Portfolio Holder **NOTED** the contents of the report.

## 10. SERVICE PLAN & PIS 2009/10: END-OF-YEAR REPORT

The Corporate Manager reiterated the contents of the report. It was noted that individual services within Community and Customer Services were covered by a number of Portfolio Holders. The Portfolio Holder undertook to liaise with his Cabinet colleagues to discuss the possibility of a rationalisation of portfolio responsibilities. **Action: Cllr Tom Bygott**

The following particular issues were highlighted:

- All but 2 of the Policy & Performance objectives were met
- A Place Survey due during 2010/11, was now subject to government review
- Low turnout in the May 2009 elections
- It was anticipated that most, if not all, National Indicators would be abolished in the near future. The monitoring of National Indicators would, however, continue by all agencies until informed otherwise

The Portfolio Holder **NOTED** the contents of the report.

**11. SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS & PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2010/11: FIRST QUARTER**

The appendix attached to the report outlined the progress against the actions for the first quarter (April to June 2010) and indicated that Community & Customer Services was on target to meet the predicted performance targets.

Progress on actions were demonstrated by using the traffic light system and some of those present felt that alternative methods of monitoring indicators could be used. The Corporate Manager explained that GO East had recommended the system as best practice, with the vast majority of local authorities using the traffic lights system and that the council should be consistent in its approach throughout all service areas. The Portfolio Holder reported that he was familiar with the system and preferred the simplicity of this way of recording the progress on actions.

In the event of the abolition of those National Indicators requiring surveys, the allocation of budget for those indicators could, subject to approval, be redirected to other areas within the service.

The Portfolio Holder **NOTED** the report.

**12. FORWARD PLAN**

The contents of the Forward Plan were **NOTED** with the addition of the following:

**21 September 2010**

ICT Internal Audit Action Plan

**17 May 2011**

Customer Service Excellence – final report

**Unscheduled**

Deletion of 'National Indicators: The New Performance Framework for Local Authorities and Local Authority Partnerships'.

**13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was **NOTED** that the next meeting would be held at 11am on 21 September 2010.

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**The Meeting ended at 1.15 p.m.**

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