



East Cambridgeshire District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Operational Services Committee
held in the Council Chamber, The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely on
Monday 18 September 2023 at 4:30pm

PRESENT

Cllr Julia Huffer (Chairman)
Cllr Christine Ambrose Smith
Cllr Christine Colbert
Cllr Martin Goodearl
Cllr Kathrin Holtzmann
Cllr Mark Inskip
Cllr Kelli Pettitt
Cllr Alan Sharp (Vice-Chairman)
Cllr John Trapp (Substitute for Cllr Christine Whelan)
Cllr Lucius Vellacott
Cllr Mary Wade

OFFICERS

Isabel Edgar – Director, Operations
Maggie Camp – Director Legal and Monitoring Officer
Tracy Couper - Democratic Services Manager
Liz Knox – Head of Environmental Services
Richard Garnett – Senior Environmental Health Officer
Karen See - Senior Environmental Health Officer
Anne Wareham – Senior Accountant

IN ATTENDANCE

Lis Every – Chairman, East Cambridgeshire Community Safety
Partnership
Catherine Sutherland – Waste Development and Support
Manager, ECSS
Andrew Willy – Operations Manager, ECSS
Melanie Wright – Communications Officer
Lucy Flintham – Development Services Office Team Leader

17. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

No public questions were submitted.

18. APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Christine Whelan and Cllr John Trapp was acting as Substitute Member.

19. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of Interests were made by Councillors.

20. MINUTES

It was resolved:

That the minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 25 May and 19 June 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman.

21. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The following announcements were made by the Chairman:

The next Parish Councils Conference would be held on 2 November 2023 and take the form of a drop-in session, with details to follow.

The roll-out of the annual delivery of black sacks throughout the District had commenced in the preceding two weeks.

Three successful Youth Fusion events had been held over the summer holiday period and the Health and Wellbeing Fair had taken place in early September 2023. These events had received positive feedback from both stallholders and attendees.

22. COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP – UPDATE

The Committee received a presentation by Lis Every Chairman of the East Cambridgeshire Community Safety Partnership (CSP) giving an overview of its structure and activities, a copy of which has been circulated to Members of the Committee.

The presentation covered the following areas:

- What is the CSP?
- Statutory and Non-Statutory Partners
- Operating arrangements – ‘how do we get things done?’
- Examples of activities/projects
- Collaborative Problem Solving & Task and Finish Groups

Ms Every highlighted that the CSP was unique within the County for its inclusion of non-statutory partner representatives from the Business Community, third sector (VCAEC), Health and Early Help Team. The CSP also provided ‘second strand’ funding for prevention advice to local communities. Ms Every referred to a spike in violent crime and disorder in a particular area of the District, which had resulted in a ‘deep dive’ and focus.

ECDC acted as the cornerstone partner, with Lead Officers Sally Bonnett and Lewis Bage, together with three posts of Emma Graves focussing on anti-social behaviour funded by ECDC, Harriett Sugg funded jointly by ECDC and the Police

and Crime Commissioner (PCC) to the end of the current year and Jo Andow funded by the PCC for 2 years. The CSP Board had recently decided to focus its funding on the retention of these three key officers.

Ms Every summarised recent activities of the CSP, which included:

- Toolkits to cover keys areas such as cyber-crime, safer streets, and speeding and bad driving
- Improved use of social media for communication
- Youth provision
- Safer streets project at Burwell
- Taking a knife to school re-enactment for schools groups

The Chairman thanked Ms Every for her presentation and commended the excellent community work of the CSP.

In response to questions by Members, it was reported that a 'highlights summary' on local crime statistics was circulated to Councillors and that consideration could be given to the provision of further information on 'hot spots' with regard to speeding, poor or unsafe driving.

23. FOOD SAFETY ENFORCEMENT POLICY

The Committee considered a report, Y40 previously circulated, detailing the outcome of consultation on the draft Food Safety Enforcement Policy and containing the final draft version of the Policy.

The Senior Environmental Health Officer (Commercial) stated that the Policy would be reviewed in September 2024.

A number of questions relating to this item had been provided prior to the meeting from Members and these, along with answers provided by officers, were set out in Appendix 1 to these minutes.

In response to a further question by a Member, it was reported that Members of the Committee would be informed of the outcome of Corporate Management Team's consideration of the introduction of a centralised tracking process for the review of Corporate policies.

It was resolved (unanimously):

That the consultation feedback and amendments to the policy as a result of the feedback be noted and the final Food Safety Enforcement Policy attached at Appendix 2 to the submitted report be approved.

24. HEALTH AND SAFETY ENFORCEMENT POLICY

The Committee considered a report, Y41 previously circulated, detailing the outcome of consultation on the draft Health and Safety Enforcement Policy and containing the final draft version of the Policy.

A number of questions relating to this item had been provided prior to the meeting from Members and these, along with answers provided by officers, were set out in Appendix 1 to these minutes.

In response to a further question by a Member on the timescale for the review of the complaints procedure, the Senior Environmental Health Officer (Commercial) reported that the current system contained an effective mechanism for the recording and resolution of complaints but it was hoped that the webpages could be revised by the end of the year to improve public awareness of and accessibility to this.

In response to a question by a Member, the Senior Environmental Health Officer (Commercial) explained the difference in the wording on the issuing of improvement notices in paragraphs 9.8 and 9.9 of the policy reflected the legislative position. Another Member queried the Member reporting mechanism for a summary of complaints and the Senior Environmental Health Officer (Commercial) stated that this was contained within the Service Delivery Plan each year.

A Member highlighted some minor typographical errors that needed correcting.

It was resolved (unanimously):

That the consultation feedback and amendments to the policy as a result of the feedback be noted and the final Health and Safety Enforcement Policy attached at Appendix 2 to the submitted report be approved.

25. BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

The Committee considered a report, Y42 previously circulated, containing details of the latest 2023/24 financial position for Services under the remit of this Committee.

A number of questions relating to this item had been provided prior to the meeting from Members and these, along with answers provided by officers, were set out in Appendix 1 to these minutes.

In response to a follow-up question by a Member, the Senior Accountant explained the current position on Planning income. The Senior Accountant also agreed to clarify the projections further with the Planning Manager and provide a written response to Members of the Committee.

The Director Operations and Senior Accountant also responded to further questions from Members on the Budgetary position for Street Cleansing, Refuse and Recycling, and Agency staff.

It was resolved:

1. That the projected year end revenue overspend on Operational Services Committee of £195,000 when compared to its approved budget of £6,968,362 be noted.

2. That the projected Capital Programme outturn of £4,775,147, an underspend of £862,666 when compared to its revised Capital budget, be noted.

26. ENVIRONMENTAL CRIME ENFORCEMENT POLICY 2023

The Committee considered a report, Y43 previously circulated, containing a revised draft Environmental Crime Enforcement Policy to accord with current legislation and enforcement powers.

The Senior Environmental Health Officer explained that the Environmental Action Plan and fee setting policy for Fixed Penalty Notices would be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.

A number of questions relating to this item had been provided prior to the meeting from Members and these, along with answers provided by officers, were set out in Appendix 1 to these minutes.

In response to a question by a Member as to what would constitute 'exceptional circumstances' for the consideration of prosecution of under 16s, the Senior Environmental Health Officer explained that this would normally include offensive graffiti.

A Member welcomed the impending review of the fee setting policy for Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) but expressed concern at the lack of FPNs served for dog fouling as this was an issue repeatedly referred to by the public. The Environmental Health Officer stated that this was due to the requirement for good quality evidence, without which FPNs could not be served. There were low numbers of formal complaints made direct to Environmental Health about dog fouling. However, Environmental Health worked with Parish Councils to undertake targeted monitoring of problem areas.

A Member referred to instances of motorbikes with the baffles removed causing noise nuisance. The Environmental Health Officer stated that this was a Police matter and also could be reported to the CSP as anti-social behaviour.

It was resolved (unanimously):

That the revised draft Environmental Crime Enforcement Policy attached at Appendix 1 to the submitted report be approved.

27. ENVIRONMENT ACT IMPLEMENTATION

The Committee received an oral update by the Director Operations on the current position with regard to implementation of the Environment Act.

The Director Operations reported that information still was awaited from Central Government and that little had changed since the Briefing Note circulated to Councillors in July 2023. DEFRA had been engaging with authorities since December 2022, but no further guidance had been issued in relation to the

proposed Transitional Arrangements (TA) that DEFRA were proposing to place the Council into. The RECAP partnership was still in agreement that they wished to implement weekly Food Waste collections. However, if ECDC was named in the Transitional Arrangements, while the Council could implement separate food collection, the TA meant that the authorities would not be provided with any central 'additional burdens' funding to do so. This was a very disappointing situation, and RECAP had written again to DEFRA in July to reassert their position, whilst RECAP and the separate Councils had written to local MPs in August on the issue. Legal advice also was being sought on options open to the partnership to challenge the TA proposal.

Members raised questions on the position taken by DEFRA and risks to the Council of upgrading the Fleet and reconfiguring rounds to accommodate weekly Food Waste collections, which were responded to by the Director Operations.

It was resolved:

That the oral update be noted.

28. HYDROTREATED VEGETABLE OIL (HVO) PROCUREMENT

The Committee considered a report, Y44 previously circulated, giving an update on the current position regarding implementation of the decision of the Committee in March 2023 on the use of HVO fuel in the ECSS Waste and Recycling Collection Fleet.

The Head of Street Scene explained the current situation and highlighted that a procurement exercise and trial of a storage tank at the depot on a trial basis were being progressed. In addition, alternative options would be considered for the smaller Street Cleansing fleet.

A number of questions relating to this item had been provided prior to the meeting from Members and these, along with answers provided by officers, were set out in Appendix 1 to these minutes.

A Member stated that they had wanted to propose an amendment to the recommendation to note the report, but the wording would not have been technically feasible at this stage, since it would have required further supporting information. However, Members of the Committee remained committed to using as much HVO as possible, within budgetary constraints, on environmental grounds. Therefore, Members requested that officers bring a report to the next meeting of the Committee to provide options and the financial implications to enable this objective to be achieved.

Members of the Committee concurred with this approach and some commented that it may be necessary to consider an increase in funding to enable the purchase of HVO to reduce carbon emissions for the benefit of the local community. Other Members queried if HVO usage might be more financially viable in rural rather than urban areas of the District.

The Chairman welcomed the proposal for a further report to enable the Committee to make an informed decision.

It was resolved:

1. That the prohibitive cost of a move to HVO for the ECSS Waste and Recycling Fleet at the present time be noted.
2. In the light of the ongoing procurement process, officers be requested to bring a report to the next meeting of the Committee on options for the usage of HVO in the short and long term.

29. QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR WASTE & STREET CLEANSING SERVICES

The Committee considered a report, Y45 previously circulated, detailing the quarter 1 Performance for Waste & Street Cleansing Services by ECSS for the period April to June 2023.

The ECSS Development Manager summarised the contents of the report and highlighted improvements across the overall performance of the Service.

A number of questions relating to this item had been provided prior to the meeting from Members and these, along with answers provided by officers, were set out in Appendix 1 to these minutes.

Follow-up questions and further questions/comments were raised by Members and responded to as follows:

A Member raised questions on the reduction in tonnage of recyclable waste and the ECSS Development Manager agreed to confirm the details of the figures.

Further questions were raised on the Street Cleansing schedules and processes and it was reported that these would be considered at the next ECSS Board meeting.

Members raised questions on the emptying of street bins and possibility of collecting recyclable goods from such bins and the ECSS Development Manager responded.

A Member queried the differing responsibilities between the District and County Councils for channel, drain and gully cleansing, which was explained by the ECSS Development Manager.

Members commended the more informative nature of the revised KPIs, which gave a better understanding of the current position and where improvements had taken place. It was considered that steps forward were being made in the move towards more satisfactory levels of performance.

It was resolved:

That the quarter 1 Performance Report for Waste & Street Cleansing Services by ECSS be noted.

30. ANGLIA REVENUES PARTNERSHIP JOINT COMMITTEE MINUTES

It was resolved:

That the Minutes of the ARP Joint Committee meeting held on 13 June 2023 be noted.

31. FORWARD AGENDA PLAN

The Committee received its Forward Agenda Plan. In the light of the above discussions and a request by a Member for an interim update on Environmental Plan implementation,

It was resolved:

That the Forward Agenda Plan be noted and the following items be added to the Agenda Plan for the November meeting of the Committee:

- Environmental Crime Fixed Penalty Notices – Fee setting review
- HVO procurement options update
- Environmental Plan update

32. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS & PUBLIC

It was resolved unanimously:

That the press and public be excluded during the consideration of the remaining items because it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during the items there would be disclosure to them of exempt information of Categories 1, & 3 of Part I Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

33. ECSS MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS – THREE MONTHS TO JUNE 2023

The Committee received a report containing a summary of the management accounts for the first quarter of the 2023/24 financial year.

A number of questions relating to this item had been provided prior to the meeting from Members and these, along with answers provided by officers, were circulated to Members of the Committee.

Further follow-up questions were asked by Members and responded to by officers.

It was resolved:

That the contents of the report be noted.

34. ECSS PERFORMANCE MATTER

The Committee received a report on an ECSS performance issue.

A question relating to this item had been provided prior to the meeting from a Member and this, along with answer provided by officers, was circulated to Members of the Committee.

A Member queried the reasons for the report being an Exempt item and this was explained by the Director Legal and Monitoring Officer.

It was resolved:

That the action taken by the Director Legal and Monitoring Officer on an ECSS performance matter be noted.

35. ECSS BOARD MEETING MINUTES

The Committee received the Minutes of the ECSS Board Meeting held on 1 June 2023.

It was resolved:

That the Minutes of the ECSS Board meeting held on 1 June 2023 be noted.

36. OPERATIONAL SERVICES COMMITTEE 19 JUNE 2023 – EXEMPT MINUTES

It was resolved:

That the Exempt Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 19 June 2023 be noted.

The meeting concluded at 6:41pm.

Chairman:.....

Date: