



EAST  
CAMBRIDGESHIRE  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

## **AGENDA ITEM NO. 4**

Minutes of a meeting of the Operational Services Committee facilitated via the Zoom Video Conferencing System at The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> July 2020.

### **PRESENT**

Cllr David Ambrose Smith (Chairman)  
Cllr Christine Ambrose Smith  
Cllr Lis Every  
Cllr Julia Huffer  
Cllr Mark Inskip  
Cllr John Trapp (as Substitute)  
Cllr Paola Trimarco  
Cllr Jo Webber  
Cllr Christine Whelan

### **OFFICERS**

Jo Brooks – Director Operations  
James Khan – Head of Street Scene  
Shona McKenzie – Community Safety Officer  
Adrian Scaites-Stokes – Democratic Services Officer  
Anne Wareham – Senior Accountant

#### **13. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no public questions.

#### **14. APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

Apologies had been received from Councillor Victoria Charlesworth.  
Councillor John Trapp substituted for her for this meeting.

#### **15. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **16. MINUTES**

It was resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2020 be confirmed as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman.

#### **17. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

## 18. **COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP**

The Committee received a presentation about the East Cambridgeshire Community Safety Partnership.

The Community Safety Officer explained that the Partnership consisted of representatives from the five responsible authorities, being the Police, the Fire Service, the Probation Service, the Health Services as well as councils. The Partnership had statutory duties, for example homicide reviews. The Partnership usually met twice a year and commissioned relevant work, such as the Research Group. It looked at crime rates, homicides and domestic violence and set performance standards.

Within the Partnership were two additional Groups. The Delivery Group, which met bi-monthly, agreed actions and managed the budget. The Problem Solving Group, which met monthly, managed cases and identified areas of concern. This Group included representatives from schools and was a confidential platform to report issues.

Partnership working was key in helping prevent and solve issues, which would help alleviate the pressure on other services. A lot of work had gone into encouraging as many groups as possible to join the Partnership, as this aided its early intervention aims.

Over the last twelve months a lot of initiatives had been undertaken:

- Neighbourhood office training and key contacts;
- Work on scams and frauds;
- Hate crime reporting centres, with the aim of providing one in each parish;
- 'Eyes and Ears' training, which would be rolled out across the area;
- Two community meetings had been held to draw up community plans, to encourage reporting and identify where support would be needed;
- Presentational work with schools, funded via proceeds of crime;
- Building rapport with the public;
- Dealing with cases of modern day slavery
- Obtaining funding from the Crime Commissioner.

Training for Councillors, both Parish and District, was encouraged and a toolkit was available that gave a good understanding of the issues. It was hoped that as many people as possible would become involved with the 'Eyes and Ears' initiative, which aimed to increase the reporting of crime. A 'Little Eyes and Ears' programme was also being used to engage with Year 5 pupils.

In response to the Committee's questions the Community Safety Officer stated that she was keen to work with parish councils to set up reporting hubs over the forthcoming year. If more people came forward then centres could be set up so people could report issues and be given some advice, and the information would be passed to the Police. 'Stop and Search' had started about five years ago and further information would be available after the meeting relating to the possible disproportionate effect on the Black and Minority Ethnic community. Training

could be escalated to parish Members, as they could offer advice about how to report crimes. Not much 'hate' crime was being reported, but people needed to know how this should be reported.

The Director Operations thought the work done by the Partnership was phenomenal and getting schools on board was incredible. Awareness training for all Members and parish councils would be vital and Members were asked to speak to their parish councils to encourage their participation. Although this would be about reporting crime it was also about preventing it beforehand and supporting the residents in their communities.

The Committee expressed its support for the Partnership as it was invaluable to communities and made a significant difference.

19. **QUARTER 1, 2020 PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR THE WASTE AND STREET CLEANSING SERVICES**

The Committee considered a report, V34 previously circulated, that provided the performance report for the delivery of the waste and street cleansing service during Quarter 1, April to June 2020.

The Head of Street Scene advised the Committee that the last three months had been unusual and very challenging. However, the service had continued to deliver an excellent and full service and had received amazing support from the residents of the district. Each service had over-achieved its targets. July's figures had not been available but would be circulated after the meeting. There had also been a substantial reduction in sickness absence. The Company's communication plan had been amended and new banners had been put on the vehicles and the media platform had been updated.

In reply to the Committee's queries, the Head of Street Scene acknowledged that it was a shame that the education plan for schools had been interrupted by the COVID pandemic. Consequently alternative methods had been considered including sending educational packs to schools and using online materials would also be considered. School tours of the Amey site had also stopped but virtual tours instead were being looked at. There had been increased numbers of reports of fly-tipping but a number of these were multiple reports for the same incident, so overall numbers had not increased.

Two years ago nobody could have predicted how well the service would have done. The service constantly wished to push itself and a review of the current targets to make them more challenging, re-purposing those targets or introducing different targets would aim to improve the service further. 17 employees had been lost for a time due to the pandemic, as they had to shield themselves. A fair number of these had been drivers, so drivers from other businesses had been employed to cover the shortfall. The last employee had returned last week so there was now a full compliment.

The Company was working closer with the Council's Trading Company mainly in relation to open spaces. Each Company's employees shared information

identifying and reporting any issues as they did their normal rounds. In the future other needs within the district would be looked at.

The Committee were very appreciative of the efforts of the service and what it had achieved. It was encouraged that fly-tipping had not increased, in part due to the continuation of the service during the pandemic.

It was resolved:

That the performance of service delivery for the first quarter be noted.

## 20. **FINAL OUTTURN REPORT**

The Committee considered a report, V35 previously circulated, which set out details of the financial position for services under the Operational Services Committee.

The Senior Accountant advised the Committee that its end-of-year report showed an underspend of £122,421 mainly due to savings achieved through recruitment issues and no system upgrade being undertaken in the IT Department, a limit on grants made, an increase in licence fees and the contingency fund for refuse collections not being used. There had been increased spending following the Customer Services pay review and use of agency staff in the Planning Department.

The Capital underspend was due to delays in improvements to the Depot.

In response to the Committee's enquiries the Director Operations stated that the grants process would be reviewed, as there were concerns it was not easy to apply under the current system. The existing IT team had taken on the Street Naming & Numbering work until a new staff member had been recruited. Two agency staff had been employed by the Planning Department, one until September and one until January. Two posts had been advertised for permanent staff. The IT upgrades had been delayed due to recruitment problems and work was ongoing to ensure value-for-money on the depot improvements.

A Member commented that the savings from unfilled staff posts was a false economy if agency staff had been employed to cover the gaps. Those posts should be reviewed to see if they were needed.

It was resolved:

- (i) That it be noted that this Committee had ended the year with net expenditure of £5,394,350 an underspend of £122,421 when compared to its approved budget;
- (ii) That it be noted that the Committee had a capital programme expenditure of £1,053,610.

21. **FORWARD AGENDA PLAN**

The Committee received a copy of its forward agenda plan.

The Director, Operations highlighted that the reports requested by the Committee at its last meeting had been incorporated into the agenda plan. In addition there would be a service presentation in future meetings with one about the Licensing Department in September, ICT in November, Planning in January and Building Control in March.

The Youth Strategy report due for September could be delayed, due to the report officers being involved in other work related to the pandemic. The Chairman requested that the Committee be kept informed.

22. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC INCLUDING REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PRESS**

That the press and public be excluded during the consideration of the remaining item no. 11 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 item(s) there would be disclosure to them of exempt information of Categories 1, 2 and 3 of Part I Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

23. **EAST CAMBS STREET SCENE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT**

The Committee considered a report, V36 previously circulated, that detailed the year end financial report for the East Cambs Street Scene Business Plan for 2019-20.

The Senior Accountant advised the Committee about the actual expenditure incurred and income earned during the year. Staffing expenses were over budget, as the amount had been set two years ago and had not been updated, and staff vacancies had been covered. The vehicles insurance figures were lower this second year compared to the previous year.

The Committee asked a number of questions and replies were given in relation to other income, which covered a number of additional work undertake, such as toilet cleaning and emptying dog litter bins and the sale of wheelie bins. Only a small proportion of staff cost increases was due to the pandemic during the 2019-20 year, but it was expected to be more significant this year.

It was resolved:

That the East Cambs Street Scene budget monitoring report be noted.

The meeting concluded at 5:50pm.