

Minutes of the Performance Overview & Scrutiny Panel



Location: Council Chamber, The Symington Building, Adam and Eve Street, Market Harborough, LE16 7AG

Date: **7th December 2023** commencing at 6.30pm

Present:

Councillors: Asher, Birch, Burrell, Dann, Elliott (Chair), King, Rickman. (Hallam, Knight, Woodiwiss – ex-officio).

Officers: E. Bird – Head of Regulatory Services
V. Jessop – Director for Communities & Wellbeing
E. Newman – Democratic Services Officer
Tara Bahur - Blaby District Council
Teresa Neal – Blaby District Council

1. Apologies for Absence

There were none.

2. Declarations of Members' Interests

Councillor King declared in interests in agenda Item 5 and Item 6, as a councillor for Leicestershire County Council.

3. Minutes of the Performance Overview & Scrutiny Panel 19.10.2023

It was raised that Councillor Finan had been left out of the attendance list. This will be rectified in the published minutes.

The minutes were proposed by Councillor Burrell and seconded by Councillor Rickman.

The panel agreed the minutes of the meeting on 19th October 2023 as an accurate record.

4. Portfolio Holder Update

The Portfolio Holder for Environmental and Climate Change provided an update on his portfolio to the Panel. This included individual updates on climate schemes – electric vehicle hubs, Warm Home Scheme, Tilton on the Hill car club and Environmental schemes – the new waste contract, the impact of the new Environment Act, street cleansing, fly-tipping, play equipment replacement, tree planting, garden waste collection scheme, and community safety.

The Chair asked the Panel for any questions or comments on the Portfolio Holder Update.

It was noted that it was important that the roll out of the new Garden Waste scheme be properly planned for to ensure that the customer contact centre would be able to cope with the amount of public contact. The Director of Communities & Wellbeing advised that this has been appropriately planned for in the team.

It was asked how the waste procurement would be commented on by Members, rather than just the Cabinet.

It was also asked why the Environmental capital grants programme had not been used in the previous year. The Director of Communities & Wellbeing confirmed that the criteria for the grants was in the process of being drawn up, and that a system had been put in place to administer the grants.

It was suggested by the panel that the Portfolio Holder update could be provided as a written report, rather than a verbal report.

5. Lightbulb Housing Support Delivery Service

The Head of Regulatory Services introduced the report. The Portfolio Holder for Communities & Wellbeing also added some considerations on the Lightbulb Support Service.

The Lightbulb Manager at Blaby District Council presented a slide deck on the Lightbulb Housing Support Delivery Service and how it is delivered across the Harborough District.

The Chair then invited questions and comments from the Panel.

Question	Answer
Why has the funding increased for 2023/24?	The original funds came from the Better Care Fund, however there were additional funds made available to Harborough District Council midyear.
What are the other partners within Lightbulb?	Leicester & Leicestershire District and Borough Councils, Leicestershire County Council, Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Hospitals, Public Health Service, Links to GP Practices, Health Partners.
How are people referred to the Lightbulb Service?	The key access point is Adult social care through Leicestershire County Council, members of the public can access details on the website on how to refer a vulnerable person that they may be concerned about.

<p>What is the total number of properties that have had adaptation while the scheme has been running?</p>	<p>The next business case for Lightbulb 2024-2029 will contain information on Disabled Facilities Grants and additional data on how people have been assisted to live more independently in their home. A quarterly performance report is shared with Harborough District Council.</p>
<p>How is the current delivery timeline comparable to when the service was run in house at HDC?</p>	<p>Prior to Lightbulb being introduced, DFG was already being outsourced to the Patworth Trust. At this time the delivery timeline was over the 20 weeks target from Lightbulb.</p>
<p>How have the extra priorities earmarked for the refresh been chosen?</p>	<p>The team consult with executive and operational boards, with a breadth of knowledge, to understand what can be and needs to be further provided across the county.</p>
<p>How relevant are the extra priorities to Harborough District?</p>	<p>Lightbulb Team to provide answer.</p>
<p>Could further detail on Lightbulb and the wider business case be provided to the Panel, especially those newly elected Councillors?</p>	<p>The Officers would look to use Pentana to distribute further data on Lightbulb, with data provided by the Lightbulb team.</p> <p>Blaby District Council have also run a county wide event for new Portfolio Holders.</p>

<p>What take up was there on the pilot scheme on assisted dementia technology?</p>	<p>A separate quarterly report on each pilot scheme (including Assisted Dementia Technology) is provided to the officers at Harborough District Council. This data could be put on Pentana to review.</p>
<p>How much of the Warm Homes funding have been used?</p>	<p>There are currently waitlists for Warm Homes intervention.</p>
<p>How many residents have benefitted from funding from Warm Homes?</p>	<p>There should be data available on this next quarter, and this will be provided to Harborough District Council.</p>
<p>How many occupational therapists are used by Lightbulb?</p>	<p>There is one specialist housing occupational therapist dedicated to the Lightbulb scheme. There is also access to a team of occupational therapists employed by Leicestershire County Council utilised for the DFG element of the scheme.</p>
<p>In the event there is an overspend of Government allocation, where does the extra money come from?</p>	<p>The scheme is currently on an underspend, which is being managed. The team are looking at the calculation of allocations, but there has not been an overspend across the scheme. They are also actively looking for funding opportunities via health partners.</p>

<p>If Charnwood joins the Partnership will this decrease the costs to other districts involved in the scheme?</p>	<p>If Charnwood chooses to join the partnership, the costs to other councils will be decreased.</p>
<p>What is 'Foundations'?</p>	<p>They are the national body for DFG. They provide advice and guidance to central government.</p>
<p>What proper budget controls are in place to ensure there's no overspending?</p>	<p>There is a £30k limit for mandatory DFG. Spending across the scheme is monitored quarterly. If there is potential of the budget being reached, preventative grants are reviewed to ensure mandatory work is completed. The team receive monthly budget updates from their accountant, as well as normally quarterly updates. There is legislation that allows for the deferral of payments to subsequent years, however, Harborough District Council have never had to use this mechanism.</p>
<p>Correction of terminology</p>	<p>It was noted that the old terminology of Disability Adaptation Grant had been used to refer to the current Disability Facilities Grant scheme, and this would be changed in the report.</p>
<p>What are the different groups of customers that can access the scheme?</p>	<p>Lightbulb is tenure neutral, however, grants and facilities have differing eligibility criteria. It was</p>

	suggested that a Members Briefing be presented to give clear details of the scheme.
How much of the Warm Homes grant has been used?	The Head of Regulatory Services will take this away.

The point was made that the presentation would have been best absorbed if it had been provided prior to the meeting. It was also noted that the presentation would have been more accessible if the external stakeholders had been at the meeting in person. It was suggested that the use of Pentana in committee meetings would be beneficial for the Panel.

It was asked whether the report for the business case of Lightbulb would come back to scrutiny for review. As the current agreement expires in March 2024, it would be unlikely that the business case for the extension of Lightbulb, would not come back to the committee to be scrutinised.

It was moved that an additional recommendation be added to this report. The draft of the new business case for Lightbulb be brought back to Scrutiny prior to it going to Cabinet for a decision. The recommendation was proposed by Councillor King and seconded by Councillor Rickman, and this was unanimously **CARRIED**.

6. Light & Life Church Convention July 2023

The Portfolio Holder for Environmental & Climate Change introduced the report. The Director for Communities & Wellbeing gave an overview of the contents and invited questions and comments from the Panel.

Question	Answer
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<p>Was the event free to attend?</p>	<p>As it was a privately run event on private land, the Council is not privy to this kind of detail.</p>
<p>Were there any direct financial costs, as Harborough District Council and Leicestershire County Council staff were tasked with clearing at the end of the event?</p>	<p>There was not a specific amount levied on the Showground. The service provided by HDC was classed as business as usual.</p>
<p>Why wasn't there a Green Agenda put together for the event?</p>	<p>As this was a private event, this was not required to be completed by the organisers.</p>
<p>Was Gallowfield Road entrance used outside of the Showground's planning restrictions?</p>	<p>The Director of Communities & Wellbeing would investigate the restrictions on this entrance to the showground.</p>
<p>There was traffic congestion due to the event – why was this not listed in the report?</p>	<p>This would be taken as part of the lessons learnt in relation to this event and ensure that this is taken into account going forward.</p>
<p>Who was responsible for health and safety at the event?</p>	<p>East Midlands Fire and Rescue service provided advice, and observed the site whilst the event was going on.</p>
<p>Who paid for the road sweeper for Gallowfield Road?</p>	<p>The event organiser had a sweeper on standby. It is most likely that the Leicestershire County Council swept the road after the event and fronted this cost. However, this is not confirmed.</p>

What were the businesses that attended meeting with the Leader after the event?	There was not an official list of businesses that attended the meetings, but there were approximately 20 businesses in attendance.
Were the parking restrictions waived for the caravans attending the event?	There were no parking restrictions lifted for the event.
Would there be an invitation to members of the business community?	During the second meeting with Police and Multi-Agency Traveller Unit, businesses were invited to attend, and receive advice and express any concerns they had with the event.
Could the Showground Manager be invited to a scrutiny meeting to discuss this issue further?	There is scope for the Showground manager to be invited to a scrutiny panel. However, this report is in retrospect of the event.

It was noted that there was an issue with not publicising knowledge of the event to the public. It was suggested by the Panel that the confidential email to councillors was not the right course of action. It was noted that a conversation between the Showground Manager and a Councillor on the Panel showed that the Showground Manager was not answering calls from the public, which was the notified process from the Council. Local businesses felt that they had to close due to safety issues, and that staff were refusing to attend work. If the businesses had received earlier notification, they may have been able to employ security, in order to stay open. Feedback from residents suggested that additional laundry facilities need to be provided, as there was only one laundry facility which was inundated throughout the event. It was noted that antisocial behaviour incidents happened but weren't reported to the police. There were also issues encountered due to congestion caused by the

event, and traffic and parking regulations being breached. It was suggested that further lessons, not detailed in the report relating to commercial impact, needed to be noted for similar future events. Panel members also felt it important to note that there were environmental impacts on the Showground and the field surrounding the showground that had not been highlighted in the report. It was also suggested that future events at the Showground would need to be reviewed, with regular communication channels opened.

The Scrutiny Commissioner attended the panel ex-officio, and the Chair allowed him to make comments to the Panel. He reiterated the problems raised by members of the Panel, including congestion caused, mess left on the roads, impact on local businesses and on the policing budget. He encouraged the need for better communication with showground manager for future events, to ensure that issues caused by this event are not repeated in the future.

It was proposed to add an additional recommendation to this report by Councillor King. That an additional meeting of the Performance Overview and Scrutiny Panel be held to further discuss the Light & Life Convention and that businesses the public be invited to further discuss the impact of the event. Councillor Rickman seconded the motion.

The amendment to the recommendation was put to a vote and did not pass.

The report was **noted**.

7. Any urgent business

It was noted that the Finance and Performance quarterly reports had not been appearing in recent Performance Overview & Scrutiny Panel meetings. This would be investigated by Democratic Services with the Corporate Management team.

The meeting ended at 21:15.