

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on Wednesday, 28 September 2022 in the Council Chamber - Council Offices at 9.30 am

Committee Members Present:

Mr N Dixon (Chairman)	Ms L Withington
Mr P Heinrich	Dr V Holliday
Mr N Housden	Mr C Cushing
Mr P Fisher	

Members also attending:

Mr A Brown (Observer)	Mrs W Fredericks (Observer)
Mr R Kershaw (Observer)	Mr E Seward (Observer)
Mr T Adams (Observer)	

Officers in Attendance: Democratic Services and Governance Officer - Scrutiny (DSGOS), Chief Executive (CE), Group Accountant (GA), Director for Place & Climate Change (DFPCC), Director for Communities (DFC), Project Manager North Walsham Heritage Action Zone (PMNW), Revenues Manager (RM), Economic Growth Manager (EGM), Assistant Director for Planning (ADP), Policy and Performance Management Officer (PPMO) and Assistant Director for Sustainable Growth (ADSG)

33 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr H Blathwayt, Cllr S Penfold, Cllr S Butikofer, Cllr E Spagnola and Cllr A Varley.

34 SUBSTITUTES

Cllr N Pearce.

35 PUBLIC QUESTIONS & STATEMENTS

None received.

36 MINUTES

Minutes from the meeting held on 20th July 2022 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

37 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None received.

38 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None declared.

39 PETITIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

None received.

40 CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE BY A MEMBER

None received.

41 RESPONSES OF THE COUNCIL OR THE CABINET TO THE COMMITTEE'S REPORTS OR RECOMMENDATIONS

- i. The DSGOS referred to the Committee's recommendations relating to CCfA on the impact of second homes and holiday lets, and informed Members that the recommendations had been deferred by Cabinet, to enable a briefing to take place prior to consideration. He added that the recommendations were expected to be considered on 6th October and would be reported to the October Committee meeting.
- ii. The DSGOS referred to the Scrutiny Panel Public Convenience recommendations, and informed Members that the urgent recommendations 1 and 2 had been accepted, subject to further work, investigation and consultation on the impacts of wild camping, with a report expected in January. He added that recommendation 3 to undertake an independent audit had not been accepted, as it was suggested that this could be done internally. It was noted that recommendations 4 to 15 were accepted, subject to the Scrutiny Panel meeting with the service areas responsible for implementing the recommendations.

42 PLANNING SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Cllr A Brown – Portfolio Holder for Planning and Enforcement introduced the report and informed Members that whilst the improvement plan was included for consideration, it was apparent that the impact of nutrient neutrality had impeded progress. He added that applications for the building of overnight accommodation had been paused whilst mitigation measures and a process for measuring development pollution was established. It was noted that the Improvement Plan would be a two stage process with the strategy coming first, followed by an action plan in due course. The DFPCC stated that the Strategy included a timetable of key dates and noted that whilst engagement had been delayed, progress with developing and implementing the Plan would continue. He added that the National Planning Advisory Service had been utilised for guidance and templates, with officers making use of best practice. It was noted that this work would be completed in advance of contacting Parish and Town Councils for comment, which formed part of the engagement process, with consultation via the Town and Parish Council Forum, direct contact, and attending meetings. The DFPCC stated that wider engagement would include social media campaigns to seek the views of the wider public to capture as much feedback as possible.

Questions and Discussion

- i. The Chairman noted that he was reassured to see that improving the customer experience had been placed at the forefront of the Strategy. He added that he was mindful of the impact that nutrient neutrality, and how this had limited the Council's ability to seek meaningful feedback, but engagement should take into account all residents. It was suggested that

whilst it may not be a good time to consult applicants and agents, residents, Parish and Town Councils and even District Councillors could be consulted for their views on the Planning Service. The Chairman noted that it would be prudent to undertake this consultation first, in advance of making any major decisions on changes to the Service and operating procedure. The DFPC agreed and suggested that expanding the scope of the consultation and engagement would add value to the Plan, and he would be happy to make these amendments.

- ii. Cllr V Holliday referred to the lack of customer focus, and stated that she was reassured to see that this had been addressed as a priority within the Plan. She added that social media and the Town and Parish Forum may not be the best way to reach people, as many residents did not engage with these platforms. It was noted that no communication on decision notices and site notices not being displayed were common complaints that had to be addressed, and could be quick wins. Cllr V Holliday suggested that relying on customers to find decision notices was not good customer service, and that better placement of site notices would help customers better understand proposals. The DFPC replied that the Council did rely on site notices to alert neighbours of applications, as they were not contacted directly. He added that this could be reconsidered, and whilst some site notices were a statutory requirement, contacting neighbours and those likely to be impacted by applications would represent far better customer service. He added that existing site notices were displayed within five days, which in some cases did clash with Town and Parish meetings, and accepted that this could be improved. With regards to decision notices, it was reported that a 24/7 self-service system was being developed, as a reliance on officers to send notices to all Town and Parish Councils was very resource intensive when the Service was already under pressure.
- iii. The DFPC referred to quick wins and reported that the service structure had been reorganised to move away from separate Development Control and Majors Teams to one Development Team, working in unison under a single manager. He added that there were also process quick wins to be addressed through the Uniform system, and a working group had been established to improve processes, increase automation and remove duplication. Cllr V Holliday replied that it sounded as though positive steps were being made, but the Service had to ensure that it listened to customers' needs.
- iv. Cllr C Cushing referred to the speed of decision making and asked what sort of issues would impede this. The DFPC replied that primarily this related to the computer system, which did not yet provide templates for decision notices, or have a full list of pre-conditions that had to be individually prepared. He added that when each officer handled forty to fifty cases, these delays amounted to a significant barrier. It was noted that the Member deferral process also added a week to the decision-making process, and in some cases this led to a Committee date being missed, delaying a decision by up to a month. Finally, the caseload of Team Leaders meant that not every decision could be signed-off within the desired timeframe. Cllr C Cushing referred to the IT system used and asked how this could be improved, to which the DFPC replied that Uniform was used by many Councils, therefore much of the required information was available, but would take time to implement. Cllr C Cushing asked whether the number of applications received was increasing, to which it was suggested that there

was a slight increase in the number of applications received, whilst staff numbers had slightly diminished.

- v. Cllr N Housden suggested that it would be difficult to get a good cross section of views from the general public, then referred to recently announced investment zones, and asked how these would be embraced and promoted in communities. The DFPCC replied that this would form an important part of future communication with Town and Parish Councils, and efforts would be made to help support and improve understanding through improved relationships. Cllr N Housden suggested that many did not understand the Planning process, and thought that further education and training would help. The Chairman suggested that it would be helpful to see how this challenge would be met within the future action plan as understanding of the planning process was varied across the District.
- vi. Cllr N Pearce noted that the planning process was complicated and was often delayed by external consultees, and suggested that expanding customer engagement to include various bodies would help to address this. He added that many did not understand the full extent of the process, and it would help to make customers more aware of the details. The DFPCC agreed that it would be helpful to communicate more with customers about how the consultation operated, and the delays this could have on the decision making process.
- vii. Cllr P Heinrich suggested that it could be helpful to create simple guidance to explain to residents what would happen to their applications, with similar guidance for Parish and Town Councils to explain how to understand and respond to applications. The DFPCC agreed that this would be helpful and suggested that discussions had also taken place on internal guidance to ensure that important steps in the process were not missed. He added that guidance could be sent to applicants as part of their registration letters.
- viii. The Chairman suggested that consultation should begin with Town and Parish Councils whilst waiting for nutrient neutrality issues to be resolved to ensure that engagement was not forgotten.
- ix. Cllr V Holliday referred to staff retention and asked whether the action plan would include any actions to address this. The DFPCC replied that there were quick wins that could be implemented to retain staff such as offering new training courses and personal development packages, which were being progressed.
- x. Cllr N Housden asked how consultation feedback would be measured, and it was suggested that this would be determined as part of the action plan. Cllr N Housden suggested that simple yes or no questions would help to identify education gaps at parish and town level. The CE suggested that some expectation management may be required, as there was a fundamental tension between balancing the need for housing and economic growth against the landscape and natural environment, which meant there was always potential for disapproval amongst residents. He added it was also not possible for the District Council to undertake a full consultation on national planning issues such as nutrient neutrality and a potential relaxation of planning regulations, and this had to be taken into account in advance of any engagement. Cllr N Housden replied that tension was a clear issue that had increased in recent years, and had coincided with a reduction in tolerance,

but there still had to be efforts made to improve engagement with residents and other customers across the District.

- xi. Cllr A Brown noted that funding for planning services across the Country had reduced by approximately 40%, and there was likely a disconnect between the aims and expectations of Government reform and what was possible with available funding. He agreed that disappointed applicants would always claim that there were negative aspects in the planning process, and these would be difficult to satisfy during any engagement process. The Chairman noted that this would be a challenge to overcome, and filtering the feedback would be necessary to improve the service.
- xii. The DSGOS outlined the suggested changes including the separation of the customer engagement process into constituent parts beginning with Town and Parish Councils, ensuring that changes to the planning regime were adequately addressed, and issuing guidance to residents and other Councils. The Chairman clarified that separation of the engagement process would include five elements made up of Town and Parish Councils, applicants, agents, residents and District Councillors. It was noted that statutory consultee delays were a system-wide issue that may be difficult to address, but could be considered by officers. The proposals were recommended by Cllr P Heinrich and seconded by Cllr N Dixon.

RESOLVED

- 1. That the Overview & Scrutiny Committee supports the Planning Service Improvement Plan, namely the Strategy and production of a draft Action Plan.**

To recommend to the Director for Place and Climate Change that:

- 2. The customer engagement aspects of the Plan are separated and progressed independently for Town and Parish Councils, District Cllrs, residents, and planning service users (applicants and agents).**
- 3. Future challenges caused by changes to the planning regime are adequately addressed within the Plan.**
- 4. That guidance be developed on the planning process for residential applicants.**
- 5. That consideration is given to expediting responses from statutory consultees to avoid delays in the planning process.**

43 NORTH WALSHAM HIGH STREET HERITAGE ACTION ZONE - PROJECT UPDATE

Cllr R Kershaw – Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Growth introduced the item and informed Members that work had commenced on phase two of the placemaking scheme in mid-September. He added that evaluating the existing materials and reusing these where possible would shorten the building period and help to keep costs down. It was noted that the Church approach was finished and ready for snagging, whilst rendering of the wall opposite the Shambles was now in progress. On the Vicarage Street Car Park it was reported that planning permission had been

approved, and the scheme was now out for tender with work expected to begin in January. It was noted that the Market had moved to Bank Loke, which had been well received by traders and the public, whilst the farmers market had also moved with an increase in the number of stalls. Cllr R Kershaw stated that the HAZ scheme had engendered a wider confidence in the Town, with the City Gates site now open to a new building and bathroom suppliers, whilst Howdens had moved into the Hornbeam Road site. He added that the knock-on effect was to increase pride in the Town and show that it was open for business. It was noted that traffic surveys undertaken throughout summer had shown that most traffic passed through the market place as a short cut, and did not stop there specifically, which had alleviated some concerns of local businesses.

Questions and Discussion

- i. The ADSG noted that interesting issues had begun to be addressed as part of the project that were not planned, such as relocating of bins and signage to make the town more accessible and user-friendly.
- ii. The Chairman asked whether any assurance could be offered regarding the considerable risks that remained visible on the risk register. Cllr R Kershaw replied that the risks were acknowledged as the Council was fully aware of issues such as increased fuel and material costs, which were discussed on a weekly basis to ensure they were adequately mitigated. The ADSG added that the project itself did come with inherent risks due to the number of stakeholders and high profile changes being made to the Town. He noted that there had been thorough engagement undertaken to mitigate these risks and costs were reviewed on an ongoing basis. It was suggested that the project had moved into the next stage and this meant that some risks would begin to diminish and become easier to quantify. The ADSG stated that risks remained whilst undertaking capital projects due to inflation in the costs of materials and labour, which justified the RAG statuses. He added that he would not expect several of the risks to be reported as amber or green until the overall project was nearing completion. The Chairman noted that it sounded as though risks were being closely monitored, adequately managed and could be expected to reduce in likelihood as the project progressed.
- iii. Cllr C Cushing suggested that the report could include a RAG status for each workstream with key milestones and dates for each. He added that it would also be helpful to understand the impacts of each risk and what mitigation measures were in place. The ADSG replied that he would be happy to provide workstream reporting and reduce the level of detail, though it was suggested that the current format did provide context that Members may not be aware of.
- iv. Cllr N Housden referred to the risk of funding not being committed within the funding timescale and asked whether this had been addressed. The ADSG replied that this related to funding from the LEP which had a spending timescale, which had now been committed, which meant that the associated risk could be reduced with completion expected in March 2023. The PMNW noted that part of the risk register included a summary of the mitigation actions taken, with an updated status. She added that the report format appeared to have changed and lost the most up to date information.
- v. Cllr N Pearce referred to cultural programming risks and asked whether residents were supportive of the wider changes being made in the Town. Cllr

R Kershaw noted that comments from p54 onwards of the risk register had been lost, which would have explained the mitigation measures. The AD SG stated that the Council was satisfied that there had been a good level of engagement on the cultural programming projects with consortium partners. He added that additional narrative within the risk register could be helpful to explain high risk areas, though cultural programming was undertaken by local groups and was separate to the town-scaping scheme. The CE noted there was an error in the formatting, and this would need to be corrected to provide the requested narrative. The DSGOS suggested that the report format may have been altered during agenda production and this could be addressed quickly. It was suggested that the updated report could be brought back to the October meeting for further discussion. Cllr R Kershaw noted that after mitigation, only four red RAG statuses remained, but this would be shown when the report returned.

- vi. Cllr N Pearce proposed deferring any formal comment on the report until it had been reconsidered at the October meeting, and was seconded by Cllr N Housden.
- vii. Cllr C Cushing asked whether individual workstream RAG ratings and milestones could be included in the next quarterly update.

RESOLVED

- 1. To reconsider the report at the October meeting subject to amendment of project risk register formatting issues and minor alterations.**

44 OUTTURN REPORT 2021/22

Cllr E Seward – Portfolio Holder for Finance and Assets introduced the report and informed Members that the Council’s finances were well placed when other Councils were facing significant difficulties. He added that the report showed what had happened to the Council’s finances in 21/22 following the setting of the budget in February, which had been a challenging time whilst still in the midst of the Pandemic. It was reported that the year-end resulted in an underspend or surplus of approximately £615k, whilst not having to use reserves or cut services. Cllr E Seward stated that the Council had ended the year with reserves of £22.4m, secure long-term investments of £32m, no long-term borrowing and a financial strength rating upgraded from silver to gold, putting the Council in the top five percent of local authorities. He added that the operating underspend had been driven primarily by better than expected car parking income, higher than anticipated income from trade waste and no interest payments on capital projects. It was noted that in addition to the underspend, the Council had received a further £674k as its share of the Norfolk Business Rates Pool for the previous financial year.

Questions and Discussion

- i. Cllr C Cushing noted that in the previous year grants had been received for Covid support, and asked whether any had been received in the year covered by the report. The GA confirmed that the Council had received just over £500k in 2021/22.
- ii. The recommendations were proposed by Cllr P Heinrich and seconded by Cllr P Fisher.

RESOLVED

To recommend the following to Full Council:

- a) The provisional outturn position for the General Fund revenue account for 2021/22;**
- b) The transfers to and from reserves as detailed within the report (and appendix C) along with the corresponding updates to the 2022/23 budget;**
- c) Allocate the surplus of £615,740 to the General Reserve;**
- d) The financing of the 2021/22 capital programme as detailed within the report and at Appendix D;**
- e) The balance on the General Reserve of £2.33 million;**
- f) The updated capital programme for 2022/23 to 2025/26 and scheme financing as outlined within the report and detailed at Appendix E;**
- g) The roll-forward requests as outline in Appendix G are approved.**

45 TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22

Cllr E Seward – Portfolio Holder for Finance and Assets introduced the report and informed Members that it was an annual requirement. He added that there was no long-term borrowing to report, investments had not suffered from any negative exposure in relation to sanctions on Russia and Belarus, and as noted the Council now held a gold standard financial strength rating.

Questions and Discussion

- i. The recommendation was proposed by Cllr P Heinrich and seconded by Cllr P Fisher.

RESOLVED

- 1. To recommend to Full Council that that the Treasury Management Annual Report for 2021/22 is approved.**

46 DEBT RECOVERY REPORT 2021/22

Cllr E Seward – Portfolio Holder for Finance and Assets introduced the report and informed Members that the report author was in attendance to answer any questions.

Questions and Discussion

- i. Cllr N Housden referred to a debt collected in his ward, and thanked officers for reaching a resolution. The RM replied that Members could be reassured that officers would continue to seek repayments on all debts relating to enforcement action going forward.
- ii. The recommendation was proposed by Cllr P Heinrich and seconded by Cllr N Housden.

RESOLVED

1. **To recommend that Full Council approve the annual report giving details of the Council's write-offs in accordance with the Council's Debt Write-Off Policy and performance in relation to revenues collection.**

47 BUDGET MONITORING 2022/23 - PERIOD 4

Cllr E Seward – Portfolio Holder for Finance and Assets introduced the report and informed Members that it was the first monitoring report of 2022/23, which meant that it was likely too early to tell how closely the budget would be adhered to, though this would be clearer in the next update. He added that in spite of this, the Council remained well placed with higher returns on investments than forecast through interest payments, which were expected to exceed the forecasted £470k. It was reported that this was particularly helpful for offsetting the £450k required to fund the employee pay settlement. Cllr E Seward stated that rising costs could be managed to an extent, but there was a limitation and increases for projects such as the Fakenham Roundabout could not be covered by the Council alone. He added that he was confident that the Council could meet the costs for to the levelling-up bids, if successful. It was noted that contingencies were also in place for existing projects if prices continued to rise, though it remained a concern. Funding required for health and safety work at Mundesley Road was reported to fund the resurfacing of a car park, to avoid potential injury claims against the Council.

Questions and Discussion

- i. Cllr V Holliday referred to LG Inform data and suggested that the Council appeared to score highly in total expenditure for central services, and asked if there where was a reason for this. The CE replied that the details relating for the overspend had been summarised within the report.
- ii. The recommendations were proposed by Cllr P Heinrich and seconded by Cllr P Fisher.

RESOLVED

1. **To note the contents of the report and the current budget monitoring position.**
2. **To endorse Cabinet's decision that £30,000 is released from the Asset Management reserve for health and safety works at Mundesley Road Car Park, North Walsham.**

48 PRE-SCRUTINY - PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

Cllr T Adams – Council Leader introduced the report and informed Members that the report outlined the proposals for how performance would be examined moving forward, and this was an opportunity for the Committee to provide input into the process.

Questions and Discussion

- i. Cllr C Cushing referred to delivery of affordable homes and asked how many would be delivered in 2022/23, taking into account the impact of nutrient

neutrality. It was noted that this question related to the next agenda item on performance itself, rather than discussion of the framework.

- ii. The DSGOS informed Members that the reporting framework addressed the way in which the council's performance would be reported going forward, which had been adapted to take into account suggestions from Members. The PPMO stated that the key change would be adapting the organisational culture, to improve the quality and timing of reporting. She added that to aid this process, a substantial amount of guidance had been produced for officers to improve planning and reporting of performance. It was confirmed that the framework could continue to be adapted if necessary.
- iii. Cllr V Holliday referred to key performance measures on p213 and asked whether these were comprehensive or could be added to, as she was not comfortable with the existing limited selection. She added that in regards to climate, coast and environment, the Council performed well on coastal issues but was fourth worst for recycling rates amongst similar authorities. It was noted that the number and value of visitors to North Norfolk was similarly not an all-encompassing measure of business growth, and quality of life did not address the number of sewage outflow incidents. The PPMO replied that the key performance measures were taken directly from the current Corporate Plan, but below these figures were management and service indicators. Cllr V Holliday replied that focusing solely on performance of corporate objectives overlooked what was actually happening in the District, and suggested that wider issues should be considered.
- iv. Cllr N Housden asked whether changes to the framework were the result of comments made during discussion of the last performance report. The PPMO confirmed that this report focused solely on the framework that the performance reporting fell within, which covered how and when performance would be reported. She added that the performance report itself had been amended following feedback from the Committee to report by exception on red and amber performance measures, with further information available on InPhase, if required.
- v. Cllr V Holliday stated that it was important to present to the public a real picture of performance that included information beyond the KPIs determined by the Corporate Plan. The CE replied that whilst the framework focused on the structure of reporting, the content of the report and the issues raised related to the content of the performance report itself. He added that benchmarking data provided by LG Inform did not always align with the measures set by the Council to determine performance against delivering the Corporate Plan. It was noted that in terms of recycling, the Council did not perform as well as its peers as there were no food waste collections, and it was therefore not chosen as a key priority of the Corporate Plan.
- vi. Cllr T Adams stated that the performance information requested was included as part of the benchmarking report, and accepted that recycling was an issue that could be improved upon, which could be included as part of the performance report if Members deemed it necessary.
- vii. The Chairman asked whether concerns related to making all performance information available to the public, to which Cllr V Holliday replied that she sought a synthesis of performance information to provide context and understanding. The CE replied that it was important to note that some of this

data would be contextual, such as the number of people on the housing waiting list, whilst the number of people housed per quarter would represent the Council's performance. He added that adding contextual data for all aspects of the Corporate Plan would require an extensive report that would not be possible with the available resource. It was suggested that the reports needed to find a balance between the two to determine what level of contextual data was appropriate, taking into account existing benchmarking reports. The PPMO noted that benchmarking data covered the previous quarter to performance reports, and this could create confusion.

- viii. Cllr V Holliday proposed that limited contextual information be added to the performance reports where appropriate, to better understand performance information. Cllr T Adams suggested that it would be helpful to discuss further which contextual information was required, though he was generally supportive of the proposal.
- ix. Cllr N Housden suggested that benchmarking reports could be broadened, as there were wider issues that required consideration such as water quality, and sewage outflows. The CE replied that the responsibilities of external bodies such as Anglian Water and the NHS provided contextual data that related to North Norfolk, but they did not relate to performance of the authority itself. He added that the Committee's terms of reference did allow for scrutiny of these external bodies, but they did not constitute part of the Council's performance. It was noted that the performance reports should focus primarily on the actions and performance of the Council against the commitments made in the Corporate Plan, or for statutory services. The CE noted that LG Inform benchmarking data focused on core services such as Council Tax collection, benefits performance, and bin collections which did provide an element of performance monitoring against other Councils. Cllr W Fredericks noted that several actions had been taken to address issues raised relating to benefits performance during the previous benchmarking discussion, and Members should be reassured that relative performance would continue to improve.
- x. Cllr V Holliday's recommendation was seconded by Cllr N Housden.

RESOLVED

- 1. To recommend to Cabinet that consideration is given to the inclusion of limited contextual information to support performance data, subject to further discussion with Cllr T Adams and Cllr V Holliday.**

49 MANAGING PERFORMANCE QUARTER 1 2022/23

Cllr T Adams – Council Leader introduced the report and informed Members that eighty households had been housed during the period covered by the report. He added that in terms of business growth and sustainability, two levelling-up bids had been submitted with outcomes expected in October, alongside continued progress with the HAZ project. On customer focus, it was reported that drop-in advice sessions for Ukrainian refugees had been very successful, whilst the Outlook magazine had also been successfully relaunched. For climate, coast and environment it was noted that whilst the physical Greenbuild event had to be cancelled due to the passing of Queen Elizabeth II, online events had been well attended. It was noted that tree planting season would soon begin, and the Coastal Team had been working hard on the Cromer and Mundesley schemes. Cllr T Adams

reported that on quality of life the District's Blue Flag beach awards had been retained, and it was hoped that there would be more beaches added in the future. He added that investment continued into the most comprehensive public toilet provision in the County.

Questions and Discussion

- i. Cllr C Cushing referred to affordable homes and asked how many would be delivered in the current year. Cllr W Fredericks replied that the impact of nutrient neutrality had been significant and would affect more schemes than just those planned in Fakenham and Stalham. She added that the price of land had been pushed up in areas that were not effected by the regulations, alongside increases in material costs, labour shortages and decreases in the value of the pound, that all made it harder to deliver affordable housing. It was noted that as a result of these issues, only thirty were expected to be delivered in 2022-23, which was significantly less than planned but beyond the Council's control.
- ii. Cllr V Holliday referred to customer focus performance and noted that the RAG status was 30% amber, with the number of calls answered at 81%, whilst the size of the Customer Service Team was at its highest of 14.74 FTE, calls resolved were at 87% and online contacts was at the lowest ever figure of 125. She added that this was a better indication of service performance than the reported number of compliments received. Cllr T Adams replied that a cross section of different strands of performance was required, and noted that pressure had increased as a result of Council Tax call handling. Cllr V Holliday suggested that a drill-down would be valuable to help improve this service. The CE stated that he would be happy to look into the issue, though calls were expected to reduce during August and September, with peak call numbers expected in March and April. He added that trend analysis would be helpful to understand if there were any underlying issues causing changes.
- iii. Cllr N Housden referred to the number of planning applications processed and asked if it was possible to see the number of decisions that had been delegated, as this helped to streamline the service. The DFPCC replied that approximately 93% of decisions were made under delegated authority and he would be happy to determine the full number, if required.

RESOLVED

- 1. To note this report and endorses the actions being taken by Corporate Leadership Team detailed in Appendix A – Managing Performance.**

50 NNDC PERFORMANCE BENCHMARKING

Cllr T Adams – Council Leader introduced the item and noted that the Committee had already discussed a number of issues covered in the report. He added that in terms of delivery of affordable housing, the impact of nutrient neutrality had already been discussed.

RESOLVED

- 1. To receive and note the benchmarking information.**

51 THE CABINET WORK PROGRAMME

The DSGOS noted that the Engagement Strategy would be delayed until November, and that interesting property transactions were expected at the next meeting such as the letting of the Cedars.

RESOLVED

To note the Cabinet Work Programme.

52 OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME AND UPDATE

The DSGOS informed Members that the next meeting's agenda was expected to be much lighter, though would include a briefing from Serco officers on the implementation of the new collections model that was currently underway. He added that the updated HAZ risk register would be included for further discussion, alongside the Council Tax Discounts Determination report.

RESOLVED

To note the Work Programme.

53 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

The meeting ended at 12.08 pm.

Chairman