

Corporate Affairs Overview & Scrutiny Panel

Minutes of the Meeting Held on 18 November 2009

Present:

Mr C Jordan (Chairman)

Mrs D Clarke

Mr B Collins

Mr J Dobson

Mr S Dorrington

Mr R Hanton

Mr M Hemsley

Mr M Langwade

Ms J Mickleburgh

Mr A Proctor

Mr R Smith

Ms J Toms

Mrs C Walker

Mr A White

Substitute Members Present:

Mr T Garrod

Cabinet Members Present:

Mr B Borrett Corporate Affairs and Efficiency

Mr I Mackie Finance and Performance

Deputy Cabinet Members Present:

Mr J Herbert Corporate Affairs

Also in attendance:

Cllr B Coleman Leader of Great Yarmouth Borough Council (GYBC)

Mr T Leonard Local Strategic Partnership Officer, GYBC

Ms J Ratcliffe Executive Director, Customer and Resources, GYBC

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Mr J Carswell (Mr T Garrod substituted), Mr Clancy and Mr Brindle.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 September 2009 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3. Declarations of Interest

Mr Garrod declared a personal interest with regard to Item 5 the Great Yarmouth Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) as he is the Norfolk County Council representative on that LSP.

Mrs Clarke declared a personal interest with regard to Item 12, the Performance and Resources Monitoring Report, paragraph 4.5, as the North Walsham industrial estate is in her Division.

4. Matters of Urgent Business

There were no matters of urgent business.

5. Public Question Time

There were no public questions.

6. Local Member Issues/Member Questions

There were no Local Member issues or Member questions.

7. Cabinet Member Feedback on Previous Review Panel Comments

8. Great Yarmouth Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)

8.1 The Panel received the annexed report (8) by the Director of Environment, Transport and Development which set out the results of the questionnaire looking at the Great Yarmouth LSP.

8.2 The Chairman welcomed Councillor Barry Coleman the Leader of Great Yarmouth Borough Council, Jane Ratcliffe, Executive Director for Customer and Resources and Tim Leonard, LSP Officer to the meeting. Councillor Coleman then gave a presentation (attached at Appendix A).

8.3 Following the presentation a question and answer session ensued during which the following was noted:

8.3.1 Councillor Coleman explained that there had been 'buy-in' by everyone on the LSP Board, and as part of this unified working health standards had improved in the Borough.

8.3.2 There were currently two major goals within the Sustainable Community Strategy:

(1) Education (raising the standard of and aspiration to): for example Great Yarmouth High School had achieved considerable success and its reputation had been transformed by the work that had taken place over the last ten years.

(2) Health: for example the new Managing Director of the PCT was keen to work with the authority to raise the quality of health - work would be concentrated in areas such as diet and teenage pregnancy.

8.3.3 Mrs Walker concurred with Mr Coleman that the LSP 'working together' had made a positive difference, including improvements in her Division.

- 8.3.4 Councillor Coleman said that a further example of working together was the Neighbourhood Management scheme which was being rolled out throughout the Borough. This scheme had started off in areas that experienced the least community activity but as it was rolled out it had been recognised that one shape did not fit all and that different areas required different schemes.
- 8.3.5 The night time economy of Great Yarmouth was one of the areas that the Safer Communities Partnership was involved in. Norfolk Constabulary lead an initiative entitled 'Night Safe' where different clubs and public houses in the town communicate with each other to deny entry to their premises to those individuals who caused trouble. A further partnership initiative 'Night Safe Haven' which was led by the PCT helps and aids people in distress or the victims of violence. These initiatives helped to ensure that people who visit Great Yarmouth could enjoy themselves and were as safe at night.
- 8.4 Members offered their congratulations concerning Great Yarmouth LSP's positive record of achievements.
- 8.5 The Chairman thanked Councillor Barry Coleman and the officers present for attending the meeting.

Resolved:

- 8.6 Members confirmed that the scrutiny of the Great Yarmouth Local Strategic Partnership was complete.

9. Shared Services

- 9.1 Members received the annexed report (9) by the Director of Corporate Resources & Cultural Services which set out a draft Terms of Reference for the new scrutiny topic looking at shared services.
- 9.2 In response to a question, the Director of Corporate Resources and Cultural Services advised that shared services covered sharing services across the authority (for example work was advanced concerning sharing support services). As part of the organisational review other opportunities for sharing services would be considered. In addition work with District Councils was looking at sharing services in such areas as integrated waste, asset management, regulatory services and legal services.
- 9.3 It was noted that the focus of the Working Group had already been fairly well defined and minuted and Members agreed that this scrutiny should be conducted speedily to ensure that the authority has an appropriate framework in place to deliver services.
- 9.4 It was suggested that the Working Group should consider what barriers existed to achieving shared services and whether these barriers could be overcome.

Resolved:

- 9.5 Members agreed the recommended purpose and objectives of scrutiny, as stated in the terms of reference and further agreed that the Working Group should consider what barriers existed to achieving shared services and whether those barriers could be overcome. The Working Group was requested to report back to the Corporate Affairs O&S Panel at its 20 January 2010 meeting.

10. Forward Work Programme: Scrutiny

10.1 Members considered the outline programme for scrutiny.

Resolved:

10.2 Members agreed the scrutiny topics listed and reporting dates.

11. Compliments and Complaints during 2008/09

11.1 Members received and considered the annexed report (11) by the Head of Democratic Services which presented the number and spread of Corporate Compliments and Complaints dealt with by the Council in the period 2008/09. The report also set out information that had been requested at the last meeting concerning Freedom of Information enquiries and complaints, specifically officer time spent providing information and other related costs, including the number of people who habitually make FOI requests and the costs incurred.

11.2 During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- Freedom of Information (Fol) requests received from political groups referred mainly to national political parties and MPs' political assistants/researchers.
- The report noted that Fol requests could cause the authority to incur significant costs and whilst Members recognised that the authority must be open and transparent, concern was expressed that one or two individuals who persistently requested information under Fol could jeopardise other Fol requests or even disrupt services. It was suggested that there was a need to keep a consistent record of Fol requests and costs incurred to enable the authority to monitor and review this.
- The internal audit of the complaints and compliments scheme, undertaken in 2008, had been commissioned by officers because of concerns about the consistency of approach across the organisation. The internal audit offered key recommendations to be taken forward in the action plan and this had led to departments being better aligned in their methodology.
- With regard to residents' complaints, it was suggested that it could not be assumed that complaints which did not progress to Stage 2 had been successfully resolved at Stage 1; it may be that a resident simply gives up and does not return the feedback form. Members were advised that the return rate for these forms was improving and officers were trying very hard to ensure that complainants had all the information they needed to take matters further.
- It was suggested that the organisational review might consider whether there were ways of centrally coordinating the work now undertaken in departments concerning compliments, complaints and Fol requests.
- With reference to work undertaken by the Standards Committee, no complaints considered by the Committee this year had been referred for further investigation.
- With reference to the Fol costs/time data, the Head of Democratic Services agreed to investigate whether information was available

concerning how Norfolk County Council's costs compared with that of other authorities and if so he would circulate this information to Members.

- With reference to the process of member involvement prior to complaints progressing to the Ombudsman, at Stage 2 of the complaints process the complainant would be asked if they wished their local councillor to be notified of their complaint. Currently no Ombudsman Commission decisions were notified to local members following the outcome of a complaint and officers agreed to look further at member involvement in this area. It was suggested that Ombudsman decisions could be included in future reports to this committee.
- It was suggested that the low number of complaints received reflected the high level of satisfaction that the public had with the authority's services.

Resolved:

11.3 To endorse the action proposed in paragraphs 5.5 to 5.7 of the report.

11.4 That Officers be requested to include data on FoI requests and costs incurred as part of the regular Compliments and Complaints report to the Corporate Affairs Overview & Scrutiny Panel.

12. Performance and Resources Monitoring Report

12.1 Members received and considered the annexed report (11) which provided an update on performance and financial monitoring information relevant to this Panel.

12.2 Members were advised that the figure on page 2 of appendix A should read 3.68, not 3.68% as shown.

12.3 During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- It was noted that whilst the report showed the projected outturns, they did not show the actual outturn for the second quarter and it would be useful to include the current figures in the report as opposed to projections. The Head of Corporate Accounting and Exchequer Services advised that this information could be provided if required but currently only the projected outturn was shown because a number of large adjustments were made at the end of the financial year and actual outturns for individual quarters could prove to be misleading whilst consideration of the overall figure helped to ensure budgets were being well managed.
- The Audit Commission's Use of Resources overall score of 3 was noted and members heard that the Audit Committee had also received and commented upon this information. It was noted that the authority had received a score of 2 for Managing Finances and also a score of 2 for Governing Business.
- It was noted that the Fire & Rescue Service would receive a separate Use of Resources Statement.

13. Service and Budget Planning 2010-13

13.1 Members received the annexed report (13) by the Director of Corporate Resources and Cultural Services and the Head of Finance which set out the main planning considerations for the services covered by this Panel and the context in which they were set.

13.2 Members were advised of the following amendments to the report:

Paragraph 4.8, second paragraph, amend sentence to read: "In 2010-11, £460,000 of our proposed £500,000 savings..."

Paragraph 6.3, amend savings to read £717,000.

13.3 During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- The report highlighted a shortfall of £5M across the authority and Chief Officers and Cabinet Members were considering proposals to be brought forward to the January meetings of the Overview & Scrutiny Panels.
- It was suggested that to enable members to understand spending pressures, some of the figures in appendix B of the report needed to be better broken down.
- With reference to the Passenger Transport costs for transporting children, it was suggested that taxi companies be requested to provide prices per child rather than per mile. The Head of Corporate Accounting and Exchequer Services agreed to pass this suggestion forward to the Passenger Transport Unit.
- Members were advised that NPS provide the management for the County Farms estate and the staff employed were qualified land agents. More could be leveraged out of the estate but NPS were currently following the revised policy.

Resolved:

13.4 Members noted the proposed spending pressures and savings set out in Appendix B of the report and that further consideration would be given to the proposals at the January meeting.

13.5 Members also noted the specific issues on the proposed list of new and amended capital schemes to be evaluated within the capital prioritisation model as part of the review of the three-year capital programme.

14. Corporate Health & Safety Mid-Year Report for 2008/2009

14.1 Members received the annexed report (14) by the Corporate Health & Safety Manager which provided updated information of the Corporate Health & Safety Report for 2008/09.

14.2 During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- With reference to the Children's Services Department, the majority of the people taken to hospital due to injuries were children - with most injuries being caused during PE lessons. All incidents had been reviewed and where necessary investigated by Health & Safety (H&S) advisers and none of the incidents had required further investigation by the H&S Executive.

- All staff were required to report incidents of violent and aggressive behaviour (including incidents caused by people with dementia) and the Corporate H&S Manager agreed to provide these figures in future reports.

15. Risk Management within Norfolk County Council and the Departments of Chief Executive and Corporate Finance

15.1 Members received the annexed report (15) which gave an update on the approach being undertaken to manage risk within the services that report to this Panel, as well as corporately across the authority.

15.2 During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- Members heard that the Audit Committee would be championing risk management.
- The Senior Risk Officer advised that risk management was embedded throughout the authority; the Chief Officer Group review corporate risks on a regular basis and Chief Officers also take account of risks that could impact on the delivery of their services. Risk management is built into services and budget planning and delivery. It is also standard practice within both project and partnership management.
- Previously, the authority had a Risk Management Group, made up of senior officers throughout the authority. However, the authority had moved to reporting risk registers through departmental management teams and the Chief Officer Group and the Risk Coordinators Group now provided a link between the Corporate Risk Centre and departments.

16. ICT Plan 2010/11

16.1 Members received the annexed report (16) which summarised the key aspects of the ICT Plan.

16.2 The Head of ICT advised Members that the status of the Council's ICT in relation to environmental impact was set out in the report. A variety of devices were being trialled and a printer rationalisation programme was underway which it was hoped would reduce the volume of items being printed. The Data Centre had been independently assessed as 'average' but newer technologies were gradually being introduced which were expected to lead to a drop in power consumption.

16.3 During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- The summary shown on p.104 of the report showed projects that it was hoped to undertake in 2010-11 whilst the summary on p.110 set out the expected savings (some of which had been allocated in previous ICT Plans). There was a shortfall to implement the 2010-11 Plan and savings of £199,000 have been identified to enable the plan to be fully implemented.
- Major contracts included indexation on price and where the authority had entered into five-year contracts these included very precise calculations on where indexation was applied. Non-staff budget in 2010/11 will not be

increased to accommodate inflation pressures therefore they will need to be met from savings elsewhere in ICT.

- In terms of savings, technology had been introduced that would allow the ICT Team to support projects remotely (such as logging onto devices remotely) and efficiencies had been made in support services staffing. However, three new posts have been created to find and make further efficiencies. Total savings of £555,000 have been achieved with £200,000 being returned to the Chief Officer Savings Budget and a further £355,000 transferring to partly fund the set-up of the new Corporate Programme Office – this equates to 10% of ICT posts.
- In terms of confidentiality with regard to emails and faxes, the authority does provide secure systems. However, there were certain services, such as Children's Services, where faxing should not be routinely used. The authority had joined the Government's Code of Connect which provides a high level of security. However, the Head of ICT said that if Members were aware of specific services where they had particular concerns regarding confidentiality they should contact her direct.
- Members had already been set up to receive electronic agenda where they are not part of the membership but the Head of ICT agreed to liaise with Democratic Services to ascertain if further savings could be made with regard to the distribution of committee papers.

The meeting closed at 12.08pm.

Chairman



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**Appendix A – Great Yarmouth Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)
Presentation**

Great Yarmouth Local Strategic Partnership



**Councillor Barry Coleman Leader
& Jane Ratcliffe Executive Director
Great Yarmouth Borough Council**

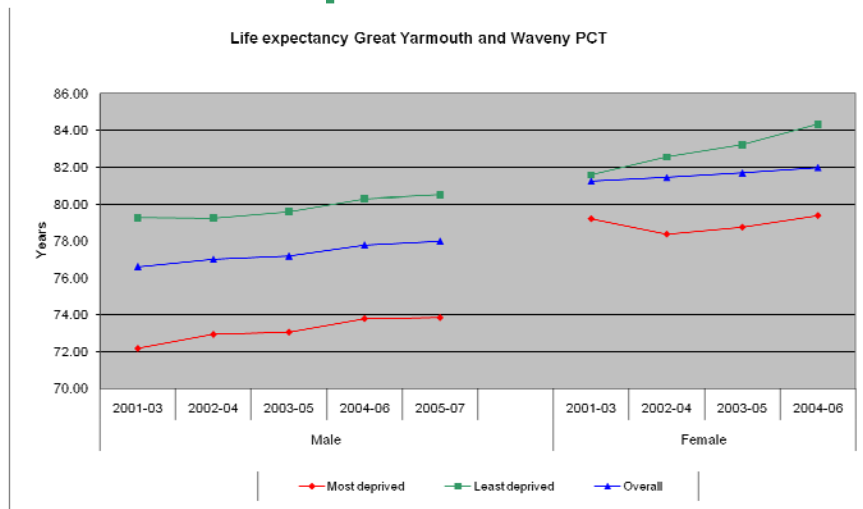
Great Yarmouth

- Population
 - Urban 54,000
 - Suburban 20,000
 - Rural 20,000
 - 94,000
 - Migrant Workers 10,000 (?)
 - Tourist bed spaces 80,000
- Current economy
 - UK's 3rd largest seaside resort
 - Medium – sized port
 - Offshore gas and energy sector



**GREAT YARMOUTH
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Health Inequalities



GREAT YARMOUTH
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Responses – Partnership Milestones.....

- 1995 - Multi-agency needs assessment
- 1996 - Informal 'LSP' emerging
- 1998 - Community Strategy
- 2000 - Strong formal partnership emerges
- 2003 - Neighbourhood Renewal Funding
- 2007 - Local Area Agreement
- 2008 - Refreshed LSP & Community Strategy
 - Working Neighbourhoods Fund
- 2009 - Commissioning Framework for ABG/investment in communities



GREAT YARMOUTH
BOROUGH COUNCIL

An increased focus on delivery

- Reconstituted Board – Chairman - the Leader
 - Delivery Executive – Chairman – B.C. Director
 - New delivery partnerships:
 - Stronger Communities
 - Safer Communities
 - Economy
 - Children and Young People
 - Health and Independent Living
 - Environment
 - New delivery plans – SCS and LAA targets
-



GREAT YARMOUTH
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Improvements delivered

- Investment and optimism
 - New Outer Harbour
 - Seafront Regeneration
 - Secondary Holiday Area Regeneration
 - Impact on the local community
 - Recession not hit as proportionately as hard as other areas
 - Customer satisfaction ratings are improving
-



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Outer Harbour



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Seafront



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SHARP - before



GREAT YARMOUTH
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SHARP - after



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Riding out the recession....

JSA count Aug '08 – Aug '09

| Area | %age change in count year on year |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Norfolk | 67.5% |
| Breckland | 77.5% |
| Broadland | 104.1% |
| Great Yarmouth | 49.5% |
| King's Lynn & West Norfolk | 67.4% |
| North Norfolk | 75.9% |
| Norwich | 54.2% |
| South Norfolk | 93.7% |

