

**BRECKLAND COUNCIL**

**At a Meeting of the**

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION**

**Held on Thursday, 16 December 2021 at 10.00 am in the  
The Breckland Conference Centre, Anglia Room, Elizabeth House, Walpole Loke,  
Dereham, NR19 1EE**

**PRESENT**

Cllr Rhodri Oliver (Chairman)	Cllr David Wickerson
Cllr Timothy Birt	Cllr Stephen Askew (Substitute Member)
Cllr Terry Jermy	Cllr Peter Wilkinson (Substitute Member)
Cllr Robert Kybird	

**Also Present**

Cllr Paul Hewett	Cllr Sarah Suggitt
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**In Attendance**

Sarah Barsby	- Assistant Director People and Governance
Rob Walker	- Deputy Chief Executive
Sarah Wolstenholme-Smy	- Legal Services Manager (Deputy Monitoring Officer)
Riana Rudland	- Assistant Director Contracts & Operations
Julie Britton	- Democratic Services Officer

**99/21 MINUTES (AGENDA ITEM 1)**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 28 October 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

**100/21 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTES (AGENDA ITEM 2)**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bushell, Dale, Eagle, Kiddle-Morris, Ian Martin, Nairn, and Turner. Councillors Askew and Wilkinson were in attendance as substitutes.

**101/21 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (IF ANY) (AGENDA ITEM 3)**

None.

**102/21 URGENT BUSINESS (AGENDA ITEM 4)**

None.

**103/21 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS (AGENDA ITEM 5)**

None declared.

**104/21 NON-MEMBERS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE MEETING (AGENDA ITEM 6)**

Councillor Hewett, the Executive Member for Property & Projects and

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Councillor Suggitt, the Executive Member for Planning, Leisure & Contracts were in attendance.

Councillor Suggitt was in attendance on behalf of Councillor Robinson, the Executive Member for Customer, Digital & Performance.

**105/21 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR PROPOSAL (AGENDA ITEM 7)**

On behalf of Councillor Robinson, the Executive Member for Customer, Digital & Performance, Councillor Sarah Suggitt, the Executive Member for Planning, Leisure & Contracts introduced this item.

Members were informed that the proposed indicator list had been assembled in line with the Council's new Corporate Plan and would provide updates on the way that the Council was performing against what it had set out to do. The changes had been made based on the feedback received from the Overview & Scrutiny Commission as well as working alongside the Corporate Management Team to revise this list. Approval was sought to agree the revised Key Performance Indicator (KPI) list and recommend to Cabinet for approval in the New Year.

Claire Burton, the Organisational Development & Performance Manager presented the report and was pleased to announce that the number of KPIs had been reduced to 25. The main changes made since presented to the Commission previously were the Climate indicators that had been reduced in line with the agreement to report annually on the Climate Strategy. The community's indicators had been removed due to the numbers but would still be reported publicly in some form moving forward. Finally, the satisfaction indicators had been removed as further work was required and this would be reported once this work had been completed.

In view of the current situation, in respect of the lack of staff and the problems with enforcement, Councillor Wickerson asked if it was possible, under the planning heading, to have a KPI for the responses to requests received by the Enforcement Team as he was aware of examples, certainly in Swaffham, of communications with the Team back in June 2021, that had still not had any response. He felt that it was important to have some measure for this particular activity.

Councillor Birt had several queries and comments to make. He asked for confirmation on the first three items including the jobs supported and was aware that there was some available data but asked for clarification on what the description under these items actually meant.

In response, Rob Walker, the Deputy Chief Executive explained that those listed were the ones that the Council had direct influence on and could be quantified on an outcome.

Under Customer Contact, and the number of days customer contact dropped below 90%, Councillor Birt felt that this was an arbitrary 90% of an arbitrary target and wondered how this would be calculated, and what it meant, as he felt that by just having one single number was unhelpful. He had noticed that there were quite a few indicators that just had a percentage against them, and he felt that it would be useful, in almost all these indicators, to know the magnitude; for example,

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under the percentage of automated customer webchat, how many were successful out of how many calls rather than just having a percentage calculation.

Also, under the Chatbot indicator webchat interactions, he wondered how this was going to be measured, unless there was a message at the end of the chatbot asking the customer if their query had been successfully completed and were they happy with the result.

On the bottom of the page 24 under IT systems availability, Councillor Birt felt that this indicator was only listing unscheduled reasons and thought that any reason for when the IT was unavailable was significant from a residents' perspective. There was very little reason to have scheduled outages and therefore felt that all should be reported.

Councillor Birt was pleased to see the Democratic Services KPI on page 25 of the agenda pack, but again felt that it would be more beneficial to have two numbers, rather than one percentage.

Under food businesses rated generally satisfied or above, he felt that rather than just having a list of 5 numbers he felt it would be better to list the number of businesses that received a score of 1, 2 etc as this would provide a complete set of information at a glance.

Under fly-tipping, again whilst the number of fixed penalty outcomes was useful, he felt it would be better to have the actual number of fly-tips and whether numbers were going up or going down as well as the amount of fixed penalty notices that were issued.

Trade waste was a very specific KPI, but he wondered why this had been included.

Referring to page 26 of the agenda pack, Councillor Birt had noticed a great deal of indicators measured by percentages, and again felt that there should be two numbers rather than one percentage.

Under Climate, he was aware that there was going to be separate reports issued on this matter but asked for the number of enforcement actions to be explained. The figure for the gas, electric and water usage was very useful and was data that the Council already held and therefore was quite easy to produce but he wondered if the Council should be doing the same for its high profile, high carbon premises such as the Leisure Centres.

Finally, under the number of trees planted, he had asked previously about the reasoning behind the emissions reduced by trees planted, this clearly had not been done and all that had been included was the number of trees planted. This was great for the environment, and he was very supportive of this but there was no evidence on what all this tree planting did for the climate as the actual climate affect was not being quantified.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Birt for his very thorough list, and all would be subsequently 'ticked' off one at a time. However, approval would be sought from the Commission for the ones that were more contentious.

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<p>In terms of Councillor Birt's first point in respect of percentages verses absolutes, the Chairman felt that it should not be too difficult to provide the absolute numbers as well as the percentages.</p>	
<p>Members agreed with this suggestion.</p>	<b>C Burton</b>
<p>The Chairman presumed that the Chatbot did ask the customer to confirm whether or not their question had been resolved. Members were informed that this was currently being developed.</p>	
<p>The Chairman felt that the Council should be monitoring scheduled and unscheduled IT outages and asked Members if they agreed. Councillor Kybird, the Vice-Chairman agreed that both should be monitored but as separate items rather than just a lump sum. The Deputy Chief Executive explained that all the relevant information had already been collated and would be easy to produce.</p>	<b>C Burton</b>
<p>On the food safety criteria, Members agreed with the suggestion of splitting the numbers into the five categories.</p>	<b>C Burton</b>
<p>In terms of follow up for those figures, the Vice-Chairman asked if there was an action plan to monitor those businesses that only achieved a '1' or '2' star rating. Members were informed that each level was monitored as well as any progress made.</p>	
<p>Referring to the fly-tipping queries, Councillor Jermy felt that what was most important was the monitoring of the number of incidents and the tonnage as the cost would vary dependent on the amount. He was happy for the Council to monitor successful prosecutions, but he did not want to lose the data around incident numbers and tonnage figures that had been included in previous KPI reports.</p>	
<p>Members agreed with this suggestion.</p>	<b>C Burton</b>
<p>The Organisational Development &amp; Performance Manager said she did not have the information to hand in respect of whether Council owned properties had been included in the figures in terms of utilities usage but would find out. Councillor Birt reported that he had been provided with the utility usage on a monthly basis so that data was already available.</p>	<b>C Burton</b>
<p>Under the Customer Contact percentage, the Chairman asked Members if they felt this was a helpful measure or if they wanted something different in its place. The Vice-Chairman asked if this was a fixed long-term target or if there was a policy for continuous improvement to underpin this service.</p>	
<p>The Chairman assumed that Cabinet would be able to alter the targets in the event of any underperformance. Councillor Birt still had concerns and felt that this should be changed as this was adding some confusion to the KPI target itself and asked exactly how this was being measured.</p>	
<p>Councillor Hewett, the Executive Member for Property &amp; Projects, having set up some key performance indicators and models for number of businesses and organisations, pointed out that the key words were 'key' and 'indicator' the indicator was a prompt for action and behind an</p>	

indicator was data and a key performance indicator would prompt an action to investigate the data and subsequently resolve it. He felt that many of the observations that were being made were part of the KPI process anyway. The Commission needed to be clear on two things, 1) the Council was monitoring and had indicators that monitored and 2), the Council was acting as behind a KPI there was always going to be an action.

The Chairman appreciated that there was argument around what it meant but asked Councillor Suggitt, if she was confident that this indicator, if it started to fail to hit the 90% target, was going to help the Commission identify if it needed to be pushing for more action. Councillor Suggitt said that she had complete confidence in the figure and thanked Councillor Hewett for his explanation. She felt that what this indicator clearly highlighted that there was monitoring going on behind the scenes and if there was an issue it would be picked up in the Officers' reports.

The Organisational Development & Performance Manager explained that the 90% was the percentage of calls that were answered but at the next Overview & Scrutiny Commission meeting she would ensure that an explanation would be included in the commentary within the report.

Members agreed.

Members were then asked if they wanted the Trade Waste target to be retained. The Vice-Chairman felt that this target was an indicator of an entrepreneurial Council and was an initiative that it had taken on as part of the contract and therefore felt that it should be monitored to allow Members to see if this element was progressing.

Members agreed that the KPI for Trade Waste should remain.

Referring to utilities' usage, it was noted that the Organisational Development & Performance Manager had already agreed to check exactly what this KPI covered. The Chairman pointed out that Councillor Birt had asked if the Council should be separately monitoring any higher carbon output areas, but he was conscious of Councillor Hewett's point that these were KPIs and not data and Members were asked if this was the level of detail that they wanted to look at on a quarterly basis or would they agree that this would be something to be included in the commentary in the annual report in relation to climate change.

The Vice-Chairman felt that quarterly figures were very seasonal and therefore, the figures themselves did not necessarily provide the Commission with much detail and an annual report with quarterly totals would be more satisfactory.

The Chairman asked Members for their thoughts on this matter.

Councillor Birt agreed with the fact that the figures were seasonal and believed that quarterly reports would be useful, but as the Commission preferred to have annual reports he reluctantly agreed with the consensus.

The Chairman assured Members that as the Commission was such a

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dynamic Committee it could always make any necessary changes in future.

The last point made was the number of trees planted. The Chairman felt that this was quite a clear measure; however, the County Council had made the mistake of stating that it wanted to see the net number of trees planted which, in his opinion, was completely uncountable. The Vice-Chairman felt that the number of trees planted told Members nothing about planting trees in advance of a drought and, for example, how many survived and, as a starting point, it was not necessarily a measure of success.

The Chairman asked the Executive Members if they had any comments to make on how to better identify whether the trees planted in Breckland had survived within a very short planting period. The Organisational Development & Performance Manager felt that this would be a question for Greg Pearson, the Head of Strategic Policy who also covered Climate Change.

Councillor Wilkinson pointed out that Breckland Council did not have any control over numbers it was between Norfolk County Council and the Parish Councils.

It was agreed that the target would remain with a view to getting more detail from the Head of Strategic Policy in due course.

The Chairman then confirmed that on the planning stats it would be very helpful to understand how many of those figures were extensions.

The Deputy Chief Executive advised that these were already monitored at the Contract Monitoring Board and therefore such information could be provided.

Councillor Jermy mentioned the percentage of successful bins collected and felt that what should also be included was the percentage of bins not collected. The other indicator that he wanted to know more about was the Leisure Centre usage and asked if the Council was going to monitor the total number of visits or the total number of people.

Riana Rudland, the Assistant Director Contracts & Operations explained that the data the Council received from the Contractor was based on individual visits, but data was also provided on the number of memberships as well as being able to see, as part of the six-monthly report, where those users came from. She felt it would be very difficult to track on how many occasions a unique individual visited the Leisure Centre; however, Members could be provided with a combination of other data available in future.

Councillor Jermy felt that this would be a big improvement on what Members had been provided with in the past.

Members were being asked to recommend the proposed indicators to Cabinet for adoption, and it was:

**RESOLVED** to **RECOMMEND** to Cabinet that the aforementioned changes to the proposed indicators be adopted.

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**G Pearson**

**G Pearson**

**C Burton**

**C Burton**

**R Rudland**

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**106/21 TASK AND FINISH GROUPS (AGENDA ITEM 8)**

(a) Serco Task & Finish Group

The Chairman was pleased to announce that the following Members had put their names forward to sit on this Task & Finish Group:

Councillor Harvey  
Councillor Wickerson  
Councillor Turner  
Councillor Wilkinson  
Councillor Morton  
Councillor Atterwill; and  
Councillor Birt.

Councillor Wilkinson had also put his name forward to be the Chairman of this Group; however, in accordance with the Constitution, substitute Members were unable to be appointed to this position.

Members were informed that Councillor Turner had also put her name forward, and following a vote, it was agreed that Councillor Turner would be appointed as Chair of this Task & Finish Group.

In respect of the Terms of reference for this Group, Riana Rudland, the Assistant Director of Contracts & Operations advised that there were three points to examine:

- To scrutinise the current performance of the Serco contract
- To examine the impact of Covid and national supply chain issues on the mobilisation of the contract; and
- To examine the governance arrangements in place to manage and monitor the contract.

Councillor Jermy felt that relevant people should be invited to these meetings so that their points of view could be heard which he felt had been covered in the Terms of Reference above.

The Chairman reminded Members that this Task & Finish Group was an extension of the Overview & Scrutiny Commission and was not a decision-making body.

**RESOLVED** that the Serco Task & Finish Group be established, and the Terms of Reference be agreed.

R Rudland  
S Simpson  
R Tudge

**107/21 OUTSIDE BODY FEEDBACK (STANDING ITEM) (AGENDA ITEM 9)**

The Vice-Chairman reported that the Norfolk Health Overview Scrutiny Committee had cancelled their next meeting.

Councillor Wilkinson reported that the Mental Health programme for young people and families should be up and running in the new year. Also, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Kings Lynn had been granted permission to construct some new buildings which had been funded by Government. In the interim, work had begun on a new endoscopy unit

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<p>which had been funded by an emergency national capital investment to modernise the Hospital.</p> <p>The Hospital had been pushing for funds for a completely new Hospital, but in the meantime, it was crucial to invest in the building. This investment would provide the necessary space to allow the movement of wards and the installation of failsafe's where needed to improve the safety and delivery of some services.</p>	
<p><b>108/21 <u>SCRUTINY CALL-INS (STANDING ITEM) (AGENDA ITEM 10)</u></b></p> <p>None.</p>	
<p><b>109/21 <u>COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION (STANDING ITEM) (AGENDA ITEM 11)</u></b></p> <p>None.</p>	
<p><b>110/21 <u>WORK PROGRAMME (AGENDA ITEM 12)</u></b></p> <p>The Vice-Chairman had noticed that there was nothing planned for the meeting on 10 March 2022 yet there were several items that had dates to be confirmed.</p> <p>In response, the Chairman assured Members that he would look for some of these to be slotted into the March meeting.</p>	<p><b>R Tudge</b></p>
<p><b>111/21 <u>NEXT MEETING (AGENDA ITEM 13)</u></b></p> <p>The arrangements for the next meeting on Thursday, 27 January 2022 at 10am in the Anglia Room were noted.</p>	

The meeting closed at 10.50 am

CHAIRMAN