

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Challenge and Improvement Committee held in the Council Chamber at the Guildhall, Gainsborough on Tuesday 1 September 2015 commencing at 6.30 pm.

Present: Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan (Chairman)
Councillor David Bond (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Trevor Young (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Alexander Bridgwood
Councillor Stuart Curtis
Councillor Chris Darcel
Councillor Adam Duguid
Councillor John McNeill
Councillor Pat Mewis
Councillor Angela White

In Attendance:
Ian Knowles Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer
James O' Shaughnessy Team Manager, Business Improvement and Corporate Governance
Andy Gray Team Manager, Housing and Communities
Lesley Beevers Regulatory Team Manager, Public Protection
Rachel Parkin Senior Home Choices Officer
Katie Coughlan Governance and Civic Officer

Apologies: Councillor Steve England

Membership: There were no substitutes appointed for the meeting.

17 MINUTES

- (a) Meeting of the Challenge and Improvement Committee held on 30 June 2015 (CAI.09 15/16)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Challenge and Improvement Committee held on 30 June 2015 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

18 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

19 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE (CAI.10 14/15)

The Committee gave consideration to the Matters Arising Schedule, setting out the current position of previously agreed actions, as at 21 August 2015.

With regard to the green action entitled “empty homes – further info requested”, Members were provided with the information they had requested through debate at their previous meeting, namely details, including examples of real successes achieved; those where really poor condition properties had been brought back into use; details / a list of their general locality; and information on the variety of methods used to bring these back into use.

Members were invited to contact Officers direct if they had any further questions regarding this data.

RESOLVED that the Matters Arising Schedule be received and noted.

20 DEMOCRACY WORKING GROUP FEEDBACK REPORT (CAI.11 15/16)

Members gave consideration to a report which sought to provide an update on the work of the Democracy Working Group. The work undertaken since the Group's inception was set out in Section 2 of the report, concluding with the chosen priorities for moving forward, namely: -

- Revisiting options for a reconfiguration of the Council Chamber to support in-meeting communication and debate;
- Development of a four-year plan for promotion of democracy and youth engagement through the civic office; and
- Use of communication and social media to publicise and engage with our communities around democracy.

RESOLVED that:

- (a) The work to date of the Democracy Working Group be noted; and
- (b) A further update report be submitted to the Committee in six months time.

21 PROGRESS AND DELIVERY (SERVICES) – PERIOD 1 (CAI.12 15/16)

Members gave consideration to the first of the newly styled Progress and Delivery reports for 2015/16, which highlighted the areas where services were “off target”, the reasons for this and the proposed rectifications. The report also provided Members with an opportunity to examine the reasons why performance was off track and seek assurance that the measures which had been put in place were sufficient to tackle the issues which had been identified with the service.

It was noted that this was an exceptions report and as such only contained off target measures for each service area. Furthermore it included the revised measures agreed in Spring 2015.

The report had been considered by both Policy Committees prior, and the relevant minutes arising from each were also presented to the Committee for consideration.

Some Members were of the view that the report was not helpful and did not provide Members with the information they needed. Not all items had baselines from which to determine targets, and explanatory and rectification text was missing from some. Suggestions were made as to the type of data / targets Members would find more use

Officers indicated that this was an exceptions report and reminded Members that the measures were set by the Policy Committee’s. The role of the Committee with regard to Performance and Delivery was re-iterated, namely that their purpose was to scrutinise how the Policy Committee’s were responding to the information contained within the report, ie were they proposing sufficient rectification actions in areas of concern.

It was suggested that the Chairman liaise with the Policy Committee Chairmen in the first instance.

RESOLVED that having examined the areas where service performance was off target and having sought assurance from Officers, agreed that the rectifications proposed would deal with the issues identified.

22 PROGRESS AND DELIVERY (PROJECTS) – PERIOD 1 (CAI.13 15/16)

Members gave consideration to the first of the newly styled Progress and Delivery reports for 2015/16, which dealt with the projects. The report was an exceptions report, in that it dealt with those projects which were off track and in danger of not delivering by their deadline. The report also highlighted those projects which had been delivered within the period in order that Members could determine where progress was being made.

The report had been considered by both Policy Committees prior, and the relevant minutes arising from each were also presented to the Committee for consideration.

Reference was made to the selective licensing project and in responding to Members comments a brief update was provided. Officers outlined the case law which was emerging and the ways in which the project plan had been amended as result. Assurance was given that any delays seen in this project was for the right reasons and to mitigate risks as far as possible.

Some Members urged Officers to not become too risk averse where this project was concerned and highlighted the benefits a selective licensing scheme had the potential to realise.

With regard to Land Charges, Whilst not referenced in the report (due to the report being for the months of April and May), Members made enquiries and were advised of the position which had been verbally reported to the Policy Committees, this being that, that performance in land charges had slipped off target again, with applications currently taking 35 days to complete. Policy Committees had been assured that the Council Leadership Team were looking to maintain a sustained improvement and were taking necessary action. Officers was pleased to report that the position had improved again. With regard to the automation project, this was being re-scoped.

Making reference to the Directors previous comments, regarding the role of the Committee when scrutinising Performance and Delivery Reports, Members suggested that the wording of future recommendations be amended to better reflect this.

RESOLVED that having examined the areas where a project was off target and having sought assurance from Officers, it was agreed that the rectifications proposed would deal with the issues identified.

23 TO CONSIDER THE QUESTION AND MOTION REFERRED BY FULL COUNCIL FOLLOWING THEIR MEETING ON 27 JULY 2015 (CAI.14 15/16)

Consideration was given to a report which asked the Committee to formally receive and consider the requests from Full Council, arising from the question and motion, submitted to their meeting on 27 July 2015.

In opening the debate, Members firstly commented on the appalling behaviour being described in the question and motion and were in agreement that this was wholly unacceptable. However, some were of the view that this was not a District Council matter and was something the Police would need to tackle.

Members made reference to the number of laws it was implied were being broken and questioned why law enforcement was not being upheld and why available powers were not being used to challenge the behaviour described.

In responding Officers indicated that this was a partnership matter and these would be the types of issues the proposed working group could further investigate, with a view to finding if there were any ways in which the partner organisations could better work together.

It was further noted that the first consideration for the proposed working group would be to compile draft terms of reference, set timescales and a scope for their work and submit this to the Challenge and Improvement Committee for approval

Nominations for appointment to the Working Group were sought and received, namely Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan, Councillor John McNeill and Councillor Trevor Young. These were duly seconded and on that basis it was **RESOLVED** that:

- (a) Having considered the requests from Full Council, a task and finish group of councillors (names set out above) be established to investigate the incidents of anti-social behaviour and criminal activity in the South West Ward of Gainsborough and the Council and partner agencies response to it;
- (b) At the conclusion of the work of the task and finish group recommendations be made to the Prosperous Communities Committee on how the Council and partner agencies response to criminal activity can be made more effective;
- (c) The work plan be reviewed to accommodate the above work; and
- (d) The working group, at their first meeting, agree draft terms of reference, set timescales and a scope of their work for submission to the Challenge and Improvement Committee for approval

24 FORWARD PLAN (CAI.15 15/16)

The Governance and Civic Officer presented a report setting out the items of business due to be considered through the committee system and asked Members to identify any reports that they wished to be brought before the Challenge and Improvement Committee for pre-scrutiny.

Members sought and received further details on the IT Strategy item and associated risks.

The Committee requested that the Market Projects be added to the Forward Plan and Officers confirmed they were now in a position to do so.

RESOLVED that the Forward Plan and the Committee's request regarding the inclusion of Markets, be noted.

25 WORK PLAN (CAI.16 15/16)

The Work Plan for the business of the Challenge and Improvement Committee was discussed.

Officers undertook to include the work of the South West Ward Task and Finish Group (as agreed at minute 23 above) within the Work Programme.

It was also suggested that the Work Plan be reviewed at the next forthcoming briefing meeting, in light of the additional work the Committee had agreed to undertake.

RESOLVED that the Work Plan, subject to the comments above be noted.

26 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED that under Section 100 (A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

27 PREPARATION FOR SCRUTINY OF PUBLIC BODY – TO FINALISE THE LIST OF STRATEGIC QUESTIONS TO BE POSED TO OFFICERS FROM ACIS GROUP LIMITED AT THE COMMITTEE'S OCTOBER MEETING (CAI.17 15/16)

The Director of Resources re-presented the strategic briefing note which set the context and provided an overview of key aspects of the Council's working arrangements with ACIS Group Ltd in order to aid Members' understanding, and to assist them in formulating prospective questions to pose to Officers from ACIS at their meeting in October 2015.

Members comments from their previous meeting had now been incorporated and agreement to the final list of questions detailed in the report was sought.

Following informal workshop style discussion the following minor amendments to the list of questions was agreed: -

- (a) First Member note on page 1 of the report which starts, “ we would suggest requesting....” , a definition of vulnerable in this context be added to the question for clarity;
- (b) First question page on page 2 of the report which starts, “Is Acis undertaking any planning....” be amended to read, “Is Acis undertaking any planning to understand the implications of these changes (right to buy) **and if so what are these? If not, why not?**”;
- (c) First question on page 3 of the report which starts, “Please can you provide information on.....” be amended to read, “Please can you provide information on the level of investment **Acis has** made in regards to aids and adaptations for **tenants?**”.

RESOLVED that the questions as amended above be passed to Acis Officer representatives in advance of October’s meeting.

28 PREPARATION FOR SCRUTINY OF PUBLIC BODY – BRIEFING NOTE REGARDING THE WORK OF LINCOLNSHIRE WEST CCG, TO ASSIST MEMBERS IN FORMULATING PROSPECTIVE QUESTIONS FOR OFFICER REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE CCGs AT A FUTURE MEETING (CAI.18 15/16)

The Director of Resources presented the strategic briefing note which set the context and provided an overview of key aspects of the Council’s working arrangements with the Lincolnshire West CCG in order to aid Members’ understanding, and to assist them in formulating prospective questions to pose to Officers from the CCG at a future meeting.

Lengthy informal workshop style discussion ensued during which the following topics/ issues were identified and raised: -

- How can the work of the CCG and West Lindsey District Council be more joined up to ensure that we are working together on our respective priorities at local issues? For example during our Corporate Plan refresh West Lindsey have identified priorities relating to dementia care and prevention as occurrences of this disease are set to rise by 60% in 2030 and one in five of our residents have a disability.
- There appears to an issue both recruiting and retaining qualified health professionals in Lincolnshire. What is the current level of vacancies and how do the CCG plan to address this? Also taking into account the planned growth for Gainsborough additional GP surgeries will be required. How do the CCG plan to address this?

- Across just our District there appears to be a vast difference in waiting time for GP appointments which could lead to health issues escalating or people self-medicating. Are there any plans in place to standardise waiting times and if not how will this be improved?
- Our residents have to travel outside the District to attend hospital consultations and receive treatment. Are there any plans to develop the services and health care offered from the John Coupland Hospital in Gainsborough?
- With the recently announced public health funding cuts, preventative health services are likely to be significantly reduced or in some circumstances disappear. It is widely accepted that these services have an important role to play in preventing people from developing long term conditions, for example those associated with smoking, alcohol use and obesity. Do the CCG have any plans to fund preventative health services and initiatives if these services are withdrawn?
- The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment is currently being refreshed. How will the priorities of the respective Districts be reflected and addressed within this? For example the Health Profile in West Lindsey demonstrates that we are significantly worse than the England average for long term unemployment, adult obesity, diabetes and people being seriously injured or killed on the road.
- One of the main challenges for public organisations and agencies will be the issues around aging populations. How will the Neighbourhood Teams support people to remain independent and enjoy a fulfilled life? As West Lindsey is a sparsely populated rural District, one of the key challenges for the elderly is social isolation, what plans are in place to address this?

The following comments / outline questions were also expressed by Members: -

- Access to GP's and the inequality in service provision / waiting times even in a small area.
- How sustainable is the NHS in Lincolnshire? What will it look like in 5, 10, 20 years time?
- Inequality in screening and self help equipment in GP surgeries (often not working)?
- Are doctors under pressure not to refer patients due to costs?
- Does the CGG feel that targets produce the best results?

- Does increased local decision making maintain and strengthen the NHS?
- Have the CCG benchmarked themselves against areas of a similar make-up? How do they compare? Is there any learning to take away?
- How can you influence trusts to commission services and supplies to ensure the best return for the he minimum outlay, ie working within Framework agreements for example?

A Member of the Committee indicated he would like to notify residents through his newsletter and provide them an opportunity to comment on this issue that effected all residents, in order to prepare suitable questions

The Director of Resources reminded the Committee of the purpose of these sessions, to build better partnership working and take learning away as to how the Council and other agencies may better align their policies and work programmes. Whilst sessions were about holder partners to account, it would not be appropriate to side-line the NHS's feedback mechanisms, and the meeting would not be an appropriate forum for raising individual residents' concerns.

Officers undertook to obtain a copy of the CCGs Operational Plan 2014-2016 for Members assistance.

RESOLVED that Officers take away Members' comments and work up a series of strategic questions to pose to the CCG, for further consideration by the Committee at their next meeting.

The meeting concluded at 7.58 pm

Chairman

Note: The Chairman with agreement from committee members asked that the next meeting commence at the later time of 7.00 pm