

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 28 October 2014 commencing at 6.30 pm.

Present: Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan (Chairman)
Councillor Nigel Bowler (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Geoff Wiseman (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Stuart Curtis
Councillor Chris Darcel
Councillor Stuart Kinch
Councillor Angela Lawrence
Councillor Malcolm Leaning
Councillor Sue Rawlins

In Attendance:

Ian Knowles Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer
Alan Robinson Head of Central Services and Monitoring Officer
Joanna Riddell Head of Localism
Katie Coughlan Governance and Civic Officer

Apologies: Councillor Pat Mewis
Councillor Mick Tinker

Membership: There were no substitutes appointed for the meeting.

24 MINUTES

- (a) Meeting of the Challenge and Improvement Committee held on 9 September 2014

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Challenge and Improvement Committee held on 9 September 2014 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

25 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

26 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE (CAI.15 14/15)

The Committee gave consideration to the Matters Arising Schedule. With regard to the amber item the Governance and Civic Officer advised that working drafts were now with Senior Officers for review and these would be circulated to the Committee over the next week or so.

With regard to the Black Item, relating to Planning Enforcement, Members opposed the proposed action detailed within the commentary and were of a view that Enforcement justified a performance report in its own right. Furthermore, Members requested that such a report should include detail and specifics, including the length of time cases had been open and if this required an exempt report, Members were accepting of this fact. This stance and request was supported by several Members of the Committee who expressed concern that they considered the department was under resourced.

There was much debate as to which Committee such a report should be submitted TO and whilst it was acknowledged historically this matter would have been considered by the Planning Committee, Members were also asked to note that with the introduction of the new Constitution, the Planning Committee was now wholly regulatory and thus consideration of reports of this nature was no longer appropriate.

In responding to the comments regarding resources, Officers did draw Members attention to report CAI.17 14/15 (Paper D) later on the agenda, in particular the minutes from a recent meeting of the Prosperous Communities, which made reference to the enforcement team and reminded Members of their role in terms of challenging performance and projects.

In view of Members' feeling on the subject, Officers undertook to prepare a report in the interim setting out how planning enforcement was managed across the authority by way of reassurance and submit this to a future meeting.

RESOLVED that:

- (a) the Matters Arising Schedule be received and noted; and
- (b) a report detailing how planning enforcement is managed across the authority be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

27 CLOSURE REPORT OF PROGRESS AND DELIVERY (CAI.16 14/15)

Members gave consideration to a report which set out the work undertaken by the Progress and Delivery Working Group and which recommended the project be closed.

RESOLVED that:

- (a) the recommendations from the Progress and delivery Working Group be submitted to the Policy and Resources Committee (Committee responsible for the Performance Management) and **RECOMMENDED** for adoption; and
- (b) the working group be deemed closed.

28 PROGRESS AND DELIVERY PERIOD 1 – SERVICES (CAI.17 14/15)

Members gave consideration to the first of the newly styled Progress and Delivery report, 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 have been put in place were sufficient to tackle the issues which have been identified with the service.

In responding to Members’ comments, Officers confirmed that resources were going back into the planning department to bolster the services currently offered to local communities, particularly in respect of Neighbourhood Planning.

Noting the current performance of the Markets, some Members were of the view that it was time to consider outsourcing the function, again in response, Officers advised of a future report being submitted to the Prosperous Communities Committee outlining options.

Concern was expressed at the current land charges performance and the reputational issues this brought with it. Members were of the view that performance was now at an unacceptable level.

Some Members were of the view that the data in places was either incomplete or the comments were misleading citing a number of examples. It was suggested that it would be of assistance if the report could identify whether targets were annual or quarterly.

Whilst not contained within the report, Members raised the issue of unreturned phone calls and e-mails. Officers gave assurance this was not a Council wide issue and where there were particular departments or individuals these should be reported to the Monitoring Officer in the first instance. By

way of further reassurance, Officers advised the current Head of Service re-structure had an emphasis on Customer Focus.

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

29 PROGRESS AND DELIVERY PERIOD 1 – PROJECTS (CAI.18 14/15)

Members gave consideration to the second of the new style Progress and Delivery reports 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 in the future would highlight those projects which had been delivered within the period in order that Members could determine where progress was being made.

Lengthy debate ensued with Members constructively challenging those projects detailed with the report.

In responding to Members' questions, Officers outlined the numerous methods which had been used to bring the 71 properties back into use.

Concern was expressed regarding the Gainsborough Young Persons Supported Accommodation Scheme, and Members enquired as to whether any alternative solutions had been considered at this stage. In the absence of securing funding who would be liable for such things as repairs and maintenance.

Members disputed the Broadband project had been delivered as stated in Section 2.4 of the report.

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

30 DEMOCRACY WORKING GROUP (CAI.19 14/15)

Consideration was given to a report which sought to establish a Task and Finish Group of Members to commission a programme of work to promote Democracy in West Lindsey.

Following discussion the Committee indicated that they would wish the following including IN the list of possible projects for investigation: -

- Re-configuration of Council Chamber; and
- Taking the Planning Committee out into the District

RESOLVED that:

- (a) a task and finish group be established to agree the scope for a number of projects to promote local democracy in West Lindsey;
- (b) Councillors Wiseman, Patterson, and Howitt Cowan (along with a nominated reserve (name to be confirmed)) be nominated as the Members to serve on the Democracy Working Group; and
- (c) the task and finish group report back their findings to a future meeting of the Challenge and Improvement Committee in the first instance.

31 FORWARD PLAN (CAI.20 14/15)

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 scrutiny.

RESOLVED that the Forward Plan be noted.

32 WORK PLAN (CAI.21 14/15)

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

RESOLVED that the Work Plan be noted.

Note Councillor Stuart Kinch left the meeting at this point (8.07 pm).

33 PREPARATION FOR SCRUTINY OF PUBLIC BODY – BRIEFING NOTE REGARDING: POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONERS ANNUAL REPORT, LINCOLNSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS AND WEST LINDSEY COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP (CAI.22 14/15)

The Head of Localism presented her strategic briefing note which set the context and provided an overview of key aspects of the strategic approach to crime reduction in Lincolnshire in order to aid Members' understanding, and to assist them in formulating prospective questions to pose to the Police Commissioner at their meeting on 2 December 2014.

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

- Budgets – What is the PCCs budget for West Lindsey? What budgets do CSPs have, if any? What are they used for?
- FIPS project – More information required. What has been the projects impact?
- Rural Crime
- Cyber Crime and Hoax Calls
- Support for Businesses /.Farming Communities
- Partnership Working Opportunities
- Restorative Justice
- Response Times
- Improving and increasing public confidence in reporting crimes
- Victim Support
- Sentinel system

RESOLVED that Officers take away Members' comments and work up a series of strategic questions to pose to the Police Commissioner, for agreement with Chairman and Vice-Chairman outside of the meeting.

The meeting concluded at 8.51 pm

Chairman