

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 30 June 2015 commencing at 6.30 pm.

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

Councillor Steve England
Councillor John McNeill
Councillor Pat Mewis
Councillor Angela White

In Attendance:

Ian Knowles Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer
Mark Sturgess Chief Operating Officer
Katie Coughlan Governance and Civic Officer

Apologies: Councillor Stuart Curtis
Councillor Adam Duguid

Membership: There were no substitutes appointed for the meeting.

8 MINUTES

- (a) Meeting of the Challenge and Improvement Committee held on 17 March 2015

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Challenge and Improvement Committee held on 17 March 2015 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

- (b) Meeting of the Challenge and Improvement Committee held on 21 May 2015 (CAI.01 14/15)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Challenge and Improvement Committee held on 21 May 2015 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

9 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

10 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE (CAI.02 14/15)

The Committee gave consideration to the Matters Arising Schedule, setting out the current position of previously agreed actions, as at 22 June 2015.

RESOLVED that the Matters Arising Schedule be received and noted.

11 OPERATING METHODOLOGY (CAI.03 15/16)

Members gave consideration to a report which aimed to outline the role of the Committee with regard to undertaking reviews; outlined the important considerations with regard to scrutiny and conduct; and provided criteria for reviews and draft related processes.

Members welcomed the document and working examples provided.

RESOLVED that: -

- (a) the proposed Methodology as outlined at section 3 of report CAI.03 15/16 be approved; and
- (b) the proposed processes outlined at appendix 1 of report CAI.03 15/16 be approved.

12 PROGRESS AND DELIVERY (SERVICES) – FINAL PERIOD (CAI.04 15/16)

Members gave consideration to the third of the newly styled Progress and Delivery reports, 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.

In response to a Member's question, Officers confirmed that a Health Trainer had now been recruited.

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.

13 PROGRESS AND DELIVERY (PROJECTS) – FINAL PERIOD (CAI.05 15/16)

Members gave consideration to the third 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 highlighted those projects which had been delivered within the period in order that Members could determine where progress was being made, together with those which had recently been initiated.

With regard to the Empty Homes Project, Councillor Young indicated he would like further details, including examples of the 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 that had been used to bring these back into use.

Officers undertook to provide this information and feedback through the matters arising system as appropriate.

Officers were congratulated on the success of the Young Persons Accommodation Project.

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.

14 FORWARD PLAN (CAI.06 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.

It was noted that the previous Committee had requested to pre-scrutinise the Strategic Review of Car Parking. Confirmation was sought and received that the newly appointed Committee wished for this to remain in their work plan. Officers advised that it was intended to hold workshops on this subject so that Members could be fully informed.

In responding to Members' questions, Officers outlined the ways in which the Committee's Work Plan was set, referring to the Operating Methodology. It was suggested that Members wishing to add specific items should approach the relevant Policy Committee Chairman in the first instance.

RESOLVED that:

- (a) the Forward Plan be noted; and

- (b) Pre-Scrutiny of the Strategic Review of Car Parking be re-affirmed in the Committee's Work Plan.

15 WORK PLAN (CAI.07 15/16)

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

It was noted that appropriate space had been allocated, should the Committee wish to continue with a programme of scrutiny of Public Bodies, to which confirmation was received.

It was noted that the previous Committee had requested to pre-scrutinise Markets. Confirmation was sought and received that the newly appointed Committee wished for this to remain in their Work Plan, and Officers undertook to programme this item in at an appropriate date once a timeline for the project had been established.

It was noted that the Strategic Review of Car Parking would now be considered by the Committee in September, as opposed to October as stated on the Work Plan. In light of this, Members suggested that ACIS be invited to attend at their October meeting as opposed to the scheduled September meeting in order to better align the Work Plan.

RESOLVED that:

- (a) the amendments, detailed above, be reflected in the work plan; and
- (b) subject to (a) above, the Work Plan be noted.

16 PREPARATION FOR SCRUTINY OF PUBLIC BODY – BRIEFING NOTE REGARDING THE COUNCIL'S WORKING ARRANGEMENTS (CAI.08 15/16)

The Chief Operating Officer 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.

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

- requesting information in advance to explain what steps Acis are taking to rehouse the more vulnerable members of society. This is in line with the introduction of 4 weeks rent upfront for sign up, changes in welfare

reform and changes to support provision within Lincolnshire via Public Health.

- information on any plans that Acis have for improving their housing stock over the coming years may be useful to consider. Acis are actively disposing of housing stock in some areas (e.g. South West Ward).
- information on the future plans that Acis have for developing homes and the type of homes they wish to develop would be helpful to understand their future ambitions for the district. For example, it is not clear whether they still wish to develop schemes in Gainsborough.
- information on the level of investment made in regards to aids and adaptations within homes would provide a good overview of the work that Acis are doing. It would also be useful to obtain their views as to why persons needing adaptations are still being allowed to move into properties that are not suitable for them, which the Council then has to adapt via a DFG.
- New Right to Buy legislation – How do Acis plan to manage this, what does this mean for an already limited housing stock. Have Acis begun planning for this change?
- Social Housing Role – What do Acis consider their role to be, social obligation, how can we work together to tackle some of the social issues present in communities?
- ACIS Complaints system / Policy, levels of Customer Satisfaction.
- Standard Clauses in Tenancy Agreements

The Committee suggested that some questions could be phrased, “What is your policy on.....? How do you adhere to it / deliver it?”

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

The meeting concluded at 7.32 pm

Chairman