

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Challenge and Improvement Committee held in the Council Chamber at the Guildhall, Gainsborough on Monday 22 February 2016 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 Adam Duguid
Councillor Steve England
Councillor Stuart Kinch
Councillor John McNeill
Councillor Pat Mewis

In Attendance:

Ian Knowles	Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer
Mark Sturgess	Chief Operating Officer
James O'Shaughnessy	Interim Strategic Lead – Organisation Transformation
Amanda Bouttell	Employment and Skills Officer
Nicola Calver	Governance and Civic Officer
Katie Coughlan	Governance and Civic Officer

Apologies: Councillor Chris Darcel
Councillor Angela White

Also in attendance: Inspector Simon Outen – Lincolnshire Police

Membership: No substitutes were appointed for the meeting

55 MINUTES

- (a) Meeting of the Challenge and Improvement Committee held on 22 December 2015 (CAI.38 15/16)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Challenge and Improvement Committee held on 22 December 2015 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

56 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

57 PROPOSAL TO VARY ORDER OF AGENDA

The Chairman advised that with agreement from Committee Members, he wished to revise the order of the agenda, taking the workshop item (Paper I) after Inspector Outen's presentation, after which business would be conducted in the order as set out on the published agenda. It was noted that the webcast would be suspended for the workshop item and resume thereafter.

RESOLVED that the order of the agenda be varied as detailed above.

58 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE (CAI.39 15/16)

The Committee gave consideration to the Matters Arising Schedule, setting out the current position of previously agreed actions, as at 12 February 2016.

It was reported that all actions within the report were marked as completed since the previous meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED that the Matters Arising Schedule as at 12 February 2016 be received and noted.

59 PRESENTATION ITEM: - CRIME AND ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR SIX MONTHLY UPDATE – VERBAL REPORT FROM INSPECTOR SIMON OUTEN

Inspector Simon Outen of Lincolnshire Police was welcomed back to the Committee to give a verbal update position report on crime and anti-social behaviour within the district.

In opening Inspector Outen advised that as a whole the picture was a mixed one. Violence with injury had seen an increase on the previous year. This was a national trend, with West Lindsey being at lower end of the increases seen. The reasoning behind the national and local trends was being analysed. Officers were confident, drivers such as the night time economy were not playing a part locally and at this stage it was likely that the increase could have arisen from a change in reporting standards and these were outlined to the Committee.

Burglary had seen a slight reduction compared to this time last year. Inspector Outen outlined the different measures being used to deal with

perpetrators, particularly youth offenders, which were designed to be more longer term and sustainable.

Robberies remained at a similar level to last year. Vehicle Crime as a whole had reduced when compared to this time last year. However there was currently a spate of targeted vehicle thefts particularly 4 x 4 vehicles along the A15 to the east, likely to be cross border crime. The force were currently deploying specialist teams to assist.

Shop theft was currently up on last year and had particularly spiked around the New Year however this was now stabilising. It was likely that crime as whole would be up around 3% across the District. It was stressed that whilst no increase was welcome, the national trend was an increase and in comparison the increase across the District was at the lower end of the scale.

In concluding Inspector Outen summarised ongoing issues facing the force advising of the creation of 40 posts (with the loss of one beat manager) to deal with emerging priorities which included cyber-crime, modern day slavery / forced labour and domestic violence.

Whilst funding remained under pressure, like for all Police forces, Lincolnshire Police had a stable establishment number comprising 1100 posts and 49 PCSOs, and were working with regional partners to provide resilience when required.

A new Police and Crime Commissioner would commence post in May as the current post holder would not be seeking re-election.

The Chairman thanked Inspector Outen for his update and invited Members to put their questions to him.

Councillor Young commented on the perception of crime, particularly in his ward, and whilst acknowledging that a lot of work was ongoing, highlighted some of the issues residents faced on a daily basis and the dissatisfaction they felt, including: -

- Cars being dismantled on the Highways
- Drugs
- Drink related ASB issues
- Noise issues and low level ASB
- Motorbikes
- Horses / ponies and traps on roads at night in the dark

Inspector Outen in responding advised of the work they were doing, how resources had to be prioritised and unfortunately how with some of the issues reported, the Police had no statutory powers to deal with, including noise. Reference was made to the ongoing partnership work being undertaken to improve the area but it was accepted that this was complicated area, with a variety of issues not only crime but socio-economic ones too.

Arising from Members' comments discussion was had around force amalgamation and a national police force, as seen in Scotland. The Committee were all in agreement that this would be a detrimental move for the District, as local police forces knew local communities and this was the key to success. Inspector Outen advised amalgamation was a debate for national level and not something that was anticipated any time soon.

In responding to a Members' questions, Inspector Outen confirmed that the Police, in particular PCSOs, worked closely with both primary and secondary schools across the District, regularly engaging in their citizenship programmes at whichever level a particular school required. Work was also undertaken with young people around the dangers of being on-line, cyber-crime and sexual exploitation. Youth Crime historically had been high in the area but over the last 18 years had seen a decrease and was now considered relatively low. Inspector Outen credited this to work under taken over the years by PCSOS.

60 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 item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

61 PREPARATION FOR SCRUTINY OF PUBLIC BODY – BRIEFING NOTE REGARDING YOUTH UN-EMPLOYMENT ACROSS THE DISTRICT (CAI.46 15/16)

The Director of Resources presented a strategic briefing note which set the context and provided an overview of key aspects of Youth Unemployment Across West Lindsey in order to aid Members' understanding, and to assist them in identifying prospective partners and agencies to invite to a future meeting.

Committee were also provided with details of one potential project the Council could look to invest in to try and tackle youth unemployment. This was a job club. An offer to visit Melton, where a similar project was already in operation was extended to interested Members.

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

- There was a view that entrepreneurial and commercial ventures by young people needed to be encouraged more and invested in
- More start up business advice was required

- There were a number of social issues entrenched in Gainsborough and aspirations needed to be raised from a young age. Children needed to be targeted in schools.
- The Academy results had been disappointing, but there were differing views as to whether achieving targets should be the focus, whilst others commented on the wider impact and effect on future investment in the District if the quality of schooling was poor.
- Independent careers advice had been lost to funding cuts and it was suggested this could be an area the Committee could further investigate
- Careers advice needed to be engaging, incentivised, greater use of social media.

RESOLVED that Officers take away Members' comments and work up a list of potential partners to invite to future meetings; suggestions made at the meeting included: -

- Lincoln College
- Acis
- Foyer
- Job Centre Plus
- Careers Service
- Gainsborough Academy
- Prince's Trust

62 RETURN TO OPEN SESSION

It was moved, seconded and voted upon that the meeting return to open session.

RESOLVED that the meeting be re-opened to public and press.

63 PROGRESS AND DELIVERY SERVICES – PERIOD 3 PROGRESS REPORT (CAI.40 15/16)

Members gave consideration to the third 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.

The report also updated Members on those areas which had been highlighted in the second quarter report, these being: -

- Complaints Received
- Gainsborough Markets

- Local Land Charges
- Development Management
- Waste Collections
- Enforcement
- Home Choices

It was noted that the report had previously been considered by both the Prosperous Communities Committee and the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee and Members were provided with the minute arising from each.

RESOLVED that having examined the responses given to the report by the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee and the Prosperous Communities Committee, assurance was received that the appropriate level of challenge was being made by those Committees to the information contained within the report.

64 PROGRESS AND DELIVERY – PROJECTS – PERIOD 3 PROGRESS REPORT (CAI.41 15/16)

Members gave consideration to the third of the newly styled Progress and Delivery reports for 2015/16, which dealt with the projects.

The Director of Resources reminded Members that the Progress and Delivery reports were by exception only, either above or below target, and only reported on those projects currently in delivery stage which were regularly monitored.

It was noted that the report had previously been considered by both the Prosperous Communities Committee and the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee and Members were provided with the minute arising from each.

RESOLVED that having examined the responses given to the report by the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee and the Prosperous Communities Committee, assurance was received that the appropriate level of challenge was been made by those Committees to the information contained within the report.

64 DEMOCRACY WORKING GROUP UPDATE REPORT (CAI.42 15/16)

Consideration was given to a report which provided Members with an update on the work of the Democracy Working Group, including reporting on the recent chamber reconfiguration trials (Section 4 of the report) and proposing a terms of reference for the Group (Section 5 of the report), which now included,

as result of the previous meetings comments, reference to the Group being “a sounding board for civic matters as and when referred to the Group”.

Section 2 of the report outlined a number of initiatives the group had been progressing to promote democracy and youth engagement within the District including: -

- Continued attendance and support of the Road Safety Partnership, which would be brought forward for update at the Group’s next meeting;
- Letters agreed to be circulated to West Lindsey Primary Schools inviting them to hold their School Council meetings in the Chamber at the Guildhall and meet with the Chairman;
- Letters agreed to be circulated on a rolling basis to all Secondary schools within the District for the Chairman and Ward Members to visit to talk to students about democracy and the decision making process.
- A new card would be designed to send out to new voters on their 18th Birthday;
- Funding would be made available and publicised through the community grant for schools to purchase flag poles and be involved in flag raising days for the district;
- Support for the Clean for the Queen project;
- Screens had been installed in the Council Chamber for better viewing for the public during meetings, and to display the webcast feed.

Section 3 of the report outlined a proposed four year work plan for the Group for consideration and approval.

Committee attention was also drawn to Section 3.4 of the report which extended an open invitation to any Member to attend future meetings of the Group.

Debate ensued and referring to the data contained in Section 4.9 of the report, Members commented that there did not appear to be an overwhelming preference. This was confirmed. It was therefore suggested that prior to making any recommendation to Full Council on a revised configuration, particularly in view of the associated costs, Members’ views first be sought on the traditional layout and then the results from all three configurations be considered again by the Committee at its next meeting.

Making reference to the four year plan contained in Section 3 of the report, namely priority 2 for the 15/16 civic year, this being the re-introduction of 18th Birthday cards for new voters, the Committee sought indication as to what evidence or data had been collected to determine that this was an activity which would promote and increase democracy. Officers advised that no data collection had been undertaken however it was intended for the card to be updated and include such features as links to the Council’s Twitter and Facebook accounts. The impact of this activity was questioned by the Committee and it was moved and seconded that this be removed from the work plan.

On that basis it was **RESOLVED** that:

- (a) the work to date of the Democracy Working Group be noted and further update report be submitted in 6 months time;
- (b) the four year plan be noted and approved, subject to the removal of the re-introduction of the 18th Birthday Card Scheme;
- (c) prior to making any recommendation to Full Council on a revised configuration for the Council Chamber, the results from all three configurations (including the traditional layout) be considered again by the Committee at its next meeting;
- (d) the terms of reference for the Democracy Working Group be confirmed and accepted.

65 DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT IMPROVEMENT PLAN (CAI.43 15/16)

Members gave consideration to a report which presented the first version of the Development Management Improvement Plan to the Committee for comment.

In presenting the report, Officers briefly summarised the background to the Improvement Plan having been created detailed in Section 1 of the report. The changes implemented to-date were summarised to the Committee together with those areas where work was continuing. The Committee were provided with the full detailed improvement plan and it was stressed that this was a living document. Furthermore it was proposed in the interests of ensuring the sustainability of the Improvement Plan that it be reviewed by the Committee every six – nine months to ensure that progress was being maintained.

Referring to the actions detailed under the staff and people theme, Members sought and received confirmation that Actions 4 and 5 had been completed.

Members commented on the noticeable improvements to-date and were encouraged by the change they had seen.

RESOLVED that having examined the improvement plan which had been formulated following intensive work with the service, stakeholders and external critical friends during autumn 2015, its content and progress to date be noted.

66 FORWARD PLAN (CAI.44 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.

RESOLVED that the Forward Plan be noted.

67 WORK PLAN (CAI.45 15/16)

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

RESOLVED that the Work Plan be noted.

The meeting concluded at 8.00 pm

Chairman