

## WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Challenge and Improve Committee held in the Council Chamber - The Guildhall, Marshall's Yard, Gainsborough, DN21 2NA on 1 September 2016 commencing at 6.30 pm.

**Present:** Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan (Chairman)  
Councillor Lewis Strange (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Mrs Angela White  
Councillor Stuart Kinch  
Councillor Mrs Pat Mewis  
Councillor David Bond  
Councillor Christopher Darcel

**In Attendance:**

Ian Knowles Director of Resources and S151 Officer  
James O'Shaughnessy Team Manager BI and Corporate Governance  
Katie Coughlan Governance and Civic Officer  
Nicola Calver Governance and Civic Officer

**Apologies:** Councillor Trevor Young  
Councillor Stuart Curtis

**Membership:** No substitutes were appointed

### 28 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING.

- (a) Meeting of the Challenge and Improvement Committee held on 28 June 2016 (CAI.18 16/17)

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Challenge and Improvement Committee held on 28 June 2016 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

### 29 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

### 30 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE

The Committee gave consideration to the Matters Arising Schedule, setting out the current position of previously agreed actions, as at 23 August 2016.

With regard to the amber action entitled "Sandsfield Lane Playing Field", Officers advised that the request had been brought to the attention of the Chief Operating Officer. Assurance had been received that this action would be updated prior to the next meeting, however, any

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Members who wished to discuss the matter, in the interim, were encouraged to contact the Chief Operating Officer direct.

**RESOLVED** that the Matters Arising Schedule as at 23 August 2016 be received and noted.

### **31 PROGRESS AND DELIVERY - PERIOD 1**

Members gave consideration to the first of the newly styled Progress and Delivery reports for 2016/17.

The report dealt with the progress and delivery of projects which were aimed at the delivery of the corporate plan. This report highlighted those projects that had entered the delivery stage and were either off track or at risk of not delivering. The report also dealt with the progress and delivery of the services the council provided. It was an “exceptions” report and dealt with those services which were either performing above the required level or were below the target set for them. The report would also provide Members with a summary of activity across services.

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.

The Committee were asked to examine the responses given to the report by the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee and the Prosperous Communities Committee and assure themselves that the appropriate level of challenge was being made by those committees to the information contained in the report.

Discussion ensued and Members sought and received background information regarding the acquisition of SureStaff Ltd. It was noted that the company had approached the Council in December 2015 advising that they were likely to cease trading. As the only agency work provider within the town and a regular supplier of workforce for operational services, consideration was given as to whether the Authority should purchase the company. An appropriate business case had therefore been submitted to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee for consideration. This demonstrated the potential to result in immediate savings in the operational budgets, offered an opportunity to grow the company whilst retaining profit back into the organisation and safeguarded local jobs. In response to Members’ further questions, Officers advised that progress, including income generation, would be monitored by the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee. The company would be operated within the parameters of a business plan and progress would be monitored against this on a six monthly basis and would form part of the budget planning process.

Some Members of the Committee were of the view that the acquisition should be more widely promoted. Officers indicated that the governance arrangements relating to the company were due for consideration by the Governance and Audit Committee and Full Council and thus would provide the opportunity for discussion with the wider elected Member core.

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In responding to questions, Officers confirmed that whilst the works on the Trinity Arts Centre roof had experienced a slight delay, these were now nearing completion and the full artistic programme had now resumed.

A new six month appointment had been approved within Planning Enforcement to mitigate the current capacity issues, this information was welcomed by the Committee. The Committee placed on record their thanks to the Planning Enforcement Officer for the work she undertook on behalf of the organisation. General discussion was had regarding the need for succession planning and assurance was offered that there was a work force development plan in place and age profile awareness with the Management Team.

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

## **32 DEMOCRACY WORKING GROUP - 6 MONTH UPDATE**

Consideration was given to a report which sought to update Members on the work of the Democracy Working Group. The Group had met twice since the Committee had received its last update on 22 February 2016. The progress made to date was set in Section 2 of the report and included: -

- further work around the Chamber re-configuration;
- the work of the Group as a Civic Matters Sounding Board;
- Engagement with both primary and secondary schools regarding making use of the facilities at the Guildhall and for Members of the Council to visit their schools respectively; and
- Flag Poles at Schools

Agreement to the revised four year plan set out in Section 3 of the report was sought. It was noted that if on investigation by the Group any of the priorities detailed therein might result in financial, staffing or other implications, for example the “making better use of the new conferencing equipment to aid the democratic process”, a separate report would be submitted for Member consideration.

In responding to Members, questions, Officers advised that the civic matters the Group had given consideration to and referred to in Section 2.2 of the report were Transport and the Civic Inventory.

Members also encouraged Officers to re-approach schools.

**RESOLVED** that: -

- (a) the work to date of the Democracy Working Group be noted and a further update be submitted in six months time; and
- (b) the four year plan be noted and approved.

### **33 FORWARD PLAN**

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.

Concerns were again raised regarding health provision across the District. In response Officers advised that a commissioning paper was currently being scoped for submission to Prosperous Communities Committee in October 2016. Subject to agreement from the Policy Committee, this commission would be referred back to the Challenge and Improvement Committee to undertake, in accordance with the Methodology the Committee had previously adopted. It was stressed that it was envisaged an in depth commission into the area could take up to 12 months to complete.

**RESOLVED** that the Forward Plan be noted

### **34 COMMITTEE WORKPLAN**

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

Members noted that a further a report would be added to the work plan for November 2016, that being the Health Commission referred to above.

It was also noted that attendance by Simon Outen, the Police and Crime Commissioner and colleagues had been moved to the Committee's November meeting, for those reasons outlined in the matters arising report considered earlier by the Committee.

Finally, in accordance with the footnote to the Workplan, consideration would be given at the next Chairman's Briefing as to which partner should next be invited to address the Committee in relation to their ongoing theme of Youth Unemployment. This would subsequently be incorporated into the workplan.

**RESOLVED** that the Work Plan, subject to the information set out above, be noted.

### **35 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.

### **36 PREPARATION FOR SCRUTINY OF PUBLIC BODY**

#### **BRIEFING PAPER IN ADVANCE OF THE 2<sup>ND</sup> PUBLIC BODY BEING INVITED REGARDING THE ONGOING THEME OF YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT – SCHOOLS – FINALISED QUESTIONS**

At its meeting on 28 June 2016, Members had been presented with a briefing paper for consideration, which set out a list of proposed schools to be invited to attend the October meeting, together with a proposed set of questions, derived from comments previously expressed by Committee, to be put to the schools.

Members received a brief update to this paper advising of progress achieved since the last meeting and were asked to re-affirm the questions which would form the basis of the presentations to be given by the schools.

In responding to Members, questions, Officers confirmed that the initial approach had been made to the respective Head Teacher, who had then directed the request appropriately within their organisation, most often to a Member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Officers further confirmed that no students would be in attendance, as this request had not been made. Members indicated that maybe this would be of value going forward but it was acknowledged that careful consideration would need to be given to the format and arena for any such event.

As earlier advised, consideration would need to be given, at the next Chairman's Briefing, as to which partner should next be invited to address the Committee and Officers undertook to also further consider the feasibility of the suggestion made by the Committee.

#### **RESOLVED that: -**

- (a) the progress made to date be noted; and
- (b) the series of questions, as presented at the meeting on 28 June 2016, be re-affirmed as the basis for the presentations.

The meeting concluded at 7.08 pm.

Chairman