

## **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 20 December 2016 commencing at 6.30 pm.

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

Councillor Stuart Curtis  
Councillor Christopher Darcel  
Councillor Michael Devine  
Councillor Stuart Kinch  
Councillor Mrs Pat Mewis  
Councillor Mrs Angela White

**In Attendance:**  
Katie Coughlan Governance & Civic Officer  
Ian Knowles Director of Resources and S151 Officer  
James O'Shaughnessy Team Manager BI and Corporate Governance  
Amanda Boutell Employment and Skills Officer

**Also in Attendance:** Katie Easey, Chief Executive, CLIP, Bridge Street, Gainsborough

Kevin Leeming Recruitment Manager, Lincoln & Gainsborough Adult Training, Lincoln

Michelle Guest, Lincoln College (Gainsborough Campus)

**Apologies:** Councillor Lesley Rollings  
Councillor David Bond

**Membership:** Councillor Mick Devine substituting for Councillor David Bond

### **58 CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENT**

The Chairman welcomed all those present to the meeting, with a particularly warm welcome extended to guest speakers, representatives from CLIP, LAGAT and Lincoln College.

## **59 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING.**

- (a) Meeting of the Challenge and Improvement Committee held on 15 November 2016 (CAI.37 16/17)

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Challenge and Improvement Committee held on 15 November 2016 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

## **60 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made at this point in the meeting.

## **61 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE**

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

**RESOLVED** that the Matters Arising Schedule as at 12 December 2016 and the verbal updates, detailed above, be received and noted.

## **62 SCRUTINY OF PUBLIC BODIES - SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

In connection with the Committee's ongoing theme of Youth Unemployment, the Committee had the opportunity to scrutinise the work of a selection of Colleges and Apprenticeship Providers across the District regarding the support they offered their students in terms of Careers advice. Katie Easey, Chief Executive of CLIP, Kevin Leeming, Recruitment Manager LAGAT, and Michelle Guest, Director of Education and Training, Gainsborough College, were in attendance to answer the Committee's previously prepared questions, by way of presentations and a period of supplementary questioning.

The questions which had been posed were as follows: -

- What steps do you take to ensure relevant career's advice is offered to your young people and how do you measure its effectiveness?
- What links do you have in place to provide effective work experience for young people and what relationships do you have with businesses to provide suitable exposure to employment opportunities for your young people?
- What positive actions do you take to raise the aspirations of all young people with regard to both academic and vocational qualifications and how do you measure their effectiveness?
- What efforts do you make to track the progress of young people once they have left your establishment and what use is made of any information you collate?

- What implications do Data Protection regulations have on 'latent learners' i.e. those that disappear?
- What measures do you have in place to monitor the retention of learners the destination of any leavers and the quality of provision?
- What do you think are the key issues facing young people in securing relevant and sustainable education, employment or training opportunities and what more could the education/vocational system do to address these?

The Chairman welcomed Ms Easey to the meeting and invited her to make her presentation to Members. This was followed by similar presentations from Mr Leeming and Ms Guest. <sup>1</sup>

During the presentations and the supplementary questioning the following points were noted: -

- Parental Buy-in and raising aspirations was a must.
- The geography of the area, and the lack of public transport was a continuous barrier to work placements, particularly for young people from low income families
- The loss of the Career Service had had a significant impact
- The loss of connexions had had a significant impact, meaning many young people did not now have access to impartial advice.
- Data sharing agreements needed to be in place as it was difficult to track people or share information
- Lack of NEET monitoring
- A brokerage service for referrals would be of assistance
- A greater need to engage with local employers and build relationships
- An acknowledgement that smaller employers struggled to assist with placements for a variety of reasons
- Careers advice provided by schools was less impartial and likely to be more academic focussed, not catering for all
- It was hoped the Apprenticeship levy would encourage more employers
- Difficult to find high quality suitable work placements
- The Gainsborough College was having to tailor the courses they offered due to their main feeder not achieving attainment levels
- Viability was becoming more difficult due to funding changes
- Positive role models were important if a young person was to be successful

The Chairman thanked the guest speakers for their invaluable input and wished them and their organisations well for the future.

## **63 PROGRESS AND DELIVERY WORKING GROUP**

---

<sup>1</sup> A recording of the presentations is available via the democratic services team.

Challenge and Improve Committee- 20 December 2016  
Subject to Call-in. Call-in will expire at 5pm on

Consideration was given to a report which proposed that a Member Task and Finish group be established to review the measures used to report performance information to the Council for the municipal year 2017/2018.

The Committee were also asked to determine the membership of and appoint Members to serve on the Task and Finish Group.

The Task and Finish Group would be asked to review the following aspects of performance management:

- Review the measures used in the current year. Confirm they were the appropriate measures for members to be assured that the Council as whole was performing at the right level and where performance was below acceptable levels that the remedial measures proposed would deliver the required improvements.
- Consider how these measures provided a performance management framework for the organisation that allowed Members to monitor progress against the Corporate Plan, service delivery and projects at the delivery stage.
- Agree changes to the measures used to report performance to members for inclusion in the reports from the start of the 2017/18 municipal year.

It was likely that the Task and Finish Group would meet no more than three times in the early part of 2017 to allow the new measures to be introduced for the 2017/18 municipal year.

The following Members were proposed and seconded: -

Councillor A White  
Councillor L Strange  
Councillor P Howitt-Cowan

**RESOLVED** that: -

- (a) Councillor White, Strange and Howitt-Cowan be appointed to serve on the Task and Finish Group to undertake the annual review;
- (b) the Task and Finish Group be requested to review the measures that form part of the Progress and Delivery report and consider a performance management framework that enables Members and Officers to have assurance that services and projects are performing well and being delivered; and
- (c) the Task and Finish Group be empowered to agree the changes to the progress and delivery measures without reference back to this Committee.

Challenge and Improve Committee- 20 December 2016  
Subject to Call-in. Call-in will expire at 5pm on

The Committee took a short comfort break and reconvened at 8.25 pm.

Note: Councillor Young left the meeting at this point and did not return

## **64 PROGRESS AND DELIVERY PERIOD 2**

Members gave consideration to the second 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 further provided 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 concern was raised regarding the performance within Land Charges. It was questioned why the Authority’s performance was behind that of partners. Members also enquired as to whether it was still the intention of the Government to transfer some of the service to Land Registry.

In response Officers advised that performance had been a concern historically, however applications were currently being turned around in 5.7 days, which was a significant improvement. The service had a good reputation for quality and accuracy and because of this, had maintained a core customer base. A new automated system for Local Land Charges had been procured and was being implemented, with an anticipated completion date of April 2017. This would significantly improve search processing times.

Until the new system was fully functioning the service would face a challenge to consistently turn around searches within the 10 day target using the current manual system. Additional resources had been allocated to the service in order to keep turnaround times for searches within the 10 day target in the interim.

No target had been set as yet for post implementation of the computerised system, however it was hoped search times could be reduced to 24-48 hours. It was further confirmed that there were still Government plans to move some of the Local Land Charges Function back to central Land Registry, however no timescales had been assigned to this.

The Committee also raised concerns with regard to the performance in Enforcement, and indicated it would be useful for them to understand how many cases were currently being managed, how many were outstanding and which were being given priority.

The Committee were reminded of their adopted procedure, whereby it would be for the Policy Committee to first challenge the performance in this area, if the Challenge and Improvement Committee were not satisfied with the action the Policy Committee were taking, after two periods, then it would be for the Challenge and Improvement Committee to then offer further challenge. It was important that the Policy Committees were first afforded the opportunity to challenge performance. With this mind it was suggested that the Chairman of the Committee liaise with the Chairman of the Prosperous Communities Committee in the first instance regarding any concerns the Committee may have.

Members recalled how historically they had received information on planning enforcement quarterly and requested such an item be added to their work plan, acknowledging that case specific information could not be included due to Data Protection. There was general discussion as to why Members felt this would be useful to them, and it was therefore agreed that the matter would be further discussed at the next Chair's Briefing.

Members also advised that they had been led to understand that a duty planner was available everyday, however this had not been their experience. Officers undertook to investigate.

**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.

## **65 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.

No reports were identified.

**RESOLVED** that the Forward Plan be noted.

## **66 COMMITTEE WORKPLAN**

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

**RESOLVED** that the Work Plan be noted.

## **67 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.

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

As part of this Committee's duty to enhance the accountability for service delivery and effectiveness of other public service providers, the Committee had previously determined that the issue of youth unemployment be the subject of scrutiny.

To that extent appropriate public and private agencies across the District that were directly involved with young people had been identified, with a view to them being invited to the Committee to provide Members with greater insight into their roles and actions they take to address the issue of youth unemployment.

The agencies identified were:

- Careers Service
- Schools
- Colleges/Apprenticeship Providers
- Department for Work and Pensions
- Businesses

Members have already agreed received presentations from:

- The Careers Service
- Schools
- Colleges and Training Providers

In line with this, the report suggested that the DWP and Local Employers should be invited to the Committee's next meeting in February 2017. Members were asked to agree the proposed questions as set out in the paper in order to agree a definitive set of questions to be posed.

Members were further asked to suggest those businesses they felt would provide an insight into the subject matter.

Once questions and invitees had been determined Officers would take action to contact the relevant organisations and invite representatives to attend in February 2017.

Discussion ensued and Members indicated they were content with the questions as presented. With regard to the employers which should be invited a number of suggestions were made and these included, Agri-Food Businesses, Engineering and Manufacturing Businesses, Small employers, not all Gainsborough based businesses.

Following the discussion the following list of businesses were initially generated: -

- Eminox Limited
- Hooton Engineering Limited
- Rand Farm Park
- Uncle Henrys
- SK8Z
- Woldgrain Limited
- Kerry Ingredients and Flavours
- AMP Rose

Following more discussion it was

**RESOLVED** that: -

- (a) The list of proposed employers be circulated to all Members of the Committee for comment, with a view to agreed list being finalised before mid-January in order invites could be sent. the that
- (b) the DWP be invited to attend at the February meeting
- (b) the series of questions, as presented, and as detailed in paragraph 3.1 of report CAI.43 16/17, form the basis of presentations the invited organisations are asked to the prepare.

The meeting concluded at 9.15 pm.

Chairman