

## WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Challenge and Improvement Committee held in the Council Chamber - The Guildhall, Marshall's Yard, Gainsborough, DN21 2NA on 26 June 2018 commencing at 6.30 pm.

**Present:** Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan (Chairman)  
Councillor Lewis Strange (Vice-Chairman) and Councillor  
Mrs Angela White (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor David Bond  
Councillor Mrs Jessie Milne  
Councillor Mrs Diana Rodgers  
Councillor Mrs Lesley Rollings  
Councillor Thomas Smith  
Councillor Mrs Anne Welburn

**In Attendance:**  
Alan Robinson Strategic Lead Governance and People/Monitoring Officer  
Michelle Carrington Strategic Lead Customer First  
Phil Taylor Well being & Health Manager (interim)  
Grant White Enterprising Communities Manager  
James Welbourn Democratic and Civic Officer

**Apologies:** Councillor Bruce Allison  
Councillor Mrs Angela Lawrence  
Councillor Roger Patterson

### 16 CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming all present and extending a special welcome to Officers who had not previously attended a meeting of the Challenge and Improvement Committee.

### 17 MEETING OF THE CHALLENGE AND IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 22 MAY 2018

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 22 May 2018 be approved and signed as a correct record.

A Member of Committee enquired about a request for information regarding the use of household recycling centres outside of the county. Members had previously reported that residents of West Lindsey were being turned away from household recycling centres, for example in North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire, which was causing difficulties for those who lived near county borders. Members were informed that confirmation had been

received via Lincolnshire County Council that Lincolnshire residents using normal family cars had not been stopped from accessing out of county facilities.

## **18 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

## **19 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE**

The Committee gave consideration to the Matters Arising Schedule, setting out the current position of previously agreed actions, as at 18 June 2018.

The Democratic and Civic Officer advised Members that further to their comments at the previous meeting regarding the running of the mini-meetings at Annual Council, this had been shared with the Democratic Services Team and would be reviewed for the next Annual Council, in 2019.

**RESOLVED** that the Matters Arising Schedule as at 18 June 2018 be received and noted.

## **20 HEALTH COMMISSION REVIEW**

Members of Committee gave consideration to a report from Phil Taylor, Interim Wellbeing & Health Manager, regarding the work and progress of the Health Commission. He provided Members with the background to the Health Commission and explained that the Health Commission sought to be part of the solution to improving the health and wellbeing of communities in West Lindsey. The original Terms of Reference were identified to Members and it was noted that it was recommended to the Prosperous Communities Committee that these be reviewed.

The Interim Wellbeing and Health Manager explained that the Health Commission had been operational for sixteen months and that membership of the Health Commission was stable and working well, with individual members leading on the thematic areas as agreed and reporting back to the Commission. It was highlighted that West Lindsey faced the challenge of an aging population, long term unemployment together with a large proportion of the population experiencing preventable conditions, linked to lifestyle and social determinants of health. It was noted that unhealthy life style choices such as poor diet, and inactivity were contributing towards diabetes and obesity above the national average. Reducing alcohol misuse, smoking, diabetes obesity and increasing inactivity were the local priorities.

Committee Members discussed that, as West Lindsey District Council did not hold the budget for health care provision, it was crucial that representatives were able to voice the needs of the District in an appropriate setting. There was acknowledgement that local health provision had to be driven by the scope or limitations of the NHS however there was agreement that there was insufficient representation across all districts within the county-wide health board. The Monitoring Officer clarified for Members that the district-led work continued to compile evidence to help inform Members to then be able to lobby the relevant

areas and providers.

In response to a question from Committee regarding the key partners for the Health Commission, the Interim Wellbeing and Health Manager confirmed that the review of the Terms of Reference would seek to amend any such details, for example adding Acis as a key partner.

Members of Committee further discussed the need for representatives across all districts to have a stronger voice in health matters and also for Lincolnshire MPs to work as necessary in Westminster to safeguard the health needs of the area. It was acknowledged that to address some of the issues identified, such as poor diet and lack of exercise, there would need to be greater work undertaken in relation to lifestyle choices rather than simply healthcare provision.

On the conclusion of discussions, it was

**RESOLVED** that the contents of the report and the recommendations to the Prosperous Communities Committee be noted.

## **21 INTERIM REPORT - PUBLIC REALM WORKING GROUP**

Members of Committee were asked to give consideration to an interim report regarding the progress and actions of the Public Realm Working Group. The Enterprising Communities Manager gave a brief refresh on the purpose of the working group and explained the interim report was to update Members on the current position of the group ahead of the final report, scheduled for the November meeting. He explained the report included details of the Public Realm Survey and also information about which key organisations the group intended to invite for targeted engagement about areas of interest identified within the survey. He added that Committee was asked to note the details of the report and had the opportunity to suggest any other organisations to be approached by the working group.

The Enterprising Communities Manager advised Members that the Public Realm Survey had gone live in May and was open until the middle of August. It had been distributed to Town and Parish Councils, there had been communications to Parish Meetings and there had been an initial response from five areas. It had been anticipated that initial response rates would be slow given the length of the survey and detail required in the answers. He explained that there would be reminders sent out to all areas and District Councillors would also be requested to discuss the survey within their parishes to encourage maximum response rates.

In response to questions from Members regarding the ease of use of the survey, the Enterprising Communities Manager explained that the survey was built using certain software which, although had many benefits in terms of gathering and analysing data, did not necessarily present the 'prettiest' of interfaces. He explained that in communicating with towns and parishes about the survey, contact details for help and questions had also been provided. Based on feedback provided regarding one particular ward, the Enterprising Communities Manager confirmed he would contact them to discuss any concerns with their completed survey.

Members of Committee expressed their concerns that the close date of 16 August would not allow all Town and Parish Councils, and Parish Meetings, sufficient time to complete the survey. It was explained that the close date for the survey could be extended and this would be discussed within the Public Realm Working Group. It was highlighted that it would be easier to amend timescales at a later date, once it was clearer as to how many responses were coming in or whether areas were struggling to complete the questions.

There was further discussion as to whether paper copies of the survey were available and who would be responsible for completing and returning the responses. It was confirmed that paper versions of the survey had been sent out with initial communications however it was preferable that responses were submitted online. With regard to who completed the survey, it was acknowledged that this could be a clerk or a councillor although it was preferable to have one named person per response. The Enterprising Communities Manager confirmed that in sending reminder communications to all involved, he would reiterate the option to contact the team for assistance if required.

Members of Committee discussed the involvement of District Councillors and how they could usefully complete a survey when they covered several, sometimes very different, areas. It was agreed that an amended version of the survey would be distributed to all West Lindsey District Councillors so they could complete as many surveys as they needed to for their areas, rather than potentially confusing the main survey results with mixed answers.

There was further discussion regarding the importance of supporting all Town and Parish Councils and Parish Meetings to complete the survey and how the results of the survey will impact the areas of focus for the working group. It was reiterated that timescales could be reviewed and it was important to gather sufficient information to be of use. At the close of discussions the Chairman repeated the recommendations of the report and enquired for any further comments. Members of Committee agreed with the recommendations in the report but requested that an additional action be recorded for District Councillors. Therefore, it was

**RESOLVED** that:

- a) Members acknowledge progress to date of the Rural Public Realm Task & Finish Group; and
- b) Members recommend that all District Councillors be requested to contribute via completion of a survey for their parishes and to encourage the Town and Parish Councils, and Parish Meetings, in their areas to complete and return the main Public Realm Survey.

## **22 CUSTOMER FIRST**

Members were asked to give consideration to a report regarding the Customer First Strategy. This was introduced by Michelle Carrington, Strategic Lead - Customer First. She explained that the council faced twin pressures to continually improve the services it offers to residents, businesses and visitors whilst at the same time trying to reduce its costs as budgets become tighter. In order to do this it was proposed that two principal methods were adopted. Firstly, that the council transformed the services which dealt directly with customers so that they put the customer at the heart of everything the Council does (the

“customer centric organisation”) and secondly, where appropriate, it utilised technology to improve the overall speed and accuracy of the service the customer received at a cost that was sustainable and affordable in the long term.

She added that this would be a major transformation programme and had the potential to deliver significant savings over the long term as well as greatly increase the levels of customer satisfaction with the Council. In order to go into more detail, the Strategic Lead drew Members’ attention to sections within the Executive Summary and explained the documents were also to be presented to the Prosperous Communities Committee.

There were several questions from Members of Committee and the Strategic Lead was thanked for presenting the report. There was significant discussion regarding the importance of attitudes and behaviours within the council and how these could have a positive or negative impact for customers. It was confirmed there would be a significant programme of training across the council. A Member of Committee enquired whether the training would be provided internally or by external organisations and it was explained that all management and some officers had already attended customer service training provided by the Institute of Customer Services. This had been very well received and was of a very high quality. It was acknowledged that there was a cost implication of using external organisations and the intention was to tailor more council-specific training to be rolled out to all officers via blended training. This was explained to be a combination of face-to-face sessions as well as online and ‘on the job’ training.

There was acknowledgement amongst Members that there had been a marked improvement in recent months in customer service and feedback received by Councillors from their constituents. It was also highlighted that since the establishment of the Customer Experience Officer role, there had been a significant improvement in complaints handling and communication with customers.

Members of Committee discussed the need for culture change across the council and questions as to how this would be achieved. Aside from the training programme, it was explained that the need to demonstrate the right behaviours and attitudes would be assessed from the outset of the recruitment process and the focus would not necessarily be on skills but on attitude, depending on role. The policy of recruiting to achieve certain attitudes would then filter through the appraisal system and the competency framework would be configured to promote high levels of customer service. It was also highlighted that it would be a transitional programme and where the final goal was to be ‘one council’ there would be a period of transition where some areas may be further ahead than others.

Members of Committee expressed satisfaction with the strategy and positive feedback was given regarding the work accomplished so far. There was discussion about the configuration of the customer services area of the council building and it was confirmed this was being looked at. It also had to take into consideration the needs of the council’s partners who share the space and Members would be kept updated.

A Member of Committee enquired whether there was any plan to update Members on the progress of the strategy throughout the implementation and it was confirmed that the Strategic Lead would attend the scrutiny committee, or other committees as necessary, to ensure Members were kept informed. It was agreed with would be arranged with the Democratic and Civic Officer.

At the conclusion of discussions it was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The report and strategy be supported and recommended to the Prosperous Communities Committee; and
- b) The Strategic Lead be invited to return to the Challenge and Improvement Committee to provide updates on the strategy at regular intervals throughout the implementation of the strategy.

## **23 FORWARD PLAN**

The Democratic and Civic Officer introduced the forward plan for all committees and explained that the items selected by C&I were already highlighted.

A Member of Committee noted the results of the Staff Survey were due to be presented to the Joint Staff Consultative committee and requested that these also be shared with C&I Committee. There was discussion regarding the details of the leisure contract and it was noted that the Governance and Audit Committee would be best placed to review the necessary processes.

There was further discussion about items due to be seen by other committees although there was nothing identified for scrutiny.

**RESOLVED** that the forward plan be noted and the item identified be added to the Committee work plan.

## **24 COMMITTEE WORKPLAN**

Members of Committee gave consideration to the committee work plan for coming months. In consideration of discussions earlier in the meeting, it was

**RESOLVED** that the work plan be updated in line with the items identified by Committee Members.

The meeting concluded at 8.18 pm.

Chairman