

## WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Challenge and Improvement Committee held in The Council Chamber - The Guildhall on 13 November 2018 commencing at 6.30 pm.

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

Councillor David Bond  
Councillor Mrs Angela Lawrence  
Councillor Mrs Jessie Milne  
Councillor Roger Patterson  
Councillor Mrs Diana Rodgers  
Councillor Mrs Lesley Rollings  
Councillor Thomas Smith  
Councillor Mrs Anne Welburn

**In Attendance:**  
Mark Sturgess Executive Director of Operations and Head of Paid Service  
Andy Gray Housing and Enforcement Manager  
Natalie Kostiuik Customer Experience Officer  
Ele Durrant Democratic and Civic Officer

**Apologies:** Councillor Bruce Allison

### 42 MEETING OF THE CHALLENGE AND IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 9 OCTOBER 2018

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 9 October 2018 be approved and signed as a correct record.

### 43 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

### 44 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE

The Committee gave consideration to the Matters Arising Schedule, setting out the current position of previously agreed actions, as at 5 November 2018.

The Democratic and Civic Officer advised Members that the green item regarding the

Amendment to the Operating Methodology had been updated since the papers were distributed and had been completed.

**RESOLVED** that the Matters Arising Schedule as at 5 November 2018 be received and noted.

#### **45 CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS HANDLING - CURRENT POSITION**

Members were asked to give consideration to a report detailing the current statistics for customer complaints handling, following the initial report seen in May 2018 which outlined the new Customer Experience Policy 2018/19 complaints process. The report included figures demonstrating the amount of feedback (Compliments, Comments and Complaints) received in the first six months of the 2018/19 period from 1 April 2018 to 30 September 2018 compared to previous years. Feedback received was also broken down by service and category. Members heard details of upheld complaints, lessons learned from complaints and those issues which had been referred to the Local Government Ombudsman in the six month period from April to September 2018.

Members were keen to offer their congratulations on the work being undertaken and improvements made in recent months. They thanked the Customer Experience Officer for a well presented and thorough report and called particular attention to the lessons learnt as it was felt that this was the most important aspect arising from any complaint. With relation to one of the learning points around the Policy and Customer Charter Update, it was highlighted that the timelines relating to planning enforcement issues had been updated and would need to be amended on the website. The Customer Experience Officer confirmed this had been recognised and was being acted upon. The Housing and Environmental Enforcement Manager also stated that although the wording was out of date, the team were working to the new enforcement timescales.

There was discussion regarding how best to keep Members informed of customer complaint details and other relevant comments and outcomes. The suggestion to share updates via the Member Newsletter was welcomed but it was also requested that an annual report be prepared to give a more in depth review of comparative data and lessons learnt. It was agreed that this annual report could be included in the work plan for the Challenge and Improvement Committee and the Head of Paid Service added that the Customer Experience data could also be considered as part of the Performance and Delivery reporting for the following year.

With unanimous agreement to the amended recommendation it was

**RESOLVED** that:

- a) the content of the Customer Complaints Handling Update Report be noted; and
- b) Members endorse the report and agree to receive future updates via the Quarterly Voice of the Customer Report, to be published as part of the Members Newsletter, alongside an annual report through the Challenge and Improvement Committee.

#### **46 SELECTIVE LICENSING - 12 MONTH REVIEW**

The Housing and Environmental Enforcement Manager introduced a report providing Members with an annual update on the Selective Licensing scheme. He reiterated that the Selective Licensing scheme in the Gainsborough South West Ward was approved at Prosperous Communities Committee in March 2016 and came into force in July 2016 for a five year period. It had been agreed for Members to receive annual updates in regards to the progress of the scheme, the main areas of work undertaken and to provide the timescales and objectives for future phases.

Members enquired about a reference to the Tenant Passport scheme and it was explained that this had not proven as successful as it could have been because the levels of consent needed from tenants did not necessarily provide the detailed information requested by landlords. It was agreed that whilst the scheme could prove beneficial for landlords and tenants alike, it was acknowledged that there were limitations as to how effectively it could be implemented in view of the disparity between information requested and levels of consent required. The Housing and Environmental Enforcement Manager explained there were ongoing discussions with landlords as to how the scheme could be amended to better suit all parties and Members would be kept informed of any progress with this.

There was discussion around the communication between landlords and the council and it was agreed that there had been difficulties in the early days of the scheme because of confusion as to what was required and the purpose of the scheme. The Housing and Environmental Enforcement Manager explained that there were regular meetings with landlords and a forum had been set up in conjunction with Homesafe, all of which provided the chance for any questions or concerns to be raised and continued the positive communications across all involved. It was agreed for the presentation from the recent meeting with landlords to be shared with Members.

A Member of Committee enquired how the enforcement of the scheme was funded and how the additional revenue from the scheme was to be used. It was explained that the licence fee could only be used for the administration of the scheme and enforcement was included in the usual enforcement budgets. As there had been more licence applications than had originally been expected, the additional funds would be used to extend the scheme.

There was an enquiry about whether there had been positive improvements with regards to drug use in the area. It was explained that the scheme made it easier to identify specific problems with tenants or landlords and that it also gave the council the right to ask landlords to deal with specific issues. It was highlighted that landlords were not expected to deal with drug use problems but the council would offer advice and work with the landlord and the police to help tackle the associated problems of anti-social behaviour. Landlords understood the expectations on them, the council's ability to get landlords to act was enhanced and the police continued to work in the area to tackle drug related problems. The Housing and Environmental Enforcement Manager also stated that members of the public were more likely to report their concerns as they could see there was action being taken. It was emphasised that the aim was to work with and support landlords, the scheme was not designed to penalise anyone.

There was round the table support from Committee Members and congratulations offered to

the team for the work undertaken so far. It was queried whether there was an issue with staff turnover because of difficulties within the post although it was confirmed that as the scheme was time limited, any associated officer post would be on a short term basis and such positions generally saw a higher turnover as officers sought permanent employment.

With final congratulations and thanks to all it was

**RESOLVED** that

- a) The success of the scheme to date and the positive impact within the South West Ward area be noted; and
- b) Members note that, in line with legislation, the income derived from the scheme will continue to fund the administration of the scheme for a further 2 year period, until December 2020; and
- c) A further update be provided to Members in 12 months' time.

**47 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.

There was discussion about the report regarding broadband options and it was confirmed that as Members had requested to be kept informed of updates and progress, these details would be shared with them in due course.

**RESOLVED** that the forward plan be noted.

**48 COMMITTEE WORKPLAN**

Members of Committee gave consideration to the committee work plan for the coming months. It was noted that some items had been rescheduled owing to an excess of business for the January meeting.

**RESOLVED** that the work plan be noted.

The meeting concluded at 7.28 pm.

Chairman