

## **WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL**

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held virtually via MS Teams on 6 October 2020 commencing at 6.30 pm.

**Present:** Councillor Mrs Lesley Rollings (Chairman)  
Councillor Mrs Diana Rodgers (Vice-Chairman) and  
Councillor Mrs Angela White (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor David Dobbie  
Councillor Jane Ellis  
Councillor Mrs Caralyne Grimble  
Councillor Mrs Angela Lawrence

**Also Present:** Councillor Mrs Anne Welburn

**In Attendance:**  
Alan Robinson Director of Corporate Services and Monitoring Officer  
Ele Snow Democratic and Civic Officer

**Apologies:** Councillor Keith Panter

### **1 REGISTER OF ATTENDANCE**

The Chairman undertook the register of attendance for Members and each Councillor confirmed their attendance individually.

The Democratic Services Officer completed the register of attendance for Officers and, as with Members, each Officer confirmed their attendance.

### **2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 18 February 2020 be confirmed as a correct record.

### **3 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

### **4 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE**

The Democratic and Civic Officer confirmed there were no outstanding matters arising.

## **5 WORK PLANNING FOR OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

The Chairman introduced the first report of the evening regarding the Committee work plan for the remainder of the Civic Year. It was acknowledged that the cancellation of meetings due to the global pandemic had impacted the usual organisation of the Committee work plan. The Chairman highlighted the proposed work streams, namely flood risk management across the district, homeworking for Officers during the pandemic and a review of communications across Planning and Regeneration.

There was discussion regarding the importance of understanding flood risk and the impact this had on affected residents. It was acknowledged that there was already work underway across the council and this work stream for the Committee would run alongside that work. The Chairman emphasised the need for swift action to avoid a repeat of previous flooding incidents and the Monitoring Officer highlighted the work that was already underway across the district and county with the same goal.

It was noted that there was no business scheduled for the proposed January meeting and the Chairman suggested an initial focus on leisure provision across the district. This had been mooted in the previous Civic Year and it was important that this strand of work should not be overlooked. It was agreed for the Democratic and Civic Officer to make initial enquiries to invite three leisure providers to attend the meeting in January.

The aspect of homeworking for Officers through the pandemic was noted to be unprecedented on such a scale and Members felt there needed to be an element of scrutiny to understand the impact this was having, both from a staff wellbeing point of view as well as with regard to service provision. It was noted that the next item on the agenda was in relation to this work stream.

### **RESOLVED** that:

- a) the proposed work streams of Flood Risk Across West Lindsey, Homeworking During the Pandemic and Review of Communications Across Planning and Regeneration be agreed; and
- b) the formation of a Flood Risk Working Group be approved; and
- c) the draft Terms of Reference and initial work plan for the Flood Risk Working Group be presented to Committee at their meeting on 10 November 2020 for final approval; and
- d) the draft work plan for the remainder of the Civic Year be agreed.

## **6 COVID-19 STAFF SURVEY RESULTS**

The Monitoring Officer introduced the outcomes of a staff survey undertaken in June 2020 regarding the impact of the pandemic and working from home. He highlighted a selection of figures, including the impressive response rate of 84% of staff. He noted that 95% of respondents felt connected to their teams and of the 5% who did not, Management Team

were able to identify those teams and work with the Managers accordingly. He also highlighted that 98% of respondents trusted the Management Team to be making the right decisions and that the level of communication was appreciated. He noted that there was concern amongst staff about the personal impact of Covid-19 but this was to be expected given the circumstances.

Members praised the survey questions and the way the information from the survey had been collated. The high response rate was also noted to be exceptional and indicative of a workforce engaged with the organisation. A Member of Committee highlighted the number of staff who would choose to continue working from home and the Monitoring Officer confirmed that, as and when office working became possible again, there would be greater flexibility for where people chose to base themselves for the majority of their working week.

The Committee heard that there would be a second similar survey going out to staff in the coming weeks and it was programmed into the work plan for the results to be presented to both the Joint Staff Consultative Committee and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Chairman enquired whether there had been any contact with Councillors in a similar vein and the Monitoring Officer highlighted the weekly messages that were sent out by the Chief Executive. These had started as twice-weekly but moved to weekly at the end of the summer. The Vice-Chairman, Councillor Mrs D. Rodgers quoted an email she had sent to Senior Officers detailing positive feedback she had received from business and residents praising the work of the council. She stated that there had been significant mentoring from Officers with regard to the new way of working online, using MS Teams, and communications between Councillor colleagues had been helpful.

The positive response to the survey was again praised, as was the work of Officers in difficult times, and the Committee expressed interest in seeing how the situation may have changed with the continuing restrictions.

**RESOLVED** that the content of the report be noted.

## **7 FORWARD PLAN**

The Chairman invited Members of the Committee to comment on the contents of the Forward Plan. She enquired about the Annual Review of the Commercial Investment Portfolio and it was explained the portfolio was constantly reviewed however, the annual review was presented at the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee. Members were advised that should they have any questions regarding that report, they could submit them to Officers in advance which would ensure Officers were able to present the answers at the time of the meeting.

With no further comments, the Forward Plan was **NOTED**.

The meeting concluded at 7.09 pm.

Chairman