

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held virtually via MS Teams on 16 February 2021 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 Liz Clews
Councillor David Dobbie
Councillor Jane Ellis
Councillor Mrs Caralyne Grimble
Councillor Mrs Angela Lawrence
Councillor Keith Panter
Councillor Roger Patterson

Also Present: Councillor Stephen Bunney
Councillor Michael Devine

In Attendance:
Alan Robinson Director of Corporate Services and Monitoring Officer
Emma Redwood People and Organisational Development Manager
Anna Grieve
Katie Storr Senior Democratic & Civic Officer
Ele Snow Democratic and Civic Officer

Also In Attendance: Simon Fearn, Regional Contract Manager - Midlands Area, Everyone Active
Kerry O'Neill, Contract Manager, Everyone Active
Damon Parkinson, Head of Operations and Business Development, Gainsborough Trinity Foundation

Apologies: Councillor Timothy Davies
Councillor Cherie Hill

15 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.

16 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 19 January 2021 be confirmed as a correct record.

17 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

18 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE

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

19 PRESENTATION ITEM - FOCUS ON LEISURE

The Chairman introduced Simon Fearn, Regional Contract Manager - Midlands Area and Kerry O'Neill, Contract Manager, from Everyone Active, and Damon Parkinson, Head of Operations & Business Development for the Gainsborough Trinity Foundation. She explained that the focus of the Committee was to understand leisure provision across the district, including outreach programmes and how the council may be able to support local efforts. She invited Everyone Active to address the Committee, to be followed by the Gainsborough Trinity Foundation, with a short question and answer session to follow both presentations.

The Committee were provided details of exactly how the pandemic had impacted on the leisure industry, not only with enforced closures through lockdown but also the requirement for social distancing and close monitoring of numbers allowed to attend the leisure centre. Activity had needed to be booked in advance and a specially designed app for smartphones had proved highly successful in streamlining this for users. Attendance data was provided, including a breakdown by age range, and whilst there was an obvious reduction in user numbers, they had seen increasing numbers of people booking swimming sessions once the leisure centre had been able to reopen later in 2020.

It was explained to Members that the West Lindsey contract provided community hubs for physical activity and health and wellbeing. They offered gyms, classes, swimming and sports hall activities, A variety of community programmes were run from the facilities and in the community. These included targeted programmes which focused on the most inactive, including those with long term health conditions or disabilities, older people, families on low incomes, obesity and care homes. There was also a comprehensive Exercise Referral and Cardiac Rehabilitation scheme in partnership with NHS and community hospital John Coupland.

In addition to this, the organisation worked with local organisations such as One you

Lincolnshire, Active Lincolnshire and Whittons Mill. The Vitality Group had a number of sessions based at West Lindsey including Parkinsons UK. Within the district there were community hubs at Scothern, Sudbrooke and Scotter with the aim of engaging with residents to understand what needed to change to encourage positive physical activities and the role the Leisure Centres could play.

Members were also given an overview of the Market Rasen Leisure Centre, which had been able to open briefly in between national lockdowns, alongside the proposed re-opening schedule of advertising and focus in the community.

The Chairman thanked both representatives from Everyone Active and invited the presentation from the Gainsborough Trinity Foundation.

The Committee heard that the Foundation was formed in 2016 and was now a registered charity. The charitable objectives were education, health and wellbeing, sport, community cohesion and supporting those living in poverty. In March 2020 the Foundation took over the full running of Roses Sports Ground which saw the completion of the new state of the art 3G facility. Since March 2020, they had made significant investment to update and upgrade the facilities at Roses to make the fit for purpose. They had also generated 30 new employment opportunities in a year where the area had seen significant job losses. Attendance figures had significantly increased, even during the pandemic, with a number of activities such as ladies rugby, walking football and disability football seeing the highest increase.

It was also explained to the Committee that the Foundation undertook several community based activities, such as providing meals to vulnerable people during the national lockdown, children's meals prepared and gifted during half term and 40,000 portions of breakfast cereals given away. In addition to this, they were also working with eight local schools to deliver sports activities and the Parish School had used the facility as an additional classroom during Covid. Members heard that they also delivered a range of family learning and health and wellbeing adult education courses and had introduced a programme for 16-19 year olds who saw sports as a career.

The Foundation was also the lead organisation of the Gainsborough Community Mental Health Network as part of the Mental Health Transformation in Lincolnshire and supported a wide range of Mental Health groups to develop and become more sustainable. Together, they were developing a set of volunteer standards to ensure all community organisations were working appropriately to ensure high standards of support for people in Gainsborough.

The Chairman thanked the Gainsborough Trinity Foundation for the presentation and opened the floor to Members for a short question and answer session.

In relation to the re-opening of leisure centres, Everyone Active were asked what plans were in place for a wider community outreach programme in order to engage with as many residents as possible. It was felt by Members that there should be an increased focus on improving access to leisure activities in the community as well as encouraging the traditional fitness avenues at the leisure centres. Simon Fearn explained that, given the impact of the pandemic, future recovery would rely on encouraging wider audiences to be involved and community outreach would be a key part of that. Given the numbers who had registered for bookable swimming sessions, as well as making use of the online fitness sessions, there were elements of current provision which would remain in place to appeal to a wider

audience. That was not to say that ‘in person’ sessions would be replaced, rather there would be greater opportunity to be involved in sessions that perhaps previously were not possible owing to schedules and personal commitments.

Members enquired as to the continuation of the app for booking swimming sessions and it was agreed that, not only did the limited numbers make for a more enjoyable session, but because the session was booked and paid for in advance, it added an element of commitment. Members were assured that the app would continue, with those who wished to ring to book still being able to. The improved quality of the booked sessions was acknowledged and there were elements of this that would remain.

A Member of the Committee commented on the social side of the work undertaken by the Gainsborough Trinity Foundation and praised them for their community-based ethos. It was acknowledged that there had been a concerted effort to improve accessibility for whole families, rather than just one member, hence the increased involvement in ladies and juniors rugby – it was no longer ‘just the dads’ getting involved.

It was acknowledged that both organisations had very different remits for their work, however the common factor was the focus on engaging with all areas of the communities and working to increase activity levels across the board. The benefits of an active and involved community were recognised by all presenters and whilst the Gainsborough Trinity Foundation had been able to continue operating (to a greater or less extent) through lockdown, the team at Everyone Active were focussed not solely on reopening after national lockdown but also on building community links and outreach programmes. Both organisations offered to return to the Committee at a future date to report how circumstances had changed once life was less restricted. The Chairman welcomed this.

On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman offered thanks to Simon, Kerry and Damon for their time and continued efforts.

20 COVID19 STAFF SURVEY

The Committee heard from the People and Organisational Development Manager with the results of the second staff survey regarding covid-19. She explained that although the response rate was slightly lower than in June, the second survey was well received, with an overall response rate of 61.4% or 132 responses (compared to 73.7% or 177 responses previously) and the vast majority of staff continued to feel well supported by their manager. She provided the following summary of results.

- Management Team were trusted to make decisions in the best interests of staff and staff felt that the right amount of information was being disseminated across the organisation.
- Staff overwhelmingly felt that the Council was doing everything it possibly could to support them, with initiatives such as the Steps Challenge cited as something that had been hugely beneficial to mental wellbeing and something which staff would like to see return.
- More staff were reporting adverse impacts on their mental health compared to June, with a higher number of people also worried about the impact of COVID-19 on their lives. .

- More staff reported feeling very or fairly satisfied with their working from home arrangement compared to June, though network connectivity and a lack of physical workspace remained a persistent issue for some.
- A higher percentage of staff had settled into a regular working routine and were working more productively compared to June.
- Childcare and caring responsibilities appeared much less of an issue than in June, though concerns remained about school closures and the impact this would have on working from home.
- Limiting hotdesking, the availability of a vaccine, staggering start and finish times and improved cleaning regimes would all make staff feel more comfortable about returning to the office.
- Fewer people wanted to see a return to the office with more respondents preferring to work from home with scheduled office time compared to June.
- An increase in people's workload and feeling under pressure as a result had emerged as a new issue with this being the single biggest work related concern that staff had.
- Social isolation and missing social interaction in the office remained the biggest reasons why staff were missing the office environment.
- Conversely, noise and distraction remained the single biggest thing that staff were not missing about working in the office.
- More staff reported enjoying the flexibility and work/life balance that working from home brought compared to June.

The Chairman thanked the People and Organisational Development Manager and invited any questions or comments from Committee Members. There was widespread support for the efforts of staff to have continued providing services as usual through what had been, and continued to be, challenging times. It was acknowledged that working practices were unlikely to return to what had been 'the norm' before the pandemic.

Members expressed concern that staff were feeling more pressure than previously but there was also support for the measures put in place by management. It was stated that Members had received positive feedback and appreciation from their local communities and it was important that staff knew people were appreciative of their work. It was acknowledged that, as the country came out of lockdown and restrictions were eased, it would be a continually changing situation but Members were assured that Management Team would ensure the balance between service need and individual impact.

Thanks were expressed to the People and Organisational Development Manager with further thanks extended to staff.

With no further comments, the contents of the report were **NOTED**.

21 FORWARD PLAN

The contents of the Forward Plan were **NOTED**.

22 COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

The Democratic and Civic Officer introduced the workplan for the Committee. The Chairman

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explained there was significant ongoing work in relation to the Flood Risk Working Group and as such it would be beneficial for the related report to Committee, as well as the presentation from the Environment Agency, to be postponed.

With no further comment, the Committee Workplan was **NOTED**.

The meeting concluded at 8.23 pm.

Chairman