

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held in the Council Chamber - The Guildhall on 19 October 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 Mrs Caralyne Grimble
Councillor Mrs Angela Lawrence
Councillor Keith Panter
Councillor Roger Patterson

Also Present: Councillor Trevor Young

In Attendance:

Inspector Gary Brockie	Lincolnshire Police
Nova Roberts	Assistant Director of Change Management & Regulatory Services
Darren Mellors	Performance & Programme Manager
Ele Snow	Democratic and Civic Officer

Apologies: Councillor Cherie Hill

16 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 21 September 2021 be confirmed and signed 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

There were no outstanding matters arising.

A Member of the Committee enquired as to additional information following the fly-tipping presentation and it was explained this would be included in the future report.

19 PRESENTATION ITEM

The Chairman welcomed Inspector Gary Brockie to the meeting, explaining that it was the responsibility of the Committee to engage with Lincolnshire Police under Section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006 (Local Authority scrutiny of crime and disorder matters) and there was a long history of welcoming a number of Officers over the years to understand and support their work.

Inspector Brockie thanked the Committee for the invitation and explained that, having arrived in post in September 2020, during the pandemic, it had not been easy to get out and about to introduce himself. He welcomed the opportunity to now meet with the Committee as well as having already had meetings with some Members regarding specific issues. Members heard details of how the pandemic had impacted on the work of the police, for example with staff being advised to shield by the NHS, the introduction of home working and using online options more than had previously been the case. He explained that it had provided the opportunity to review standard practices and to change and adapt as circumstances changed, however, stations had remained open throughout and there was now a greater return to face-to-face working.

Note: Councillor C. Grimble arrived at 6.35pm

Inspector Brockie provided Members with the staffing numbers across West Lindsey and explained how the district was split into areas, with Officers and PCSOs working out of each area. Response staff were based in Gainsborough and Market Rasen, with these Officers being those who would be responding to 999 calls. In addition, they were supported by the CID staff at Gainsborough as well as the specialist resources based at the headquarters in Nettleham.

Members heard that, in relation to the national uplift of 20,000 new Officers, there were 100 extra Police Officers projected to join Lincolnshire Police. This would lead to a number of positive changes, such as a new dedicated roads policing unit. He explained that there had not been a standalone unit for some time and not only would it open up opportunities for focussing on some of the known hot spots in the area, but it would also free up other resources to focus attention on other areas of need. There would also be a rural crime action team, the details of which were yet to be confirmed however, it was anticipated that this would reap positive results.

With regard to Neighbourhood Policing, there would be an uplift of 12 Officers across the Force, with one being located in Gainsborough. Numbers had been worked out centrally, with new Officers arriving in two tranches. It had been confirmed that Gainsborough would see their new Officer as part of the first tranche. With Response Policing being the largest department, they would see the most significant uplift, although numbers had not yet been confirmed.

Inspector Brockie explained to the Committee that the current focus for his team was supporting Community Gains, working with residents to identify the issues in their communities and support the projects they choose to make a difference. The first event had been held in September and the focus now was to spread the word across the area. He explained that where residents may be reluctant to approach the Police directly with their concerns, there were volunteers involved in the project who could be the voice-pieces for

their areas. There would be ongoing work to support this initiative with more events planned for the future. In addition to supporting Community Gains, there had also been renewed focus on working in partnership with other agencies, such as the Council, in order to identify where there were opportunities for addressing recurrent issues.

The Committee heard that the current priorities across the district were:

- Rural crime – with cross-district working using pooled resources and intelligence, rather than one area simply pushing the problem into neighbouring areas.
- The ‘Fatal Four’ – drink driving, using mobile phones, wearing seatbelts and speed. The majority of road traffic accidents were caused by one or more of these and so it was important to maintain focus on the key messages.
- Youth-related Anti-Social Behaviour – this was direct from community feedback and differed across the district. The focus was district-wide but the response would be according to the issues of the specific area. It was also noted that some reports were not ASB but actually a lowered tolerance to groups and noise, following the lockdowns throughout the pandemic.

There was also ongoing work for the re-establishment of the ‘Mini Police’ post-lockdowns, with it being re-introduced to schools across the county and PCSOs having received specialist training. It had proven a successful scheme in the past and the re-introduction was a positive step as we come out of the impact of the pandemic.

The Chairman thanked Inspector Brockie for a detailed and informative presentation and welcomed questions from Members.

There were multiple concerns raised regarding speeding throughout the district, especially on the country roads between villages. Inspector Brockie confirmed they undertook speed checks, in both marked and unmarked vehicles, as well as conducting other checks such as valid MOTs, insurance, and these vehicles and drivers were dealt with accordingly. In response to comments regarding speed limits and accident hotspots, it was explained that they were under the control of the County Council and whilst the police may feed into the Road Safety Partnership, for example highlighting hotspots, they had no power to influence speed limits. The Chairman enquired on behalf of a Speedwatch Community Group Supervisor whether there were any plans across Lincolnshire to bring the Speedwatch groups together, as happened in other areas of the country, in order to provide feedback to them. Inspector Brockie explained he was not aware of that situation and would undertake to find out more information.

There were questions from the Committee regarding online crime and rural crime, with Inspector Brockie explaining there were committed teams to investigating online scams, with messages shared as much as possible for victims to report such incidents to the police. In relation to rural crime, every reported incident was reviewed by Inspector Brockie on a daily basis but once the dedicated team was in place, it was expected the reporting and investigating of rural crime would be fed through them, although the details of the arrangement were yet to be confirmed.

There was significant discussion regarding drug use in the district, specifically issues encountered in certain areas of Gainsborough. Inspector Brockie reassured Members that he and his team were committed to addressing such issues however, they could not act

without the evidence to do so. There was an element of normalisation to such problems and so people did not choose to report incidents to the police. Inspector Brockie gave the example of requiring a warrant to undertake a house search, stating that the warrant would not be granted by a magistrate without sufficient evidence. That evidence came from members of the public reporting information to the police. He recognised that people did not always wish to do this, and highlighted the use of Crimestoppers as a way of anonymously reporting crime. Visiting Member Councillor T. Young expressed his concerns regarding the different information provided to him compared to the statistics reported by the police and it was again emphasised that residents needed to report their issues to the police in order for them to be addressed. This was recognised and Members also suggested that the Crimestoppers number be widely circulated for those who did not wish to contact the police directly.

A Member of the Committee enquired as to whether there was any guidance provided by the police for individuals or businesses in relation to personal safety, particularly in light of recent high profile incidents. It was recognised that there needed to be wider national debate however, it was the responsibility of businesses to ensure their staff were provided with, for example, lone worker guidance or personal safety equipment. There were comments from Members regarding the situation in Lincolnshire with streetlights being switched off and the impact this had on personal safety. Inspector Brockie explained he did not have any feedback to hand as to whether there were still recurrent issues raised through the police, but specific concerns could be taken to Lincolnshire County Council as they were responsible for the initiative. A Member of the Committee suggested the use of the website 'fix my street' to report lights that were off.

The Chairman thanked Inspector Brockie and voiced support for the Community Gains event, hoping it would be repeated and more widely publicised. She invited him to return to the Committee in future with an update on the new initiatives, it was agreed for this to be arranged with the Democratic and Civic Officer.

Note: The Committee adjourned at 7.32pm for Inspector Brockie to leave and reconvened at 7.37pm

20 REQUEST TO CONVENE A PROGRESS AND DELIVERY MEMBER WORKING GROUP

The Committee heard from the Performance and Programmes Team Manager, seeking approval for a time limited, cross-party Progress and Delivery Member Working Group as part of the process for setting the Council's Progress and Delivery measures and targets for 2022-23. It was explained that this had last been undertaken in 2019 and the purpose of the Member Working Group was to review all of the Council's proposed key performance indicators and corresponding targets; ensuring they reflected a balanced scorecard approach, were stretch based to reflect the Council's ambitions and enabled a transparent view of performance across the Council's service areas.

It was suggested that a group membership of five Councillors was preferable, with volunteers being sought from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee initially. Four Members volunteered to be involved, those being Councillors A. Lawrence, A. White, D. Rodgers and K. Panter.

The Chairman thanked those Members and, having been moved and seconded it was

RESOLVED that a time-limited, cross party Member Working Group, as part of the process for setting the Council's Progress and Delivery measures and targets for 2022-23, be commissioned.

21 FORWARD PLAN

A Member of the Committee enquired as to the details of the report regarding free parking for Christmas Markets, it was confirmed this information would be shared with him. With no further comments, the contents of the Forward Plan were **NOTED**.

22 COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

With no comments from Members, the work plan was **DULY NOTED**.

The meeting concluded at 7.45 pm.

Chairman