

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held in the Council Chamber - The Guildhall on 22 February 2022 commencing at 6.30 pm.

Present:

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
Councillor Stephen Bunney

Also Present:

Councillor Ian Fleetwood
Councillor Trevor Young

In Attendance:

Nova Roberts Assistant Director of Change Management & Regulatory Services
Ady Selby Assistant Director of Commercial and Operational Services
Ele Snow Senior Democratic and Civic Officer

Apologies:

Councillor Mrs Lesley Rollings
Councillor Cherie Hill

Membership:

Councillor Stephen Bunney sat as substitute for Councillor Mrs Lesley Rollings for this meeting.

30 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 23 November 2021 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

31 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

32 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE

There were no outstanding matters arising from previous meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

33 MANAGING FLOOD RISK IN WEST LINDSEY

Councillor Mrs A White, in the Chair, highlighted the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Flood Risk Management Working Group, explaining that whilst there had been delays through the pandemic, there had been significant work undertaken by Officer and Members, and she extended her thanks to all.

The Committee then heard from the Assistant Director of Commercial and Operational Services regarding the proposal to develop the council's working arrangements to align strategic planning, development management and the operational response to the management of flood risk. It was explained that national statistics indicated one in six properties in England were at risk of flooding from rivers, sea and surface water, with many others susceptible to various sources of flooding. This number was only set to increase due to climate change, increasing the need and urgency for Councils and other Flood Risk Management bodies to put in place proportionate arrangements to deal with the increasing demand.

Members heard that this report would set out the current work being undertaken and propose a more formal method of providing officers and Members with adequate oversight of the current and future risk. This new method would bring together the current work, both operational and strategic, into one formal area. It was proposed that a new officer-led Flood Group would be formed and report to Management Team, similar to other working group arrangements. Feeding into the group would be a strategic Member Working Group comprising of Members who represented the authority on external flood-related bodies. Ultimately, reassurance in this area would be provided to the wider Member cohort through a twice-yearly report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The report outlined how officer and Member attendance at external forums would not only ensure the Council fulfilled its legislative duty, but also achieve a flow of consistent and credible information onwards to the Flood Group. It also acknowledged the need to communicate the Council's strategies and preparedness to residents in order to support them to adequately protect their properties.

It was noted that the proposed Flood Group was not a reactive body. Existing arrangements for minor and major flooding incidents, alongside other partners via the Lincolnshire Resilience Forum were deemed adequate. If approved, the recommendations would help further prepare and protect residents against the short- and long-term risks from surface water and fluvial flooding.

In welcoming questions and comments from the Committee, there was further support for the work undertaken in recent times in relation to supporting those who had been flooded and were at risk of future flooding. The importance of involving Members with such work, as well as liaising with Town and Parish Councils, was emphasised, as was the need to document 'near-misses', as this could help inform where future risks may lie. It was noted that the efforts of homeowners to protect their properties, whilst perhaps experiencing flooded gardens or 'non-residential' space such as garages, were often overlooked and they did not receive the support they needed to avoid future flooding.

This was recognised by the Assistant Director, with him commenting that the prevention work would be a key element of the proposals with the need to use local influences to

document and influence the investigation process.

Several Members of the Committee explained their own experiences of flooding within the district, either for themselves personally or in supporting residents who had been flooded. The need to work with all agencies, as well as the local councils and residents was again emphasised. Vice-Chairman Councillor Mrs Rodgers notified the Committee of a government website that provided information regarding current flood risks and who to alert in a flooding situation. This website would be shared with Members for their information.

The two Visiting Members were invited to join discussions, with support for the work expressed as well as highlighting the need to report incidents such as flooding of an internal utility area, with it being explained that if residents did not report such incidents, the agencies such as Environment Agency and Lincolnshire County Council were not working with accurate data. This was supported by the Assistant Director. It was also noted that, despite significant efforts by Elected Members, local residents and Parish Councils, recurring areas of flooding had not yet been addressed by those agencies who held responsibility. The Assistant Director recognised the frustrations that had been expressed in several forums and explained that the proposals would be emphasising the need to work with such agencies and influence their priorities across the district.

In relation to the proposed Member Working Group, it was suggested that, whilst there would need to be a core membership, it would be beneficial to invite involvement from all and any Member who was representing areas at risk of, or experiencing, flooding on a regular basis. It was also noted that there would be work being undertaken that focused on prevention, rather than simply focusing on response to incidents of flooding.

The Committee thanked all those involved in the work to date and the presentation of the report and, having been proposed and seconded, it was

RESOLVED that

- a) the establishment of an officer-led Flood Group and also a Members Flooding Working Group be **recommended** to the Prosperous Communities Committee; and
- b) the composition of the Member Flood Risk Working Group be agreed by the Chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny and Prosperous Communities Committees, in consultation with the Assistant Director for Commercial and Operational Services, subject to the approval of such a group by the Prosperous Communities Committee; and
- c) the Overview and Scrutiny Committee receive a twice-yearly report from the Flood Group regarding flood events, current flood risk and ongoing work in this area, subject to the approval by the Prosperous Communities Committee.

34 FORWARD PLAN

The content of the full Forward Plan for all Committees was **NOTED**.

35 COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

The content of the Committee Workplan was **NOTED**.

36 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED that under Section 100 (A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

37 EXEMPT REPORT: DISCUSSION ITEM - LEISURE PROVISION

In anticipation of the presentation item at their meeting on 29 March 2022, Members of the Committee discussed areas of interest and concern in relation to leisure provision and sports development across the district. Following the presentations received by the Committee previously, it had been highlighted that it was important to engage with communities outside of the leisure centre environment and Members had previously been assured that outreach work had always been a focus, however the pandemic had delayed efforts. Members had previously heard the plan for initiating and continuing this outreach work and so the Committee suggested that this be a focus of the presentation.

Discussions also turned to experiences described to Councillors by individuals, in relation to use of the leisure centres and access to services, either in the community or on site in Gainsborough or Market Rasen.

A Member of the Committee noted the progress and delivery figures had been reported to the Prosperous Communities Committee and the focus on outreach work had also been discussed in that forum.

A Visiting Member suggested that, with major sporting events on the horizon, there was great opportunity to capture the excitement such events generated and use it to enhance engagement within local communities and, in particular, school aged children.

Further to this comment, it was suggested that a breakdown could be provided as to what services were offered for differing demographics, as well as a request for user data to be grouped by age range if possible.

The Democratic Services Officer undertook to share the areas of discussion with the attending guests in advance of the meeting in March, with the understanding that additional questions could be raised on the evening based on the information provided at that time.

The meeting concluded at 7.32 pm.

Chairman