

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Prosperous Communities Committee held in the Council Chamber - The Guildhall, Marshall's Yard, Gainsborough, DN21 2NA on 19 March 2024 commencing at 6.30 pm.

Present: Councillor Mrs Lesley Rollings (Chairman)
Councillor Emma Bailey (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Trevor Young (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Owen Bierley
Councillor Frazer Brown
Councillor Stephen Bunney
Councillor Karen Carless
Councillor Jacob Flear
Councillor Paul Lee
Councillor Roger Patterson

Also Present: Councillor Paul Key

In Attendance:
Sally Grindrod-Smith Director Planning, Regeneration & Communities
Ady Selby Director - Operational & Commercial Services
Grant White Communities Manager
Andy Gray Housing & Environmental Enforcement Manager
Ele Snow Senior Democratic and Civic Officer
Maisie McInnes Democratic and Civic Officer

Apologies: Councillor Mrs Diana Rodgers

70 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

71 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Prosperous Communities Committee held on 30 January 2024 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

72 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor E. Bailey declared a pecuniary interest in agenda item 6f, Private Rented Sector Commitment, and would leave the meeting for the item.

73 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE

With no comments, questions or requirement for a vote, the Matters Arising Schedule setting out the current position of previously agreed actions, as at 22 January 2024, was **DULY NOTED**.

74 RECOMMENDATION FROM OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: CULTURAL STRATEGY

The Senior Democratic Services Officer summarised that the Overview and Scrutiny had requested an update on the progress of the Cultural Strategy and received a presentation from the Director of Planning, Regeneration and Communities at their meeting on 20 February 2024. She highlighted the recommendations in the report from Overview and Scrutiny and invited Members to ask any questions.

The Chairman explained the context surrounding work on the Cultural Strategy and that Members were keen for grassroots work to be in place in the district before setting the strategy. There had been a significant amount of work undertaken to improve the cultural offerings in the district, by building connections and partnerships in communities, and it was highlighted that the recruitment of cultural development officers to embed and continue the work in the district was important. The next steps would be to update the Cultural Strategy to reflect Member feedback, with a final review by the Leisure, Culture, Events and Tourism Group (LCET). The Overview and Scrutiny Committee was recommending for the Cultural Strategy to be re-included on the work plan for the Prosperous Communities Committee and for the Terms of Reference for LCET to be reviewed.

Members expressed the importance of continuing the Cultural Strategy work and enquired whether there was a timeframe for the next steps work that had been identified. The Director of Planning, Regeneration and Communities shared that an update would be brought to the next meeting, subject to approval by the Committee.

Having been proposed and seconded, the Chairman took the vote, and it was unanimously

RESOLVED that

- a) the Cultural Strategy be included on the Prosperous Communities work plan for a future meeting; and
- b) the terms of reference for the Leisure, Culture, Events and Tourism Member Working Group be reviewed for approval by the Prosperous Communities Committee.

75 ECONOMIC GROWTH STRATEGY TASK AND FINISH GROUP

The Director of Planning, Regeneration and Communities presented the proposal for an Economic Growth Strategy task and finish group (EGSTFG) which would give Members oversight of the development of the strategy. This would promote a collaborative approach to developing the Economic Growth Strategy, which would replace the Council's Economic

Recovery plan 2021-24 following the Covid-19 pandemic. The report emphasised the collaborative nature of the task and finish group and set out the opportunities for Members to provide input to shape the future strategy and review concepts such as the audience, design, language, and style of the document. Members were asked to consider the proposed terms of reference contained in the report, and five Members were required to form the membership for the EGSTFG. The Director of Planning, Regeneration and Communities explained that the draft Economic Growth Strategy would be brought to the Prosperous Communities Committee for consideration and approval, and once adopted the task and finish group would be concluded, with any future updates to be brought to the Committee.

The Chair thanked the Director of Planning, Regeneration and Communities for her report and invited Members to ask questions. Members were pleased to receive the report and were keen to be a part of the development of the Economic Growth Strategy. It was felt that the strategy was vitally important for West Lindsey and it was asked if the nature of work was business as usual. The Director of Planning, Regeneration and Communities shared that there were some complexities with the changing economic environment and devolution, but the strategy would be as part of business as usual and would create a vision for economic growth to give the Council the tools to shape the future.

During the course of the debate, three names were put forward for inclusion in the group, those being Councillor S. Bunney, Councillor L. Rollings and Councillor T. Young. It was agreed that the further two names be provided after the meeting.

Having been moved and seconded, and on reiterating thanks to all involved, the Chairman took the vote, and it was unanimously

RESOLVED that

- a) the Economic Growth Strategy Task and Finish Group be established to support the collaborative development of the new economic growth strategy; and
- b) the draft Terms of Reference (and shown in appendix 1 of the report) for the Task and Finish Group, including the appointment of members to the EGSTFG, be adopted; and
- c) the membership of the Economic Growth Strategy Task and Finish Group, comprising of cross party and cross district representation, be formed including Councillors Bunney, Rollings and Young, with a further two Councillors to be named after the meeting.

76 RESPONSE TO MOTION AT COUNCIL RE: REVIEW OF SIDE WASTE POLICY

The Chairman introduced Visiting Member Councillor P. Key and invited him to present the motion to the Prosperous Communities Committee, as he had initially done so at the meeting of Full Council. Councillor Key presented his motion and requested to speak again at the end of the discussion.

The Director of Commercial and Operational Services explained the motion was received by Council on 6 November 2023 and officers had been commissioned to review the side waste policy. It was explained that the nature of motion was regarding placing an additional burden on carbon emissions due to street cleansing teams returning to properties to collect side waste left by refuse crews, as was the current policy of not collecting side waste. It was clarified that waste policies were reviewed and presented to Members every two years, with the next agenda item for the Committee being that next review.

The Committee heard details of the current process for incidents of side waste, with crews recording instances using mobile devices and how the information was shared across customer services as well, in order to be able to identify missed collections or issues with side waste. Should an occasion arise where crews had not made a report of side waste, or there was a legitimate reason for presentation of the side waste, the nearest available resource was sent to pick it up. This would sometimes be street cleansing crews. It was highlighted that this approach reduced the carbon impact, rather than increasing it, and an average of 25 reports of side waste were received across the district each week so did not present as an issue.

The Committee further heard that any move towards an unconstrained side waste policy would lead to more waste generation at the kerbside and put a strain on collection and disposal resources. Using previous data as a guide, it was estimated that any proposal to revert back to allowing uncontrolled waste presentation would result in a minimum of one extra collection round, leading to significant financial costs, and even greater environmental costs. It was highlighted that current policy aligned with all other Lincolnshire authorities, promoted the waste hierarchy and specifically waste minimisation, with the recommendation being to retain the policy in its current form.

During the course of debate, Members of the Committee expressed their support for the work of the operational staff, however there were differing views as to how the matter of side waste could be addressed, with some Members suggesting side waste be collected. It was highlighted there were alternative options for residents, such as the new 'Big Bin Clear Out' scheme, which had recently been approved by Members. There were additional concerns raised, for example the health and safety of crew members, as well as the environmental impact.

Members enquired whether there was any scope for a pilot scheme to be undertaken to start collecting side waste. It was explained that this approach would be contrary to the strategic direction of waste management in Lincolnshire. Members were advised that any such scheme would need to be presented separately for Committee approval, taking all factors into consideration such as staff implications, financial implications, and environmental issues, as well as looking at the terms of the pilot, such as where it would run, and for how long.

On this basis, an additional recommendation was proposed. That being: that further investigations be undertaken into all implications associated with options to run a pilot of collecting side waste, and that be returned to this committee for consideration.

The proposed additional recommendation was seconded. On preparing to vote whether to add the additional recommendation to the list of decisions required, a Member of the Committee proposed a recorded vote, this was duly seconded.

The votes were cast as follows:

For: Councillors E. Bailey, S. Bunney, K. Carless, J. Flear, L. Rollings and T. Young (6)

Against: Councillors O. Bierley, F. Brown, P. Lee and R. Patterson (4)

Abstain: No Votes (0)

With a total of 6 votes for, and 4 against, the amendment of an additional recommendation was declared **CARRIED**.

The Chairman summarised the debate and invited Councillor Key to make any further comment. He thanked the Committee for their discussions and encouraged them to read a number of documents in relation to the waste services processes.

The Chairman then led the vote on the recommendations contained within the report and the additional recommendation. It was

RESOLVED that

- a) the motion as presented to Council on 6 November 2023 be accepted; and
- b) the adoption of the side waste policy as outlined at paragraph 1.3 of the report and in the refreshed Waste Policies Document (to be presented as the next item on the agenda) be approved; and
- c) further investigations be undertaken into all implications associated with options to run a pilot of collecting side waste and that be returned to the Prosperous Communities Committee for consideration.

77 WASTE SERVICES POLICIES REVIEW

The Director of Commercial and Operational Services presented a report detailing the amendments to the waste services policies, and explained that waste services were regularly reviewed in line with legislation, to ensure the Council continued to operate effectively and to minimise residual waste and fuel use. The policies had been revised with amendments highlighted in the report to make the detail more accessible to read, and changes had been communicated to customer services and crew colleagues to inform residents.

Members discussed the report and felt it was user friendly and easy to read, and highlighted that it was important to continually review policies. Members asked whether a shortened version could be produced by the communications team and distributed to residents. The Director of Commercial and Operational Services shared that residents did receive a calendar of waste collection dates annually which highlighted key messages on the topic of recycling.

The Director of Commercial and Operational Services explained that if the policies were to

be approved and any future changes made to the waste service, as discussed earlier in the meeting, amendments would be made and brought to the Committee.

Having been proposed and seconded, the Chairman took the vote and it was unanimously

RESOLVED that the new Waste Services Policies, including the changes and additions highlighted in Table 1 of the report, be approved, and amendments, if so required subject to previous decisions, be received by the Prosperous Communities Committee.

78 VOLUNTARY & COMMUNITY SECTOR FUNDING 2024/25

The Communities Manager presented the report on Voluntary and Community Sector Funding 2024/25 and commended the excellent work that the voluntary organisations provided to the district. He explained the financial information was contained within the report and the appendix detailed the summary of activities provided. The Council would be broadly reviewing the voluntary sector funding by December 2024 to take stock of the list of organisations and to assess the support the Council could provide for these. The Community Grants Panel would be used as a forum for the review, to give Members opportunity to look at the Council's current priorities being funded and to inform future funding.

Members expressed concerns relating to national financial challenges and the lack of government funding. Members asked that the review be communicated to voluntary sector organisations, and requested if there were any changes in funding that three months' notice be provided. Members praised the work of the voluntary sector and urged officers to consider the social value and health benefits of these organisations which saved the council money in the longer-term due to the health and wellbeing benefits gained by residents accessing services.

The Communities Manager explained that the Council had already notified organisations regarding the report and future review coming to committee, as open conversations were required for the review as well as interviews and visits for information gathering. The review would encompass value for money as well as community, health and social factors, and give the Council opportunity to engage with these organisations and record the work they were doing. In terms of the three months' notice, the Communities Manager confirmed they were working in line with the LGA's principles of best practice and were conscious to give as much notice as possible around any changes. A letter would also be sent to voluntary sector organisations following the committee meeting and any decision made by Members.

Having been moved and seconded, the Chairman took the vote, and it was unanimously

RESOLVED that

- a) the Voluntary and Community Sector core funding grants for 2024/25 be approved as follows:
 - Call Connect (LCC) - £30,000
 - Citizens Advice Lincoln & Lindsey - £60,200
 - Gainsborough Adventure Playground Association - £15,000

- Lincoln Area Dial-a-Ride - £13,000
- Live and Local - £3,500
- The Conservation Volunteers - £30,000
- Voluntary Centre Services - £25,000
- West Lindsey Churches Festival - £8,000

TOTAL: £184,700

- b) the Council undertake a review of Voluntary and Community Sector core funding as set out in Section 6 of the report and present a report to the Prosperous Communities Committee by December 2024.

79 PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR COMMITMENT

Note: Councillor Bailey left the meeting at this juncture.

The Housing and Environmental Enforcement Manager introduced the report which set out the Council's commitment to make improvements to the Private Rented Sector (PRS) and detailed proposals for 2024-26. Members agreed at their meeting in September 2023 that a policy should be developed, and clear working objectives should be set to deliver improvements and promote better communication between the Council, tenants, and landlords. Following this, officers had developed the policy, Chairs and Vice Chairs were consulted, and a meeting had taken place to update Members on the progress of the development of the policy.

It was explained that section 4 of the report highlighted the financial information, and the Housing and Environmental Enforcement Manager suggested that the £19.1k in enforcement reserves and £35k from the revenue budget be utilised to fund the work as detailed in the table. The Council's commitment at Appendix 1 of the report outlined the various areas of work, such as enforcement and standards, and tenancy support. As part of the government's regulatory reform work in Private Sector Housing, the Council had been invited to take part in the Healthy Homes project pilot, which would gather data on damp and mould within the PRS. The Housing and Environmental Enforcement Manager explained that 90 councils were selected to participate in the project, with responses required by 29 March 2024.

During the course of the debate, Members expressed their support of the Council participating in the Healthy Homes project and it was felt that West Lindsey had a unique challenge as a rural authority and sparsely populated district. The deterioration of health and wellbeing was stressed as a significant side effect of living with damp and mould, and Members expressed concern for residents in the district who lived further away from medical services.

It was asked whether the training programme could be delivered inhouse, in response to which the Housing and Environmental Enforcement Manager explained that the training was specialist, and recommended by the LGA, and would enable the Council to receive external expertise on how to provide advice to landlords. Members suggested an accreditation scheme for landlords as an incentive for them to join and encourage communication with the Council.

The Private Rented Sector work was praised, and the issue of damp and mould was recognised as a national housing problem affecting residents.

Having been moved and seconded, the Chairman took the vote en bloc and it was unanimously

RESOLVED that

- a) the Private Rented Sector Commitment as shown in appendix 1 be approved; and
- b) the Private Rented Sector Commitment be scheduled for review at the Prosperous Communities Committee in 24 months; and
- c) the £35k made available to Prosperous Communities Committee for selective licensing work, as agreed at Corporate Policy and Resources Committee on 11 November 2021, be made available to support the work within the Private Rented Sector Commitment; and any balance remaining at year end 2023/2024 be carried forward into 2024/2025; and
- d) the Council engage in the Healthy Homes Project with DLUHC; and
- e) an urgent item be taken to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee on 21 March 2024 to approve that the Council commits to seeking the required grant funding.

80 WORKPLAN

With no questions or comments, the work plan was **DULY NOTED**.

The meeting concluded at 8.20 pm.

Chairman