

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Regulatory Committee held in the Council Chamber - The Guildhall, Marshall's Yard, Gainsborough, DN21 2NA on 7 December 2023 commencing at 6.30 pm.

Present: Councillor Jim Snee (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs Mandy Snee (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor John Barrett
Councillor Eve Bennett
Councillor Trevor Bridgwood
Councillor Karen Carless
Councillor Liz Clews
Councillor David Dobbie
Councillor Mrs Angela Lawrence
Councillor Paul Lee
Councillor Maureen Palmer

In Attendance:
Andy Gray Housing & Environmental Enforcement Manager
Andrew Warnes Democratic and Civic Officer

14 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PERIOD

There was no public participation.

15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

16 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Regulatory Committee held on Thursday, 14 September 2023 be confirmed and signed as an accurate record.

17 HEMSWELL CLIFF PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDER REVIEW

Members considered an update on the Hemswell Cliff Public Space Protection Order and a request for a consultation on extending the Order. The current Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) was due to expire in June 2024, and officers detailed that there was a strong justification for its extension. This paper set out the process the Council intended to undertake to review the PSPO and determine its future.

Members heard that the impact of the issues experienced at Hemswell Cliff had been well documented, and it was still an area of the district which the Council classified as a vulnerable community. The Council had also invested in CCTV to assist with the overall management of the designated area.

The report proposed that the existing PSPO be extended for an additional three years and sought approval for consultation to be undertaken with the community to inform this extension. The report included a copy of the notice and a list of the frequently asked questions which was to be distributed in the communication plan for the consultation.

Members of the Committee were invited to comment, and debate ensued. Members enquired about other PSPOs in the district that had not been renewed, such as the Trinity Arts Centre PSPO and the Cemetery PSPO. The Housing and Environmental Enforcement Manager explained that the decision to end those specific PSPOs had been made by the Regulatory Committee, based on the information presented at the time. He highlighted the different processes required for either the conclusion of a PSPO or an extension, with the latter requiring public consultation prior to a final decision being made by the Committee.

In a follow-up statement on a related comment about the process, the Housing and Environment Enforcement Manager explained the commencement of PSPOs was evidence based, such as submitted reports from Members, organisations, and the public. Members were invited to report any concerns and issues, as there was the opportunity for reports to be brought to the Regulatory Committee for Members to determine the way forward.

Having been proposed and seconded, on taking the vote, it was unanimously

RESOLVED that:-

- a) the proposal to consult upon the extension of the Hemswell Cliff Public Space Protection Order be approved; and
- b) the consultation to take place between 3 January 2024 and 4 February 2024 be approved; and
- c) the results of the consultation and a final proposal for the PSPO be brought back to Regulatory Committee on 14 March 2024.

18 FOOD, HEALTH AND SAFETY WORK PLAN - MID YEAR UPDATE

Members considered the Food, Health and Safety Work Plan 2023/24 Mid Year Update. It was highlighted that at its meeting in June 2023, the Regulatory Committee resolved that an update on the performance against the Food Standards Agency inspection regime be submitted to the Committee in December 2023, so the Committee was assured of what progress had been made. The original committee paper was provided as a background paper.

It was explained that as of the end of September 2023, 111 planned inspections had been undertaken, totalling 49% of the overall 228. In addition, a further 27 unplanned inspections

had been launched, resulting in a total of 138 inspections overall. Members heard a further update, in that this figure had since increased, with 67% of the overall planned inspections having been conducted by the end of November 2023. The Officer also updated Members on staffing changes within the team, with another experienced inspector due to start in February 2024.

Members learned of the risk in 2024/25, with between 418 and 437 inspections due. These figures were based on the routine planned inspections, 25 to 30% of additional unplanned inspections and the estimated shortfall from 2023/24. This was an increase from 2023/24 and would present a significant challenge in terms of the council's ability to achieve those levels within the current staff resources. Additional temporary resources would be required, with recruitment-focussed work due to be undertaken.

Members of the Committee were invited to comment, and debate ensued. Members enquired as to current staffing practice and the inspectors' operational work. It was noted that arrangements to use staff from nearby local authorities were possible, and coastal-based authorities had contracts for high-traffic points of the year. Members learned the challenge was to meet 90% of the target visits, and there was a significant challenge in the recruitment from a small pool of qualified individuals.

There was discussion regarding the use of agency staff, with the importance of business continuity emphasised. Members heard that it was common for Local Authorities to use agency staff in this way to maintain service provision and whilst there was a limited pool of suitable workers, there had been no issue in securing agency staff when needed. In response to a question about the certification needed for employees of premises under inspection, Members learned the checks formed part of the inspector's work.

Having been proposed and seconded, upon taking the vote, it was unanimously

RESOLVED that: -

- a) the report, as requested by Committee at their meeting on 15 June 2023 to update on current progress against the food, health and safety work plan 2023/24 be received; and
- b) further updates to the Chair and Vice Chair of Committee at Chairs Brief for the remainder of 23/24 be agreed.

19 WORKPLAN

With no comments or questions, the Workplan as set out in the report was **NOTED**.

The meeting concluded at 6.59 pm.

Chairman