

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held in the Council Chamber - The Guildhall on 7 November 2023 commencing at 6.30 pm.

Present: Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan (Chairman)
Councillor Jacob Flear (Vice-Chairman) and Councillor Jeanette McGhee (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Trevor Bridgwood
Councillor Liz Clews
Councillor Paul Key
Councillor Lynda Mullally
Councillor Maureen Palmer
Councillor Roger Pilgrim
Councillor Moira Westley

Also Present: Councillor Stephen Bunney
Councillor Mrs Lesley Rollings
Councillor Trevor Young

In Attendance:
Inspector Michael Head Lincolnshire Police
Ady Selby Director - Operational & Commercial Services
Katie Storr Democratic Services & Elections Team Manager

Apologies: Councillor Mrs Diana Rodgers

16 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday 3 October 2023 be approved and signed as a correct record.

17 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

18 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE

With no comments or questions, the Matters Arising Schedule was **DULY NOTED**.

19 PRESENTATION ITEM: LINCOLNSHIRE POLICE

The Chairman welcomed Inspector Michael Head of Lincolnshire Police who gave a presentation to the Committee regarding crime, disorder and the role of Community Policing across West Lindsey.

Inspector Head explained his background and advised that his first year in the job had been challenging due to staffing issues, a force wide restructure, difficulties at Scampton, as well as adjusting to the role in general.

The Neighbourhood Policing Remodel was explained and it was highlighted that an evidence based policing approach was taken to ensure best allocation of resources. This included a reduction in the number of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs), with retained PCSOs being allocated to high harm areas, working closely with partners to reduce Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and community based problem solving.

It was advised that the district was split into nine separate beat codes each of which had their own Neighbourhood Policing Team and priorities. Details of the geography of each area was then outlined together with the staffing and priorities for each. Detailed crime figures for each beat code were presented to Members.

The arrangements for urgent response requirements in the area were outlined. Members heard there were four different teams working from Gainsborough and Market Rasen. Each team consisted of one Sergeant and ten Constables would respond to 999 and 101 calls. It was explained that there was a dedicated team to police the RAF Scampton site and their role was to provide education among residents and act as a link between the police, the centre and the Home Office.

With regard to the use of Criminal Behaviour Orders (CBO's), which issued conditions the receiving individual was mandated to abide by, it was explained that such orders could run for a period of two years and recipients could face a custodial sentence should they breach the mandated condition. Members heard there were six such orders in place in West Lindsey. Further sentencing guidelines were explained, with scenarios provided to clarify how aspects such as culpability (for example pre-meditated or impulsive act) and level of harm (for example substantial physical or psychological harm, extensive damage, substantial degree of loss, or, limited harm, nothing stolen, limited damage) were used to demonstrate what sentence might be handed down to a perpetrator of crime.

Questions were welcomed from the Committee, recognising there may be the need to provide answers outside of the meeting. The Chairman thanked Inspector Head on behalf of the Committee for a thorough and informative presentation.

In response to an enquiry regarding contact with Parish Councils, it was acknowledged that attendance at meetings of Parish Councils was not as frequent or common as it had been in the past. Inspector Head explained he had made contact with parishes when he started in his role, and had maintained those lines of communication as far as possible. He requested Members to emphasise the approachability of the area teams and for parishes to make contact with their named officers as well. It was acknowledged that some areas naturally had more contact between residents, Parish Councils and their policing teams, however the importance of understanding community needs was equally recognised.

With regard to the priorities set for each area, a Member of the Committee enquired as to how frequently the priorities were reviewed and set, and whether there was account taken of sudden changes. It was explained that there were quarterly reviews of the data and priorities were set accordingly, however, as it was a new team structure and with new officers in place, comparisons with previous years were not being used at this point, but would be monitored through the quarterly review process.

In response to a series of enquiries regarding specific policing teams, such as CID, Rural Crime and policing the roads around Lincolnshire, Inspector Head provided further information as to the focus of the rural team, for example regarding hare coursing, and detailed the work of the CID team based from Lincoln. There was wider discussion regarding the PCSOs and involvement in the min-police scheme, and it was confirmed the scheme did still run across some schools although it had been scaled back in recent years. There was specific praise for the Gainsborough team, with a witnessed example of Officer going above and beyond to assist a member of the public.

A Member of the Committee enquired about ‘fear of crime’ as an issue, for example families or individuals who would not go out after dark for fear of a crime occurring, and whether there was anything to offer reassurance to those who were worried. The Committee heard that there was a lot of inter-agency working in order to address the issues that led to that fear in the first place, such as the drug-related issues, and there was greater emphasis on people approaching the police, speaking with them to discuss any issues they were having, without worry of reprisals within their neighbourhood. Inspector Head recognised the importance of increasing peoples’ confidence in their communities to be able to live without that fear, and emphasised the work he and the teams were doing to interact and build that rapport with the local communities.

Further discussion matters included the wider implications of certain crimes in Lincolnshire, for example cars being ‘stolen to order’, stripped down, transported out of the county and sold on in a very short space of time, making them irrecoverable, as well as certain types of crimes being brought into the county from out of area (such as County Lines). In relation to drug issues in the district, it was explained that there was a high level of interaction with local schools to educate children about the dangers of drugs, and ongoing work, especially inter-agency, to address specific individuals or addresses where there was a known problem.

Traffic issues were raised, such as speed limits, speeding ‘hotspots’ and whether the Community Speedwatch scheme was working as it should, based on feedback from communities involved. It was acknowledged that speeding was an issue in some areas specifically, and the police were only able to deal with speeding motorists if they were caught. The Community Speedwatch scheme was recognised to be manned by volunteers, with the data submitted on a regular basis, however, there had been greater focus on, for example, drink driving, using mobile phones, the Fatal Four. Anecdotal evidence suggested the speeds were reduced at the times of the Community Speedwatch activity, proving as a deterrent to drivers.

Further questions were posed to Inspector Head, including concerns about dog attacks and how they were dealt with in the district. There was anecdotal evidence of dogs attacking other dogs, but not having been reported or treated as an issue, until there was an attack against a person. Members were invited to share such incidents with Inspector Head in

order for him to gain a wider understanding of the extent of the issue, with it also acknowledged that the police could only act on what was reported to them, but if there was a wider issue it would need to be investigated further.

Having brought the question and answer session to a natural conclusion, the Chairman, on behalf of the Committee and Visiting Members, extended his heartfelt thanks for Inspector Head's time and effort, and for a thorough and detailed presentation and engaging discussion session.

Note: The meeting was adjourned for a short comfort break at 8.03pm and reconvened at 8.11pm

20 MEMBER FLOOD WORKING GROUP UPDATE REPORT

The Committee heard from the Director of Commercial and Operational Services regarding the work undertaken by the Officer Flood and Drainage Working Party, and the Member Flood and Drainage Working Group. It was explained that the Officer Working Party ensured the Council was fulfilling its statutory responsibilities regarding its role as a Flood Risk Management Authority. Under the Civil Contingencies Act (2004) the Council had a duty to fulfil a Warn and Informing role, arrange rest centres for displaced residents and provide temporary accommodation if required. The Working Party considered these responsibilities and received updates from work areas related to flooding including Development Management, Enforcement, Operational Services and its link to the Environment Plan.

Additionally, Members heard that the Member Working Group received oversight of the Officer Working Party and considered reports from Members who sit on Water Management and Internal Drainage Boards. Visiting Members were permitted to attend and raise particular flooding issues in their wards at the discretion of the Chair.

With regard to the update, it was explained that the Director of Commercial and Operational Services met with the Lead Local Flood Authority and LCC Highways representatives on a six weekly basis to review up to date circumstances regarding those properties which had suffered internal flooding or had a near miss.

The Central Lincolnshire Local Plan, which considered flood and drainage risks was formally approved in April 2023 and Officers had completed work with the Environment Agency and other partners on collating base data which would be used for scenario planning for the Humber 2100 Strategy. The Humber 2100 Strategy Programme Board had 'endorsed' this first part of a long programme of works considering mitigations on and around the Humber which could mitigate long term flood risk resulting from sea level rises. Representatives from the Environment Agency presented the latest position on the Strategy at a Member workshop in early October and a report would be presented to Prosperous Communities Committee in December.

Members heard updated information regarding the recent storm which had hit the UK, and it was highlighted that one longstanding issue was the lack of sign off of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Lincolnshire Districts and the Lead Local Flood Authority regarding the immediate operational support offered to residents in the event of low-level

flooding incidents. Officers continued to work with the LRF to deliver a final document which could be signed off by all partners.

Councillor T. Bridgwood wished to put on public record his thanks to all those who had been involved in assisting with the recent flooding issues in Fiskerton and enquired whether there was any work to be undertaken around the Witham Valley. It was explained that this was an area that had been raised with the Environment Agency, with Officers requesting updates as to future management strategies.

The Chairman invited Councillor L. Rollings, Visiting Member, to speak. She expressed her appreciation for the work of the Officers and Members, and highlighted the improvements in Scotter in comparison with previous incidents of flooding. She recognised the continued work that was undertaken in liaising with the Environment Agency, Lincolnshire County Council and other agencies, and described what she saw as a shift in focus to help those areas most affected.

There was further discussion regarding the impact of local development and the approach to mitigating the risk of flooding, with all in agreement that whilst there had been an increase in such events, there was also recognition for the work being undertaken to monitor, manage, avoid and ultimately support those impacted by flooding events.

With no further comments, the Chairman read aloud the recommendation of the report and, having been proposed, seconded and voted upon, it was

RESOLVED that the work of the Member Flood and Drainage Working Group and Officer Flood and Drainage Working Party be welcomed.

21 FORWARD PLAN

With no comments, questions or requirement for a vote, the Forward Plan was **NOTED**.

22 COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

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

23 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 involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

24 PREPARATION FOR PRESENTATION FROM EVERYONE ACTIVE

The Committee heard from the Democratic Services and Elections Team Manager that Everyone Active were due to attend the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at

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its meeting in January 2024. The organisation had last visited in November 2022 where the session had focussed on how they were moving forward post covid. The issues covered at the last meeting were summarised as follows:

- Cleanliness of wet side change rooms
- Review of suppliers
- Pool experience and length of time to resolve issues
- User numbers and improving access to facilities.
- Future engagement work
- An update on the outreach service
- Recent complaints regarding water temperatures and cleanliness
- Lack of improvements to wet-side.

Discussion ensued and Members raised the following matters:

- Outreach work – a further update on this area - what activities offered, uptake figures and areas this involves
- Childrens activities held at the weekend in the gym /sports hall: it was suggested there were very few weekend opportunities for youngsters
- Reasons for closing the pool recently – what was the reason and were there wider issues
- Social prescribing – do they have figures?

It was then suggested by Visiting Members that the Committee needed to understand the nature of the contract, what they could and could not affect, and that questions should be shaped based on that understanding.

With no further suggestions made, Officers undertook to look at arranging a workshop, prior to the next Overview and Scrutiny Committee, so Members could understand the contract and add any additional areas for questioning post that workshop.

In concluding, Members were in agreement for the discussions to be summarised thus far and shared with the Everyone Active and relevant Officers, in order to inform their presentation to the Committee at the January meeting.

It was respectfully requested that those presenting be in a position to answer questions posed, that there be clarity in the information and that sufficient time be allowed for questions and follow ups.

The meeting concluded at 8.30 pm.

Chairman