

## **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 12 November 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 Stephen Bunney  
Councillor Karen Carless  
Councillor Paul Lee  
Councillor Roger Patterson  
Councillor John Barrett

**In Attendance:**

Sally Grindrod-Smith	Director Planning, Regeneration & Communities
Darren Mellors	Performance & Programme Manager
Claire Bailey	Change, Projects and Performance Officer
Rachael Hughes	Head of Policy and Strategy
Steve Leary	Policy and Strategy Officer - Climate and Sustainable Environment
Ele Snow	Senior Democratic and Civic Officer

**Apologies:** Councillor Frazer Brown  
Councillor Christopher Darcel  
Councillor Jacob Flear  
Councillor Peter Morris

### **34 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was no public participation.

### **35 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Prosperous Communities Committee held on 29 October 2024 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

### **36 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **37 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 4 November 2024, was **DULY NOTED**.

### **38 PROGRESS AND DELIVERY QUARTER TWO (2024/25)**

The Committee heard from the Change, Projects and Performance Officer who presented the progress and delivery report setting out the performance across the council for quarter two, including the performance improvement plan, covering the period July to September 2024. Members were advised there had been one amendment to the report since papers had been published. This was following the agreement of the 2024/25 pay award for staff and meant that measure COF03 – Overall Council Budget Forecast Outturn had reduced to 0.87% with a forecast net underspend of £160k.

In relation to the overall performance, it was explained that 81% of all measures were either exceeding or within agreed tolerance of their targets, compared to 83.7% measures in quarter one. The Officer highlighted the details contained within the performance improvement plan, explaining that the Council Tax Collection Rate and NNDR Collection Rate both reported within tolerance for quarter two and so had been removed from the performance improvement plan, although would continue to be closely monitored. New additions to the plan included the percentage of households spending more than 42 nights in B&B accommodation. The Committee heard it was expected to feature as the target was set at zero, in line with guidance and what the Council needed to strive to achieve. It was recognised that this was a challenging target, with the only temporary accommodation in Cross Street, but the Temporary Accommodation project was now in motion which would provide additional units, with two of these being out of the Gainsborough area.

The percentage of food standards agency inspections completed was also a new addition to the performance improvement plan. This measure was one that Members had been informed of, as it was raised within the annual work plan in May. The Manager had provided an update for the performance improvement plan, however there was a mid-year report due at the Regulatory Committee in December, and so a more detailed update would be made following that report. Members were assured, however, that with increased capacity within the team, it was expected that inspection numbers would begin to increase over the next quarter.

The final new addition to the plan was T24 savings delivered. It was explained this was an annual cumulative target, which was being monitored against the current position, and a position statement would be provided as part of the quarter three update.

It was explained that there were two measures which remained in the Performance Improvement Plan. Those were: the Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) measures and Market Stalls. In relation to the DFGs, it was not expected that the performance of these measures would change given the budget position, the focus being on lobbying for fair distribution of funding, with this due to resuming following the elections in May 2025. When looking at the data regarding the market stalls, it was noted that whilst Saturday market reported above target, this was due to the supporting event program and an additional four antique traders

who had registered to continue trading on the Saturday Market. Therefore, whilst the measure was reporting above its target, it remained in the performance improvement plan alongside the Tuesday market measure. Members were directed to page 51 of their papers for a full breakdown of all stalls per week and the dates on which the farmers markets were held in order to clarify the weeks which were impacted.

Finally, Members were advised that, in relation to services held at the Lea Fields Crematorium, the measure that looked at the percentage of direct cremations had reported below target for two consecutive quarters. It was explained, however, that this reflected an improved position and could not be taken in isolation. For those reasons, it was proposed that for the 2025/26 measure set, all service types be included in line with the business plan targets.

Members of the Committee were invited to comment. In relation to the leisure centre data, it was recognised that customer satisfaction levels were on the way up, however it was enquired as to whether the feedback from the 'Meet the Manager' sessions could be shared, as there were suggestions for improvements which would be useful to be aware of. Officers undertook to consider how this might be shared or included in future reporting options. Similarly, it was requested that further information behind the data could be provided, for example in relation to fly-tipping collection rates where fly tips were on private land and therefore not collectable with the Council, or the upcoming pressures which would be faced by the Trinity Arts Centre.

With regard to the percentage of households in bed and breakfast accommodation, it was enquired as to whether the recent budget announcements for homelessness prevention would have an impact on reducing that figure. It was explained that there was not yet any specific information regarding what those figures might be, however Officers would be working on options as soon as possible. A Member of the Committee requested clarification regarding suitability of placement and it was explained that individuals may be restricted as to where they could be homed, however the ongoing project would provide accommodation outside of Gainsborough.

A Member of the Committee enquired about the feasibility of training extra staff to undertake food safety inspections, in light of the circumstances which had led to the backlog of inspections. It was confirmed that a member of the team had in fact recently completed training and moved into a qualified position. The update due to be presented to the Regulatory Committee in December would provide further details as to the contingency planning and action plan to bring inspection numbers back in line with where they should be. It was further enquired as to why the decision had been made to undertake the funeral parlour inspections as this had not been a mandatory requirement. Members were advised that, due to the recent local and national incidents which had been well-covered by the media, it had been a priority to be able to offer reassurance to members of the public and customers that such inspections were undertaken. It was not anticipated that this would be a recurrent inspection regime.

In response to an enquiry regarding the market stalls and market traders, whether continued growth was being driven by approaching new traders or encouraging new traders to return, it was confirmed that Officers were spending time at markets in other areas, seeking to encourage new traders to the Gainsborough Markets. It was suggested that more could be done in terms of marketing, for example interviews with traders, wider-spread social media

marketing rather than only the West Lindsey pages.

The Chairman thanked Members for their comments and, having been proposed and seconded, took the vote. It was

**RESOLVED** that the performance of the Council's services had been assessed through agreed performance measures and areas where improvements should be made, having regard to the remedial measures set out in the report, had been indicated.

### **39 ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY ACTION PLAN ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT**

Councillor S. Bunney, as Chairman of the Cross-Party Environment and Sustainability Member Working Group, was invited to introduce the Council's third Environment & Sustainability update report. He provided the Committee with a summary of the activity undertaken since the previous annual report, including but not limited to, the installation of solar panels, the creation of orchards, and the development of communal spaces for gatherings. The Lincs Warmer Homes Officers had attended over 50 community events across West Lindsey and the wider partnership area, with their role being to provide home energy advice to residents, including bespoke advice during home visits and grant referrals where appropriate.

In acknowledging that the Council's waste fleet was one of highest emitters of Co2, the Council had adopted its first ever vehicle decarbonisation strategy. Working with Officers and Members of the Environment and Sustainability Working Group to develop the strategy, it provided a clear framework for decision making which allowed a full and detailed assessment of all aspects of any future vehicle purchase, allowing future procurement to respond to technological developments whilst also continuing to balance excellent customer service and financial stability. It was highlighted that for a second year in a row the Council had reported a further 5% decrease in its operational emissions, which included the fleet and operational buildings.

Members heard that the report provided a summary of activity and initiatives undertaken across the Council in relation to delivering against the refreshed Environment and Sustainability Strategy, which was adopted this year. The overarching aim of the Strategy remained clear, which was for West Lindsey District Council to become a carbon net zero council and district as soon as possible before 2050. The Action Plan provided detail of the proposed activity required to meet this target, as well as acknowledging the importance of the co-benefits in doing so, including money, jobs, growth, better quality of life and health and wellbeing through connectedness with natural environment. Within the report, the updates were grouped by the ten themes of the Climate and Sustainability Strategy, and activities had been developed closely with all services through the business planning process.

Councillor Bunney concluded by providing his personal perspective, that, given the recent changes in national and international politics, it was key to focus on targets and actions rather than being lost in words and politics. He explained that the Administration Group intended to identify areas of focus against which it would be possible to demonstrate the

successes being achieved.

The Chairman extended his thanks to Councillor Bunney, and equally those who were involved in the working group. He expressed his agreement with the intention to identify targets and demonstrable actions, also requesting that Members be provided with a breakdown of initiatives in their ward areas. It was confirmed that the State of the District report was being digitised and could include this breakdown of actions per area.

It was recognised that work was being undertaken across the district by private organisations as well as initiatives supported by the Council, and it was important that good practices be shared as much as possible. A Member of the Committee highlighted that the Council had committed to the Green Energy Statement as far back as 2012 and had continued the focus over the years. He stated that the government needed to take the matter seriously, and needed to understand the challenges faced in rural locations, for example the lack of public transport and therefore the necessity to use personal motor vehicles. It was hoped that the upcoming election for the Mayor of Greater Lincolnshire would bring greater focus for lobbying the government for fairer funding and greater investment.

Members expressed the need for continued conversations to make new developments as energy efficient as possible, recognising that options to retrofit buildings with alternative energy solutions were not always the most efficient. It was highlighted that grant funding options tended to have strict criteria, however there was the possibility that some nationally set eligibility criteria may be due to be relaxed, which would open the schemes to more residents. The work undertaken by the Warmer Homes team was highlighted, with Councillors expressing their experiences of the team helping parish councils and community groups.

There was further discussion regarding the potential benefits of the new Mayor for Greater Lincolnshire, as well as the need for areas of work such as the infrastructure strategy to have significant involvement from the district councils, specifically to ensure rural areas with sparse population levels were not overlooked. The role of the transport companies was also highlighted, with instances of reduced or cancelled services being of great concern for communities with limited public transport options.

The growing network of electric vehicle charging points was welcomed, with Members seeking to understand the running costs. It was explained that the cost of installing the charging points was often prohibitive, meaning it was more cost efficient for the companies to install, manage and maintain the charging points.

With final comments regarding the importance of ensuring continued prioritisation of the environment and sustainability action plan, and having been proposed and seconded, the Chairman took the vote. It was

**RESOLVED** that

- a) progress against the ten themes identified in the Environment and Sustainability Action Plan be noted; and
- b) the Environment and Sustainability Action Plan detailed under each of the adopted 10 themes for 2024/25 & 2025/26 be approved.

#### **40 WORKPLAN**

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

The meeting concluded at 7.48 pm.

Chairman