



Council

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Subject: Revised Council Vision and Values

Report by:

Executive Director of Operations/Head of Paid Service

Contact Officer:

Mark Sturgess
Executive Director of Operations/Head of Paid Service
01427 676687
mark.sturgess@west-lindsey.gov.uk

Purpose / Summary:

Preparations are underway to review the Council's corporate plan. Work is also being undertaken to implement the Customer First Programme. A need has been identified, in order to progress both these work streams, to review the vision and values which underpin how the Council operates. This work has been carried out this year and has involved both councillors and officers. The report seeks endorsement of the outcome of this work.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

- 1. That Council endorses and adopts the following vision for the Council:
"WEST LINDSEY IS A GREAT PLACE TO BE WHERE PEOPLE, BUSINESSES AND COMMUNITIES THRIVE AND CAN REACH THEIR POTENTIAL"**
- 2. That the Council endorses and adopts the following revisions to the Council's values:**
 - 1. To put the customer at the centre of everything we do**
 - 2. To act as one council**
 - 3. To be business smart, to act on evidence and take advantage of opportunities, thinking creatively and getting things done**
 - 4. To communicate effectively with all stakeholders**

- 5. To have integrity in everything we do
- 3. That the strapline “The Entrepreneurial Council” is no longer used.

IMPLICATIONS

Legal: FIN/147/19/TJB

Financial :None

Staffing :None

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights : None

Risk Assessment :

It is clear from staff surveys in recent years (not the current one) that there is no common agreement amongst staff about the vision and values of the organisation. The risks associated with this position are: staff engage in activity which runs counter to the “perceived” vision of the council; staff adopt methods of working which are in conflict with the values of the council and this leads to damaged organisational reputation, wasted resources or both.

The principal mitigating actions which the Council can take is to ensure that the vision, mission and values of the organisation are developed with full staff and member engagement. This is what this reset exercise has been able to do.

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities : None

Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

None

Call in and Urgency:

Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?

Yes X No

Key Decision:

Yes X No

Executive Summary

1.0 Purpose of report

- 1.1 The Council's Vision, Mission and Values have been under review since the start of 2018. This review has included full engagement with staff and members through a variety of techniques.
- 1.2 It is now necessary to crystallise what was been learnt from the review process into revised Vision and Values for the Council. This report sets out the review process which has been undertaken and a revised vision and set of values which should be adopted by the Council based on this work.
- 1.3 With regard to mission, the accepted definition is that a mission is the method by which the vision will be delivered¹. In this context it is recommended that the consideration of a revised mission for the council takes place once the vision has been adopted and as part of the 2019/22 revised corporate plan.

2.0 Methodology

- 2.1 Early desktop research around the current Vision, Mission and Values of West Lindsey District Council carried out in preparation for this work in late 2017 showed a number of things:
 - Work with Team Managers carried out by the Institute of Customer Services in the summer of 2017 demonstrated that amongst this level of managers there was no common understanding of the Council's vision, mission and values.
 - What constituted the current vision, mission and values of the Council were not readily visible. The most recent iteration appears to be given in a 2014 version of the Corporate Plan. The current Corporate Plan does not reference them at all.
 - That the Vision for the Council itself pre-dates all the current management team and council leadership and appears to have originated in the mid-2000s.
 - What currently constitutes the vision, mission and values of the council are confused. For example one of the "missions" (although confusingly it is not specifically called the "mission") is described as "accountable leadership" which is probably more of a value.
 - The vision itself is generic and could be applied to most District Councils (although this is a danger with most visions for organisations that deliver a wide range of services).

This constituted the case for change.

¹ Institute of Customer Services

- 2.2 This early work and research around the importance of vision, mission and values to an organisation led to a programme of work developing that was aimed at refreshing the vision, mission and values for the Council ahead of the production of a revised Corporate Plan in 2019.
- 2.3 In order to give a firm anchor to the work and to ensure a common understanding of what was trying to be achieved, management team adopted a common definition for “vision”, “mission” and “values” based on those used by the Institute of Customer Service. This would provide a strong link between the training by the ICS, training the Council was preparing to roll out in the future, the Customer First Programme (a major transformational change programme for the Council) and the vision, mission and values of the organisation. It would also ensure that as far as possible everyone in the organisation understands what was meant by vision, mission and values and so could engage constructively with the review process.
- 2.4 The definitions for vision, mission and values were therefore set as:
- **“Vision”**: describes where an organisation aspires to be in the future. In West Lindsey’s cases this is about describing what it wants for the **District and its people in the future**.
 - **“Mission”**: **a mission is a path to realise the vision** of the organisation. What is the organisation going to do to realise the vision that it has set itself. It was agreed by the Management Team that this would be developed through the new Corporate Plan due in draft in 2019.
 - **“Values”**: The **basic principles that an organisation and its employees uphold in delivery its vision and mission**.

These definitions were agreed by the Management Team.

- 2.5 One clear principle emerged from early work on setting vision, mission and values in an organisation (apart from having an agreed definition) and that was everyone in the organisation needed to have the opportunity to be engaged in the process of agreeing a revised vision, mission and values for the organisation.
- 2.6 Before the full programme of staff and member engagement was developed and rolled out across the organisation a pilot exercise was carried out to test how well the old vision, mission and values were known throughout the organisation. This involved faced to face interviews with approximately 5% of the workforce.
- 2.7 The pilot demonstrated a number of things;
- There was no widespread awareness of the current vision or mission of the council and this appeared to be evenly distributed across all services and management levels.
 - Knowledge of the values was a little higher which perhaps reflects the fact that they were put together by engaging a staff working

group (in 2010) and, until recently, were visible around the Guildhall.

- That face to face interviews using a structured questionnaire worked as a technique for engaging staff.

2.8 The programme of engagement was developed from this point and included the following:

- A larger exercise engaging staff through a face to face structured interview based on the pilot.
- A questionnaire on the Minerva system which was available to every member of staff.
- Workshops with staff that didn't have regular access to council systems – North Warren Road and Market Rasen depot staff.
- Workshops with Councillors.
- This process was publicised through the regular corporate updates and at the staff meeting in 2018.

3.0 Revised Vision and Values

3.1 Clearly there is more work that sits behind the development of the draft visions and values given below. This is important, as the process for developing the “vision” and “values” is probably more important than the articulation of the vision and values themselves.

3.2 **Revised Vision:**

“WEST LINDSEY IS A GREAT PLACE TO BE WHERE PEOPLE, BUSINESSES AND COMMUNITIES THRIVE AND CAN REACH THEIR POTENTIAL”

3.3.1 **Revised Values:**

1. **To put the customer at the centre of everything we do**
2. **To act as one council**
3. **To be business smart, to act on evidence and take advantage of opportunities, thinking creatively and getting things done**
5. **To communicate effectively with all stakeholders**
6. **To have integrity in everything we do**

3.4 That the mission be developed through the Corporate Plan review aimed at delivering the vision.

Main Report

1 Introduction

1.1 The ability to visualise and articulate a possible future state for an organisation or the area or customers it serves is a vital component of successful leadership and in providing focus for what the organisation is seeking to achieve. Good visions should describe a future state the organisation wants to achieve.

1.2 The current vision for West Lindsey is:

“West Lindsey is seen as a place where people want to live, work and invest”

1.3 This vision was adopted sometime in the last decade. From work which has been carried out this year it has very little visibility amongst staff and members. More importantly it is fairly generic and does not give a strong sense of what a future state for the District might look like nor what the council is seeking to achieve.

1.4 The current values which have been adopted by the Council are:

- **Focus on communities and customer first**
- **Creative and business smart**
- **Can do council**
- **One council**
- **Communicate effectively**

1.5 These were refreshed through staff engagement in 2010 and were generally better known and better understood than the vision. As values for a local government organisation tend to be universal the opportunity has been taken to amend the current values rather than recommending adopting completely different ones.

1.6 There is currently no established or generally accepted “mission” adopted by the Council. This is the path to realise the vision of the organisation. Through work with Councillors and the Management Team it has been agreed that the “mission” (the path to the realisation of the vision) is best set through the work to revise the current Corporate Plan. This will set out the work the Council intends to carry out across all areas in order to realise its vision.

1.7 Neither the current vision nor values are referenced in the Corporate Plan.

1.8 A complicating factor during the staff and member engagement process was the strapline “The Entrepreneurial Council” which is neither part of the current vision or values. It is recommended that this is no longer used and is phased out.

2.0 The Process

2.1 The first part of the work involved a variety of techniques to involve councillors and staff in identifying what should be included in a new vision and values for the Council. These techniques were:

- Short structured interviews with a random cross section of staff building on the pilot which had been carried out in January 2018
- Workshops with the staff at the Market Rasen and Gainsborough depots
- A short questionnaire on the council's intranet for staff to fill in
- Presentations at the Executive Directors "Corporate Update" sessions and at the staff meeting
- Regularly publicity through the ICT network and the televisions located around the offices
- Two workshop sessions with Councillors
- Presentations at the leaders panel of Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs

2.2 The messages which came back regarding the vision were consistent. It was clear that most people (staff and members) regarded the district as a great place to live with many assets, however some areas and sectors were not realising their full potential. The word cloud below shows the most important words that councillors and officers considered should be part of the revised vision.



2.3 As well as covering what the vision should contain the responses also covered the "tone" the vision should take in expressing the Council's aspiration for the District. The word cloud below illustrates the tone that respondents considered the vision should take:

Enabling
Aspirational
Inspirational
Forward-thinking
Snappy Exciting
Building-on-strengths

2.4 Following these exercises a draft vision was prepared based on the comments received through the engagement exercises. This has been tested with councillors through the leader's panel and with staff through the intranet and the use of the televisions around the Guildhall. The reactions received have been favourable and the following vision is presented for endorsement and adoption.

2.5 Vision:

“WEST LINDSEY IS A GREAT PLACE TO BE WHERE PEOPLE, BUSINESSES AND COMMUNITIES THRIVE AND CAN REACH THEIR POTENTIAL”

The vision recognises that the area has great strengths, however and in accordance with the comments received it also recognised that in certain areas and sectors work is necessary so that people, communities and businesses can reach their full potential. How the Council address these issues will be part of our mission and be set out in the 2019/22 Corporate Plan due next year. What the vision does is give a clear indication of what business the Council is in (assisting people, communities and businesses to thrive) and what is a West Lindsey priority – ensuring that those people, businesses and communities can reach their full potential. As stated above the Corporate Plan will detail specific actions which will show how it will deliver the vision. This will become the Council's mission.

2.6 As for values these are the basic principles which the organisation will uphold in delivering its vision. In terms of engagement undertaken the following words were identified as being important in forming the revised Council values:



2.7 These are fairly standard words to describe the values of a public sector organisation and to some extent reflect the values that are already in use. This led to the following revised values being presented for endorsement and adoption:

1. To put the customer at the centre of everything we do
2. To act as one council
3. To be business smart, to act on evidence and take advantage of opportunities, thinking creatively and getting things done
5. To communicate effectively with all stakeholders
6. To have integrity in everything we do

3.0 Conclusion

- 3.1 Council is therefore asked to endorse and adopt the revised vision and values as set out in the report.
- 3.2 Finally the Council has used the strapline long with its logo, of the “Entrepreneurial Council”. Whilst this was innovative when it was first adopted other Councils are now acting entrepreneurially due to financial pressures and it is recommended that the strapline is phased out.