

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held in the Council Chamber - The Guildhall on 25 June 2019 commencing at 6.30 pm.

Present: Councillor Mrs Lesley Rollings (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs Diana Rodgers (Vice-Chairman) and
Councillor Mrs Angela White (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Mrs Caralyne Grimble
Councillor Cherie Hill
Councillor Lewis Strange
Councillor Jeff Summers

In Attendance:
Alan Robinson Strategic Lead Governance and People/Monitoring Officer
Andy Gray Housing and Enforcement Manager
Ellen King Senior Performance Officer
Natalie Kostiuk Customer Experience Officer
Ele Snow Democratic and Civic Officer

Apologies: Councillor Mrs Angela Lawrence
Councillor Roger Patterson
Councillor Mrs Judy Rainsforth

1 CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed all present to the first meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the Civic Year, with special mention to those Councillors who had been newly elected.

2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Challenge and Improvement Committee held on 2 April 2019 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

3 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at this stage of the meeting.

4 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE

The Committee gave consideration to the Matters Arising Schedule, setting out the current position of previously agreed actions, as at 17 June 2019.

The Democratic and Civic Officer explained there was one completed matter on the schedule which was clarified for new Members of the Committee. It was highlighted that it was related to the completed work of the Public Realm Working Group and the resulting report would be scheduled into the forward plan. With no further comment it was

RESOLVED that the Matters Arising Schedule as at 17 June 2019 be received and noted.

5 VOICE OF THE CUSTOMER ANNUAL REPORT

The Customer Experience Officer introduced the Voice of the Customer report for consideration by the Committee. She explained that it was an annual report covering all aspects of customer feedback including satisfaction levels, rather than focussing on complaint information, and also sought to identify drivers for improvement across the council. For those who were not aware of recent changes to the customer complaints process, this was explained and highlighted that the report being presented was the first full year's worth of data.

Members were informed that the collected data regarding comments, compliments and complaints had been more clearly categorised with the aim of making it easier to identify trends. It was highlighted that the number of compliments and comments had increased and the number of complaints had decreased. The Customer Experience Officer also explained that the percentage of upheld complaints had decreased. She detailed how the data was broken down per service area with a comparison to the previous year's data. This was with the exception of waste services and street cleansing which had previously been categorised together but had now been separated.

The final point highlighted for Members was regarding learning outcomes and improvement actions which had arisen as a result of feedback received or the outcome of complaint investigations. The Committee was told about several changes that had been implemented in the ground floor Customer Services area as a result of customer feedback or complaint outcomes.

Committee Members expressed their thanks to the Customer Experience Officer and noted the positive changes that had been implemented. There was discussion regarding certain areas of the report such as the average number of days to respond and specific service complaints. The Committee heard that the average number of days to respond had increased, however, the context of this was against a previous three stage complaint process where each team dealt with their own complaints rather than the current process with one Officer, independent of the team, investigating from start to finish. It was also noted that the average response time of 7.3 days was well below the target of 21 days. Where there had been an unexpected increase in complaints, for example for Arts and Leisure, it was explained that this tended to be where there had been service changes implemented which had not been welcomed by all existing customers. It was highlighted that for the same service area there had been compliments and comments in favour of the changes and the overall feedback had been positive.

There was further discussion regarding communication access routes for customers, such as online, telephone or face to face and it was confirmed that there was ongoing

improvement work for both online and telephone services but that customers would always be able to choose their preferred way of contacting the authority.

The Chairman thanked the Customer Experience Officer for the detailed report and it was

RESOLVED that the Annual Voice of the Customer Report be noted.

6 PROGRESS AND DELIVERY REPORT - PERIOD 4 2018/19

The Committee gave consideration to the Progress and Delivery Report for period four of the 2018/19 civic year. The Senior Performance Officer explained it was a report of exceptions, that was to say, the report covered areas that were above or below target and did not detail the areas that were on target. She explained that the report was seen by both policy committees and Members were provided with the minutes from those committees. The Senior Performance Officer highlighted a couple of areas for Members, specifically Trinity Arts Centre which had shown particularly good service over the past 12 months and Waste Collection Services which were above target in all areas. She also highlighted the Home Choices service as an area of concern but explained that there had been a performance workshop held, the results of which, including the action plan, would be covered in the period one report for the 2019/20 civic year.

The Chairman invited comments from the Committee and there was significant discussion regarding the areas that were under-performing over two or more periods. The Chairman suggested it was important for the performance measures to accurately reflect the day to day functioning of each service. She gave an example that the number of paid for market stalls might not always match with the number of active market stalls. It was also noted that targets had to be realistic to ensure a service was not consistently shown as under- or over-performing simply because the target was unrealistic.

The Senior Performance Officer reiterated that this was the final report for the previous year and confirmed that performance measures had been reviewed. These would be reflected in the first period report which would be seen by the Committee at the September meeting. The Monitoring Officer highlighted that the purpose for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was to review whether the two policy committees had given sufficient challenge to the data within the report and whether it was felt there were other areas to be addressed.

There was further discussion regarding the services highlighted by the policy committees, such as the Home Choices Team, and the Senior Performance Officer confirmed that the details for the action plan for this service would be included in the next report. The Monitoring Officer commented that there had been legislative changes in some areas, which had understandably had an impact on teams' performance, however the updated performance measures had now taken those changes into account and performance would be measured more accurately against the amended legislation from period one onwards.

The Chairman read aloud the recommendation from the report and with no further comment it was

RESOLVED that Members be assured that suitable challenge had been made by both policy committees to the information contained within the report.

7 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY OPERATING METHODOLOGY

The Chairman invited the Democratic and Civic Officer to introduce the report regarding the Overview and Scrutiny Operating Methodology. The Officer explained that, as per the Constitution, the Operating Methodology for the Committee was reviewed every year and then agreed by the Committee at the start of each municipal year. She stated that, as a result of the recent scrutiny review, the Operating Methodology had been re-written to ensure it was clear, concise and reflected the working methods of the Committee, but the detail of how the Committee should work had not been changed.

The Chairman invited comments from the Committee and there were questions as to why an item could not be called-in if it had been subject to pre-decision scrutiny. The Monitoring Officer explained that if the Committee was involved in pre-decision scrutiny, it then became a part of the decision-making process and could not be considered unbiased. For this reason, the decision could not then be called-in. He highlighted that the Committee had always functioned in such a way and this had not been changed from previous Operating Methodologies.

There was further discussion regarding the time scales for call-in, with a Member of Committee noting that policy committee decisions could be implemented before there was the opportunity to call-in the decision. The Monitoring Officer stated that the authority could not enact a decision prior to the close of the call-in period, except in extreme circumstances, and suggested that with the use of pre-decision scrutiny, there need not be any concern about delayed decisions.

With no further comments it was

RESOLVED that the Overview and Scrutiny Operating Methodology, for implementation throughout the 2019/20 Civic Year, be approved.

8 FORWARD PLAN

The Democratic and Civic Officer introduced the forward plan and explained that it showed all the items due to be seen through the committee system over the coming months. As discussed in the Operating Methodology, the Committee could request reports for pre-decision scrutiny or use the forward plan as an overview of upcoming important decisions.

With no items requested at this time it was

RESOLVED that the forward plan be noted.

9 COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

The Democratic and Civic Officer introduced the workplan for the coming months and highlighted that items would be added as identified throughout the municipal year.

The Chairman requested that an invitation be extended to the Environment Agency to talk

with the Committee about issues with flooding in the district. It was acknowledged it was a complex area and residents would expect the Council to maintain open dialogue. It was also suggested that other relevant organisations, such as Severn Trent and Anglian Water may also be able to add to the conversation.

Members of Committee accepted there would be further items added to the work plan and with no further discussion it was

RESOLVED that:

- a) an invitation be extended to the Environment Agency to attend a future committee date; and
- b) the workplan be noted.

The meeting concluded at 7.56 pm.

Chairman