

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Prosperous Communities Committee held in the Council Chamber - The Guildhall on 28 January 2020 commencing at 6.30 pm.

Present: Councillor Owen Bierley (Chairman)
Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan (Vice-Chairman) and
Councillor John McNeill (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Stephen Bunney
Councillor Mrs Tracey Coulson
Councillor Michael Devine
Councillor Mrs Jessie Milne
Councillor Mrs Judy Rainsforth
Councillor Tom Regis
Councillor Jim Snee
Councillor Mrs Mandy Snee
Councillor Robert Waller
Councillor Mrs Anne Welburn
Councillor Trevor Young

In Attendance:
Ian Knowles Chief Executive
Rachel Parkin Home Choices Team Manager
Amanda Bouttell Senior Project and Growth Officer
Sue Leversedge Business Support Team Leader
Ele Snow Democratic and Civic Officer

Apologies: There were no apologies

Membership: There were no substitutes appointed for the meeting

53 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

54 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

(a) Meeting of the Prosperous Communities Committee – 3 December 2019.

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Prosperous Communities Committee held on 3 December 2019 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

55 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE

Members gave consideration to the Matters Arising Schedule which set out the current position of previously agreed actions as at 20 January 2020.

The Democratic and Civic Officer advised Members that the majority of the matters arising had been completed. Of the three outstanding matters, Members were informed that provision for enforcement training for Parish Councils would be outlined within the Parish Charter, meaning there was a revised target date of the end of May 2020. The date also needed to be amended regarding the final version of the Parish Charter which should read 2020 rather than 2019. With regards to the establishment of the Environmental and Sustainability Working Group, Members heard this was underway with Councillor Tracey Coulson as Chairman.

Councillor Coulson provided the Committee with a brief update as to progress with the working group. She explained that the inaugural meeting had been held where it had been agreed to adopt a tool kit drafted by the sustainable energy charity Ashden in conjunction with Friends of the Earth. This tool kit was specifically for councils who were focusing on greener credentials. Councillor Coulson stated there would be monthly meetings of the group for the first three months with a view to presenting the final strategy at Annual Council in May 2020.

A Member of Committee enquired about a matter which was no longer included on the schedule. This was regarding problems with pigeons in Gainsborough town centre. He noted that the action had been to erect signs in the market place but, as this had not yet happened, enquired why the matter was not still listed. The Chief Executive explained that it had been passed to the relevant Officers to deal with, however the matter would be raised again from the current meeting with an update to be provided next time.

There was a further enquiry from a Member of Committee with regards to the leisure centre client feedback and whether the Committee would continue to receive regular updates. The Chairman explained that it would be included in the Progress and Delivery reports from April and so Members would continue to receive regular information.

RESOLVED that progress on the Matters Arising Schedule, as set out in the report, be received and noted.

56 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

57 ADDITION OF A ROUGH SLEEPING CHAPTER TO THE LINCOLNSHIRE HOMELESS STRATEGY 2018-2021

The Committee gave consideration to a report regarding the addition of a 'Rough Sleeping' chapter to the existing Lincolnshire Homeless Strategy 2018-2021. The report was introduced by the Home Choices Team Manager who explained that the addition of the chapter was a statutory requirement. She highlighted that, as the strategy was county wide,

the figures covered not only West Lindsey as a district but all areas in the county although it did serve to demonstrate the low numbers of rough sleepers in West Lindsey. She noted the pro-active work undertaken by the Home Choices team and the focus on training staff and keeping them up to date with legislative changes.

Members heard that in June 2020 there were to be changes made to the number of beds available in the district, from 30 beds to 12, which may have an impact on the number of rough sleepers. The Home Choices Team Manager assured the Committee that the district only had need of the 12 beds and there would be options in place to offer further support to those who may be impacted by the reduced number of beds available. She explained that there had been bids submitted to the Ministry of Housing for additional money, one fund in particular was for cold weather provision and they had been working closely with Market Rasen House to look at move on accommodation or outreach services for individuals who may not be able to use Market Rasen House. The Home Choices Team Manager informed the Committee that the team had found out the previous day that as part of a combined bid to the Ministry of Housing for rural districts, £607,000 had been awarded for use across the four districts involved with the bid. This would be used to fund outreach support services, intensive support packages and property support options and that by working together across the four districts, they hoped to minimise the anticipated increase in numbers of rough sleepers.

The Chairman thanked the Home Choices Team Manager for her in depth explanation of the strategy and for the work her team undertook across the district. He invited comments from Committee Members.

A Member of Committee opened with thanks to the Home Choices Team for their fantastic work and commended the team however he noted that in comparison with 10 years ago, funds available for such work were significantly reduced. This was acknowledged by the Committee and the Home Choices Team Manager however the team could only work with what was currently available to them.

Following a question regarding the division of the grant funds, the Committee heard that it was anticipated for one district to be the budget holder and that the street outreach work may be contracted out to specialist workers. There would be increased funds available for advance rent costs and rental deposits and it was hoped that despite low numbers of rough sleepers, West Lindsey District Council would be able to use the funds more intensively for those few individuals.

A Member of the Committee enquired whether those with difficulties such as substance misuse were housed in lodging houses and hostels and whether this then had an impact on housing others without such difficulties. The Home Choices Team Manager explained that there were limited options and the preference was to ensure individuals remained in their home district. The services users the team dealt with often experienced complex issues and needed an intensive multi-agency approach to assist them. She confirmed that the funding available would not be sufficient to fully address the complex difficulties of the client base but the team made every effort to minimise the impact on other clients. She stated that all options were explored, although these were limited, but the use of hostels was the last option.

Committee Members made further comments regarding the assurance provided to

Councillors for the work undertaken in such a complex area and the Chairman again thanked the Home Choices Team Manager for the work she and her team were involved with.

With no further comments, it was proposed, voted on and

RESOLVED that

- a) The addition of a rough sleeping chapter to the Lincolnshire County Homeless Strategy 2018-2021 be endorsed; and
- b) Members be assured that appropriate work was being undertaken to address rough sleeping in West Lindsey.

58 EMPLOYMENT & SKILLS PARTNERSHIP

The Committee received a presentation from the Senior Project & Growth Officer for Employment & Skills regarding the work underway for the Employment and Skills Partnership. She explained that the partnership had been in place for four years and now had 12 member organisations from the public, private, voluntary and education sectors. She added that West Lindsey District Council was the only district represented on the Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership board and the only district in the county to have a skills partnership, a dedicated Employment and Skills Officer, a constituted Employment Board and an annual budget of £10,000, which was approved 18 months ago to support the delivery plan. The Committee heard details of the Made in Gainsborough initiative which created and supported jobs in the Gainsborough area and also the committed work taking place at several local schools, academies and colleges which was already showing significant benefits across the area.

The Senior Project & Growth Officer explained that there was also significant work being undertaken in order to improve support for unemployed young people and their access to work. She explained the council was working with a number of partner agencies such as Acis, the DWP and voluntary services in order to provide impartial advice, advocacy services and support with finding and successfully gaining employment. Members were told of the recent success of a careers event involving the new local restaurant in Gainsborough where almost all of those employed had been identified at the careers event.

There was further information provided regarding the success of the apprenticeships provided through the Made in Gainsborough initiative. Members heard there were significant plans in place for further initiatives based on the Made in Gainsborough model as well as closer working partnerships with the University of Lincoln to highlight opportunities for graduates in the area. The Senior Project & Growth Officer explained there was a delivery plan in place for the retention of graduates from the University of Lincoln and encouraging growth and graduate opportunities in the Gainsborough area. She concluded by thanking Councillors for their support of the Employment and Skills Partnership and assured them there would be continued focus on these areas.

The Chairman thanked the Senior Project & Growth Officer for the detail of her presentation and also the work she was involved with so passionately. He then invited comments from

Members of the Committee.

There was consensus across the Committee that, not only was the presentation comprehensive and well delivered, but the commitment to this area of development was highly commendable. There were discussions regarding the challenges faced by young people seeking employment and the difficulties specifically in West Lindsey, either as a result of rural localities or lack of employment opportunities in general. It was also acknowledged that there were increasing numbers of young people facing significant mental health difficulties. The need for specialist or intensive support and intervention for these young people was not always possible to meet through the usual employment support routes. The relevance of academic qualifications was mentioned and the Committee heard that there was due to be the introduction of technical qualifications which were the equivalent of A-Levels but would be delivered through employers. This then created the need for sufficient numbers of businesses to sign up to the scheme in order for it to be a viable route for young people. The Senior Project & Growth Officer confirmed there were numerous employers offering apprenticeships, which was a positive, but there would have to be further engagement with regards to the technical qualifications.

Note: Councillor T. Regis left the meeting at 7.27pm

A Member of Committee enquired what links there were with uniformed services, such as the police. The Committee heard that the uniformed organisations, along with the council, were part of a public service compact designed to promote and encourage employment in public service. It was explained that the Armed Forces tended to run their own recruitment drives and the police had also recently run a recruitment campaign, however it was acknowledged that there could be more done to promote public service as a career choice. This included not just the uniformed services but also local councils such as West Lindsey District Council.

Vice-Chairman McNeill enquired as to when the first update would be available in the Members' Bulletin and it was confirmed the next edition was due in mid-February. The Senior Project & Growth Officer confirmed she would distribute the update as soon as possible. She noted there was also a presentation booked for Councillors to attend the following week.

The Chairman brought discussions to a close by again thanking the Senior Project & Growth Officer for her commendable work. Having been proposed and seconded it was unanimously

RESOLVED that

- a) The programme of activities delivered by the Employment & Skills Partnership, and the future planned work, be endorsed and support by the Prosperous Communities Committee; and
- b) Regular updates be provided by the Senior Project & Growth Officer for Employment & Skills via the Members' Bulletin.

59 PROSPEROUS COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE BUDGET 2020/21

Note: Councillor A. Welburn left the room at 7.39pm

The Committee heard from the Business Support Team Leader regarding the Prosperous Communities Committee budget for 2020/2021. She highlighted the key points of the report including the total cost of services for 2020/21 would be £4.626m compared to £4.122m in 2019/20. This had resulted in base budget increases of £1.032m, and additional income of £0.528m, resulting in a net movement of £0.504m. The Committee heard that, included within the movement of £0.504m was £0.541m relating to Secondary Employer Pension Contribution payments (Pension Deficit contribution). Previously this budget had been held in one budget line within Corporate Policy & Resources however from 2020/21 the budget had been allocated across all services based on staffing levels (FTE) in order to more accurately reflect the total cost of each service.

The Business Support Team Leader added that £0.087m of budgets to support service investment projects had been included which were to be funded from Earmarked Reserves, therefore the overall impact was a decrease of £0.124m, excluding allocation of Pension Deficit and use of Earmarked Reserves. She read aloud the recommendation of the report and invited questions from Members.

A Member of Committee enquired about the grants and contributions included as income for the budget and whether this meant they were guaranteed to be received. The Business Support Team Leader explained that these amounts were only included when there was high assurance that they would be received. The income for health and wellbeing was also queried and it was explained that this was regarding the leisure contract which had not been in place previously so showed as a new income stream.

Note: Councillor A. Welburn returned to the room at 7.44pm

With no further questions it was

RESOLVED that the draft Prosperous Communities budget 2020/21 and revenue estimates to 2024/25 be recommended to Corporate Policy and Resources Committee for the purpose of budget setting 2020/21 and for inclusion in the Medium Term Financial Plan 2020/21 to 2024/25.

60 WORKPLAN

Members gave consideration to the Committee Work Plan.

RESOLVED that the workplan as set out in the report be received and noted.

The meeting concluded at 7.46 pm.

Chairman