



**Annual Council**

**9 May 2016**

**Subject: Annual Report from the Challenge and Improvement Committee 2015/16**

Report by:

Director of Resources

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Purpose / Summary:

To present the Annual Report.

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

- 1) That Members receive the Annual Report from the Challenge and Improvement Committee**

## IMPLICATIONS

### Legal:

The Chairman of the Committee is required constitutionally (Part 1 Page 17 paragraph 7.6) to submit an annual report to Council on the work his Committee has undertaken.

### Financial : FIN / 11/ 17

None arising directly from this report

### Staffing

None arising directly from this report:

### Equality and Diversity including Human Rights :

N/A

### Risk Assessment :

N/A

### Climate Related Risks and Opportunities :

N/A

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

Agendas and Minutes arising from the meetings of the Challenge and Improvement Committee held during 2015/16 located on the website

### Call in and Urgency:

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

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)

Yes

No

x

### Key Decision:

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications

Yes

No

x

## 1. Introduction and Context

1.1 The Chairman of the Committee is required constitutionally (Part 1 Page 17 paragraph 7.6) to submit an annual report to Council on the work his Committee has undertaken over the previous year.

1.2 The Chairman's Annual Report is set out below.

## 2. Chairman's Annual Report

2.1 The primary role of the Challenge and Improvement Committee is to scrutinise the Council in a positive and effective manner, however, it has to be appreciated that all committees are there primarily to hold to account West Lindsey District Council. I cannot over emphasise the need for colleagues to study all papers and reports well in advance of meetings and to contact officers for clarification before the committee meets in order to be well informed to arrive at a decision and to remember, that if colleagues are unsure therefore to defer that decision, until they feel comfortable to proceed.

2.2 The central thrust of this year has been to make the Committee robust and give it greater credibility as a scrutiny body, which is non-political, without fear or favour, working solely to enhance the work of The Council. I feel we have achieved this in a variety of ways and set out below the range of activity the Committee has been involved in:

- Establishment of and Continued Work of the Democracy Working Group
- Re-establishment of the Progress and Delivery Working Group
- Review of Operating Methodology
- Continued Programme of Public Body Scrutiny
- Items Selected for Pre-Scrutiny to Assist in Policy Development
- Establishment of a South West Ward Working Group

3. **Establishment and Continued Work of the Democracy Working Group** – C&I set up a small democracy group during 14/15 with the initial aims of promoting the concept of democracy across the District and to look at possible initiatives which would engender greater participation in the democratic process and uphold the principles which support effective democratic operations. To that extent the group identified three initial projects:

- A review of the current configuration of the Council Chamber
- Consideration to take the Planning Committee out into the District
- Engagement with young people and schools

3.1 Consideration of taking the Planning Committee out into the District was deemed to be impracticable and as an alternative it was decided to ensure that all Planning Committee meetings be webcast in real-time and larger viewing screens be installed for the viewing gallery.

3.2 The Group has continued to work throughout the 15/16 Civic Year, and following a change in Membership currently comprises Councillors Anne Welburn, Roger Patterson and Giles McNeill.

3.3 Following its change in Membership the Group discussed previous minutes and suggestions in order to re-focus and move forward with chosen priorities. The revised priorities became:

- Revisiting options for a reconfiguration of the Council Chamber to support in-meeting communication and debate
- Development of a four-year plan for promotion of democracy and youth engagement through the civic office
- Use of communication and social media to publicise and engage with our communities around democracy

3.4 Along with the reconfiguration of the chamber and developing a four-year plan, the DWG have been progressing the following initiatives to promote democracy and youth engagement within the District:

- Continued attendance and support of the Road Safety Partnership which will be brought forward for update at their next meeting
- Letters agreed to be circulated to West Lindsey Primary Schools inviting them to hold their School Council meetings in the Chamber at the Guildhall and meet with the Chairman
- Letters agreed to be circulated on a rolling basis to all Secondary schools within the District and for the Chairman and Ward Members to visit to talk to students about democracy and the decision making process
- Funding will be made available and publicised through the community grant for schools to purchase flag poles and be involved in flag raising days for the District
- Support for the 'Clean for the Queen' project
- Screens have been installed in the Council Chamber for better viewing for the public during meetings, and to display the webcast feed

3.5 The DWG agreed four year plan to promote democracy and youth engagement is set out below

<b>CIVIC YEAR</b>	<b>PRIORITY 1</b>	<b>PRIORITY 2</b>	<b>PRIORITY 3</b>
15/16	Reconfiguration of the Council Chamber to aid debate and democratic process	Reintroduction of 18 <sup>th</sup> Birthday Cards for new voters *	Road Safety Partnership attendance and support
16/17	Reintroduction and development of Primary Youth Council Meetings in the Chamber	Commence Secondary School Visits for all Members of Council	Flags and Flagpoles for Schools Initiative

17/18	Introduction of Youth Chairman and Youth Council for WL	Focus on Scouting / Guiding	Focus on Cadets and Introduce a Chairman's Cadet
18/19	Youth Council to lead on projects such as a Takeover		

- \* The Group have been asked to reconsider this item as it has associated delivery costs.
- 3.6 Arising from the work of the Group, recommendations on a new Chamber layout were submitted to Council in April 2016. Subject to agreement these will come into operation from Annual Council 2016.
- 3.7 The Chairman of the Council and the Chairman of the Challenge and Improvement Committee are now advisors to the Group and we have formalised and extended the Group's Terms of Reference to include being a sounding board for all civic matters as and when referred to the Group.
- 3.8 The Group's full Terms of Reference are set out at Appendix A to this report.
- 3.9 The work of this Group has been much appreciated and continues.
- 4 **Re-establishment of the Progress and Delivery Working Group –** C&I re-established the successful progress and delivery working group. This Group has reviewed with officers the effectiveness and usefulness of the measures included in the current progress and delivery reports to ensure that what is reported to the public, partners and stakeholders is relevant and relates to the aims and objectives of the Council's Corporate Plan.
- 4.1 The working group have been looking at the following aspects of performance management:
- Reviewing the previously agreed measures to confirm they are the appropriate measures
  - Considering how these measures provide a performance framework for the organisation that allows Members to monitor progress against the Corporate Plan, service delivery and implemented projects
  - Considering the reporting format for future reports
- 4.2 Members have reviewed the current reporting format and content, scrutinised the Council's current Corporate Scorecard, had sight of a proposed set of measures to oversee delivery against the new Corporate

Plan priorities and were introduced to the concept of a measure definition sheet to be used internally so as to ensure consistency of reporting.

4.3 This Group made formal recommendations back to us as a Committee at our April meeting which included: -

- An overall satisfaction expressed with the Progress and Delivery format and content, however with the following suggested improvements:
  - Direction of Travel indicators to be used in reporting
  - Consistent usage of explanations and rectification actions where appropriate

4.4 Work is now underway across the Council to firm up the measures to be used across the Council for 2016/17.

4.5 Additionally, a revised Progress & Delivery template is being designed which will report against:

- Corporate Scorecard
- Programme & Project Delivery
- Corporate Plan Delivery
- Service Performance

4.6 The concept of reporting by exception will be retained, however service areas will be invited to add brief contextual detail to the data they provide.

4.7 Formal discussions have taken place with both Policy Committee Chairman and the revised style reporting will be launched in May 2016.

5 **Review of Operating Methodology** – to ensure the on-going effectiveness of the Committee, a review of its operating methodology was undertaken. This focused on performance management and policy and performance reviews. The Committee recognises that the policy committees play a key role in challenging performance and policy development to seek assurance that any issues are rectified. However the Challenge and Improvement Committee must also play a part and scrutinise the operations of the policy committees to ensure they are fulfilling their roles effectively. To that extent, the Committee will intervene where it is felt that rectifications are inadequate and/or project development is cause for concern or post project reviews have not been conducted. Intervention will only occur after an agreed period of time has been allowed for rectifications to take effect.

5.1 The Committee have effectively challenged the Policy Committees on a number of areas this year particularly where baselines have not been included and where explanatory and or rectification text has been omitted.

5.2 The Challenge and Improvement Committee have also been charged with overseeing the implementation of the Development Management Improvement Plan and receive progress update reports every six months. On receiving the last report Members commented on the noticeable improvements to-date and were encouraged by the change they had seen. We hope this work continues and will continue to monitor progressing during 16/17.

6 **Continued Programme of Public Body Scrutiny** - to enhance the accountability for service delivery and the effectiveness of other public service providers delivering for residents of the District, the Committee has continued with a programme of meetings with strategic partners to discuss their approach to addressing the strategic needs of the residents of the District. Meetings held to date have seen: -

- Police Inspector Outen attend twice to discuss Crime & Anti-Social Behaviour;
- Acis Group Limited attended to present an overview of their work; the impact it is having on the general well-being of the District and the issues they face. The Committee posed questions around Acis's intentions for their stock in the South West Ward; what provision they make to house the more vulnerable members of society in light of changes to welfare reform; how they planned to manage the new right to buy legislation; and offered challenge on why tenants requiring aids and adaptations were still being housed in unsuitable properties.
- Representatives from the Lincolnshire West CCG attended to present an overview of their work; the impact it is having on the general well-being of the District and the issues they face. The Committee posed questions around the future intentions of the John Copeland Hospital; unacceptable GP waiting times and inconsistent service, dependent on the practice registered to; the implications of an aging population; the work of the neighbourhood teams; and how the CCG and WLDC can ensure their priorities are aligned.

6.1 While this is an area still being developed and refined initial thoughts are that the meetings have provided valuable insight into the strategic aims of these bodies and their impact on the District. Additionally, it has provided an opportunity for issues pertaining to the District to be raised and for responses to be provided.

6.2 Member engagement and attendance has been greatly raised through this area of the Committee's work. Copies of all the questions and answer sessions are available on the Members' Portal for future reference.

6.3 A programme of work for 2016/17 is in development, which it is hoped will be more outcome focussed. To achieve this we intend to deliver these sessions in a different format. Further details are contained in Section Nine.

## 7 **Selection of Items for Pre Scrutiny to Assist in Policy**

**Development** - a key role for the Committee is to take a pro-active stance in relation to the development of policy and to scrutinise proposals in advance of implementation. The Committee therefore routinely scans the Forward Plan to identify any matters of interest that are worthy of scrutiny and discussion.

7.1 During the year the Committee successfully pre-scrutinised the development of the Car Parking Strategy and drove an all Members Workshop on the subject to ensure full engagement. Arising from this a number of options were put forward for consideration into incorporating into the Strategy including:

- More dynamic use of car parks to open spaces for other users
- Parking during school-time pick-ups
- Supporting businesses by free 'quick errand' spaces
- Parking for residents
- Incremental increases in season tickets
- Free parking towards the end of the trading day when business is slower
- Uniformity for charging across areas

7.2 The Strategy was approved in November 2015 and the Challenge and Improvement Committee intend to closely monitor it's effectiveness and will be receiving impact assessment reports throughout the 16/17 civic year.

7.3 To date the topic of Markets has also been selected for advance scrutiny with a view to effecting and influencing policy decisions at the outset.

7.4 The Committee received its first pre-scrutiny report on this subject at its April meeting and this work will conclude early in the 2016/17 civic year with formal recommendations being made to both Policy Committees as a result.

## 8 **Establishment of a South West Ward Working Group** – In response to a formal request from Council arising from a motion and question submitted, the Challenge and Improvement Committee established a South West Ward Working Group.

8.1 The first meeting of the group took place on 21 September 2015 where draft terms of reference were agreed, which incorporated a proposed timeline for the work and the scope of the work. This is set out at Appendix B.



- 8.2 The Group is expected to make its final recommendations back to us as a Committee in May 2016 with Challenge and Improvement Committee making recommendations for action thereafter to the Prosperous Communities Committee.

## **9. Conclusion and Look Forward to Next Year**

### **Public Body Scrutiny**

- 9.1 At the Committee's last meeting of the 15/16 Civic Year, Members gave consideration to areas they may wish to incorporate into their work plan for 16/17 and agreed to a themed approach around Youth unemployment.
- 9.2 As previously mentioned at Section 6.3, the Committee are revising their approach to public body scrutiny. It has been agreed that the Committee takes a detailed look at the issue of youth unemployment and adopts a structured, chronological approach. The Committee recently received a presentation on this subject area, which highlighted that the rates of youth unemployment across our District are the highest in Lincolnshire.
- 9.2.1 To that extent it is proposed that a series of involved bodies are invited, starting with education through to careers advice (or equivalent), employers' bodies and finally Department for Work & Pensions and/or supporting job scheme partner agencies.
- 9.2.2 This approach is intended to map the 'journey', interventions and approaches taken at differing stages by agencies to identify and remedy the issues that face the youth of the District in obtaining the required qualifications, work skills and experience which support sustainable, rewarding employment and in turn support the local economy.

### **Other Areas**

- 9.3 The Committee will oversee the introduction of the revised Performance and Delivery Monitoring Reporting and evaluate its effectiveness.
- 9.3.1 The Committee will continue to receive regular update reports and oversee the implementation of the Development Management Improvement Plan.
- 9.3.2 Following pre-scrutiny of the Market Operations Options the Committee will be making recommendations to the relevant Policy Committee early in the 16/17 Civic Year.
- 9.3.3 At the conclusion of the South West Ward Working Group the Committee will be making recommendations to the relevant Policy Committee early in the 16/17 Civic Year.

9.3.4 The Committee will continue to respond to direct requests to undertake work made either by Council or the Policy Committees.

## **10. Concluding Remarks**

10.1 The past Civic year has been a busy one and the next one looks busier still! In conclusion, may I express appreciation to the Vice Chairmen and Members of the Committee who have shouldered the responsibility of scrutinising key areas of the Council's business with integrity and in a non-partisan manner. Thanks also go to Mr Ian Knowles for his help and support throughout the past civic year. Finally, a huge thank you to Katie, who has kept us on the straight & narrow throughout the past civic year.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Terms of Reference – Democracy Working Group**

#### **a) Membership 2015/16**

The Membership of the DWG is appointed at Annual Council.

- Cllr Roger Patterson
- Cllr Anne Welburn
- Cllr Giles McNeill

Consulting on Civic Matters:

- The Chairman of the Council
- Chairman of Challenge and Improvement Committee

All Members of Council are welcome to feed in to the discussions of the group.

#### **b) Purpose**

The purpose of the Democracy Working Group is to:

- Increase confidence in local democracy – getting more people involved and taking responsibility for their community.
- Increase the public's awareness of the democratic process
- Increase awareness of the role of councillors.
- Help the public to understand the difference they could make as a councillor.
- Increase the number of people putting themselves forward to be a Parish / District councillor.
- Increase the voting turnout.
- Involve young people (Youth Councils / schools / etc) in the democratic process.
- Be a sounding board for civic matters as and when referred to the group.

#### **c) Role**

- The DWG works together as a close knit team to provide leadership on progression of initiatives to meet the objectives of the group.
- The DWG brings together and represents all Members of Council in the promotion of democracy.

#### **d) Responsibilities**

The DWG take collective responsibility for:

- Engaging all Members in the work it undertakes;
- Reporting on a regular basis and when requested to its parent committee (Challenge and Improvement);
- Developing ideas to further its objectives;
- Making recommendations, where necessary to its parent committee.

#### **e) Modes of Operation**

- The Group tailors its ways of working to its various functions;
- The Group meets on a regular basis, as business progression dictates.
- Agendas and Minutes are produced for each meeting, and Minutes are provided to the parent committee on a regular basis by e-mail

## **APPENDIX B**

### **South West Ward Anti –Social Behaviour and Criminal Activity Task and Finish Group**

#### **Draft Terms of Reference**

##### **Purpose of the Group**

To review the effectiveness of the council and partner agencies approach to tackling incidents of anti-social behaviour and criminal activity in the South West Ward of Gainsborough and work with these agencies to ensure that incidents are being dealt with efficiently and effectively within the context of the current powers and responsibilities available to the council and the partner agencies. On the conclusion of the work to make recommendations to the Prosperous Communities Committee on how the approach to these incidents could be changed in order improve efficiency and effectiveness.

##### **Membership**

Councillors Howitt – Cowan (chair), McNeill and Young. Supported by the Chief Operating Officer and other officers as appropriate.

##### **Frequency of meetings**

6 weekly (to allow for work to be completed between the meetings).

##### **Method of Investigation**

Diagnose the problem through an analysis of our current approach (policies and procedures), analyse the information/data available, learning from best practice and involve partner organisations.

##### **Scope of the Organisations Involved**

Organisations with a role in delivering improvements in the South West Ward – ACIS, PCSOs, South West Ward Tasking Group, landlord groups.

##### **Key Milestones and Reporting Timetable (including action planning)**

1. Agree the terms of reference (meeting 1)
2. Review the evidence (meeting 2)
3. Action Plan (meeting 3)
4. Report back to Challenge and Improvement Committee with recommendations
5. Challenge and Improvement Committee makes recommendations back to Prosperous Communities Committee for action