

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Prosperous Communities Committee held in the
<https://west-lindsey.public-i.tv/core/portal/home> on 14 July 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 Christopher Darcel
Councillor Michael Devine
Councillor Mrs Jessie Milne
Councillor Mrs Judy Rainsforth
Councillor Tom Regis
Councillor Jim Snee
Councillor Mrs Mandy Snee
Councillor Mrs Anne Welburn
Councillor Trevor Young

In Attendance:
Ian Knowles Chief Executive
Alan Robinson Director of Corporate Services and Monitoring Officer
Andy Gray Housing and Enforcement Manager
Diane Krochmal Housing Strategy & Supply Manager
Grant White Enterprising Communities Manager
Anna Grieve Contracts Manager
Emily Holmes Selective Licensing Officer
Katie Storr Senior Democratic & Civic Officer
James Welbourn Democratic and Civic Officer

Membership: No Substitutes

Apologies: No Apologies

10 CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed all present to the second virtual meeting of the Prosperous Communities Committee and in doing so made reference to the recent recalculation of political balance and committee allocations. This had resulted in Councillor Waller no longer serving on the Committee and the Chairman therefore took the opportunity to thank him for the work he had undertaken and his contribution to the Committee.

11 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

12 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

(a) Meeting of the Prosperous Communities Committee – 2 June 2020.

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Prosperous Communities Committee held on 2 June 2020 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

13 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE

Members gave consideration to the Matters Arising Schedule which set out the current position of all previously agreed actions as at 6 July 2020.

In light of the concerns raised at the previous Committee meeting regarding the Leisure Centre, and in particular its cleanliness, the Chief Executive offered a brief update of the activity which had been taking place in preparation for the Centre's opening, following recent Government Announcements. The Contracts Manager, who had been working closely with the Leisure provider, and who was overseeing this work, was also in attendance and provided Committee with a more detailed update.

The Centre at Gainsborough would re-open on 25 July. Only dry side activities would be available and there would be a reduced programme. There would be no racket sports, no active seniors sessions and the gym facility had been spread over several locations to ensure guidelines could be met. All centre users would need to book and no walk-in users would be permitted, this arrangement would help facilitate track and trace requirements. The Centre would be open 8-4 weekends and 7-9 during the week, the same hours would apply to the new centre at Market Rasen which would also open its doors on 25 July for the first time.

The Centre at Gainsborough would be undergoing a deep-clean, by an external company, before the re-opening and staff had been attending the centre on a voluntary basis to assist with this work. Additional sanitizer stations had been installed and following the deep clean, all the necessary social distancing signage would be erected. The Contracts Manager would be having a walk around with the Centre Manager following the deep clean and it had been agreed in advance, any job not considered to standard would be repeated as part of the negotiated price. There was also an opportunity for Gainsborough Members and Members of this Committee to visit the centre next Friday, before the centre re-opened to ensure they were satisfied with the work that had been undertaken.

During the Centre's closure the heating to the pool had been turned off and chemical levels had been increased. Daily backwashing had been undertaken and was likely responsible for the visible grit Members had previously referred to. It was envisaged the process of increasing the temperature, re-aligning the chemicals and safety testing sign offs would be completed within 3-4 weeks, after which time some form of wet-side activity would be returned.

In response to Members' questions it was confirmed that SLM were aware of guidance relating to air conditioning and the air conditioning would therefore be off. The Leisure provider would be paying for the deep clean. However the Council were currently looking at how they could support the provider through the recovery when the centres would be operating at reduced capacity. This support was currently under negotiation.

Members thanked Officers for the update and the offer to visit the Centre in Gainsborough, on Friday 23 July before its re-opening was re-iterated.

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

14 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Tracey Coulson declared a personal interest in agenda items 6 (a), and (b), (Progress of Health Related Work), and (Housing Enforcement Policy Review) as her business was a housing provider for the over 55's. Neither she nor her company however, would be directly or indirectly affected by the proposals within the reports.

15 PROGRESS OF HEALTH RELATED WORK

Members gave consideration to a report which provided the first annual update on progress of health related work within the authority, following it having been resolved at the Committee in January 2019 that Members would receive such an annual update report. The contents of the report were summarised to Members.

Debate ensued and whilst Members considered a lot of work had been undertaken and the Health and Well-being Partnership undoubtedly had the capability to deliver and make a difference, some considered there was still a lot of work to be undertaken in promoting the services available, and ensuring residents knew how to access them.

Councillor Young made reference to a number of questions he had submitted in advance of the meeting, all of which directly related to Appendix 1 of the report this being the 2018 - 2019 Annual Report of the Well-Being Lincs Partnership. He outlined a few of these to Committee and considered access to this type of information would really assist elected members in undertaking their roles and assisting residents.

Officers thanked Councillor Young for his questions, and advised the Committee that responses were being sought from the Partnership. Both the questions posed and responses received would be circulated to all Members of the Committee. Furthermore, the Service Manager of the Partnership had indicated he would be more than willing to address the Committee at a future meeting, to update them further on the work of the Partnership over the 2019/2020 year and to-date. Officers concurred with the comments around promotion and awareness raising and outlined some of the activities that were planned and of leaflets in production by the Communities Team.

Members also felt it was important, that in order to be able to better determine the true

impact of the work more information around the actual outcomes and detailed data would be helpful in the future.

In response, Officers advised that work was on-going to develop appropriate Corporate Plan measures. It was hoped measures developed would be able to demonstrate both the direct and in-direct benefits this work was having across the District. A report against corporate plan performance measures was due to be presented to Members later in the year and would include such information around the Health agenda.

The Chairman confirmed future attendance by the Service Manager of the Partnership would be welcomed and Officers undertook to arrange this for a future meeting.

RESOLVED that

- (a) the ongoing work relating to health and well-being and the forward plan be approved;
- (b) a further update report be submitted to the Prosperous Communities Committee in one year's time.

16 HOUSING ENFORCEMENT POLICY REVIEW

The Council was required to have in place a Housing Enforcement Policy and from time to time, as legislation was introduced or amended the policy would require revision.

Members gave consideration to a report which set out a revised version of the policy and which outlined the main changes made, as detailed in Section 3 of the report. These were summarised to Members with rationale and explanation offered for each.

It was noted that the Council's ability to enact parts of the policy were restricted currently due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Specific guidance had been issued to landlords and tenants in relation to disrepair and this was being applied at the current time. The main restriction related to the internal inspections of properties, which carried a significantly higher risk to staff than in any normal circumstance. Other methods for assessing matters under the policy were being developed to enable the service to continue to be delivered. The focus currently remained on high risk issues that could cause a threat to life.

Debate ensued and Members firstly congratulated Officers for the work they undertook in relation to Housing Enforcement. Members considered the service performed well and was often ahead of the game in the approaches and measures it used.

In response to requests for data demonstrating activity across both Gainsborough and the District, Officers advised, whilst the majority of activity was focussed within Gainsborough, as this was where issues were readily identified and reported, the approach taken was a District Wide approach. It was acknowledged that similar issues existed in rural communities and Officers offered reassurance that all cases, regardless of location, would be addressed in the same manner.

Whilst the location of reports was not something regularly reported to Members, Officers

advised they could provide information detailing the spread of cases.

Members again thanked the Team for the work undertaken and encouraged that this continue.

RESOLVED that:

- (a) the revised Housing Enforcement Policy be approved; and
- (b) delegated authority be granted to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chairman of the Prosperous Communities Committee, to make minor housekeeping amendments to the Policy in the future.

17 HOUSING ACT CIVIL PENALTIES POLICY REVIEW

The Housing and Planning Act 2016 made provisions for Local Authorities to issue civil penalties for certain offences under the Housing Act 2004. The Council introduced its first policy to enable this in May 2018, with further revisions made in March 2019.

The Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2020 came into effect on June 1st 2020. This regulation required all landlords to have a valid electrical safety certificate in much the same way as a gas safety certificate was required. Due to the introduction of an additional offence, the Policy required further updating to include this.

Members therefore gave consideration to a report which outlined these additional powers and gave an overview of other changes made and deemed necessary in order to further improve the policy and ensure it remained robust. These were detailed at Section 3 of the report.

The report also provided high-level information of the penalties issued to-date under the Policy and further offences were anticipated following the introduction of this new legal requirement.

Debate ensued and Officers were again congratulated for their work. It was acknowledged that the new regulations would be challenging particularly in older housing stock. Assurance was sought that any stock with which the Council had a direct association would be subject to the same checks including any Almshouses in the Council's ownership.

It was confirmed that the small stock hold within the South West Ward, would be tested although the Council was not responsible for arranging the check. All had scheduled inspections and Officers could provide the dates if needed. Certificates once issued were active for five years.

With regard to Almshouses, Officers requested that the Member provide specific details of the properties.

A point of information was offered from Vice-Chairman, Councillor Howitt Cowan, who served as a trustee for the Charles Cooper Almshouses. He advised that the Almshouses

within that particular Trust were most definitely not within the ownership of West Lindsey District Council.

Officers re-iterated the offer to further look into the matter if specific details could be provided.

On being put to the vote it was

RESOLVED that

- (a) the revised Civil Penalties Policy be approved; and
- (b) delegated authority be granted to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chairman of the Prosperous Communities Committee, to make minor housekeeping amendments to the Policy in the future.

18 WORKPLAN

Members gave consideration to the Committee Workplan.

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

19 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED that under Section 100 (A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 A of the Act.

20 SAFER STREETS FUND - DELIVERY

Members gave consideration to a report which sought approval of the delivery of CCTV upgrades and expansion subject to Safer Streets Funding being secured.

Members noted that the funding came with stringent conditions meaning the area specified within the report was one of only two areas within the whole of Lincolnshire eligible to apply. Details of the bid submitted and the additional resources this would bring to the area were shared in detail with the Committee.

The bid outcome was awaited and was expected by the end of month, delivery of the proposed scheme was dependent on a successful bid, following which the timescales for implementation were tight, with all monies needing to be spent before March 20201.

Debate ensued and Members fully supported the investment and additional provision. It was acknowledged that there was a perception that CCTV did not work and was not always a deterrent. However, CCTV could and would never prevent every crime. Detection was only part of the process and police presence at incidents nationally was on a priority basis.

A record of incidents and data was retained; evidencing impact on criminal cases could be difficult due to the timeline within the criminal justice system. CCTV also afforded benefits in respect of wider enforcement issues.

Members felt it imperative that there was better reporting of outcomes directly resulting from CCTV intervention or information in order to improve public confidence. Officers undertook to publish some case studies in a future edition of the Members Bulletin.

Following further discussion around the specifics of the upgraded equipment and additional capability this would afford it was

RESOLVED that

- (a) the upgrade of public space CCTV be approved subject to the Safer Streets Fund bid being successful and subsequent grant agreement with the Office of Police & Crime Commissioner; and
- (b) it be **RECOMMENDED** to the Corporate Policy & Resources Committee that a capital budget for this project be created.

The meeting concluded at 8.10 pm.

Chairman