



ANNUAL COUNCIL

Monday, 9 May 2022

Subject: Overview & Scrutiny Annual Report 2021/22

Report by:

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Purpose / Summary:

To present the Annual Report from the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

RECOMMENDATION(S):

1. That Members receive the Annual Report from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

IMPLICATIONS

Legal: The Chairman of the Committee is required constitutionally (Part II, Article 7, paragraph 7.6) to submit an annual report to Council on the work the Committee has undertaken.

Financial: FIN/18/23/SL

There are no financial implications arising from this report

Staffing: The Committee is supported from existing resources and there are no other implications arising from this report.

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights: N/A

Data Protection Implications: N/A

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities: The Council's Carbon Management Plan, Climate Strategy and Action Plan contain proposals aimed at reducing the Council's carbon emission to a net-zero position by 2050 and achieve the same across the District of West Lindsey within the same timescale. The Council's carbon footprint and a report on progress against the Action Plan will be reported to Prosperous Communities Committee on an annual basis, starting in September 2022.

Climate related risks are inherent in all work the council undertakes and a new assessment tool will be presented to Prosperous Communities Committee in May 2022 that is intended to make sure all council projects, policies and decisions take proper account of their environmental impacts. The risk of not properly incorporating assessments could lead to the Council contributing to irreversible temperature rises and subsequent damage to the climate and natural environments.

In practice the Overview & Scrutiny Annual Report 2021 is too high-level to undertake a meaningful Climate, Environment and Sustainability impact assessment against the criteria. Individual assessments will be undertaken in 22/23 as actions are developed.

Section 17 Crime and Disorder Considerations: Whilst not related to Section 17, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee regularly welcome representatives from Lincolnshire Police in order to fulfil the Council's responsibilities under Section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006 (Local Authority scrutiny of crime and disorder matters).

Health Implications: Work streams such as the review of Disabled Facilities Grants and receiving representatives from the NHS have a wider implication for the district as a whole, as the Committee strives to enable improvements in health and wellbeing provision.

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

Agenda and minutes arising from the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held during the 2021/2022 civic year, all of which are located on the West Lindsey District Council website.

<https://democracy.west-lindsey.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=386&Year=0>

Risk Assessment:

N/A

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

Key Decision:

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

Yes

No

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Chairman of the Committee is required constitutionally (Part II, Article 7, paragraph 7.6) to submit an annual report to Council, in which she details the work her committee has undertaken through the previous civic year and summarise the proposals for the work plan over the coming year. In line with the terms of reference for the committee, the Chairman should also update Annual Council with any amendments to the committee's operating methodology.
- 1.2 The Chairman's Annual Report is set out below.

2 Chairman's Annual Report

- 2.1 As we, and the Council, have adapted to the frequently changing circumstances due to Covid-19, 2021 saw not only the return of face-to-face meetings but also 'business as usual' for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee following the shortened work plan of the previous couple of years.
- 2.2 Throughout 2021/22, we have welcomed several representatives from outside agencies, we have once again been involved in the review of the Progress and Delivery measure sets as well as scrutiny of the quarterly P&D reports, and we have dealt with matters referred to us by both the policy committees.
- 2.3 The Committee reviewed the Operating Methodology at its June meeting in 2021, where it remained unchanged. It is anticipated that, having had 12 months of more usual working practices, the next annual review in June this year may generate more amendments.
- 2.4 There has been limited opportunity for pre-decision scrutiny due to the referrals from the policy committees and the commitment to existing items on our work plan, but as a Committee we receive the Forward Plan at each meeting and review upcoming reports.
- 2.5 Along with the review of the Operating Methodology in June this year, the proposed work plan for 2022/23 will be considered, with options to extend our work of the current year as well as identify other areas of focus.

3 Progress and Delivery

- 3.1 As well as our usual scrutiny of the Progress and Delivery reporting, where we consider the discussions held during the presentation of P&D reports to both policy committees, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was involved in a cross-party working group to review the P&D measure set.

- 3.2 This review was last undertaken in 2019 and the purpose of the Member Working Group was to review all the Council's proposed key performance indicators and corresponding targets; ensuring they reflected a balanced scorecard approach, were stretch based to reflect the Council's ambitions and enabled a transparent view of performance across the Council's service areas.
- 3.3 The Working Group met with Officers and the outcome of the review was reported back to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee in February 2022, where the new measure set was approved.
- 3.4 For the upcoming year, scrutiny of P&D reporting will continue to be a function of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, with the continued option for the policy committees to refer items to O&S where they feel unmet targets need further investigation.

4 Referrals from the Corporate Policy and Resources and Prosperous Communities Committees

- 4.1 This year, our Committee undertook two specific reviews based on referrals from the policy committees. Those being the processing of Disabled Facilities Grants and the performance of the markets contract in Gainsborough.
- 4.2 At our meeting in September 2021, we heard from the Homes, Health and Wellbeing Team Manager, with a breakdown of how the DFGs were processed between district and county level, as well as identifying areas where improvements could be made and where it was outside of the Council's control.
- 4.3 It was proposed that an internal review of the process be undertaken, as well as improved measures through the P&D reporting, in order to more accurately reflect the elements of the process that were within control of the District Council. This continues to be monitored through the P&D reporting.
- 4.4 Also in September 2021, we heard from the Assistant Director of Commercial and Operational Services regarding the performance of the markets contract in Gainsborough. This had been referred to us from the Prosperous Communities Committee, specifically regarding value for money in terms of supporting the markets in Gainsborough.
- 4.5 Discussions at that meeting were spirited and detailed, with the Committee gaining an understanding of the future proposals for all West Lindsey markets. Members welcomed the information at that time, although there have since been further reports shared through the policy committees whereby the proposals for the future of the markets have been approved.

5 Programme of Outside Agencies and Presentation Items

- 5.1 This year has been a successful year for visits from outside agencies, with returning faces as well as new ones, and we have also had a series of presentation items from our own Officers.
- 5.2 October 2021 saw the return of Lincolnshire Police, with both the Inspector and the Committee seeing his visit as an opportunity to 'reset' after the pandemic and to introduce himself to our Members and vice-versa. We heard of the difficulties faced by the Police during the pandemic, as well as how they had adapted to working from home for support staff, with the Inspector highlighting ways in which the pandemic had actually forced a review of processes and led to some significant improvements. We also heard details of the incoming new Police Officers across the county and district, based on the Government's drive for more Officers. The Committee will welcome the Inspector back to one of our meetings in the new civic year, a little under a year since his last visit.
- 5.3 Following the visit from the Police, we then welcomed representatives from the NHS to our November meeting, specifically regarding the services run out of the John Coupland Hospital in Gainsborough. Members were reassured that the NHS was focused on providing increased services from the hospital, as well as undertaking a significant schedule of works to improve the setting and facilities. Cross-district services were discussed, as well as the perceived imbalance of access to 'local' services, with Members sharing examples of residents who had needed to travel out of area for relatively minor procedures. The Committee heard how the need to work from home / work remotely had led to several service improvements, for example remote issuing of prescriptions to be collected from a nearby pharmacy, with work undergoing to expand and continue these improvements. The Committee welcomed the detailed information provided on that evening, as relevant as it was for Gainsborough residents as well as insights into services across the district.
- 5.4 Presentations provided by our own Officers have covered, as well as the DFGs mentioned earlier, concerns regarding fly-tipping across the district and the outcome of the flood-risk working group. Both schemes of work have identified areas of action for the council to address, with recommended proposals to be presented to the policy committees for consideration. The flood work, in particular, has been identified as an area of need across the district, with suggestions for Member and Officer working groups to be ongoing in an attempt to alleviate the impact of flooding for our residents.
- 5.5 Our final visiting agency, in March this year, was the return of Everyone Active, the leisure providers at both Gainsborough and Market Rasen Leisure Centres. Focus had been intended to be on outreach services, however the Committee also asked to address concerns specific to Gainsborough Leisure Centre in terms of cleanliness and state of repairs.

- 5.6 The Committee was reassured by the openness and honesty of our two guests and were assured that intended improvements would be undertaken, with a return visit on the cards to update us of their progress.
- 5.7 Aspects of the outreach and community engagement programmes were also shared, with Members appreciating that whilst the pandemic had really had an impact on their ability to engage in that way, the focus now was on making that happen.
- 5.8 The upcoming programme of outside agencies will be discussed within the meeting in June this year, however it is anticipated that the focus on leisure will continue into the new civic year.

6 Look Forward to Next Year

- 6.1 Given the overall success of the renewed focus on scrutiny this year, there is much scope for this to be continued throughout 2022/23. We will keep an eye on areas of work such as the flooding working groups, the development of the new market proposals and of course the promised improvements in terms of leisure and sports development.
- 6.2 As mentioned previously, we anticipate there being more scope in which to re-introduce other areas of work for the committee, such as reports for pre-scrutiny, and as always will welcome any referrals from the two policy committees.

7 Concluding Remarks

- 7.1 Much of the work undertaken by District Councils becomes highly successful, meeting the needs and expectations of our residents when, as a Council, true partnership working is undertaken. Where we confine ourselves to only considering elements of provision that are within the control of the District Council, we limit our success.
- 7.2 The work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has aimed to consider issues and work presented to it, in a way that encourages collaboration between key partners and providers.
- 7.3 Leading officers should be congratulated when great strides forward are achieved due to this style of working, and when cross party working is added to the mix, we see significant progress which is of great benefit to our residents. The work around flooding and drainage is a good example of this.
- 7.4 Going forward, in an environment that allows in person meetings, I believe greater involvement of residents will contribute very positively to the scrutiny process and enhance the Council's standing in the community as an organisation that listens to its stakeholders.