

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Prosperous Communities Committee held in the Council Chamber - The Guildhall on 7 June 2022 commencing at 6.30 pm.

Present: Councillor Owen Bierley (Chairman)
Councillor John McNeill (Vice-Chairman) and Councillor
Mrs Tracey Coulson (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Stephen Bunney
Councillor Christopher Darcel
Councillor Michael Devine
Councillor Jane Ellis
Councillor Mrs Caralyne Grimble
Councillor Mrs Jessie Milne
Councillor Jaime Oliver
Councillor Roger Patterson
Councillor Mrs Lesley Rollings
Councillor Jim Snee
Councillor Trevor Young

In Attendance:
Sally Grindrod-Smith Director Planning, Regeneration & Communities
Ady Selby Director of Commercial & Operational Services
Grant White Enterprising Communities Manager
Wendy Osgodby Senior Growth Strategy & Projects Officer
Claire Bailey Assistant Planning Services Team Manager
Darren Mellors Performance & Programme Manager

Apologies: Councillor Steve England

Membership: Councillor Mrs Caralyne Grimble sat as substitute for
Councillor Steve England

1 CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed all Members and Officers to the first meeting of the 2022/23 Civic Year. Noting the Committee's membership had changed at Annual Council, he expressed thanks to Councillor Mrs Snee, who had left Committee, for the work she undertaken and welcomed Councillor Rollings who had joined the Committee.

2 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Prosperous Communities Committee held on 3 May, 2022 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

4 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE

With reference to the Matters Arising entitled CCTV- Case Studies, whilst acknowledging it was not directly related to the action, a Member referenced recent interactions with the Police where it had been stressed by them the importance of really effective and high-quality CCTV to ensure prosecutions and convictions, noting the recent spate in crimes.

The Member sought an update as to whether there had been and/or would be ongoing interactions between West Lindsey Officers and the Police to ensure that the Council was supporting the Police as fully as possible and whether there were plans to grow the quality and provision of CCTV in particular hotspots.

In responding the Chairman outlined interactions which had been held and confirmed to Members that a report in respect of CCTV provision was due to be presented to Corporate Policy and Resources Committee later in the month.

With no further comments or questions, the contents of the Matters Arising schedule were duly **NOTED**.

5 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations made at this point in the meeting.

6 LINCOLNSHIRE WOLDS FUNDING 2022-2025

The Committee gave consideration to a report from the Communities Manager, presenting the new Memorandum of Agreement for the Lincolnshire Wolds Countryside Service, including the funding commitment matching DEFRA and other Local Authority contributions. It was explained that the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (NPAC Act) established the powers to designate AONBs; with the primary objective of conserving and enhancing their natural beauty, whilst taking account of the needs of agriculture, forestry and other rural industries. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) reaffirmed the duty and obligations for the protection and management of AONBs. Part IV of the Act; Sections 82, 84, 85, 86 and 89 (as detailed within the Management Plan) were of particular relevance, and placed a legal requirement on all relevant local authorities to prepare and publish a partnership Management Plan.

It was highlighted that approval was sought for a commitment of £17,830 per annum for the three financial years 2022/2023 to 2024/2025. There was an ongoing budget provision of £17,900 pa allocated within the MTFP for this purpose.

Debate ensued during which there was cross chamber support for committing the funding requested. Members spoke passionately of the value of the service, the benefits it afforded to the wider surrounding area, the visitors and additional spend the Wolds brought to the District.

It was even suggested that additional funding should be committed.

At the request of the Committee, the Communities Manager, outlined the history of the funding schedule, why current levels were set as they were and the potential risks in amending the amount of funding afforded directly to the Partnership through this means, including a likely impact on the total amount the Partnership could secure from DEFRA .

The Lincolnshire Wolds Countryside Service delivered excellent value and return and whilst having limited operating budgets, Officers advised that this was supplemented with other grant funding. The Countryside Service were excellent at bidding for community grants and external funding to fund specific project activity beyond the core base budgets.

It was stressed that this decision did not prevent the Authority funding specific projects and events, run by the Partnership in the future. This funding was the amount allocated to the Partnership solely, as part the Memorandum of Understanding

It was also brought to Members attention that the current Management Plan ran until 2023, there would be a public consultation exercise undertaken in reviewing the Plan and Members were encouraged to engage in the process.

The Chairman requested the Communities Manager express the Committee's sincere appreciation to the Lincolnshire Wolds Countryside Management Service for the services they provided and work they undertook.

RESOLVED that the 3-year funding commitment for the Lincolnshire Wolds Memorandum of Agreement 2022-2025 be approved.

7 VISITOR ECONOMY STRATEGY 2022

Members gave consideration to a report presented by the Senior Growth Strategy & Projects Officer, regarding the draft West Lindsey Visitor Economy Strategy and Action Plan for approval. Members heard that in late 2019 West Lindsey District Council began the drafting of a Visitor Economy Strategy to support the Corporate Plan ambition of 'a vibrant visitor economy'. A draft of the strategy was initially developed however, in early 2020, resources were diverted into the delivery of the Covid-19 business grants and work on the strategy was delayed. Although the Corporate Plan aspiration for the visitor economy remained, the national and regional policy environment, as well as the sector itself, had shifted significantly since the strategy was first drafted in 2019.

It was explained that the Council was successful in receiving support from the Local Government Association Economic Growth Advisor Programme. Planning Solutions Consulting were appointed by the Local Government Association to support the Council with the development of a Visitor Economy Strategy and Action Plan, building on the work

developed in late 2019.

The Visitor Economy Strategy and Action Plan had been drafted in consultation with key stakeholders. It was vital that the process of identifying new opportunities and developing the Visitor Economy Strategy must align with and embrace the needs and aspirations of stakeholders involved in the visitor economy. The consultations were carried out through one-to-one discussions with Officers and Members and key partners including the County Council, East Lindsey District Council, Lincolnshire Wolds AONB, Visit Lincoln and Greater Lincolnshire. Virtual workshops were held online to discuss the action plan with key stakeholder groups such as tourism businesses including key attraction and accommodation representatives. It was highlighted that the Visitor Economy Strategy and Action Plan had been developed and endorsed by Members of the Leisure, Culture, Events and Tourism subgroup.

Members heard that, as previously reported to the Committee, the Visitor Economy Strategy and Action Plan would feed into the development of a Cultural Plan for West Lindsey. The findings from the research had been compiled in a draft report which included an action plan with a suite of detailed interventions and initiatives which responded to the vision to create a community-led destination that develops, refines and presents an authentic responsible tourism product with a focus on sustainability and community benefits.

The Chairman thanked the Officer for her thorough presentation and invited comments from Members of the Committee. Members were supportive of the strategy and associated action plan, however it was highlighted that the Council needed to take responsibility for the implementation of the strategy and drive it forward. Members highlighted the many and varied attractions for tourists across the district, not just the market towns and Lincoln fringe.

During the discussion on the Visitor Economy item Members noted that the currently proposed Solar Farm developments had the potential to pose a serious threat to the Visitor Economy. In particular concern was raised around a potential impact on the visual amenity and accessibility of open spaces across the District. During this debate wider impacts were also noted with particular concerns raised regarding the potential loss of land for the purpose of agriculture, specifically food production.

Officers noted these concerns, both in terms of the impact on the Visitor Economy and the wider economic impacts, and offered assurance that these would be picked up and referenced during the Local Impact Assessment stage of each of the development proposals.

Members further discussed the wide-ranging attractions across the district, from golf courses, to the Lincolnshire Wolds, to local theatre, as well as Farmers' Markets, the Viking Way, Lincolnshire Showground, Market Rasen race course, as well as many other events and attractions listed by Members of the Committee.

There was great support for the strategy, and recognition of the importance of it, with a clear understanding that the Council needed to deliver against the plan.

Having been moved and seconded, the Chairman took the vote and it was unanimously

RESOLVED that

- a) the draft West Lindsey Visitor Economy Strategy and Action Plan be approved; and
- b) updates on progress and performance against the agreed strategy and action plan be received from the Leisure, Culture, Events and Tourism Sub Group.

8 PROGRESS & DELIVERY QUARTER FOUR (2021-22)

The Chairman welcomed the Change Project and Performance Officer to the meeting and invited her to present the Progress and Delivery report for quarter 4 of 2021-22, which covered January to March 2022 and the end of year report for 2021/22. It was explained that, as this was an exceptions report, the Officer would run through each portfolio highlighting the measures that had performed above or below target for two consecutive periods. It was noted that there was a correction to be made within the quarter 4 report in terms of the percentages, explaining that 45% of measures had exceeded their targets, 32% were within tolerance and 23% were performing below the agreed target. In addition, 71% of measures had exceeded their targets for two quarters or more while the remaining 29% had been below target for two quarters or more. Overall performance had improved on the last quarter with 77% of measures within tolerance or above compared with 65% in quarter three. In addition, measures exceeding target had also improved with 71% of measures exceeding target compared with 59% in quarter three.

Corporate Health

Members heard that all measures regarding % of calls answered in 21 seconds were either above target or within tolerance, meaning corporate health reported a good overall performance. The measure CH12 had been removed within the 22/23 measure set as it had not presented an accurate representation of the call handling within the council.

Finance and Property

The rental portfolio voids reported at above target for at least two previous quarters, with voids at 3%. There were no measures reporting below target within the finance and property portfolio.

Homes and Communities

There were 3 performance measures which had performed above target for at least two consecutive quarters, these being long term empty properties as a % of all housing stock; number of households which had been housed from the housing register (removed 22/23) and homeless prevention (amended 22/23 to homeless approaches with positive outcomes). Four measures had performed under target for at least the previous two consecutive periods, these measures related to home choices and homes, health and wellbeing. For home choices the measures below tolerance for two consecutive periods were regarding the number of nights spent in B&B accommodation and Homeless prevention cases as a % of total approaches. In terms of the number of nights spent in B&B accommodation, whilst this had increased from the last quarter it had decreased from quarter 4 20/21 which was at 512 nights and all contracted temporary accommodation had remained full during quarter 4. Delays with moving on, due to issues outside of the Council's control, had contributed to the increase. In addition the protect and vaccinate programme, which required additional

temporary accommodation, also contributed.

For homes health and wellbeing, the measures below tolerance related to the average number of days from DFG referral to completion and long-term empty properties brought back into use. Starting with the average number of days from DFG referral to completion this was to be amended in 22/23 measure set in order for performance to be measured from the receipt of a completed application from Lincolnshire County Council to completion of works. This was the period of time for which the Council had direct responsibility for DFGs. A new measure was to be included in 22/23 to report on the “percentage of referrals completed within 120 days (not including complex cases)” so that the timeframe could also be reported without the complex cases to provide further context in the report. In 22/23 the empty property levels would continue to be monitored however the measure to monitor long term empty properties brought back into use would be removed as there was no resource or officer proactively dedicated to this area of work.

Operational and Commercial Services

There were 5 measures which performed better than the agreed targets for at least two consecutive quarters with positive progress to be reported in the recovery of the Trinity Arts Centre and exceeding the service level agreements to collect missed bins and recover fly tipping. The Leisure Centre continued to report above target in terms of customer satisfaction.

Measures below target, with the exception of the missed black and blue bin collections, were still ongoing in their covid recovery however in terms of leisure centre usage and outreach work, this continued to move closer to the targets. An additional measure to include the number of outreach sessions would be included to add further context to the existing measure of outreach users.

The average number of stalls at the Tuesday and Saturday markets fell short of their target, work was ongoing with Marshall’s Yard to support the market, following successful events held in quarter four. The addition of a further measure to report on the average number of market traders for both markets over the reporting period would provide additional context during 2022/23 reporting.

Members were provided with a brief update from the Commercial Development Manager in relation to leisure provision. It was explained that the Commercial Development Manager was preparing an action plan that would identify and address the short and long term challenges with the leisure and sport provision in West Lindsey. Everyone Active had been given clear instructions to improve the cleanliness and maintenance of the West Lindsey Leisure Centre and significant improvements had been made over the last 2 months. The P&D measures would continue to be reviewed and clarity sought on the data provided, as well as driving community outreach through Everyone Active, Trinity Foundation, Active Lincs and other partners.

People and Democratic Services

Two measures had performed above target for two consecutive periods, both related to FOIs

with turnaround remaining above target and maintaining zero challenges to FOI's. There were no measures under target in this portfolio.

Planning and Regeneration

Development Management performance remained high with 3 measures maintaining performance above target for 2 or more consecutive periods, the team continued to ensure applications determined in time remained above target for both major and non major applications. There were no measures under target for two of more consecutive period in this portfolio.

Change Management and Regulatory Services

Members heard that 11 measures performed above their targets for two consecutive periods with only one performing below target. Continued high performance was reported in all areas with a special mention to the LLPG standard which was awarded the platinum award following the service maintaining gold standard for the whole year. This was awarded to ten local authorities in the East Midlands including West Lindsey.

The number of community safety cases remained below target; this measure related to cases closed during the reporting period as a result of compliance with warning, Fixed Penalty Notice or formal action. If cases were not reaching a point of action then there were fewer to close, and this measure would be amended in 22/23 to report % of community cases closed following compliance. This would provide more accurate reporting and the number could also be included in the narrative of the report going forward.

The Officer paused in her presentation, prior to summarising the end of year report, in order for Members to ask questions of the quarter 4 report.

There were concerns raised that the figures provided appeared to demonstrate repeat and continued difficulties in the same areas of service provision, such as enforcement, homes and housing and leisure facilities. It was recognised that improvements to how data was reported and collated had been made for the 2022/23 measure sets, in order to more accurately reflect those areas where the Council could influence improvements, however comments were made by some Members that there needed to be a stronger review of those service areas that seemingly continuously underperformed. It was requested that Service Managers should attend meetings in order to present their plans for improvement to the Committee.

Vice-Chairman Councillor J. McNeill, speaking as Chairman of the Governance and Audit Committee, suggested there could be audit work undertaken to review the information provided to Members and whether there were any suggested improvements. He noted he would discuss this within the Governance and Audit setting.

There was further discussion regarding rates of fly-tipping and the Council's response to it, as well as the success of community litter picks across the district. Members praised the Trinity Arts Centre and stated it to be an excellent home for the arts in West Lindsey.

With no further speakers, the Chairman invited the Officer to conclude with her summary of the end of year report.

The Committee heard that the end of the year was a good opportunity to reflect on all the good performance which 2021/22 had reported, with a lot of positives to take away, not only on the continued recovery of commercial activities but performance as a whole. Corporate Health represented a positive picture of the Council with all but the one measure in tolerance or above target. Commercial activities that remained below target showed growth on the previous year, which is what would be hoped to see. Homes and communities continued their work to prevent homelessness before it reached a relief stage and there were a number of services reporting all measures above target such as Finance, Property, Democratic and Development Management. Finally, Regulatory and Change Management reported a large number of measures above target, and improvements on the Food Standard Agency inspections and community safety case closures from the previous year.

The Chairman again thanked the Officer for her time and presentation of the report, and, with no further comments or questions, having been moved and seconded it was

RESOLVED that the performance of the Council's services through agreed performance measures had been assessed, and areas where improvements should be made, having regard to the remedial measures set out in the report, had been indicated.

9 WORKPLAN

On consideration of the work plan, a Member of the Committee raised grave concerns that there was a planned item in relation to the South West Ward, where there had been no prior communication or consultation with either Ward Councillor. Work had been undertaken previously, and the Member stated it to be incredible that further work was on the work plan having had no consultation with Members or the community. His comments were noted to be discussed with Officers.

There were further comments made regarding the upcoming report on the Parking Strategy, with Members of the Committee raising issues regarding pay machines being out of order and the pay by phone being the only option, this not being suitable for some people. These comments were also noted by Officers, with it explained that the strategy would seek to address some of those concerns.

With no further comments, questions, or requirement for a vote, the Work Plan was **DULY NOTED**.

The meeting concluded at 8.26 pm.

Chairman