

## WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Challenge and Improve Committee held in the Council Chamber - The Guildhall, Marshall's Yard, Gainsborough, DN21 2NA on 27 June 2017 commencing at 6.30 pm.

**Present:** Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan (Chairman)  
Councillor Lewis Strange (Vice-Chairman) and  
Councillor Mrs Angela White (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Ian Fleetwood  
Councillor Mrs Jessie Milne  
Councillor Malcolm Parish  
Councillor Roger Patterson  
Councillor Thomas Smith  
Councillor Mrs Anne Welburn

**In Attendance:**  
Mark Sturgess Chief Operating Officer  
James O'Shaughnessy Team Manager BI and Corporate Governance  
Sarah Shaw Health Co-ordinator  
Katie Coughlan Governance & Civic Officer

**Also Present:** Councillor Mrs Shelia Bibb

**Apologies:** Councillor David Bond  
Councillor Mrs Diana Rodgers

**Membership:** No substitutes were appointed

### 17 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING.

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 23 May 2017 were approved as a correct record.

### 18 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

### 19 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE

The Committee gave consideration to the Matters Arising Schedule, setting out the current position of previously agreed actions, as at 19 June 2017.

With regard to the green actions entitled "Café Style Meeting with Young People" and "Youth Unemployment Recommendations" the Interim Strategic Lead for Organisation, Transformation and Business Improvement updated the Committee and advised that the

event had been held on 14 June, had been well attended, of value and resulted in some frank discussions. A report, including a number of recommendations, had now been formulated and would be submitted to the Prosperous Communities Committee for consideration at their July meeting.

A short discussion ensued with Members commenting on the variety of issues young people had to overcome to secure successful and appropriate employment. All were in agreement the Authority had a role to lobby and persuade those organisations who could bring about change.

**RESOLVED** that the Matters Arising Schedule as at 19 June 2017 be received and noted.

## **20 PRESENTATION ITEM - CRIME AND ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR 6 MONTHLY UPDATE - VERBAL REPORT FROM INSPECTOR NIGEL KEY**

The Committee welcomed Inspector Nigel Key to meeting who addressed Members, providing the Committee with a six month verbal update on crime and anti-social behaviour across the District.

It was noted that in the period May 16 – May 17 crime as a whole had increased by 22%. This was a national trend. This was broken down into the following categories and Inspector Key shared with Members some of his reasoning as to why the increases may have been seen: -

- Violence against the Person - up 29%
- Violence against the Person with injury – up 28%
- Sexual Offences – up 24%

It was envisaged that some of these increases were as a result of the community having greater confidence to report such matters, having better reporting and recording mechanisms and as a result of a number of special units being set up to deal with specific crimes including domestic violence and Child Sexual Exploitation.

- Robbery – up 4%
- Burglary – up 17%
- Theft – up 20%
- Vehicle Crime – up 28 %
- Drugs Offences – up 35%

On-line reporting was due to be launched imminently and thus figures were expected to rise again. Despite the percentage increases seen Members were reminded that in terms of the number of incidents across West Lindsey, when compared to the national scene, crime within West Lindsey remained low, and Lincolnshire one of the safest counties (third out of 43 counties) to live. The only exception to this was around road safety and deaths on the roads. This had slowly been decreasing however since 2016 a rise had been seen, the reasons for this were shared with the Committee.

A current issue in the main settlement of Gainsborough was drug use and dealing. There

had been a number of recent successes, the force continued to be proactive.

Hate crime across the country had risen, however this trend had not been reflected across West Lindsey, although Lincoln had seen a spike.

Regarding force numbers and recruitment, the establishment when operating at normal levels, was around 1100 officers, it was currently operating at around 36 officers below this number. Government initiatives had made Police forces establish a variety of special units and this was a mandatory requirement and had resulted in some officers having to move off the front line. 30 Officers had been recruited in January, a further 30 were expected to join the force in September 2017. The number of PCSOs had seen a considerable reduction however this was as a result of a large number of them having been successful in their applications to become police officers.

Replacement PCOS were currently being recruited and recruitment would run through to 2018.

Moving on to issues effecting rural areas, these were often cyclic. At the last update the main issue had been around the theft of land drovers and 4x4 vehicles, this had tailed off in recent months, being replaced by the theft of diesel from farms, rural business and Gainsborough businesses. Significant arrests had been made recently, proactive work continued and it was hoped this would have a positive impact on the position.

Unfortunately, owners did not always take the necessary pre-cautions to safeguard their property in rural locations, Officers were again working proactively with communities to advise on ways they could help prevent themselves being targeted.

Plant equipment theft continued to be of concern. There had also been a recent rise in the theft of transit vans. These were being stolen, engines removed and the remainder of the van burnt out.

Hemswell Cliff continued to be challenging, the Police were working in Partnership with West Lindsey and had relocated officers to meet the current demand.

Rural Crime was a priority for the Police and Crime Commissioner and a Rural Crime Strategy had recently be launched. The key thrusts of this were shared with the Committee. It was noted that Lincolnshire Police had invested in drone technology for evidence gathering, had dedicated officers for rural crime, made greater use of an ANPR.

Lincolnshire Alert was a great tool for “spreading the word” and was used to engage with communities, generate awareness and offered tips on preventative actions residents could take. Members were encouraged to promote this service to residents.

A short period of questioning and answering followed, with Members raising specific issues within their own Wards. These were responded to accordingly

Inspector Key was thanked for his attendance.

## 21 HEALTH COMMISSION - INTERIM POSITION REPORT

The Committee gave consideration to a report which sought to present a position update on the activity of the Health Commission since January 2017.

The Chairman of the Prosperous Communities Committee and Chairman of the Health Commission presented the report to the Committee, and in doing so outlined the progress the Commission had made in a number of areas, as detailed in Section 2 of the report.

**RESOLVED** that: -

- (a) Neighbourhood Networks be considered as a work plan item over the coming year as part of the review of the Health Commission work, already included in the work plan;
- (b) it be **RECOMMENDED** to Prosperous Communities Committee that additional district council representation at the Lincolnshire Health and Well-Being board be formally requested; and
- (c) it be **RECOMMENDED** to Prosperous Communities Committee that the work of the health commission continue and a review be undertaken every six months to determine the progress outcomes and future need and remit of the Health Commission.

## 22 COMMITTEE OPERATING METHODOLOGY FOR 2017/18

Members gave consideration to a report which aimed to outline the role of the Committee with regard to undertaking reviews; outlined the important considerations with regard to scrutiny and conduct; and provided criteria for reviews and related processes.

It was noted that the methodology within the report was primarily the same as that which had been operated over the last two municipal years but had had minor revisions to ensure it achieved four main objectives, namely: -

- To be able to scrutinise poor performance wherever it might be occurring within the Council – either a service or a project.
- To be able to call reports into the Committee for pre-decision scrutiny.
- To exercise part of the Council’s role as “community leader” by scrutinising the work of other organisations or agencies which deliver services to the people of the District.
- To act as a scrutinising committee for those decisions which have been taken by a policy committee and have been “called in” by members in accordance with the procedure outlined in the Council’s Constitution.

In response to some Members’ concerns that the methodology was limiting in areas

assurance was offered that the proposal to commission external expertise would assist the Committee in becoming more effective. Capacity and resources also needed to be considered.

**RESOLVED** that: -

- (a) the proposed Methodology for 2017/18 as set out in the report be approved; and
- (b) the operation of the Challenge and Improvement Committee be reviewed utilising expertise external to the Council and taking advantage of national best practice.

## 23 FORWARD PLAN

The Governance and Civic Officer presented a report setting out the items of business due to be considered through the committee system and asked Members to identify any reports that they wished to be brought before the Challenge and Improvement Committee for pre-scrutiny.

The following suggestions were made and agreements reached: -

- **Adoption of the CIL for West Lindsey** – This matter be submitted to September’s meeting so as not to affect its current decision date.
- **Scampton Air Show** - this matter was no longer due for consideration by Full Council, however, having heard Committee Members’ reasons for wishing to see the report, it was agreed that a “lessons learnt” report could be submitted to the Committee, post the event. It was agreed this would be added to the Work Plan
- **Housing Strategy** – This matter be submitted to September’s meeting so as not to affect its current decision date, but in order to allow the Committee to submit a consultation response.
- **Enforcement Policy** – This matter be submitted prior to it being submitted to Policy Committee in order that C and I can review the proposals.

**RESOLVED** that:-

- (a) the Forward Plan be noted; and
- (b) the matters detailed above be actioned

## 24 COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

The Work Plan for the business of the Challenge and Improvement Committee was presented.

Attached at Appendix 1 was a proposed workplan which had been formulated in consultation with Lead Members of the Committee and took into account views previously expressed by Members at Committee meetings and through follow-up e-mails.

Appendix 2 detailed the statutory business already included within the workplan

Debate ensued and number of further areas for inclusion in work area one, "Rural Public Realm" were suggested. Officers indicated that the current list was only indicative and if Members were minded to set up a Task and Finish Group to cover this area, the Group once established could finalise the areas to be covered.

Following debate it was also suggested that all Members of the Committee be invited to the Task and Finish Group in the first instance.

All other suggestions within the Work Plan were supported.

On that basis it was **RESOLVED** that: -

- (a) the Work Plan be approved;
- (b) all Members of the Committee be invited to serve on the proposed Task and Finish Group relating to the rural public realm; and
- (c) the Task and Finish Group report back to the next meeting of the Challenge and Improvement Committee setting out the scope, terms of reference, work plan and outcomes of the Public Realm Task and Finish Group for approval.

The meeting concluded at 8.15 pm.

Chairman