

## WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Challenge and Improvement Committee held in the Council Chamber - The Guildhall, Marshall's Yard, Gainsborough, DN21 2NA on 22 May 2018 commencing at 6.30 pm.

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

Councillor Bruce Allison  
Councillor David Bond  
Councillor Mrs Angela Lawrence  
Councillor Mrs Jessie Milne  
Councillor Roger Patterson  
Councillor Mrs Lesley Rollings  
Councillor Thomas Smith

**In Attendance:**  
Mark Sturgess Executive Director of Operations and Head of Paid Service  
Andy Gray Housing and Enforcement Manager  
Natalie Kostiuk Customer Experience Officer  
Ele Durrant Democratic and Civic Officer

**Apologies:** Councillor Mrs Diana Rodgers  
Councillor Mrs Anne Welburn

### 6 CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed all present to the start of a new Civic Year and welcomed Councillor Angela Lawrence who had joined the Committee at Annual Council.

### 7 MEETING OF THE CHALLENGE AND IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 3 APRIL 2018

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 3 April 2018 be approved and signed as a correct record.

## **8 MEETING OF THE CHALLENGE AND IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 14 MAY 2018 (AT THE CONCLUSION OF ANNUAL COUNCIL)**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 14 May 2018, at the conclusion of Annual Council, be approved and signed as a correct record.

Members of Committee commented on the methods chosen for running the committee meetings at the close of Annual Council and the Head of Paid Service agreed to share their comments with the Democratic Services Team, for consideration ahead of Annual Council 2019.

## **9 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

## **10 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE**

The Committee gave consideration to the Matters Arising Schedule, setting out the current position of previously agreed actions, as at 14 May 2018.

The Democratic and Civic Officer advised Members that there remained one outstanding item for the new Civic Year but that all other completed items had now been closed.

**RESOLVED** that the Matters Arising Schedule as at 14 May 2018 be received and noted.

## **11 CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS HANDLING**

Members gave consideration to a report presented by the Customer Experience Officer regarding the current status of customer complaints and the new complaints handling process. She explained her role in the complaints' process and how this had changed over recent months. The Head of Paid Service explained that the role of the Customer Experience Officer was to act as an advocate for the customer to ensure complaints were listened to and used as a learning opportunity to improve services and the overall experience for the customer. The experience and knowledge gained by the Customer Experience Office would be used to identify themes and areas of concern.

Members of Committee enquired as to why the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) may not investigate a complaint, whether compliments were categorised per service in the same way complaints were and whether the amended timescales had made any difference.

In response, the Customer Experience Officer explained that there were areas the LGO did not investigate, such as planning, and these cases would be recorded as 'not investigated'. She added that compliments were categorised per service and it was true that the services with most complaints did also receive most compliments. She also confirmed that the amended time scales had made a difference as she was able to complete most enquiries by

herself, without needing to involve multiple parties which, under previous processes, led to unnecessary delays.

Members of Committee expressed their pleasure at the figures for compliments across all services and congratulated the Customer Experience Officer on her work. It was noted that committee were also due to receive another update report in November 2018.

**RESOLVED** that the contents of the report be noted.

## **12 ENFORCEMENT CASES - BENCHMARK FOR TIMESCALES**

The Housing and Environmental Enforcement Manager presented a report to provide Members with an overview of the current performance position within the planning enforcement work area. Committee was asked to note the contents of the report and the positive steps being taken to ensure performance was enhanced in the future.

Committee Members were welcoming of the report and paid tribute to the hard work of the department. There was discussion regarding what had caused delays in dealing with cases and whether there was anything to be done about those who repeatedly work outside of planning guidelines. The Housing and Environmental Enforcement Manager explained that delays had been caused by a combination of high volume of cases and high complexity. He also explained that methods of recording the complex cases were to be separated out of general data. He gave the example of a case which had been open for two years and five months although Officers could not work on the case for large amounts of time because of statutory timescales involved. Cases such as these would skew the final closure figures.

It was noted that Committee were due to have a further update in November 2018 when there would be a greater amount of data to reflect the new enforcement policy.

After further discussion regarding specific examples of enforcement cases, it was

**RESOLVED** that the contents of the report be noted.

## **13 PROGRESS & DELIVERY PERIOD 4**

The Head of Paid Service introduced the Progress and Delivery report for period four and explained it had already been seen by the two policy committees – Corporate Policy and Resources and Prosperous Communities. The minutes from the Prosperous Communities Committee had been shared with Members previously and the minute of the item from Corporate Policy and Resources was tabled for Members at Committee. He informed Members that they were asked to consider the comments from both policy committees and to ensure there had been appropriate challenge to the report.

There was significant discussion regarding waste disposal agreements, including the recycling strategy for West Lindsey District Council, the green waste charge and queries as to whether residents of West Lindsey were able to access household recycling centres in areas outside of the district, such as in North Lincolnshire. Members acknowledged that there had been a workshop held with County Councillors regarding waste management and

there was ongoing work around this matter.

A Member of Committee praised the work of the Trinity Arts Centre and suggested that there may be opportunities in the future to create deals between the hotel and the Arts Centre in order to encourage more people to come from further afield. It was noted that people already travel for events at the Arts Centre and the opening of the hotel could encourage more people to do so. Councillor J. Milne commended the staff at the Arts Centre and wished for it to be on record that the staff and volunteers did a brilliant job with all they did and the range of events they offered for everyone.

**RESOLVED** that having examined the responses given to the report by the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee and the Prosperous Communities Committee, the Committee was satisfied that the appropriate level of challenge was being made by those committees to the information contained within the report.

#### **14 FORWARD PLAN**

Members were invited to review the forward plan of items for consideration through all committees. The Democratic and Civic Officer advised Members that any items identified for scrutiny could be added into the Committee work plan to be seen at future meetings.

Councillor T. Smith suggested that the 12 month review of selective licensing be brought to Challenge and Improvement to look at the success, or otherwise, of the scheme and specifically examine the support provided to landlords. After discussion between Members it was agreed it would be appropriate to add this item to the work plan, providing sufficient time had elapsed since the initiation of selective licensing. It was confirmed that the item was not due to be seen at Prosperous Communities Committee until the end of 2018 and therefore would be seen by Challenge and Improvement Committee at the beginning of autumn. This allowed a full 12 months to have passed before the review.

Councillor L. Strange recommended that the East Midlands Ambulance Service (EMAS) be invited to attend Committee and explain their recent budget amendment and how this would impact on the District. This was seconded and unanimously agreed to be added to the forward plan.

The Chairman suggested to Committee that the Customer First strategy was selected for pre-scrutiny. The Head of Paid Service explained that it had been due to go to the Prosperous Communities Committee in June although this could be delayed. It was agreed for the Customer First strategy to be added to the meeting agenda for 26 June 2018.

After further discussion about items on the forward plan, it was

**RESOLVED** that the forward plan be noted and the items identified be added to the Committee work plan.

#### **15 COMMITTEE WORKPLAN**

Members of Committee gave consideration to the work plan for coming months. Councillor

Angela White provided an update on the work of the Public Realm Working Group and apologised to those who had attended for a meeting prior to committee, not realising it had been cancelled. Councillor White explained the survey had been distributed to all Town and Parish councils and reminders would be sent in due course. It was enquired whether Parish meetings were included in the roll out of the survey and Councillor White confirmed she would enquire.

In consideration of discussions earlier in the meeting, it was

**RESOLVED** that the work plan be updated in line with the items identified for scrutiny by Committee Members.

The meeting concluded at 7.47 pm.

Chairman