

## WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Prosperous Communities Committee held in the Council Chamber - The Guildhall, Marshall's Yard, Gainsborough, DN21 2NA on 26 October 2023 commencing at 6.30 pm.

**Present:** Councillor Mrs Lesley Rollings (Chairman)  
Councillor Trevor Young (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Owen Bierley  
Councillor Matthew Boles  
Councillor Frazer Brown  
Councillor Stephen Bunney  
Councillor Karen Carless  
Councillor Mrs Mandy Snee

**In Attendance:**

Sally Grindrod-Smith	Director Planning, Regeneration & Communities
Ady Selby	Director - Operational & Commercial Services
Steve Leary	Policy and Strategy Officer - Climate and Sustainable Environment
Claire Bailey	Change, Projects and Performance Officer
Darren Mellors	Performance & Programme Manager
Peter Davy	Financial Services Manager (Deputy Section 151 Officer)
Ele Snow	Senior Democratic and Civic Officer

**Apologies:** Councillor Emma Bailey  
Councillor Jacob Flear  
Councillor Paul Lee  
Councillor Roger Patterson  
Councillor Mrs Diana Rodgers

**Membership:** Councillor Matthew Boles sat as substitute for Councillor Emma Bailey  
Councillor Mandy Snee sat as substitute for Councillor Jacob Flear

### 41 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

### 42 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Prosperous Communities Committee held on 11 October 2023 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

#### **43 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE**

With no comments, questions or requirement for a vote, the Matters Arising schedule was **DULY NOTED**.

#### **44 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

#### **45 ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY ACTION PLAN ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT**

The Committee considered the Annual Progress Report in relation to the Council's Environment and Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan.

Councillor Bunney, Chair of the Environment and Sustainability Working Group, introduced the report and referred to the recent flooding events in the district and thanked Officers and Members for their hard work in helping local communities. It was indicated that such situations could become more frequent and therefore it was important that environment and sustainability was at the forefront of Council priorities and that the UK Government's climate emergency declaration had been unanimously supported by councillors.

The background to climate change was outlined and the cross-party work being undertaken on environment and sustainability issues was crucial. This included reducing operational emissions and an 11% decrease had been achieved in the past year. The challenge of the target to make West Lindsey a Net Zero carbon district well before 2050 was highlighted. It was suggested that the initiatives outlined in the documents would help achieve this.

It was explained that funding had been secured to help retrofit homes in the district and grants to help small businesses make their operations greener had been implemented. The adoption of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan was also a significant milestone by setting sustainable construction standards, protecting biodiversity, diversity, flood mitigation and future-proofing energy sources.

The importance of working with communities and educating a wide range of groups on the issues was highlighted. The Committee was advised that a communication strategy was in place and a number of documents were being produced to support the work.

A Member expressed support for the report and recommendations and concurred it was a major priority for the Council particularly with regard to flooding. The aim to achieve net zero before 2050 was also supported. The work of the Working Group was highlighted and it was suggested that all Members should be aware of the issues.

A Councillor referred to the huge amount of work that was being undertaken across the whole region and it was important to share good practice and highlighted the example of a tree being planted for each new home built. It was acknowledged that this could be looked at by the Working Group. The importance of engaging with local community groups in

introducing initiatives was emphasised. The Lead Officer highlighted that Lincolnshire County Council had an incredibly ambitious target to plant 500,000 trees across the whole of Lincolnshire.

The Chair summarised the discussion and highlighted the building of eco homes and the long term savings that could be accrued. The role of the Flood and Drainage Working Group was outlined and the support that could be provided to local communities at risk of flooding.

The recommendations in the report were proposed and seconded and on being put to the vote, it was unanimously

**RESOLVED** that

- a) progress against the ten themes identified in the Environment and Sustainability Action Plan be noted; and
- b) the Environment and Sustainability Action Plan for 2024 onwards be approved.

#### **46 PROGRESS AND DELIVERY QUARTER TWO (2023/24)**

Consideration was given to the Progress and Delivery report for quarter two 2023/24 (July-September).

The Change, Projects and Performance Officer introduced the report and explained that it set out performance across the period July to September 2023. It was advised that there had been some slight changes to the overall summary with a view to making the information clearer and more accessible. The content of the report was detailed and it was noted that the Council budget forecast outturn it needed to be updated to minus 1.83%.

The performance improvement plan was also outlined for the Committee. Information regarding markets in the district was highlighted and clarification was given that the performance in terms of average weekly number of stalls took into account farmers' markets and events held throughout the quarter, and where it referenced stalls, one trader could have more than one stall.

A number of indicators and their respective ratings against the agreed targets were highlighted particularly in respect of crematoriums. The performance of individual portfolios including Change Management, ICT and regulatory services, Finance, Business and Property Services, Homes and Communities, Operational and Commercial Services and Planning and Regeneration were detailed.

A Councillor welcomed the report and thanked Officers for the clarity of the information and it was suggested that, as the Council was relatively small, organisation figures could be impacted by minor fluctuations. The information relating to community funding and use of the new levelling up fund was highlighted, and it was considered beneficial that additional monies were available to reduce pressure on council funding.

The information regarding Disabled Facilities Grants was emphasised and it was noted that

West Lindsey currently received the second highest number of referrals but was the second lowest funded authority. It was suggested that this needed to be resolved urgently.

A Member suggested that more detailed information was needed regarding secondary spend at Trinity Arts which was below target and some work to increase performance should be explored further.

The good street cleansing performance was noted and the Committee expressed their thanks to the staff involved for providing such a good service. It was suggested that many fly tipping incidents were due to traders disposing of waste and it was asked if work could be undertaken with partners to make waste sites more accessible.

In response the Director of Operational & Commercial Services acknowledged the concern and agreed that the situation where residents could not necessarily access the nearest facility as it was in a different district needed to be addressed. In respect of fly tipping it was outlined that it was often difficult to catch offenders but investment in cameras had helped and a reporting portal was now available. The information allowed the Council to identify hotspots and target resources as needed.

A Councillor returned to the issue of Disabled Facilities Grants and expressed disappointment that the target of 120 days was not being met and was currently on average 157 days. It was noted however that this work was split between the district and county councils which led to delays, and it was suggested that comparative data with other districts would be useful. It was also noted that minor adaptations were undertaken in a shorter time frame. Members requested for a breakdown to be provided as to time taken for minor adaptations in comparison with larger scale works.

In response it was suggested that the complexity of the transfer between occupational therapy and whichever housing team, wherever that was based, was what ultimately held things up. There had been discussion as to whether this now sat in the performance improvement plan because until the challenge around funding for grants was resolved, performance was not going to improve. Work was continuing through the housing, health and care delivery group looking for a conversation to change how funding was allocated across Lincolnshire. It was suggested that more detailed information could be provided as many smaller adaptations were being completed relatively quickly.

A Member raised concern regarding reduced collection rates for Council Tax and Non-domestic Rates and the potential impact this could have in income for the Council. The concern was acknowledged, and it was advised there were some changes in payment terms for some businesses due to relief funds and this skewed the figures. It was confirmed that figures would be closely monitored.

The performance relating to leisure facilities was raised and whilst the increase in attendance was welcomed it was not particularly large in Market Rasen. It was asked if this could be monitored. Officers undertook to take the issue away and raise it with the contractor.

The recommendations in the report were proposed and duly seconded, and, on being put to the vote it was unanimously

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

#### **47 PROPOSED FEES AND CHARGES 2024/2025**

Committee gave consideration to a report outlining proposed Fees and Charges to take effect from 1 April 2024. The Committee was advised that some of the appendices were exempt as they were commercially sensitive and it would be necessary for the press and public to be excluded if discussion on those items was needed.

The Financial Services Manager introduced the report and advised that the report detailed proposed fees and charges to be implemented from the 1st of April 2024 for services within the remit of the Committee. The appendices provided service specific detail around performance and demand, and consideration had been given to total cost recovery, benchmarking data and team manager knowledge of the market when proposing the fees.

The budget implications reflected both the impact of proposed amendments to fees and the forecast demand, and although the Retails Price Index (RPI) in September stood at 8.9%, it was proposed to apply 6% where fees were to be increased by inflation. This represented the expected average pay award increase for 2023/24 with staff costs being the main cost driver for fees and charges. Inflation had been added to the majority of non-statutory fees. However, there were some non-statutory fees which had been increased above inflation, to reflect cost recovery calculations and benchmarking data. Where no increases were proposed this was to ensure that the Council maintained or increased market share whilst remaining comparable to benchmarking data.

The criteria for setting statutory and non-statutory fees were outlined and it was advised that the impact of the proposed fees meant an increase in income for the medium term financial plan of £8,700 pounds in 2024/25, rising to £145,300 pounds in 2028/29. It was noted that amendments to statutory planning application fees had been approved by the government, but confirmation of the implementation date was awaited. Updates would be reported to the Committee.

A Councillor thanked Officers for the report and proposed that amendments should be made to the fees and charges so that car parking fees be frozen for 2024/2025 and request that a value for money review of the car parking enforcement contract be undertaken and report back to Prosperous Communities Committee by 31st May 2024.

In respect of the proposed charging for markets, amendments were proposed that if a trader attended for 12 continuous weeks, then the fees would be discounted by 50% for the period after the twelfth week.

It was further proposed that in respect of young market traders aged 16 to 25, the discount should be the same as the new traders and set at 50% after 12 weeks.

Finally it was proposed that the largest stall discount for market organisers, bringing more than 25 stalls to the Gainsborough Market on a Tuesday or Saturday a new fee of £7.50 is

introduced

The proposed amendments were duly seconded and on being put to the vote were carried.

The revised recommendations were then proposed and seconded and on being put to the vote it was

**RESOLVED** that

- a) the proposed fees and charges for 2024/2025 as detailed in the report be **recommended** to Corporate Policy and Resources Committee for approval subject to the following amendments in respect of markets:
  - New traders to get a 50% discount when trading for 12 continuous weeks – discount for the full period;
  - Young market traders age range to 16 – 25 to get 50% discount under same terms as new traders;
  - A larger stall discount for market organisers bringing more than 25 stalls to Gainsborough market on either a Tuesday or Saturday with a new fee of £7.50 being introduced where a trader utilised more than 25 stalls. This to be in line with the new trader cost.
- b) Officers carry out a value for money review of the existing car park enforcement contract and report the findings to the Prosperous Communities Committee by 31 May 2024.

#### **48 WORKPLAN**

With no further questions or comments, the work plan was **DULY NOTED**

The meeting concluded at 7.32 pm.

Chairman