

Appendix 1

Excerpt of Minutes Prosperous Communities Committee 4 June 2024

5 PROGRESS AND DELIVERY QUARTER FOUR REPORT AND SUMMARY OF YEAR END PERFORMANCE 2023/24

The Committee heard from the Change, Projects and Performance Officer regarding the Progress and Delivery report for quarter four (January – March) including performance improvement plan and year-end 2023/24 report.

Members heard how quarter four compared with quarter three and included a breakdown of the performance improvement plans in place and explained which of those would be moving forward and which were no longer valid owing to the changed performance measures. The officer highlighted the report contents per portfolio, and noted that it remained a 'by exception' report, meaning those areas that were 'on target' were not included. With regard to the year end report, there were additional measures in the current report which had not been in place the previous year, meaning there was no comparable data. The correlation with the Corporate Plan was further highlighted to the Committee.

The Chairman thanked the Officer and suggested that the Committee addressed the report according to each section.

There was considerable debate in relation to Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) and in particular the time taken to complete works required. It was recognised that DFGs had been the focus of the Committee on numerous occasions, with Officers reiterating that whilst the funding structure remained as it was, there was no opportunity to improve the timescales. It was highlighted that the funding strategy remained with Lincolnshire County Council.

With regard to the markets data, it was enquired whether there was any way of monitoring footfall within Gainsborough town centre, to be able to ascertain whether anecdotal evidence of increased footfall on market days was a true picture. It was confirmed that footfall cameras in the town centre were in the testing phase and that data would be available to share in the future.

Members of the Committee drew attention to the reduced rates of Council Tax collections and recognised that it was a worrying trend which could lead to significant financial pressures. Officers agreed with the potential risk, and offered assurance to the Committee that work was ongoing to improve collection rates and ensure the reduced collections did not continue.

In relation to rates of fly-tipping, a Member of the Committee enquired whether the increased fines had been shown to have an impact. It was explained that early indications showed that those who had been issued with fines at the new higher rate had been paying immediately. This was assumed to be in order to avoid the increasing costs if payment was delayed. It was also highlighted that the new measures for the 2024/25 reporting periods did include the fixed penalty charges so Members would see that information starting to be reported in future reports.

Further debate focused on matters relating to the market share for land charges, where it was explained a benchmarking exercise was underway, and also the cleanliness issues which had been raised regarding the Gainsborough Leisure Centre. Members were assured that Officers were visiting on a weekly basis to maintain oversight. With regard to the reduction in the number of outreach sessions, it was explained that in previous years there had been more sessions held but with lower engagement levels, therefore this year had focused on those sessions where there was highest attendance. It was recognised that further detail within the report could provide greater context, however, it was noted that the upcoming Sports and Leisure Development Strategy would help align those areas of work.

As the Committee continued to review the sections contained within the report, comments were made regarding the impact of not having a cross-boundary agreement for the use of household waste recycling centres, with some Members questioning whether that did lead to the incidents of fly-tipping seen in the district. It was recognised this was an area that had previously been discussed, however, there was currently no expectation of a cross-boundary agreement being reached.

Final comments highlighted the success of Planning and Regeneration, the continuation of the garden waste collections and the crematorium business plan which would be presented to the Committee in due course. With Members content there were no further comments, the recommendations contained within the report were duly proposed and seconded and, on taking the vote, it was unanimously

RESOLVED that

- a) the performance of the Council's services had been assessed through agreed performance measures and areas where improvements should be made had been indicated, having regard to the remedial measures set out in the report; and
- b) the Progress and Delivery Performance Improvement Plan for Quarter Four (January-March) 2023/24 be approved; and
- c) the Progress and Delivery Year End 2023/24 Report be approved.