

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee held in the Council Chamber - The Guildhall on 16 July 2024 commencing at 2.00 pm.

Present: Councillor Stephen Bunney (Chairman)
Councillor David Dobbie (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor John Barrett
Councillor Mrs Jackie Brockway
Councillor Paul Key
Andrew Morriss

In Attendance:
Emma Foy Director of Corporate Services and Section 151
Lisa Langdon Assistant Director People and Democratic (Monitoring Officer)
Katy Allen Corporate Governance Officer
Badar Abbas KPMG
Natalie Kostiuik Customer Experience Officer
Maisie McInnes Democratic and Civic Officer
Aaron Macdonald Client Manager RSM

Apologies: Councillor Baptiste Velan
Councillor Christopher Darcel
Councillor Sabastian Hague
Councillor Mrs Angela Lawrence
Alison Adams

74 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PERIOD

There were no public speakers.

75 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 11 June 2024 be approved and signed as a true and accurate record of the meetings.

76 MEMBERS DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

77 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE

Members considered the Matters Arising Schedule which had been updated to contain actions following the previous Committee meeting.

With no further comment, the Matters Arising Schedule was duly **NOTED**.

77a INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT - QUARTER ONE

Members heard from Internal Audit that the report detailed the current progress made against the Internal Audit plan. RSM had been newly appointed in April 2024 and were expecting to bring a report to the next Committee meeting in September. Internal Audit gave assurance to Members that they were on track to deliver on the audit plan and invited Members to ask any questions.

Members asked if there were any communication or engagement issues with Officers and the Internal Audit confirmed there were no issues, and if there were any issues Internal Audit could approach Members.

RESOLVED That Members considered the content of the report and identified any actions required.

77b QUARTER ONE REVIEW OF STRATEGIC RISKS 2024/25

The Monitoring Officer presented the Quarter One Review of Strategic Risks 2024/25 report which considered risks categorised into the four Corporate themes of Our Council, Our People, Our Place and overarching risks. The Management Team reviewed strategic risks regularly in their meetings. Since the last update presented at Committee, the commentary, controls and actions had been updated in the report and a new risk had been added in relation to a cyber security threat surrounding the General Election and democratic processes. Members were requested to consider the report and determine if there were any other risks.

Members discussed the report and thanked Officers for the useful detail. Members asked a question surrounding meeting customer expectations and how this could be improved. The Section 151 Officer responded that customer service were front of house for resident contact and it was important to continually review improvements to customer service and engaging with residents.

Members expressed concern relating to the collection rate of council tax and extreme weather events. The Section 151 assured Members that actions were in place to improve the collection rate and suggested monthly reporting on the collection rate to be shared with Members. In terms of extreme weather events, Officers were considering what controls could be in place and monitoring of the extreme weather periods.

RESOLVED that the Governance and Audit Committee reviewed the register and considered if there were any additional risks of a strategic nature and if the current controls and proposed actions were sufficiently robust.

77c RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY QUESTIONNAIRE

Members heard from the Section 151 Officer that the Risk Management Strategy Questionnaire had been drafted to enable the authority to understand it's position on risk appetite and tolerance in advance of drafting the Risk Management Strategy, which would be brought to Committee in September 2024. The questionnaire contained a range of statements for Members and Officers to complete and would show the organisation's

aversity to risk. Some of the questions were commercial in nature and Officers were looking to decommercialize some of the questions. The results of the questionnaire would inform and shape the Risk Management Strategy and reflect the views of the Council.

Members considered the questionnaire and requested more background information to the questions and financial background to risk. Members suggested different methods to collecting questionnaire responses and if sliders could be used for individuals to provide their risk opinion on a scale. The Section 151 responded that a summary on the financial backdrop and Medium-Term financial position could be provided on the first page and Officers would include explanations on each of the questions.

RESOLVED that Members considered the content of the questionnaire at Appendix One and approved the questionnaire for dissemination to Management Team, Corporate Policy and Resources Committee, Prosperous Communities Committee, and Governance and Audit Committee.

77d ANNUAL VOICE OF THE CUSTOMER REPORT 2023/24

The Customer Service Manager presented the Annual Voice of the Customer Report 2023/24 and highlighted the following salient points:

- The previous year 2023/24 had saw a decrease in customer feedback and customer demand. There had been an increase in compliments and decrease in comments.
- Customer satisfaction had increased following improvements including the implementation of the CRM system which helped to keep customers more informed and up to date.
- In terms of customer demand data, demand had decreased overall, and number of calls received had decreased. Face to face contact had increased and there were more visits through the door for tenant services and face to face appointments.
- The website usage had increased, and it was reported that over 95% of customers made contact with the Council online or via telephone.

The Chairman praised the thorough report and thanked the Customer Service Manager on behalf of Members for the level of detail and data in the report. Members discussed the report and praised the customer service team for the high satisfaction rates. Members asked what a comment was defined as, and the Customer Service Manager responded that a comment was a suggestion on how the Council could improve or how processes or similar could be carried out differently.

RESOLVED: That Members welcomed the contents of the Annual Voice of the Customer Report for 2023/24 and noted the progress that had been made by the Council in improving the customer experience over the last 12 months.

78 COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

With no comments, the Workplan as set out in the report was **NOTED**.

79 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

The Chairman moved that the remainder of the meeting be held in private:

That under Section 100 (A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

RESOLVED that Members agreed that the public and press were excluded from the remainder of the meeting and the Governance and Audit Committee moved into private session.

80 FRAUD RISK ASSESSMENT

The Section 151 Officer presented the Fraud Risk Assessment and robust action plan to mitigate counter fraud.

Members discussed the report and asked questions of the Section 151 Officer.

RESOLVED that Members considered the contents of the Fraud Risk Assessment and the Committee receives quarterly progress updates on implementation of the recommendations.

The meeting concluded at 3.30 pm.

Chairman