

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held in the Council Chamber - The Guildhall on 30 July 2024 commencing at 6.30 pm.

- Present:** Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan (Chairman)
Councillor Jacob Flear (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Moira Westley (Vice-Chairman)
- Councillor Trevor Bridgwood
Councillor Paul Key
Councillor Roger Pilgrim
Councillor Stephen Bunney
- In Attendance:**
Nova Roberts Director of Change Management, ICT & Regulatory Services
Darren Mellors Performance & Programme Manager
Katie Storr Democratic Services & Elections Team Manager
- Apologies:** Councillor Eve Bennett
Councillor Liz Clews
- Membership:** Councillor Stephen Bunney was appointed substitute for
Councillor Eve Bennett

1 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

A Member of the Committee noted a typing error contained within minute item number 43, suggesting the use of the word 'weather' should be replaced with 'whether'. This was confirmed to be the case and, subject to that amendment being made, the minutes were agreed to be an accurate record. It was therefore

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday 26 March 2024 be approved and signed as a correct record.

2 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE

With no comments or questions, the Matters Arising Schedule was **DULY NOTED**.

4 OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: REVIEW OF OPERATING METHODOLOGY

Members gave consideration to a report seeking to consider and approve the Operating Procedure for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Civic Year 2024 / 2025.

It was explained that the Operating Methodology for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee set out the criteria for fulfilling the main functions of the Committee. The methodology was introduced in 2014, with an updated version reviewed and agreed by the Committee in 2019. It was reviewed annually with amendments considered in line with each annual review of the Constitution.

Members heard that the current version of the Operating Methodology had been in place since July 2023 and was considered by the Committee in March 2023 as a part of the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report. Following that review, and the annual review of the Constitution, there were no suggested amendments. It was confirmed that, pending approval, the Operating Methodology would be used as a reference point when considering items for the Committee's work plan for the coming civic year.

In response to a query regarding the decision-making status of the 'Proper Officer' quoted in the document, it was explained that the role within a District Council was different to that of the role within a Parish Council. It was confirmed that items for inclusion on the work plan would be discussed between the Chairman, Committee and Officers, as needed.

With no further comments, and having been moved, seconded, and voted upon, it was

RESOLVED that the Operating Methodology be approved for implementation throughout the 2024/25 Civic Year.

5 SCRUTINY OF PROGRESS AND DELIVERY REPORTING THROUGH THE POLICY COMMITTEES: QUARTER FOUR AND YEAR END 2023/24

Members heard from the Performance and Programme Manager regarding the Progress and Delivery reporting for quarter four and year end of 2023/24. It was highlighted that Members were required to scrutinise the challenge of the two policy committees to the content of the council's Progress and Delivery reports. To assist this scrutiny, a summary of the relevant minutes was provided, as well as the full Progress and Delivery report. Members were asked to examine the responses given to the report by those two policy committees and assure themselves that the appropriate level of challenge was being made to the information contained in the report.

Members expressed their contentment with the detail of discussions at both the Prosperous Communities and Corporate Policy and resources Committees and with no further comments to add it was

RESOLVED that the Committee had examined the responses given to the report by the Prosperous Communities and the Corporate Policy and Resources Committees and assured themselves that the appropriate level of challenge was being made by those committees to the information contained in the report.

6 FORWARD PLAN

With no comments, questions or requirement for a vote, the Forward Plan was **DULY NOTED**.

7 COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

In considering the work plan for the upcoming meetings it was explained that several items were subject to confirmation and the Committee would be kept updated. The Chairman noted additional items for the work plan, those being related to the matters arising schedule and inviting Directors to present updates on their service areas.

It was also noted that Councillor T. Bridgwood had submitted a request for consideration by the Committee. The Chairman invited Councillor Bridgwood to speak.

Councillor Bridgwood explained that there was some concern regarding the fire risks associated with battery storage sites, including those related to the proposed solar farms across Lincolnshire. The potential risks were summarised for the Committee, including access to rural sites, the potential for battery fires to become unmanageable very quickly, the potential for contamination of nearby waterways from the runoff of water used to manage any fires, and the lack of any national legislation or local policy to address the possible risks. A short video was played to the Committee highlighting these issues.

In response to this matter, it was requested that the Director of Planning, Regeneration and Communities, or the Development Management Team Manager, attend a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in order to present the Council's approach to battery storage across the district. It was requested that this be arranged as soon as practicable. Members were content with this approach.

There was further discussion regarding options for reviewing local and national policies and lobbying government for more stringent controls. The Committee was advised that, whilst it would not be in the remit of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to review those policies, pending the presentation of information a recommendation could be made to the Prosperous Communities Committee, and Members may wish to undertake lobbying action alongside that recommendation. It was advised for the presentation from Senior Officers to consider those options in their presentation to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

With no further comments or discussion, the indicative work plan was **DULY NOTED**.

8 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED 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 involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

9 PREPARATION FOR PRESENTATION FROM EVERYONE ACTIVE

The Committee heard from the Democratic Services and Elections Team Manager that Everyone Active were likely to attend the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting in September 2024. The organisation had last visited in January 2024 where the session had provided updates regarding the schedule of improvements planned at the Gainsborough Leisure Centre, information regarding outreach programmes across the district as well as ongoing work programmes to support wellbeing within the community.

Members noted the additional scrutiny which was taking place within the remit of the Prosperous Communities Committee, following a question submitted to Full Council in June 2024 regarding cleanliness of the Gainsborough Leisure Centre.

During the course of discussions, Members raised several areas of interest that they wished to be covered. These included a continuation of concerns regarding cleanliness at the Gainsborough Leisure Centre, some uncertainties regarding the success of the outreach programmes, from both Gainsborough and Market Rasen, and also comments regarding the advertising and marketing approach, which sometimes seemed rather lacking. There was additional discussion regarding specifics of the contract, with Members understanding this was being taken forward within the remit of the Prosperous Communities Committee.

In light of the headline subjects raised, it was suggested and agreed that Members of the Committee be provided with the exempt report considered by the Prosperous Communities Committee in June, in order that they may use the information to help formulate any questions on those matters.

It was further agreed that having reviewed the information, Members of the Committee should submit their comments or draft questions to the Chairman of the Committee and Democratic Services by 16 August in order for all to be collated ahead of the meeting in September.

Members requested that those presenting be in a position to answer questions posed, and that sufficient time be allowed for questions and follow up discussions. Members also requested that the Operations Manager for Gainsborough Leisure Centre be in attendance.

The meeting concluded at 7.24 pm.

Chairman