

Present: Councillor Bill Bilton (*in the Chair*),
Councillor Laura McWilliams, Councillor Alan Briggs,
Councillor Ralph Toofany, Councillor Pat Vaughan,
Councillor Jane Loffhagen and Councillor Bill Mara

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Hilton Spratt

55. Confirmation of Minutes - 8 October 2019

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 8 October 2019 be confirmed.

56. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Laura McWilliams declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest with regard to the agenda item titled 'Regulation 7 Direction on Lettings Boards'.

Reason: She worked for a Lettings Agency. She left the room during discussion of this item.

57. Regulation 7 Direction on Lettings Boards

Kieron Manning, Planning Manager

- a. presented a report to update committee on:
 - i. the application to the Secretary of State for a Regulation 7 Direction in certain areas of Lincoln, prohibiting the display of lettings boards.
 - ii. the post-implementation action against unauthorised lettings boards by the Planning Enforcement team.
- b. advised that the approval from the Secretary of State for the Regulation 7 Direction was received on 7 January 2019 and the Direction was implemented on 8 April 2019.
- c. advised that during a survey in January 2018, a total of 394 boards were being displayed in the Monks Road area, West End area, Sincil Bank area, Union Road and Waterloo Street.
- d. explained that on 15 April 2019, one week post-implementation, 29 boards were still being displayed which were subsequently removed following Planning Enforcement. A further 9 signs had been erected since the implementation of the Regulation 7 Direction but were subsequently removed following contact from Planning Enforcement. At the date of the report, one board remained and Officers were currently in the process of contacting the owner about it.
- e. invited members questions and comments

The Chair asked how these changes had been viewed by Lettings Agencies?

Kieron Manning, Planning Manager explained that during the consultation period there was some concern expressed by Lettings Agencies which was mainly around it being a level playing field for all agencies. There had been no issues in relation to this.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

58. Key Holding Progress Report

Simon Colburn, Assistant Director of Health and Environmental Services

- a. presented an update on the City Councils key holding system which was launched at all of the City Councils Community Centres on 4th July 2016 as requested by Policy Scrutiny Committee on 28th November 2017.
- b. advised that since the last Policy Scrutiny Committee usage of the Community Centres had grown from 42 regular block bookings to over 60 per week.
- c. explained that through key holder engagement and assistance the number of groups that still required support had reduced to two.
- d. advised that the ongoing savings generated by this key holding system had been in excess of the original target saving £60,000 per year. In the first full year it was £61,700. An additional £5,000 savings (per annum) was found above and beyond the £61,700 already achieved. This additional saving was added to the TOFS targets from 2017/18.
- e. advised that since the start of the key holding scheme a total of over 160 hirers had been key holder trained plus eight City Council staff, four County Council staff and 20 contractors.
- f. explained that the Recreation Service at City Hall regularly reviewed the use of the community centres by monitoring events history on the Paxton System.
- g. referred to paragraph 4.7 of the report and highlighted the issues arising as a consequence of the introduction of the key holding system and advised that these were resolved with the individual hirers by identifying trends and giving assistance to key holders and if necessary reviewing their key holding status.
- h. advised that Officers felt that the current satisfaction levels of hirers was high, key holders were encouraged to notify officers of any issues with regards to repairs , cleanliness or any other concerns in relation to the operations of the centres.
- i. invited members questions and comments

Question: Was there a charge for key holder training?

Response: There was no charge for training.

Question: How often were the community centres deep cleaned?

Response: The community centres were regularly deep cleaned, an email clarifying the cleaning regime would be circulated following the meeting.

RESOLVED that the progress on the Key Holding Scheme be noted.

59. Protecting Vulnerable People

Paula Burton, Housing Solutions Manager

- a. presented an annual update on the Protecting Vulnerable People work that had taken place over the last year.
- b. advised that over the last 18 months the City of Lincoln Councils Internal Safeguarding meeting had been rebranded as 'Protecting Vulnerable People' and had been expanded to encompass Hate/Mate Crime, PREVENT, Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Modern Day Slavery.
- c. referred to paragraph 4.1 of the report and advised that the work of the Protecting Vulnerable People group had focussed on the training of staff and ensuring that reports were centrally stored and auditable.
- d. advised that a county wide Safeguarding Policy was agreed at Executive in October 2019 which would ensure that over the coming year all district councils would start to operate in a more consistent way.
- e. advised that the Council had signed up to the Modern Day Slavery Charter which ensured that the Council's procurement chain was free from modern day slavery.
- f. advised that the Council had contributed towards the Modern Day Slavery review into a major operation and the report would be published once it had been approved by the Home Office.
- g. referred to paragraph 4.5 of the report and highlighted the number of referrals that had been made over the last 18 months and advised that the increased numbers were thought to be mainly due to staff being more aware of the signs to look out for and that staff were being encouraged to identify cases using an improved process.
- h. referred to the work in progress as detailed at paragraph 5 of the report and highlighted the following:
 - A Safeguarding information page would be published on City People.
 - Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children and Adults training pathway which included online and face to face training.
 - Members had attended a safeguarding training event and further training events would be held for those Members who could not attend.
 - All of the district Councils within Lincolnshire were currently assessing the effectiveness and cost of implementing the Ecins IT system to record all safeguarding concerns and cases.
 - Officers continued to attend multi-agency meetings to ensure that the agencies involved were working in a co-ordinated approach.
 - A business case was being prepared for the Corporate Management Team regarding the capacity of officers to fulfil the current ongoing requirements of safeguarding.

- i. advised that due to the successful training and publicity raising awareness of officers and the public surrounding issues of modern day slavery and exploitation there had been an increase in the number of concerns raised and subsequently cases that required assistance.
- j. referred to paragraph 6.2 of the report and highlighted that Lincolnshire County Council were currently reviewing their processes regarding adult safeguarding and how Housing Related Support was determined and allocated and explained the impact that this would have on the City Council.
- k. invited members questions and comments.

Question: Were people reluctant to ask for help if they did not have the correct immigration status?

Response: There was not enough information available to know whether this was an area of concern. Most referrals for trafficking came from the Police, and addressing the issue of trafficking would take priority over the immigration mechanism.

Question: Would Members be provided with further updates on the changes that Lincolnshire County Council were proposing to their safeguarding processes.

Response: If there were major changes which impacted on resources etc then it would be brought to Policy Scrutiny Committee.

Question: Referred to the table at paragraph 4.5 of the report and asked how many of the 113 referrals were Officers working on?

Response: It varied, there was a lot of pressure on Tenancy Services staff to take a lead on cases. Also, the table did not include trafficking, and domestic abuse or domestic violence cases.

Comment: Members would like to recommend to officers that more resources needed to be provided for safeguarding.

Response: Corporate Management Team were aware and were looking at resources to support safeguarding.

Question: Would members be receiving regular updates on this in the future?

Response: Yes an update report could be presented to Policy Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED that

1. The contents of the report be noted
2. The committee recommended that more resources be made available to support safeguarding.

60. Localised Council Tax Support Scheme 2020/21

Martin Walmsley, Head of Shared Revenues and Benefits

- a. presented the proposed scheme for Local Council Tax Support for the financial year 2020/21, as part of the formal consultation period, as well as regarding proposals made in relation to an Exceptional Hardship Scheme, also regarding Council Tax changes.

- b. gave the background to the scheme as detailed at paragraph 2 of the report and advised that there were currently 8542 residents claiming Council Tax Support in the Lincoln District.
- c. advised that there were 2,903 pensioners in receipt of Council Tax Support and they were protected under the legislation so that they would not be affected by any changes made to the Council Tax Support Scheme.
- d. further advised that there were 5,639 working claimants who would be affected by any changes made to the scheme, and such any potential reduction in support being provided.
- e. referred to paragraph 3 of the report and gave an overview of the current Council Tax Support Scheme.
- f. advised that based on the current core elements of the existing scheme, a caseload, reduction of 1% had been modelled along with an increase in Council Tax (ranging from 2% to 4%). These were summarised in Appendix 1 of the report which gave an indication of the potential cost savings to the City of Lincoln. Also included was the potential value for non-collection (based on projected collection in the tax base of 98.75%)
- g. explained that as a billing authority the Council could decide whether or not to amend core elements of its Council Tax Support scheme each year. Officers were not proposing any changes to core elements of the scheme.
- h. referred to paragraph 4.3 and 4.4 of the report and explained the technical amendments and assumptions that had been made in developing the modelling for each Council Tax Support Scheme.
- i. advised that alongside the proposed 'no change' Council Tax Scheme for 2020/21, it was proposed that £20,000 for an Exceptional Hardship Scheme be continued.
- j. explained the Care Leavers Council Tax Exemption as detailed at paragraph 5 of the report and advised that officers proposed to consider the extension of the 100% support up to their 25th birthday.
- k. referred to paragraph 5.2 of the report and explained the Council Tax empty homes premium, from 1st April 2020 Councils would have the powers to charge greater premiums on homes left empty following an amendment to legislation. Approval of any change for 2021/22 could not be made until the 2021/22 Local Council Tax Support scheme had been consulted on.
- l. referred to Appendix 2, Annex 2 paragraph 2(a) and advised that this has been amended to:

2(a) The additional charge shall not apply in the first 6 months that a taxpayer becomes liable for the Council Tax for a property following the date of its purchase.
- m. asked for committee's consideration and comments as part of the formal consultation process.

Members referred to paragraph 5.2 of the report and asked if the number of years could be amended for the premium charge/

Martin Walmsley, Head of Shared Revenues and Benefits advised that the number of years could not be changes as it was set in legislation.

RESOLVED that

1. the proposed 'no change' Council Tax Support Scheme for 2020/21, as set out in Section 4 be supported and referred to Executive for approval.
2. the continuation of the £20,000 Exceptional Hardship Fund for 2020/21 to top up Council Tax Support awards in appropriate cases be supported and referred to Executive for approval.
3. the proposed Council Tax charges for 2020/21 – i.e Care Leavers exemption, and Council Tax empty homes premium (with a range of factors for consideration) be supported and referred to Executive for approval.

61. Parking on Grass Verges - Position Statement

Simon Walters, Director of Communities and Environment

- a. presented a report to outline the position in relation to the councils current approach to tackling verge parking and to suggest a pilot intervention on selected major bus routes where the impact was most acute.
- b. gave the background to the report advising that verge parking had been a concern of some Members for a long time, and the City Councils approach to tackling the issues had been reviewed on a number of occasions in the past.
- c. advised that following recent reports from Stagecoach they were experiencing difficulties navigating a few selected areas on public bus routes due to the presence of parked vehicles.
- d. referred to Appendix A of the report and highlighted the work completed in September 2018 to review the then current situation.
- e. advised that since the work undertaken in 2018 two important influencing factors had emerged:
 - Stagecoach had confirmed that they had found it necessary to alter their route/ operating methodology in three locations – Roman Pavement, Trelawny Crescent and Broxholme Gardens due to the prevalence of parked cars preventing the safe passage of buses.
 - Lincolnshire County Council were in the process of developing a Transport Strategy for Lincoln. Whilst the results had not been released, it was envisaged that over time the aspiration would be to reduce the reliance on cars and move to more sustainable modes of transport.
- f. referred to paragraph 3.3 of the report and advised the above issues suggested that:

- a focus of any intervention work should be on ensuring vital services such as bus routes be maintained within Local Communities.
 - Large-scale investment over a period of years to tackle verge parking may not be the right solution in the long term.
- g. referred to paragraph 4.1 of the report and advised that the Assistant Director of Housing, had commenced an engagement process with both Stagecoach and County Council Highways to explore options for removing the problematic parking at these locations and open them up to bus travel again.
- h. advised that officers would also continue to use the techniques employed to date as detailed at paragraph 4.2 of the report.
- i. referred to paragraph 4.6 of the report and advised that the issue could be considered by Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee who could assess the issue against other estate improvement demands within the Housing Revenue Account.
- j. referred to paragraph 5.1 of the report and explained the financial implications to the Council.
- k. referred to paragraph 5.1 of the report and explained the legal measures that could be implemented and explained whilst they were legally feasible it was not a practical solution.

The Director of Housing updated that there were ongoing discussions with Lincolnshire County Council Highways. A joint site visit had taken place to look at the 3 areas affected by changes to the bus routes. There was the potential for double yellow lines to be placed in the next 6 months. However, reassurance that this would be done was still being sought from Lincolnshire County Council.

The Director of Housing further presented a GIS map of the City and explained that the vast majority of the roads within the city were owned by Lincolnshire County Council and not within the City Council's remit. He re-iterated that the problem areas that were affecting bus routes were being identified and solutions were being sought in those areas to get services re-established. This would then provide time to look at other areas within the housing estates to try other solutions such as leaflet drops.

The committee discussed contents of the report and raised the following main points:

Question: Should this be included within the Tenancy Agreement?

Response: The Tenancy Agreement could be looked at to see if there was anything already included within it.

Comment: A survey should be sent out to one of the areas such as St Giles or the Ermine to find out what residents would like doing to tackle this.

Comment: It was a major issue for residents and was regularly raised with Councillors.

Question: The County Council used to put in dropped kerbs for a £100 charge to residents, why could this not be done?

Response: Officers could ask the County Council this, however, it was not currently a priority for them.

Comment: Each area of the city was different and different solutions were needed in different areas.

Response: The housing estates were not designed for the number of cars that we had today. The consequences could be that the problems were moved elsewhere as people still needed to park their cars. If more parking was created then green space would be lost.

Question: Could the enforcement be outsourced to an external company?

Response: This could be looked into.

The Director of Housing summed up the discussion that had taken place and suggested the following action:

- Refer to Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee and engage with the Lincoln Tenants Panel (LTP) to work on this.
- Choose an estate to run a pilot scheme to find out what action worked and what didn't.
- Complete a survey in the pilot area to find out what residents would like to see.
- Complete a leaflet drop in the pilot area.
- Look at the cost of dropped kerbs and the impact on grounds maintenance.
- Look at the Tenancy Agreement to see if there was anything robust relating to parking.
- Following the pilot work with LTP, bring back to Members for consideration.

RESOLVED that

1. The proposed approach to tackling problem verge parking in the areas that affected major bus routes as identified be supported.
2. The issue be referred to Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee to consider the impact after trial interventions had been undertaken to assess its further application, subject to funding with the 30 year business plan.

62. ICT Strategy 2019-25

Matt Smith, Business Development and ICT Manager

- a. presented the proposed ICT Strategy 2019/2025 for consideration prior to referral to Executive.
- b. explained that the ICT Strategy had been developed alongside Foresight Consultants and advised that the strategy was based on:
 - Council priorities and the likely challenges that would face services over the next three years.
 - Supporting Vision 2025 and One Council agenda
 - Interviews with key stakeholders
 - Reviews of current infrastructure

- Potential future requirements
 - Meetings with stakeholders
 - Industry developments
- c. advised that the proposed strategy combined essential and aspirational elements, acknowledging the reliance of the Council, as a modern business, on ICT; and also the requirement to develop further and seek to optimise the use of technology to enable new methods of service delivery, and customer expectations in the way they wished to access Council services.
- d. stated that four key themes had been identified:
- Channel Shift – Customer Services
 - New ways of working
 - Value for money
 - High availability and high performance.
- e. gave a power point presentation covering the following main points;
- Context
 - One Council
 - Application Strategy
 - Technical Strategy
 - Governance
 - Outcomes
- f. invited committees question and comments

Members referred to the issues that had occurred previously with a computer system procured by the Council and asked how would officers ensure that this did not happen again?

Matt Smith, Business Development and ICT Manager advised that lessons had been learned, the ICT Strategy would underpin the work and make sure that the correct process was in place for procuring future applications.

RESOLVED that the proposed ICT Strategy 2019-25 be supported and referred to Executive for adoption.

63. Health Scrutiny Update

The Chair of Policy Scrutiny Committee updated members of the business discussed at the Health Scrutiny Committee and advised that that the Burden of Disease in Lincolnshire report had been considered.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

64. Annual Scrutiny Report

The Democratic Services Officer presented the Scrutiny Annual Report and asked for Members' questions and comments.

Members noted the report and recommended that it be forwarded to Full Council for approval.

RESOLVED that the report be noted and forwarded to Full Council for approval.

65. Policy Scrutiny Work Programme 2019-20 and Executive Work Programme Update

The Democratic Services Officer:

- a. presented the report 'Policy Scrutiny Work Programme 2019-20 and Executive Work Programme Update'.
- b. presented the Executive Work Programme January 2020 – December 2020.
- c. requested councillors to submit what items they wished to scrutinise from the Executive Work Programme and policies of interest.
- d. invited members questions and comments.

Members made no further comments or suggestions regarding the Policy Scrutiny work programme.

RESOLVED that:

1. the work Policy Scrutiny work programme be noted.
2. the Executive work programme be noted.