

# ACTION NOTES

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
TUESDAY, 26 NOVEMBER 2013



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## COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Councillor Reginald Howard (Chairman)	Councillor Bob Russell
Councillor Mrs Rosemary Kaberry-Brown	Councillor Bob Sampson
Councillor Michael King	Councillor Ian Selby
Councillor David Nalson	Councillor Mrs Judy Smith (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Helen Powell	

## OFFICERS

Operations Director (Ian Yates)  
Head of People, Projects & Performance (Sue Griffiths)  
Property Development Manager (Neil Cucksey)  
Economic Development and Regeneration Lead (Corrine Garbett)  
Development Management Service Manager (Pat Reid)  
Housing Options Team Leader (May Read)  
Performance Management Officer (Sam Selby)  
Community Engagement & Policy Development Officer (Carol Drury)  
Principal Democracy Officer (Jo Toomey)

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## 34. COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Mr Worth, who had previously made statements about fixed penalty notices being given in Market Place, Grantham informed members that he had spoken to the Chief Executive who had passed the information to the Chief Executive of Lincolnshire County Council. He added that details of the issue had been passed onto the head of the relevant highways team, who had already responded.

## 35. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Cosham and Turner.

## 36. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

No interests were disclosed.

## 37. ACTION NOTES FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 15 OCTOBER 2013

The action notes of the meeting held on 15 October 2013 were noted with the following amendments:

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- Action note (AN) 30, pg 4, para 1: “Procurement Advisory Board” should be replaced with “Strategic Procurement Board”
- AN30, pg 4, para 2: Following the definitions of the different savings about which the committee was verbally informed, the following sentence should be added: *“Members said that they could not comment on this oral contribution before seeing the whole response of Procurement Lincolnshire to its recommendation.”*
- AN30, pg 5, para 1: “Procurement Advisory Board” should be replaced with “Strategic Procurement Board”
- AN30, pg 5, para 2: To amend the first sentence to read: *“Members recognised that Procurement Lincolnshire had accepted its recommendation in relation to target-setting but referred to the amount of time the Committee had to wait.”*
- AN30, pg 5, para 3: Amend the second sentence to read: *“Altering the savings methodology would help Procurement Lincolnshire accurately demonstrate its success/worth.”*
- AN30, pg 5, para 5: references to the “Strategic Procurement Board” should be replaced with “Procurement Advisory Board” and existing references to the “Procurement Advisory Board” should be replaced with “Strategic Procurement Board”
- AN30, pg 5, para 6: “Strategic Procurement Board” should be replaced with “Procurement Advisory Board”

Members agreed to the proposed changes at bullet points 2, 4 and 5 because they did not feel the original action notes sufficiently reflected the anger felt by the Committee.

### **38. UPDATES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING**

Councillors made comments around a number of topics in the action notes.

One member expressed concern regarding the process suggested for raising issues with Procurement Lincolnshire. The Committee was reminded that at its last meeting most members agreed that the most appropriate way to raise a concern was through a single point. The Committee’s knowledge meant it was ideally placed to channel concerns and prevented the potential for the district council representative being overwhelmed. Members requested that the route for feeding into Procurement Lincolnshire be publicised to all Councillors.

Several Councillors referred to the introduction of defibrillators in Council buildings. One member suggested that the best use of public money was to make defibrillators permanently accessible to the public. Officers informed the Committee that the defibrillators would be available in the buildings to which the public most frequently had access, including the arts centres and the Bourne Community Access Point. The Committee was reminded that the remit of the working group was to look at options for Council buildings, not the broader public realm. Reference was made to community schemes which were available in towns and parishes but the distinction was made between the responsibilities and liabilities of the different types of council. It was also suggested that when the defibrillators were in place, the Council should advertise their presence through the local media and SK Today magazine.

The Operations Director informed members that he had set a deadline for the introduction of defibrillators of Christmas 2013. He added that defibrillators would be sited in the selected locations in publicly accessible spaces. He added that he would bring a report back to the Committee on the location of defibrillators and take advice with regard to insurance and liability to develop ways in which the equipment could be made more accessible. He further stated that consideration would be given to ways of informing people defibrillators were available in those centres.

One member asked for an update on the use of revenue raised through the green waste scheme. The Operations Director said he would share details of additional services and hours funded by income from the scheme with the Committee.

### **39. QUARTER 1 & QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE REPORT 2013/14**

The Performance Management Officer introduced report number PPMO06 by the Head of People, Projects and Performance. The report covered the authority's progress against projects and performance indicators during quarters 1 and 2 (April to September) of 2013/14. Relevant officers were then invited to summarise key priority projects and answer questions.

There were three key projects that fell within the Grow the Economy priority: the Stamford Georgian Festival, Mallard Festival and shop front scheme. While the report highlighted the success of the festivals, officers were asked what lessons had been learned. The Economic Development and Regeneration Lead explained that two different models had been used to deliver the festivals: the Georgian Festival had been delivered by an in-house team while the Mallard Festival had seen the Council sponsor a partnership. Recognition was made that for the sponsoring of a partnership to be successful, an enthusiastic external driver was required. If this was the preferred funding model for future festivals, the right partner would need to be identified. She added that as the festivals developed different models could be deployed to ensure ongoing sustainability. The most appropriate funding model would be determined by the nature and duration of the festival together with any external drivers. The differences in the nature of the Mallard and Georgian Festivals meant it was difficult to evidence which delivery model was the most cost-effective.

Several members made comments about the benefits of tourism to the local economy. One member asked whether the footfall figures had been worked through economic impact models to demonstrate their benefits. It was suggested that all festivals should undergo a mini economic analysis using modelling tools to calculate GDP, local spend and employment. The pride and community cohesion which were generated through festivals was also noted.

One Councillor referred to the shop front scheme and made comments on how well it had been received.

The Operations Director reminded members that the chargeable green waste scheme was in its second year. While membership had almost returned to the level prior to the introduction of a charge, take-up was higher in North Kesteven

who introduced a chargeable scheme after South Kesteven. This was attributed to North Kesteven District Council providing a free green waste service for all residents prior to the introduction of charging. Officers were looking at ways to improve take-up in South Kesteven. Members were advised that there were high satisfaction rates with the current scheme. Officers were investigating new ways people could pay, including Direct Debit, and ways to streamline the annual renewal process.

Councillors were informed that for the second year running, Wyndham Park in Grantham had been awarded Green Flag status. Officers said that annual incremental improvements were required, which made retaining the status year-on-year increasingly challenging. Councillors noted that external funding had been granted for the improvement of the paddling pool feature. An application for heritage funding had also been made for the restoration of buildings, features, boundary walls and railings on the basis that the park was a world war one memorial park.

An exercise to optimise the rounds of the refuse crews had been undertaken. The review took account of growth within the district and aimed to make rounds as efficient as possible and ensure safe working conditions for the crews. Officers reported that the transition to the new rounds had been smooth. Councillors made comments about ensuring the crews replaced the correct bin at the edge of the property from which it originated; the Operations Director stated that the crews would be reminded about this.

Reference was made to a project that was facilitated by the Chartered Institute of Housing to look at securing a successful and sustainable future for neighbourhoods. The project, which involved working with local residents and other agencies, was piloted in the Earlesfield area of Grantham where a neighbourhood improvement plan was in development. It was intended that the scheme would be rolled out across the district in areas where there was social housing. While the scheme was about how the Council fulfilled its duties as landlord and the management of stock and tenants, the project would affect all residents in those areas.

Officers also highlighted recent work that had been undertaken on the Housing Strategy, Tenancy Strategy, Tenancy Policy and Housing Allocations Policy.

The Head of People, Projects and Performance informed members about the 'Unlocking our Potential' project. This was an ongoing project that looked at how the authority, managed, motivated and supported its staff. Reference was made to the behavioural framework for officers and ensuring they understood the authority's priorities by embedding both in the PDR and 1-2-1 processes. Members were informed that 'Unlocking our Potential' was a recognisable brand for staff and had increased staff motivation.

A People Strategy had also been developed which recognised the tough financial times and concentrated on increasing the flexibility of staff. A question was asked about the use of the PDR process to determine staff rewards and reference was made to the release of salary increments. Members were informed that most officers were on a single point salary so this was not relevant. While one member said it was good news that the authority did not

have salaries with built in increments, they recognised the importance of reward as part of the PDR process. The officer stated that one strand within the People Strategy focused on rewards and recognition; she highlighted the staff award scheme through which staff members were recognised by their peers. Officers were also supported through additional development opportunities and consideration was being given as to whether the rewards system needed changing.

The progress of the new Customer Access Strategy was brought to the Committee's attention. The draft document had been presented to the Engagement Policy Development Group on Friday 22 November 2013 ahead of its submission to Cabinet in January 2014. The strategy, which was based on customer feedback and work with the Citizen's Panel, looked at the ways through which customers could contact the council as well as the overall customer experience.

Reference was made by Members to a new phone system that had been introduced where one number was advertised to dial into the authority. This meant that customers did not need to know contact details for individual teams. The Head of People, Projects and Performance reported that feedback had been positive and had increasingly led to customers being put through to where they needed to be. It was noted that the system could be bypassed if the caller knew the extension number of the officer that they were trying to contact. Members did not respond positively to the changes and reported an increase in the amount of time it had taken them to speak to the person they needed.

Committee members stated they preferred a system where they could choose to speak to an operator and ask to be transferred to a named individual. Members noted that contact details for officers at service manager level and above had been circulated, however they said that they did not always have that information with them when they needed to contact the offices. Members expressed concern about the increasing reliance on the Council's website. Officers reported that the increased offer was based on customer feedback and acknowledgement was made of those customers who would always want to contact the Council via telephone or in person. The strategy behind the change was about making savings and meeting the customer demand for providing an increased range of services online. The Head of People, Projects and Performance agreed to attend the next meeting of the Committee to answer the more detailed questions it asked.

### **Action Point**

***The Head of People Projects and Performance to bring detailed information on the single phone number for the authority to the Committee's next meeting on 18 February 2013.***

A review of the ICT systems used by the authority had been undertaken. It identified which systems were fit for purpose and established whether they were future-proof. The review had helped with the development of a replacement programme for the next few years.

The last project on which the Committee received an update was the

introduction of Civil Parking Enforcement. Almost a year after its introduction changes in parking behaviour were evident in both Grantham and Stamford. A study of decreased car parking income for stays of up to 2 hours in Stamford was attributed to increased turnover of short-stay on-street parking. Members were further informed that operating conditions for a residents' parking scheme would be considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 2 December 2013.

Finally the Committee looked at the authority's performance. One member drew the Committee's attention to NI154: Number net additional homes provided. Despite showing an increase in the number of additional homes delivered, the response in the "Have we improved?" column was "no". It was suggested that a consistent approach should be taken highlighting the distinction between "have we improved?" and "have we achieved our target?" The Development Management Service Manager made a brief comment on that particular indicator stating that the target for each quarter was based on a proportion of the annual target. He expected the authority to meet the target by the end of the year but stated that the information did not come through smoothly at regular intervals.

At the last meeting of the Committee reference was made to a planned education campaign to try to increase recycling and prevent contamination. Members were updated on the progress of this campaign: a special edition of SK Today included information on waste and recycling (due December 2013) and information on the website had been updated. Following an audit of rounds, leaflets were being targeted at streets where contamination was highest. A new version of the recycling wheel would also be circulated with the spring edition of SK Today.

The Chairman thanked all the officers who attended the meeting for their input.

#### **40. WORK PROGRAMME**

A number of items were raised for addition to the work programme:

- Grantham Hospital (Feb 2014)
- Procurement Lincolnshire (Feb 2014)
- Single telephone number (Feb 2014)
- Wind energy
- Consideration of items for future work programme.

#### **41. REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES**

Councillor Mrs Kaberry-Brown informed members there had been two meetings of the Lincolnshire Health Scrutiny Committee and stated that she would leave copies of the paperwork in the Members' Lounge.

#### **42. CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting was closed at 12:08pm.