

# AGENDA



For a meeting of the
<b>SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>
to be held on
<b>TUESDAY, 13 SEPTEMBER 2016</b>
at
<b>10.00 AM</b>
in
<b>NEWTON ROOM - GUILDHALL ARTS CENTRE, ST. PETER'S HILL, GRANTHAM. NG31 6PZ</b>
Beverly Agass, Chief Executive

Committee Members:	Councillor Lynda Coutts, Councillor Phil Dilks, Councillor Mrs Rosemary Kaberry-Brown, Councillor David Mapp, Councillor Bob Russell, Councillor Bob Sampson (Chairman), Councillor Jacky Smith (Vice-Chairman), Councillor Mrs Judy Smith, Councillor Mrs Sarah Stokes, Councillor Mrs Brenda Sumner and Councillor Frank Turner	
Scrutiny Support Officer:	Jo Toomey	Tel: 01476 40 61 52 E-mail: <a href="mailto:j.toomey@southkesteven.gov.uk">j.toomey@southkesteven.gov.uk</a>

**Members of the Panel are invited to attend the above meeting to consider the items of business listed below.**

**1. COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

To receive comments or views from members of the public at the Committee's discretion.

**2. MEMBERSHIP**

The Committee to be notified of any substitute members.

**3. APOLOGIES**

**4. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

Members are asked to disclose any interests in matters for consideration at the meeting.

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**5. ACTION NOTES FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 12 JULY 2016**

**(Enclosure)**

**6. UPDATES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING**

**7. FEEDBACK FROM THE EXECUTIVE**

**8. SKDC REPRESENTATIVES ON INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARDS**

- Resources PDG: Action Note 6 from Thursday 8 October 2015
- Resources PDG: Action Note 7 from Friday 20 May 2016

**(Enclosure)**

**9. GREEN WASTE RENEWALS 2016**

- Governance and Audit Committee: minute number 48(1) from 24 March 2016

**(Enclosure)**

**10. QUARTER 1 PROGRESS REPORTING ON CORPORATE PLAN**

Report number PPMO04 of the Performance and Projects Team Leader.

**(Enclosure)**

**11. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16**

Report number LDS182 of the Scrutiny Committee Chairman. **(Enclosure)**

**12. REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS**

**13. WORK PROGRAMME**

**14. REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES**

**15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS, WHICH THE CHAIRMAN, BY REASONS OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES, DECIDES IS URGENT**



## MEETING OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

TUESDAY, 12 JULY 2016 10.00 AM



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### GROUP MEMBERS PRESENT

Councillor Lynda Coutts  
Councillor Phil Dilks  
Councillor David Mapp  
Councillor Bob Russell  
Councillor Bob Sampson (Chairman)

Councillor Jacky Smith (Vice-Chairman)  
Councillor Mrs Judy Smith  
Councillor Mrs Brenda Sumner  
Councillor Frank Turner

### EXECUTIVE MEMBER

Councillor Nick Craft (Executive Member, Environment)

### OFFICERS

Strategic Director (Tracey Blackwell)  
Executive Manager, Commercial (Judith Davids)  
Executive Manager, Environment (Ian Yates)  
Executive Manager, Growth (Paul Thomas)  
Performance and Projects Team Leader (Sam Pearson)  
Community Engagement and Policy Development Officer (Carol Drury)  
Principal Democracy Officer (Jo Toomey)

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#### 1. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Mrs Stokes.

#### 2. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

No pecuniary interests were disclosed however Councillor Dilks stated that he was a member of Lincolnshire County Council, which would be the subject of discussion under agenda item 5, which related to disabled facilities grants.

#### 3. ACTION NOTES FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 22 MARCH 2016

The action notes of the meeting held on 22 March 2016 were noted.

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#### **4. UPDATES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING**

During discussion around complaints related to gas repairs and gas servicing at the meeting held on 22 March 2016, members requested that report number P&D24, which had previously been presented to the Committee, be re-circulated. This had been done and no additional comments had been raised in relation to the report.

#### **5. DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS**

The Executive Manager, Environment presented report number ENV641, which related to funding arrangements for disabled facilities grants (DFGs) in 2016/17. He began by providing contextual information about the process to apply for a grant. The needs of an applicant would be assessed by Lincolnshire County Council, which would make recommendations about adaptations that needed making to a property to enable a person with a disability to continue to live there. Applicants were means tested to assess their ability to pay for the adaptations identified through the County Council's assessment. When an applicant was considered not to have sufficient means to pay for the adaptation a grant would be awarded to cover all or some of the required works.

Until 2016/17 funding for DFGs had been passed straight from the Department of Communities and Local Government to district councils, which had the statutory responsibility to make grants for adaptations. In previous years South Kesteven District Council had considered DFGs a priority, topping up the grant paid by central government to meet any shortfall. Since 2015, funding to support the statutory duty has been provided to local housing authorities through the Better Care Fund, which was a pooled budget paid to the top tier authority (in this instance, Lincolnshire County Council), with a requirement for the allocation to be cascaded down to district councils.

In 2015/16, the Council received a government allocation of £375,587 of DFG funding and this was topped up by the Council to £412,000. Funding for 2016/17 was combined with funding from the Social Capital Care Grant that had been discontinued. The DFG allocation from Government to South Kesteven District Council increased to £670,960. Instead of passporting the full amount to South Kesteven District Council, Lincolnshire County Council had determined that DFG funding would be maintained at 2015/16 levels, with the additional allocation across Lincolnshire being used to:

1. Facilitate the development of a Preventative Housing Strategy
2. Support one-off investment in the MOSAIC ICT platform
3. Provide a one-off contribution to the creation of a contingency sum

Members were advised of guidance provided by the Department of Communities and Local Government, which stated that it was for the district council as the responsible authority for disabled facilities grant to be paid the

full grant allocation and for any decisions on its uses to be made through the authority's own governance arrangements. Adversely the required steps for the approval of planned spending of the Better Care Fund required an alternative decision-making processes and included the Lincolnshire Health and Wellbeing Board, clinical commissioning groups in the county and Lincolnshire County Council. Proposals were then submitted to the Department of Health for sign-off. Members noted that the Department of Health had signed off Lincolnshire's plans with an unqualified agreement.

Officers from SKDC stated that they had indications of a backlog of approximately 70 to 80 DFG applications and suggested that the additional funding would be better spent supporting vulnerable residents and clearing that backlog.

Tony McGinty, the Consultant in Public Health from Lincolnshire County Council was invited to explain his perspective of the situation. The total size of the BCF in Lincolnshire was approximately £50m and the DFG component was one part of that. He explained that the spending arrangements for the Better Care Fund (BCF) required a local level agreement between the social services authority and clinical commissioning groups. He acknowledged that there were two parallel decision-making systems that were running alongside one another that were not consistent and explained that the process for signing-off BCF spend was prescribed by the Department of Health. The BCF agencies had produced a plan to spend the funding which had completed the prescribed process.

Mr. McGinty suggested that at this stage the Council could take a pragmatic view to look at how the funding could be used to support residents in the district and/or seek clarification from government about which decision-making process should take precedence in the local management of the fund. Mr. McGinty recognised that the standstill methodology used to determine the DFG allocation for district council's constituted a real terms funding. Partners had agreed to look again at the fact that inflation had not been factored into the calculation. He commented that in order to release funding that had been earmarked for the development of a Housing for Independence Strategy, Lincolnshire County Council had agreed to fund this work itself. He also referred to previous comments that had been made regarding a backlog in applications, stating that research was underway to establish whether there was a backlog in assessments and, if there was, the extent of that backlog.

Mr McGinty explained that it was hoped that an agreed spending plan would be in place in time for the 2017/18 budget round. The plan was already in the process of being developed, meaning the proposals highlighted in the Committee report were one-year commitments only.

In providing additional information around the contingency allocation, Mr. McGinty explained that one of the conditions of BCF funding required partners to meet certain targets around reducing the number of people admitted to

hospital or delayed in hospital for non-healthcare reasons. Failure to meet the targets could see the claw-back of up to 3% of Better Care Funding. To mitigate the potential impact of any claw-back, a sum was top sliced from all areas of the BCF allocation to create a contingency from which the repayment to government could be made.

The Strategic Director was invited to make comments. She stated that work was already underway to generate a specific action plan to help people live more successfully independently with early scoping work concentrating on working together more seamlessly and in a tailored way, giving residents more options and fast-track solutions that would help relieve pressure on other parts of the system. She underlined the fact that the Council had topped up the DFG spend for a number of years, which indicated that the need exceeded the grant that had already been provided and the increased funding provided from DCLG should have helped mitigate that.

Discussion was opened up to members to make comments and ask questions.

A number of comments were made in relation to the MOSAIC software system, which it was proposed would receive a total of £1m funding from the DFG allocation. In response to questions raised by the Committee, Mr. McGinty explained that the platform was a customer relationship management system that had been deployed by other Councils to help health and social care partners maintain a single view of their customers and track actions that related to their enquiries. Members noted that while the system had been deployed by other local authorities, a lot of work had been undertaken to produce a package bespoke to Lincolnshire. He added that considerable testing of the software had been undertaken with the rollout of the system anticipated to commence in October 2016 and run through to April/May 2017. Members queried the advantages the new platform would provide for customers and received the reply that the main improvement would relate to the customer's experience. Clarification was also provided that the MOSAIC system was a replacement for the existing core adults and children's social care systems, not a platform that specifically supported work around disabled facilities grants; consequently members challenged the appropriateness of using the DFG allocation to fund a core workstream of Lincolnshire County Council.

Members were also interested in the contingency allocation, with a number of members expressing a view that rather than planning to fail, the funding may provide greater benefit if used to support interventions that would prevent delayed discharge from hospitals or admission on non-medical grounds. Members were advised that the contingency allocation was a part of financial planning designed to mitigate the potential risk of being penalised for not meeting targets. It was also noted that the contingency sum and performance were reviewed in-year, with sums being released and reallocated to different projects.

Mr. McGinty informed members that processes related to disabled facilities

grants and the assessment of applicants had been reviewed in recent years which had demonstrated that cases could be progressed faster but highlighted the significant financial impact of bringing forward assessments for DFG-awarding bodies. A comment was made about the duty that sat with South Kesteven District Council to provide adaptations regardless of whether funding was available. Failure to provide an adaptation on the basis of lack of funding could make the decision challengeable.

Discussion turned to the strategy to support people living independently. It was recognised that the amalgamation of the DFG allocation within the BCF allocation reflected a need for more joined up working to unify housing, housing adaptation and social care interventions. Members queried whether the allocation was for the production of the strategy but were advised that the money would be used to fund interventions which might include, for example, placing housing options officers into discharge teams or funding any backlog.

Mr McGinty reiterated that those agencies with BCF funding believed they had followed the correct processes re-emphasising the unconditional sign-off of the spending plans by the Department of Health.

The general consensus amongst members was that any backlog should be addressed, with the additional funding being made available to fulfil grant applications and queried the impact on the proposed BCF spending plans should additional funding need releasing for this purpose. An indication was given that it was possible that contingency funding could be released to reduce the backlog and fulfil identified adaptations as that was the intended purpose of the funding. A comment was made by Mr. McGinty that a condition of the grant funding to district council was that it had to be spent on DFGs; any not spent would need to be returned to the Department of Communities and Local Government. Members' attention was brought to the advice of DCLG which indicated that once the total allocation for each district had been handed over, it was for them to determine how that allocation should be spent, which might mean using the full amount for disabled facilities grants or providing a sum to support projects such as those planned by Lincolnshire County Council.

Consideration was given to the decision-making process for approval of the BCF spending plans. While members noted that proposals were signed-off by the Health and Wellbeing Board which included one district council representative who acted on behalf of all authorities in the county, the report had not incorporated the specifics of the proposals, including the amount of money it was proposed should be passed onto districts or reallocated for other projects. Members also noted that at the time the broad proposal was considered, no detailed information had been provided from DCLG regarding the grant conditions. Some concern was expressed that the arrangements for developing plans for the BCF spend sat completely outside the Council's decision-making process and noted that there was no requirement within the process prescribed by the Department of Health to indicate whether district councils in the area had been consulted on or supported the proposals.



Members were keen that other district authorities in the county should be engaged in the conversations regarding the use of the DFG allocation. Reference was made to a meeting that would be held on the afternoon of 12 July 2016 at which actions to support people living independently would be discussed. Members suggested that the concerns about the way in which the allocation of DFG funding was handled should be raised as urgent business to get the support of the other district authorities.

Members of the Committee drew the debate to a conclusion and agreed that it wanted to make a strong recommendation that the full DFG allocation should be paid to the district council, which the committee agreed unanimously.

### ***Recommendations***

- 1. That Lincolnshire County Council should pay to South Kesteven District Council the full allocation of monies from the Department of Communities and Local Government for disabled facilities grants, bringing the total payment for 2016/17 to £670,960.***
- 2. That from 2017/18 onwards, discussions about what should be done with future funding should be undertaken on the basis of Lincolnshire County Council working with the district councils.***

The Chairman thanked Mr. McGinty for attending the meeting and addressing the committee

*11:34-11:42 – The meeting was adjourned*

## **6. YEAR END PERFORMANCE UPDATE 2015/16**

The Performance and Projects Team Leader presented report number PPMO03 which gave an overview of the district council's performance against corporate performance measures at the end of 2015/16. Of the 11 indicators against which performance was assessed, 6 had targets set against them while the remaining 5 were contextual and recorded for data only; these were indicators that fell outside the direct control of the district council but provided an indication of general progress.

Members were advised that overall the Council had performed well. One highlight to which members' attention was drawn related to the number of affordable homes delivered, which had exceeded the target of 100 by 60 units. A question was asked in relation to the amber classification given to the number of new homes built. Members were assured that performance in South Kesteven reflected the national picture and was not a result of having insufficient land allocated for housing development or planning permissions not being granted. Members noted that housing supply and demand issues would form a key part of the housing strategy, which was under development.

Members also queried whether the new homes that were being built were occupied and the turnaround time for searches on properties.

In response to a question on the methodology used to calculate footfall in the town centres, members were advised that a manual system had formally been deployed, physically counting the number of people at specific locations in the town centres. This methodology was being reconsidered as the data provided was liable to be influenced by external factors including weather and special events. Officers were looking at other ways of articulating the success of town centres using data that would be less liable to fluctuate.

Members were advised that following the adoption of the new Corporate Plan in June 2016, new measures would be introduced to monitor progress. Work was also underway with regard to the tolerances that determined the performance of an indicator as green, amber or red. It was hoped that going forward a corporate approach would be taken to tolerances so that if performance was within 5% of the target it would be classified as amber and within 15% it would be classified as red. Any exceptions in either performance or tolerances related to performance would be highlighted within the commentary provided to members.

## **7. WORK PROGRAMME**

Two items had been referred to the Committee for addition to its work programme.

The first item, referred by the Governance and Audit Committee related to the Council's green waste scheme. It had asked the Committee to consider the following points:

- Process for renewals following some difficulties experienced by some users in renewing
- Reduced rate for customers paying by direct debit

The second item had been referred by the Resources PDG and related to Internal Drainage Boards. The Committee had been asked to look into the following areas:

- How do we ensure we get value for money from Internal Drainage Boards
- Role of representatives – how do they advocate the best interests of the Council?
- How can representatives most effectively represent the council

A member of the Committee also suggested a scrutiny exercise on the Council's complaints handling process.

## **8. REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES**

Members were advised that the most up-to-date information on the activities of the Upper Witham Drainage Board was available on its website. The suggestion was made that the website address be included in the folder stored in the Members' Lounge, in which information provided by Councillors who represented the authority on outside bodies was stored.

A report had also been submitted via the Committee's Chairman from the Council's representative on the Lincolnshire Police and Crime Panel which summarised the two meetings of the Panel that were held in June 2016.

## **9. CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting was closed at 12:16pm.

## MEETING OF THE RESOURCES POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP

THURSDAY, 8 OCTOBER 2015 2.00 PM



### 6. INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARDS

The Chairman welcomed Steve Larter, the Finance Officer for the Upper Witham Internal Drainage Board (IDB). The Upper Witham IDB was one of 13 drainage boards operating in Lincolnshire and one of three boards to which South Kesteven District Council paid a levy. In introducing his presentation, Mr Larter explained that while they remained separate entities with separate boards, the Upper Witham, Witham First and Witham Third IDBs were jointly administered. While each IDB had separate budgets, issued separate levies and had its own plant and machinery, they shared a Chief Executive, Director of Operations, engineering function, GIS and Environmental Services, consents and enforcement and finance and administration.

The Environment Agency was responsible for maintaining main rivers while IDBs were primarily responsible for maintaining smaller dykes and watercourses that mainly ran across agricultural land.

Members were informed that when IDBs were created, their main priority was draining low-lying land so that it could be used for agriculture however the remit had since widened to include water level management, environmental duties, reducing flood risk for people and communities, water level management associated with renewable energy supply and transport and utilities, and running pumping stations.

IDBs comprised a combination of elected members who were levy-paying landowners within the drainage board area and representatives appointed by those district councils that paid levies to the IDB. While the majority of members that sat on the Witham First board were elected, appointed members held a majority on both the Witham First and the Upper Witham IDBs.

The role of members of the IDB was:

- Acting in the best interests of the Board
- Setting policy, direction and strategy
- Ensuring the smooth running of the board
- Challenging and scrutinising
- Approving the Budget, 'penny rates' accounts, annual returns, plant/machinery programme and write-offs

- Approving which watercourses to maintain

The PDG was then shown examples of the plant and equipment that was required for IDBs to carry out their work, the cost of that equipment and its life expectancy. Mr. Larter explained that where possible, the IDBs tried to 'sweat' their assets, prolonging their useful life.

While Lincolnshire County Council was the lead local flood authority, members were advised that the IDB undertook consent and enforcement work on its behalf.

There were also environmental duties under which IDBs had to operate. Specific reference was made to recent EU legislation that required eel and fish friendly provisions to provide safe passage through or bypassing pumps. Of specific concern for IDBs was the impact of the additional cost of these measures on new and replacement pumping stations.

A brief overview was given of the income and expenditure headlines of the IDBs' budgets together with an explanation of on drainage rates and the way in which they were calculated. The IDB was required to pay an annual precept to the Environment Agency, which for the Upper Witham area equated to approximately 15% of the board's outgoings.

While the different elements that made up the individual budgets for the three IDBs varied in proportionality, members were advised that the majority of funding for the Upper Witham IDB was raised through special levies with a discretionary payment for highland water forming a significant component. This payment was made to the drainage board by the Environment Agency in respect of highland water, which was water that had run off high ground and was pumped through watercourses and pumping stations that were the responsibility of the IDB. The possibility of the withdrawal of this payment was a key risk to the IDB's funding.

Members of the PDG were particularly interested in the similarities between the work undertaken by the Environment Agency and the IDBs. It was suggested that the relationship between the bodies could be confusing for members of the public and as functions were duplicated with each body using its own plant, equipment and engineers, less efficient than if all watercourses were maintained by a single body.

Having noted the savings made through the joint administration of the Upper Witham, Witham First and Witham Third IDBs, the PDG also suggested that a more streamlined system of drainage boards would lead to more efficient services. Members were mindful of the total sum of £700k which South Kesteven District Council paid through levies to the three boards within its area. Of particular concern to members were the additional levies local authorities were required to pay as land passed from agricultural land to other land. Members made specific reference to a number of recent applications for solar

farms on agricultural land, which would constitute a change of use that transferred the drainage levy on that land to the district council.

Members were interested in whether the IDB could access national funding in the case of a major emergency. IDBs were not eligible to apply for funding through the Bellwin Scheme, however they would channel their costs through the relevant district council, which would claim on their behalf.

The suggestion was made that there might be opportunities for district councils to work more closely with IDBs, with specific reference being made to the collection of levies and identifying relevant landowners for billing purposes.

IDBs could apply for Environment Agency funding for capital schemes to prevent flooding. In assessing those applications, greater weighting was placed on protecting developed land rather than agricultural land. This meant partnership-based funding models were becoming increasingly prevalent, including contributions from the drainage board and the relevant county, district and parish councils. Members were mindful of a scheme that would be coming forward for Westborough and the additional financial commitment that would be required to support such schemes in the future

Discussion progressed to the IDB's 5-year plant and machinery programme. There had been significant recent investment in equipment for the Upper Witham IDB to get it to standard but ordinarily purchases would be smoothed, with one or two major pieces of equipment being purchased each year.

The Chairman thanked Mr Larter for attending the meeting and presenting to members of the PDG.

# MEETING OF THE RESOURCES POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP

FRIDAY, 20 MAY 2016      2.00 PM



## 7. INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARDS

Representatives from the Upper Witham and the Welland and Deeping Internal Drainage Board (IDB) were welcomed to the meeting. Jane Froggatt the Chief Executive of the Upper Witham IDB and its Director of Operations and Engineering, Martin Shilling began by giving a presentation. They showed the area covered by the Upper Witham, Witham First and Witham Third IDBs which all worked together and summarised some of the key work undertaken by drainage boards, including benefits provided by operational and engineering services.

Core work carried out by Upper Witham IDB included: maintenance, repair, operation of pumping stations, water level management, investigation of flood and drainage problems, the delivery of the Consents and Enforcements Service on behalf of Lincolnshire County Council, flood alleviation and environmental enhancements. The IDB also worked closely with district councils providing comments on planning applications and pre-application advice.

The presentation also included the estimated income and expenditure of the Upper Witham IDB during 2016/17, information on drainage rates and examples of the work carried out by the IDB during 2015/16. Examples were given of areas where efficiencies had been achieved, including the one team of officers supporting three IDBs and the potential for a fourth to be added from April 2017. Efficiencies had also been made in relation to procurement and adjusting working practices. There were also a number of Public Sector Co-operation Agreements in place which meant that the IDB carried out work on behalf of other public bodies without having to tender or utilising machinery whilst in an area carrying out IDB work.

A number of future pressures were highlighted including ageing infrastructure, the Environment Agency withdrawing from permissive powers to undertake maintenance of some main rivers, weather, fly-tipping, withdrawal of the highland water discretionary payment and the impact of the economic climate on funding partners.

The Chief Executive of the Welland and Deeping Internal Drainage Board, Karen Daft, followed with a brief presentation. She showed the area covered by

the Welland and Deepings IDB and those partners situated closest. The board covered 32,434 hectares including 631km of watercourse and 24km of pipeline. It was also responsible for 14 pumping stations, 3 tidal sluices and in excess of 70 water control structures. Members were then shown examples of some of the maintenance and improvement works that had been undertaken. Challenges going forward were similar to those faced by the Upper Witham IDB.

Members were given the opportunity to ask questions of each of the internal drainage boards. Some discussion ensued which included budgeting. The boards set that it had been historically difficult for them to budget in the medium to long-term as settlements were agreed only on an annual basis. Changes were afoot that would provide for a 5-year funding announcement which would facilitate more medium term planning.

The PDG asked questions about the practicalities of running pumping stations and the amount of use plant had. Comparisons were drawn with water management and drainage provision in other European countries.

The calculation of drainage levies was mentioned and members queried, as South Kesteven District Council paid levies to three IDBs, whether there was the potential to achieve savings by them joining together. Reference was made to the importance of local knowledge and the joint working undertaken with neighbouring clusters of IDBs, which were more alike.

Members asked whether there were opportunities for the drainage boards to take on new work however anything they did undertake had to be permitted within the Land Drainage Act else Ministerial approval was required. Work undertaken under the public sector co-operation agreement had helped split overheads but had not generated any income as work had to be charged on a cost recovery basis. Members also queried the likelihood of any efficiency savings being reflected in future levy requirements.

The role of internal drainage boards in the preparation of local plans was the subject of discussion. It was noted that while, on occasion, the drainage board might object to a proposed allocation site in principle, they would work with the local authority and developers to identify ways they can reduce or mitigate the risk of flooding.

The representatives from the two drainage boards were thanked for their attendance and the time they had taken to answer members' questions.



# MINUTES

## GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, 24 MARCH 2016



### 48. INTERNAL AUDIT - UPDATE

The Corporate Finance Manager introduced report number CFM359, which gave an overview of work completed by Internal Audit between 19 November 2015 and 9 March 2016.

#### (1) Internal Audit Progress Report

Amjad Ali presented the report on behalf of RSM, which had been re-awarded the contract for providing internal audit services to the Council. He confirmed that all the work on the internal audit plan for 2015/16 had now been completed with seven reports finalised since the Committee was last updated. Of those audits, 3 were given a positive, green assurance with no management actions raised (treasury management, elections and planning fees) while risk management was given a green assurance with three low risk recommendations raised. The remaining three audits were given positive opinions with an amber/green level of assurance: 6 low risk recommendations were raised in relation to green waste, 5 low and 2 high risk recommendations were raised in relation to gas servicing and 3 medium and 3 low risk recommendations were raised in relation to tenancy management.

Further detail was discussed in relation to gas servicing. In response to a member's question, the Business Manager, Assets and Facilities explained that information relating to the number of properties where gas servicing had been completed had been consolidated and reconciled on the core asset management database. A 3-month monitoring period was underway during which the old and new systems would run parallel with one another to ensure that there was confidence that the new system was running correctly. The testing phase was due to be completed by May 2016.

One member asked questions regarding the sample testing which identified instances where the four-week tenancy notice period was not being adhered to. Tenancies started on a Monday and ended on a Sunday, however, of the sample tested, a number were identified where the notice period began part-way through the week, rather than commencing the following Monday, which ultimately resulted in lost. Members noted that a wholesale review of tenancy agreements was underway, which could provide an opportunity to address the internal audit recommendations by changing the date from which the four-week notice period would commence.

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Members also gave additional consideration to recommendations in relation to green waste. One Councillor made comments about the way in which payment for green bins was changing; residents were offered a reduced rate for signing up to pay annually by direct debit. No discount was offered to customers who paid by debit card, for which the Council was not subject to transaction fees, about which some concern was expressed. Members also raised concerns about the availability of the offer for those residents who did not have access to the internet. Officers provided some reassurance that a lack of internet access would not prevent a customer from setting up a direct debit, explaining that customer services advisors were able to arrange this over the telephone. Some members also made comment about difficulties that had been experienced with the system through which the direct debit had to be set up. Committee members recommended that the decision to offer reductions to residents signing up for direct debit and the way in which systems had operated during the renewal period should be considered by the Scrutiny Committee. It was further suggested that the Council may benefit from speaking to customers who had chosen to end their subscription to the green bin service to find out why.

The contents of the report were noted.

**Recommendation:**

**That the Scrutiny Committee should consider the decision to offer reductions to customers paying via direct debit for green bin renewals together with the way systems had operated during the renewal period.**

## REPORT TO SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**REPORT OF:** Sam Pearson, Performance and Projects Team Leader

**REPORT NO:** PPMO04

**DATE:** 13<sup>th</sup> September 2016

<b>TITLE:</b>	Quarter 1 Corporate plan performance report	
<b>KEY DECISION OR POLICY FRAMEWORK PROPOSAL:</b>	Not applicable	
<b>EXECUTIVE MEMBER: NAME AND DESIGNATION:</b>	Councillor Frances Cartwright Executive Member, Governance	
<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	Sam Pearson – ext 6341 Email: <a href="mailto:s.pearson@southkesteven.gov.uk">s.pearson@southkesteven.gov.uk</a>	
<b>INITIAL IMPACT ANALYSIS:</b>	Carried out and Referred to in paragraph (7) below	Full impact assessment Required:
<b>Equality and Diversity</b>	Not required	Not required
<b>FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT:</b>	This report is publicly available via the Your Council and Democracy link on the Council's website: <a href="http://www.southkesteven.gov.uk">www.southkesteven.gov.uk</a>	
<b>BACKGROUND PAPERS</b>	Agendas and minutes to previous performance reports to Scrutiny <a href="http://moderngov.southkesteven.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=496&amp;Year=0">http://moderngov.southkesteven.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=496&amp;Year=0</a>  Corporate plan <a href="http://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=8467">http://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=8467</a>	

## **1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1.1 The committee are asked to note the contents of the report

## **2. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 2.1 To update Scrutiny Committee members on the Quarter 1 Corporate plan performance

## **3. DETAILS OF REPORT**

### **3.1 Context**

This is the first report which sets out the progress against the outcomes detailed in the Corporate Plan, and the corporate priority measures which underpin these.

Senior officers work with Members to develop priorities and define the outcomes required by the end of the plan. The Corporate Plan was approved by Council on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2016.

The corporate plan outcomes section shows progress against the key activities, the corporate priority measures are indicators that are tracked in order to reflect the progress that is being made; and detailed progress reports for both of these are contained within Appendix 1

'Data only' figures are recorded but not measured against as they may have external factors that affect them, they do however help to spot trends or provide contextual information.

### **3.2 Executive Summary**

The Council is working towards two main priority themes to achieve its goals; Open for Business and Commercially and Customer Focused.

There are fourteen outcomes and thirty-one measures which are being monitored this year.

For this period we are reporting on six outcomes and nine measures under Open for Business, and five outcomes and five measures under Commercially and Customer Focused.

Thirteen measures are used to provide trend analysis and contextual information to support a specific indicator and this detail is contained within the relevant commentary.

#### **Key priority – Open for Business**

The Council has made good progress on the key activities and the associated tasks. There are currently six tasks underway, four of which are proceeding as anticipated

Gravity fields – Preparations for the third Gravity Fields Festival are underway. A full programme of diverse activities has been developed which will culminate

in an evening finale. External funding of £89,000 for the outdoor programme has been secured from the Arts Council.

Local Plan – Consultation on some of the detailed aspects of the Local Plan has commenced, and although a final version of the plan is not scheduled to be published until January 2018, this consultation is vital at this early stage.

St Peters Hill – Contract negotiations have concluded to complete the new Grantham Senior Citizen Club (GSCC) hall. The GSCC have relocated temporarily to Jubilee Church, although lease documentation of the new building awaits finalisation. Commercial support has been engaged to prepare a prospectus to support the engagement of cinema and retail operators for phase 1 commercial premises.

Performance measures - There has been some success with the corporate priority measures in this area; the occupancy rates of retail units in the four towns remains high at 94%, with Grantham having the lowest rate of 86% and Deepings experiencing 100% occupancy.

The district has 98% of food establishments broadly compliant with the food hygiene law. Premises are inspected on a risk level basis to ensure ongoing compliance.

There are two indicators at red status reported within quarter 1. The anticipated level of net additional homes provided (OB02) and number of affordable homes (OB03) have not been delivered during this period. There appears to be a continuance in the slow-down of the housing market which affected the performance outturn at the end of 2015-16. The Governments change in emphasis towards more support for home ownership rather than affordable rent models together with new policies introduced on rights to buy, social rent setting, high value void levy and terms of tenure have contributed to uncertainty within the affordable housing delivery market. The Council is continuing to invest HRA capital into its 2<sup>nd</sup> phase new build housing programme of 27 homes. Work is underway to review the Council's Housing Strategy and develop a range of responses to encourage new housing development which meets people's needs and supports successful growth across the district.

### **Key Priority - Commercially and Customer focussed**

Flexible organisation – Following on from the re-launch of the Council's website, and the improved functionality which enables more customers to interact with the Council on-line. This programme of work includes a focus on increasing the range of services that customers can access via the Council's website at a time which is convenient to them, rather than contacting the customer service centre by phone or in person during established opening hours.

Over 50% of waste enquiries are now being accessed online as a result. Customers can now pay by direct debit through the website for their green waste collections.

Mobile solutions are also being developed for those teams that work away from the main offices, to enable them to work more efficiently remotely and not be as reliant on returning to the office to update their records.

Delivering differently - Options around a partnership approach to delivery of some of the Council's services are being explored. The process to test the market for a potential partner has begun. Effective stakeholder briefings are in place. The established member steering group is reviewing the scope of services, the opportunities presented by creating a commercial hub and the impact on the wider organisation.

LACC - Work to date has focussed on the refinement of; the draft Articles of Association, shareholder agreement and development of the initial Business Plan, which will set out the details of commercial activity planned for 2016/17/18. Five District Councillors were appointed to the Shareholder Committee at the Council meeting held on the 21<sup>st</sup> April.

Performance measures - The collection rates of Council Tax, NDR and rent against the annual target are slightly lower than the anticipated profile. This has been due in part to the closure of the local Magistrates court, resulting in all liability order hearings taking place at Lincoln. With initially just one court date scheduled a month, the subsequent impact caused a delay to the recovery of both Council Tax and NDR. Negotiation with the Magistrates court has resulted in an increase in court hearings, and a revised recovery schedule has been agreed to enable immediate action to take place. Furthermore a review of the rent recovery process has been undertaken and a focus on targeted intervention should see an increase with the collection rate.

Further detail on all key activities and performance measures can be found in Appendix 1

#### **4. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

4.1 N/A

#### **5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no resource implications to this report. Any actions detailed to address performance will be met within existing resources

#### **6. RISK AND MITIGATION**

6.1 Risk has been considered as part of this report and any specific high risks are included in the table below:

<b>Category Risk</b>	<b>Action / Controls</b>
N/A	

#### **7. ISSUES ARISING FROM IMPACT ANALYSIS**

7.1 This report provides a retrospective summary of the Council's performance, an equality analysis is not necessary.

#### **8. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 There are no crime and disorder implications directly arising from this report.

## **9. COMMENTS OF FINANCIAL SERVICES**

- 9.1 The report forms part of the overall performance management framework of the council. There are no specific financial issues arising from the performance information reported.

## **10. COMMENTS OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

- 10.1 This report is made to Scrutiny Committee to inform it of the progress made in respect of performance against the outcomes detailed in the corporate plan and corporate priority measures. This report has also been presented to the Executive for consideration and recommendation if appropriate.

## **11. COMMENTS OF OTHER RELEVANT SERVICES**

- 11.1 None

## **12. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – Quarter 1 Corporate plan performance report





# Appendix 1

## Quarter 1 – Corporate plan performance report

### Key used for this report

### Corporate plan outcomes

Status

- |  |             |   |
|--|-------------|---|
|  | Overdue     | The task has passed its due date  |
|  | Warning     | The task is approaching its due date. One of more milestones are approaching or have passed it due date |
|  | Progress OK | The task is expected to meet the due date   |
|  | Completed   | The task has been completed   |





### Corporate priority measures





Status

- |  |           |
|--|-----------|
|    | Alert     |
|   | Warning   |
|  | On track  |
|  | Data Only |










## Open for Business - Corporate plan outcomes




<b>Local Plan</b> <b>Target Date: January-2018</b>		Project Manager: Roger Ranson SRO: Steve Ingram	RAG status:  The task is expected to meet its due date
<b>Objectives of this project:</b>  The proposed new Local Plan will achieve the following outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide an up to date planning framework, consistent with the NPPF, and be the key document in supporting future decision making</li> <li>• identify sufficient deliverable sites to maintain a rolling five year supply of housing land</li> <li>• identify major sites likely to come forward for development by 2036 including planning guidance for these sites which will influence how future planning applications will be decided</li> </ul>			<b>Corporate Plan Outcome: Open for business</b>  Adopted a new Local Plan setting out opportunities for the development of homes, businesses and leisure facilities.
Milestone Status	Milestone Due Date	Milestones	Progress
	November 2016	Evidence based studies	Settlement hierarchy, retail needs study, capacity study, employment land review, gypsy and traveller accommodation assessment and strategic housing market assessment are completed
	21 <sup>st</sup> June 2016	Assessment of site submissions at call for sites stage	Site appraisals and assessments have been completed. Issues agreed and sites which are not suitable to allocate are confirmed. Site appraisal document has been drafted.
	8 <sup>th</sup> September 2016	Site and settlement consultation	Consultation has commenced

<b>Register of brownfield sites</b> <b>Target Date: April 2017</b>		Project Manager: Roger Ranson SRO: Steve Ingram	RAG status:  The task is expected to meet its due date
<b>Objectives of this project:</b> To produce a register of brownfield sites and land available for development			<b>Corporate Plan Outcome: Open for business</b> An up to date register available of development opportunities on previously used land. Opportunities for large and small scale housing developments available in our towns and villages
<b>Milestone Status</b>	<b>Milestone Due Date</b>	<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Progress</b>
	May 2016	Self and custom build register	This has been completed and there have been 8 responses to date.
	March 2017	Monitor completions of brownfield sites	Completions are monitored on a regular basis.
	March 2017	Monitor opportunities for pilot schemes	The team submitted an application to be a pilot authority in the first phase. They were unsuccessful due to an oversubscription of applications, and the extent of brownfield land in the district is relatively small due to the rurality of the area. If a second phase is due to commence then the team will submit an application.




<b>Build new Council housing</b> <b>Target Date: October 2018</b>		Project Manager: Andrew Sweeney SRO: Neil Cucksey	RAG status:  The task is expected to meet the due date
<b>Objectives of this project:</b>			<b>Corporate Plan Outcome: Open for business</b>
Ensuring the right mix of housing meets local needs by providing accommodation built to 'lifetime homes' standards which have flexibility to adapt to suit changing needs.			A range of affordable housing available across the district. Completed 27 new Council homes and developed ongoing plans to deliver more low cost housing in the district.
Milestone Status	Milestone Due Date	Milestones	Progress
	15 <sup>th</sup> April 2016	Earlsfield Lane – Legal Contracts phase	Legal contracts have been completed. Work has commenced on site - Approval of design for Anglian water services diversion/renewal received. Awaiting AWA sewer diversion works being completed mid August 2016 before full commencement. Completion due – February 2017
	30 June 2016	Trent Road – Planning application submitted	The planning application has been submitted – and is expected to be considered at the August Development Control Committee meeting.
	31 May 2016	Westry Close - Barrowby – Planning application submitted	The planning application has been submitted – and is expected to be considered at the August Development Control Committee meeting. Negotiations have been completed successfully to lift covenants affecting the site. Preliminary activity has been undertaken to ensure that the Council's contractors are in a position to move forward once the application has been determined.





<b>St Peters Hill</b> <b>Target Date: 06-July-2018 Phase 1 build complete</b>		Project Manager: Neil Cucksey SRO: Tracey Blackwell	RAG status:  One or more milestones have passed its due date
<b>Objectives of this project:</b>			<b>Corporate Plan Outcome: Open for business</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a viable, contemporary, state of the art multi screen cinema complex.</li> <li>• Support and enable development of a diverse daytime and evening economy through the creation of associated new A3 restaurant space.</li> <li>• The scheme proposes a core (Phase One) development of up to 15,000 sq ft of new build cinema, 6,500 sq ft of ground floor (A3) restaurant space and 8,000 sq ft of first floor space that could be used for a variety of compatible leisure or office uses.</li> </ul>			Developed initial phases of St Peter's Hill in Grantham to provide new opportunities for restaurants, a multi-screen cinema and other leisure time uses.
Milestone Status	Milestone Due Date	Milestones	Progress
	November 2016	Enabling works package	Negotiations concluded with the contractors who are building the new GSCC building. A revised contract sum for the build has been received. Site investigation work has been completed. GSCC have moved to Jubilee Life Church, and the group are scheduled to sign the agreement for lease. This task had been postponed for 4 weeks to allow contract negotiations to take place.
	January 2017	Core development phase 1	Support has been commissioned to develop a market prospectus to engage cinema and A3 operators. The prospectus has been drafted and is on track to be issued to the market on the 25 <sup>th</sup> July.

<b>Southern Quadrant</b> <b>Target Date: October 2018</b>		Project Manager: Sylvia Bland SRO: Steve Ingram	RAG status:  One or more milestones have passed its due date
<b>Objectives of this project:</b> To ensure the development of a sustainable urban extension, including Grantham Southern Relief Road, to the South of Grantham.			<b>Corporate Plan Outcome: Open for business</b> Development delivery arrangements in place for the Spitalgate Heath/ KiNG 31 site. Balanced approach in place which encourages new housing and employment development whilst ensuring a proportionate contribution towards essential community infrastructure
Milestone Status	Milestone Due Date	Milestones	Progress
	2 <sup>nd</sup> May 2016	Heads of Terms agreed for Section 106 agreement	Some progress on this has been made and it is anticipated agreement will be reached before the planning permission is considered by Development Control Committee in October.
	20 Sept 2016	Residential Development – planning permission granted and S106 signed	The planning application submitted by Buckminster is on course to be determined in October.
	31 Mar 2018	Completion of King 31 Link Road	The first phase of the link road to the King 31 site has been completed this month. The new junction on the A1 is scheduled for completion by March 2018

<b>Gravity Fields Festival</b> <b>Target Date: September 2016</b>		Project Manager: Paul Stokes SRO: Steve Ingram	RAG status:  The task is expected to meet the due date
<b>Objectives of this project:</b> Increase the economic benefit above that generated by the 2014 festival. Encourage accommodation providers to plan for and to include the event as part of their promotional activities. Increase footfall to and throughout the town during the outdoor festival and in particular in respect of the performances. Encourage local businesses to be directly involved in order to raise their own profile. Extend partner working with appropriate agencies such as Lincoln University and encourage schools to participate with outreach work			<b>Corporate Plan Outcome: Open for business</b> Raised the profile of South Kesteven as a great place to live, work and invest. Contributed to the success of local tourism and leisure business through a range of promotional activity including a programme of local festivals.
<b>Milestone Status</b>	<b>Milestone Due Date</b>	<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Progress</b>
	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2016	Ticket sales launched	Education tickets were on sale on 11th March following community & Education launch. All tickets were launched for sale on May 2 <sup>nd</sup> . A Gravity Fields website has been launched which delivers transactional functionality
	30 Sept 2016	Deliver event programme	There has been considerable interest in sponsorship in kind, for the event. The team have secured a grant from the Arts Council of £89,000 towards the outdoor programme. Food traders for the evening markets are secured and the team are currently working to secure further traders for the event. Volunteer stewards for the 5 day event are being sought, and the team are approaching local community groups for assistance.





## Commercially and Customer Focused - Corporate plan outcomes

<b>LACC</b> <b>Target Date: December 2016</b>		Project Manager: Richard Wyles SRO: Tracey Blackwell	RAG status:  One or more milestones have passed its due date
<b>Objectives of this project:</b>			<b>Corporate Plan Outcome: Commercially and customer focussed</b>
To establish a generic trading company that generates income streams to the Council and assists in the delivery of Council priorities			A range of commercial services available through the Council's company to increase customer choice and contribute to our long term financial sustainability Delivered increased returns on capital investment
Milestone Status	Milestone Due Date	Milestones	Progress
	20 April 2016	Register company with Companies House	Work to date has focussed on the refinement of; the draft Articles of Association, shareholder agreement and development of the initial Business Plan, which will set out the details of commercial activity planned for 2016/17/18. Target dates for the registration of the Council's company will be confirmed following consideration of appointments to the Company Board and the Business plan at the next meeting of the Shareholder Committee in October.
	21 April 2016	Board members agreed at Council	5 District Councillors were appointed to the Shareholder Committee at the Council meeting held on the 21 <sup>st</sup> April and initial activity has focused on developing a more detailed understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the Committee as part of the governance arrangements for the Council's company.



<b>Flexible Organisation</b> <b>Target Date: December 2017</b>		Project Manager: Lee Sirdifield SRO: Tracey Blackwell	RAG status:  The task is expected to meet the due date
<b>Objectives of this project:</b> Our transformation approach has three streams, people, property and customers. This is supported by our revised ICT strategy unifying plans up to 2016			<b>Corporate Plan Outcome: Commercially and customer focussed</b> Enhanced the way our services are delivered and resourced to match the evolving needs of our business and residential communities. Increased the range of services that people can use on the Council's website 24 hours a day, every day of the year. <b>and</b> Redesigned our customer service offer to optimize our resources and enable residents and business to access the services in a cost effective but convenient way.
Milestone Status	Milestone Due Date	Milestones	Progress
	31 December 2017	Enhance customer intelligence to shape service improvements	Analytics are embedded into the customer website which enables a better understanding of what customers search for on the website. A series of "How To" guides and dynamic solutions will be developed and offered to customers, enhancing their experience and resulting in an increased number of transactions being handled online. Freedom of Information processes and the Feedback module have been moved off Covalent and the processes have been designed and built in the Corporate CRM solution and linked to the single customer view. This provides enhanced analysis and tracking of customer enquiries, and reduces double handling.
	31 December 2017	Flexible workforce delivering services in the right places for our customers	The Neighbourhoods team are now able to use the corporate CRM solution to create and receive work items whilst out and about in the district. Mobile technologies have been introduced to ensure that officers can receive real-time information and manage workloads without the need to return to one of our offices. The new processes are targeted at making neighbourhoods more desirable places to live.
	31 December 2017	30 – 70% of customer transactions handled online	The ongoing delivery of the CRM and DMS solution is making more services available through our website. This work will continue in accordance with the project plan for phase 2 and 3. Utilisation of online transactions is monitored by CF02 which shows 56% of customers are making use of the services that are already available online.




<b>Customer service centre re-design</b> <b>Target Date: December 2017</b>		Project Manager: Lee Sirdifield SRO: Tracey Blackwell	RAG status:  The task is expected to meet the due date
<b>Objectives of this project:</b>			<b>Corporate Plan Outcome: Commercially and customer focussed</b>
Using the previously assigned work styles, become more flexible to allow more organisations to use our office space. The Customer Service Centre and reception at the St Peters Hill office will be re-designed.			Reduced the cost of office space used by South Kesteven District Council by maximising flexible working arrangements and sharing our space with other public and voluntary sector organisations.
<b>Milestone Status</b>	<b>Milestone Due Date</b>	<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Progress</b>
	26 <sup>th</sup> July 2016	Reach agreement with partner over Heads of Terms	Meeting arranged with partners' new representative to work through the Terms of reference, timescales and date of occupation.
	30 <sup>th</sup> August 2016	Working project team established	The initial team meeting workshop has been arranged for 9 <sup>th</sup> August where terms of reference, roles and responsibilities, timeline and governance arrangements are due to be agreed





<b>Delivering Differently</b> <b>Target Date: May 2017</b>		Project Manager: Judith Davids SRO: Daren Turner	RAG status:  One or more milestones have passed its due date
<b>Objectives of this project:</b>			<b>Corporate Plan Outcome: Commercially and customer focussed</b>
The Council would like to safeguard local employment and where possible grow the number of jobs available whilst at the same time insulating itself from the impact of welfare reform. The Council seeks to use its asset base, specifically the St Peters Hill offices more effectively and derive an income from doing so. To facilitate the creation of a commercial Hub in Grantham.			A range of delivery models in place together with or by partners to provide high quality, cost effective services to the local community Created a local delivery hub for public sector services in Grantham
Milestone Status	Milestone Due Date	Milestones	Progress
	22 <sup>nd</sup> April 2016	Strategic Development	All tasks within this phase were successfully completed. Project Governance was established, the scope and deliverables of the project confirmed, and a staff representatives group was established. On the 9 <sup>th</sup> May the Executive gave in principle support to allow the project team to proceed with testing the market for interest.
	22 <sup>nd</sup> July 2016	Produce procurement documentation	This milestone is behind the originally planned schedule due to the fact that based on advice received, two phases of the procurement process were merged, thereby reducing the overall timeline. However in the short term more work was necessary to complete the required additional documentation. The timeline has been re-cast and milestones re-aligned to incorporate this change.
	5 <sup>th</sup> August 2016	Bidder Day / Pre-market engagement day	This milestone is behind the originally planned schedule due to the additional time required to produce the procurement documentation for the two merged phases described above. It was also agreed that the Bidder day, which was originally scheduled to be between the Pre Qualification Questionnaire phase and the Invitation to Submit Outline Solutions, should be now be treated as Pre-market Engagement, and held in advance of the publication of the Contract Notice.

## Open for business – Corporate Priority Measures

RAG	Performance Measure Description	Frequency	April 2016		May 2016		June 2016		Annual Target 2016/17	Performance comments
			Value	Target	Value	Target	Value	Target		
	OB02 Net additional homes provided (cumulative)	Monthly	25	56	46	112	81	168	680	Quarter 1 performance demonstrates a continuance of the slowdown in the housing market which was reflected in 495 out of targeted 680 homes completed in 2015/16. We see this problem continuing to worsen in the future due to uncertainties causing the housing market to slow. Work is underway to review the Council's Housing Strategy and develop a range of responses to encourage new housing development which meets people's needs and supports successful growth across the district.
	OB03 Number of affordable homes delivered (gross) (cumulative)	Monthly	1	0	1	2	1	2	60	Although we were expecting two affordable homes to have been completed this quarter, only one shared ownership has been sold. Close liaison is maintained with registered providers and developers to understand their development trajectory. There are a variety of issues impacting on the delivery of completed homes including the Governments changing emphasis on housing policies, legislation and related funding programmes. The Council is currently progressing the development of its 2 <sup>nd</sup> phase new build programme of 27 homes as a result of investment from the Housing Revenue Account





RAG	Performance Measure Description	Frequency	April 2016	May 2016	June 2016	Annual Target 2016/17	Performance comments
			Value	Value	Value		
	OB04 Percentage of planning applications approved	Monthly	90%	93%	90%	N/A	Of the 316 applications received this quarter 284 have been approved. The team have been focussing on alternative ways of service delivery given the number of officers who have recently left and utilising the knowledge which remains over the whole section. In essence;- 6 out of the 6 major applications have been approved 47 out of the 84 minor applications have been determined within time. This has dipped while a backlog has been cleared in order a new householder team can concentrate in expediting these applications. 165 out of the 226 'other' applications have been determined in time. Officers who would normally work on these have been concentrating on the final issues which have arisen since

RAG	Performance Measure Description	Frequency	April 2016		May 2016		June 2016		Annual Target 2016/17	Performance comments
			Value	Target	Value	Target	Value	Target		
✓	OB08 Occupancy rates of retail units in town centres	Quarterly	-	-	-	-	94%	90%	90%	51 out of 881 units are vacant across the four town centres. The latest national figures show town centre vacancy rates at around 12%. Our occupancy rates across the district are well in excess of that. Three quarters of these unoccupied premises are in Grantham – all premises within Market Deeping are occupied including the old bank property. Vacant units in Grantham have increased by 4 properties since the last quarter. However occupancy rates have improved slightly, helped by the Council's investment (alongside Historic England) in shopfront improvements and the town-wide improvements that were supported by the Growth Point. This, alongside a positive planning approach to ensure that vacant units can be occupied by alternative uses, has helped to arrest a tendency to move away from retail shopping in town centres. The Council will seek to build on Grantham's 'experiential' offer with the new cinema development and associated leisure uses. In Stamford, occupancy rates are close to 100%. This is down to Stamford's obvious attraction as a tourist destination, and a relatively constrained supply of new units. This will be investigated further through the Local Plan which is currently in production. Bourne has 7 vacant properties.

RAG	Performance Measure Description	Frequency	April 2016		May 2016		June 2016		Annual Target 2016/17	Performance comments
			Value	Target	Value	Target	Value	Target		
	OB09 Percentage of Food establishments in the area which are broadly compliant with food hygiene law	Monthly	98%	95%	98%	95%	98%	95%	95%	There are currently 1468 registered food premises in the district. The proportion of broadly compliant businesses (equivalent to Food Hygiene Rating Score of 3 or above) remains high at 98%, despite 4 businesses recently experiencing reduced rating scores. Two premises have recently received "0" ratings following routine inspections, both as a result of issues with pests entering food preparation areas and poor cleaning practices. Both premises have received advice and support but are still subject to formal action
	OB10 Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting (formerly NI 192)	Monthly	46%	45%	45%	45%	45%	45%	45%	We continue to promote good recycling through the web and media. However the LCC recycling materials contract continues to show that contamination rates reported have doubled. A county wide education campaign is planned. Making our green waste service easier to access has helped improve the speed of take up, with currently 31,083 bins (30,801 this time last year) and 27,646 customers (27,337 last year).
	OB11 Percentage of streets that meet clean streets standard	Quarterly	-		-		91%		N/A	A review of the new street cleansing schedules has been undertaken with Street Scene having ensured that 91% of streets meet the (national) clean streets standard. Ongoing education campaigns are undertaken through local media.
	OB13 Number of fly tipping incidents received (cumulative)	Monthly	68		137		245		N/A	Education campaigns and targeted actions are being undertaken. The 245 fly tipping incidents reported, is a reduction on previous years. 278 and 289 incidents were reported for the same period in previous years. Nationally there is an increase in fly-tipping which is reflected in the yearly performance outturn. In 2016 there were 1169 incidents, in 2015 – 1061 and in 2014 there were 807.

## Commercially and customer focused – Corporate Priority Measures

RAG	Performance Measure Description	Frequency	April 2016		May 2016		June 2016		Annual Target 2016/17	Performance comments
			Value	Target	Value	Target	Value	Target		
✓	CF02 Percentage of self service transactions (Percentage take-up)	Monthly	57%	-	55%	-	56%	-	New measure target to be set for 17/18	<p>The performance levels attained in 2016/17 will be used as a baseline for further years and to enable realistic targets to be set.</p> <p>5212 transactions were completed online during April 2016. This equates to 57% of demand. 34% of demand was via the telephone, with 9% of customer demand coming in person.</p> <p>2660 transactions were completed online during May. This equates to 55% of demand where an online offer exists. 39% of demand was via the telephone, with 6% of demand being in person</p> <p>2057 online transactions were completed during June. This equates to 56% of demand for services where an online offer is available. 38% of demand was via the telephone, with 6% in a face to face setting.</p>

RAG	Performance Measure Description	Frequency	April 2016		May 2016		June 2016		Annual Target 2016/17	Performance comments
			Value	Target	Value	Target	Value	Target		
	CF03 % of Council Tax collected (cumulative)	Monthly	10.89%	10.86%	20.30%	20.33%	29.49%	29.68%	98.80%	For the first quarter, collection rates remain broadly on track compared with the anticipated profile. Recovery action is underway where appropriate to remind those residents who have not yet brought their accounts up to date.
	CF04 % of Non-domestic Rates Collected (cumulative)	Monthly	14.80%	14.73%	24.33%	24.25%	33.00%	33.26%	98.70%	Collection performance remains high despite the challenging economic conditions that are being experienced by some local businesses. We continue to work with ratepayers to ensure that payments are maintained over the financial year.
	CF05 % of Rent collected against annual collection target (cumulative)	Monthly	5.44%	5.97%	15.07%	15.62%	23.09%	23.69%	98.5%	Collection rates remain strong despite the challenging environment particularly the impact of welfare reform on some tenants. A review of the recovery process has been undertaken to ensure that targeted focused intervention is undertaken where necessary.
	CF06 Right to buy sales	Monthly	3		4		6		N/A	The number of right to buy sales continues at a high level and at the current rate will exceed last year's total sales of 41. In line with Government policy, the Council will continue to make tenants aware of their right to buy entitlements.



## REPORT TO SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**REPORT OF:** Scrutiny Committee Chairman

**REPORT NO:** LDS182

**DATE:** 13 September 2016

<b>TITLE:</b>	Draft Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2015/16	
<b>KEY DECISION OR POLICY FRAMEWORK PROPOSAL:</b>	Not applicable	
<b>EXECUTIVE MEMBER: NAME AND DESIGNATION:</b>	Councillor Mrs. Frances Cartwright – Executive Member, Governance	
<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	Jo Toomey, Principal Democracy Officer Telephone: 01476 40 60 80 (Ext: 6152) <a href="mailto:j.toomey@southkesteven.gov.uk">j.toomey@southkesteven.gov.uk</a>	
<b>INITIAL IMPACT ANALYSIS:</b>	Carried out and Referred to in paragraph (7) below	Full impact assessment Required:
<b>Equality and Diversity</b>	Not applicable – see paragraph 7	
<b>FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT:</b>	This report is publicly available via the Your Council and Democracy link on the Council's website: <a href="http://www.southkesteven.gov.uk">www.southkesteven.gov.uk</a>	
<b>BACKGROUND PAPERS</b>	None	

## **1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1.1 The Committee approves the draft report for submission to Council on 17 November 2016.**

## **2. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 2.1 Under Article 6.8 of the Council's Constitution, the Scrutiny Committee must report annually to the Council on its activity.

## **3. DETAILS OF REPORT**

- 3.1 This report covers the period from 21 May 2015 to the 21 April 2016. The report provides a summary of the Committee's work during the course of the year.

## **4. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 4.1 The Council's Constitution prescribes that the Committee must submit a report each year to the Council.

## **5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 None.

## **6. RISK AND MITIGATION**

- 6.1 Risk has been considered as part of this report. No high risks to the Council were identified.

## **7. ISSUES ARISING FROM IMPACT ANALYSIS**

- 7.1 The report provides a summary of work undertaken by the Scrutiny Committee in 2015/16; consequently no impact analysis is required.

## **8. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 There are no crime and disorder implications arising as a result of this report.

## **9. COMMENTS OF FINANCIAL SERVICES**

- 9.1 There are no financial comments to make in respect of this report.

## **10. COMMENTS OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

- 10.1 It is a requirement under Article 6 of the Constitution that the Scrutiny Committee report annually to Council on the work it has undertaken.

## **11. APPENDICES:**

- Appendix 1 - Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2015/16



## Scrutiny Committee Annual Report

2015/16



*your council working for you*

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## **1.0 Chairman's Foreword**

2015/16 was an exciting year for the Scrutiny Committee. The new Committee was appointed following the District Council elections. not only did it contain a number of new completely new Councillors, many of the returned Councillors were new to Scrutiny.

During 2015/16 the Committee participated in two training sessions. The first, which was delivered by the Centre for Public Scrutiny, focussed on high-level, strategic topics. The second session, which was delivered by Dr. Stephanie Snape provided a more practical introduction to scrutiny, concentrating on skills and tips to help the Committee in its activities.

In its first year, the Committee has particularly focussed on its critical friend role.

I would like to thank the Councillors who sat as members of the Committee during the year for their commitment and willingness to participate. While it can be challenging to start something from scratch, I think the whole Committee is now getting to grips with its role and gaining momentum so I look forward to seeing it develop in the coming years.

In particular I would like to offer my thanks to Councillor Bob Russell who served as the Committee's vice-chairman in 2015/16. I am pleased that he will remain a member of the Committee and we can share his knowledge and experience.

Finally I would like to offer my thanks to all those officers who have attended meetings of the committee and helped us with our scrutiny work, sharing their expertise.

*Councillor Bob Sampson  
Chairman, Scrutiny Committee*

## **2.0 Introduction**

Overview and scrutiny was introduced as part of the modernisation agenda for Local Government in the Local Government Act 2000. The overview and scrutiny process can influence decisions but it cannot make them.

In South Kesteven the overview and scrutiny functions are separated. Three Policy Development Groups carry out overview work, while the Scrutiny Committee is responsible for the scrutiny function.

### **2.1 About the Committee**

The Scrutiny Committee is politically balanced, comprising 11 non-Cabinet members of the Council. Details of membership during 2015/16 are shown below:

<b>Chairman:</b>	Councillor Bob Sampson
<b>Vice-Chairman:</b>	Councillor Bob Russell
<b>Members:</b>	Councillor George Chivers ( <i>replaced by Councillor Lynda Coutts on 9 July 2015</i> )
	Councillor Phil Dilks
	Councillor David Mapp
	Councillor Mrs. Judy Smith
	Councillor Mrs. Sarah Stokes
	Councillor Mrs. Brenda Sumner
	Councillor Frank Turner
	Councillor Dean Ward ( <i>replaced by Councillor Ray Wootten on 21 January 2016</i> )
	Councillor Ray Wootten ( <i>replaced by Councillor Mrs. Rosemary Kaberry-Brown on 9 July 2015</i> )

During 2015/16, the Committee met six times. Full details of the agendas and action notes from those meetings are available on the Council's website.

The Committee has a responsibility to monitor the Council's performance, consider its decisions, question how those decisions were made and recommend improvements.

The Scrutiny Committee also undertakes external scrutiny to examine wider issues that affect the district. The Council is required to have a Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee; the Constitution allows the Scrutiny Committee to fill this role.

## **2.2 The role of scrutiny**

The Scrutiny Committee has four key functions, which are listed below.

- *To provide a "critical friend" challenge to the Cabinet as well as external authorities and agencies*
  - Challenge by scrutiny should be constructive, robust and purposeful
  - Scrutiny should work effectively with the Cabinet and senior management
  - Scrutiny should provide an effective mechanism for the Cabinet to demonstrate public accountability
- *To reflect the voice and concerns of the public and its communities*
  - Scrutiny should take a community leadership role by focusing on issues of public concern
  - Scrutiny should have a constructive relationship with the press and media
  - Scrutiny should create the conditions for plural views and concerns to be taken into account
- *Scrutiny members should take the lead and own the scrutiny process on behalf of the public*
  - Scrutiny should operate with political impartiality
  - Scrutiny should have ownership of its work programme
  - Scrutiny members should have a worthwhile and fulfilling role
- *Scrutiny should make an impact on the delivery of public services*
  - Scrutiny should have access to timely and accurate performance information
  - The scrutiny work-programme should be balanced, well co-ordinated and integrated into corporate processes
  - Scrutiny work should be carried out with strategic objectives in mind
  - Scrutiny should contribute to improving local public services

## **2.3 Work programming**

As part of its working programming for 2015/16, the Committee has tried to concentrate on topics that support corporate priorities and drive improvements in the services the Council provides for its customers.

### **3.0 Introduction to Scrutiny**

At the first meeting of the new Committee on 2 June 2016, the new Committee received a presentation which gave them an overview of the key principles of scrutiny. The aim of the presentation was to give members an understanding of the way the scrutiny function worked in South Kesteven prior to the training session led by the Centre for Public Scrutiny.

The presentation gave members information about the local arrangements for processes like call-in and Councillor Call for Action.

### **4.0 Performance and priorities**

#### **Annual Performance Report – 2014/15**

At its meeting on 20 October 2015, the Scrutiny Committee received the annual performance report for 2014/15. The report and included statistics showed progress against the Council's corporate priorities in respect of projects and strategic performance measures.

Highlights from the report included:

- Increased footfall in the town centres towards the end of 2014/15 and beginning of 2015/16
- 166 new business enquiries
- 81% planning applications determined within the statutory timescale
- 92 affordable homes were delivered
- Projects aimed at keeping the district attractive including publicity campaigns and reviewing cleansing regimes
- Footfall in leisure centres exceeded targets
- Delivery of the second Gravity Fields Festival

Other issues discussed as a result of the report included the removal of recycling credits and its impact on the organisation, classification of villages within the Local Plan, matters related to council housing, the programmes being run through the arts centres, arrangements for answering customer telephone calls and headline financial information.

#### **Performance updates 2015/16 – quarters 1 to 3**

During the year the Committee received updates on the Council's performance and their contribution towards achieving priority themes.



Performance information was supplied to the Committee in a new, tabulated format, which members found very useful; they also noted the quality of the information that was being provided to support its work.

The tables provided information on 10 broad performance indicators that underpinned the Council's priority themes. Four of the indicators were recorded for data only; these were indicators over which the Council had little control but were useful in providing wider context and showing the general direction of travel. The remaining indicators all had targets set against them.

The indicators against which performance was reported to the Committee were:

Grow the Economy

- Percentage of planning applications approved (data only)
- Occupancy rates of retail units in town centres (target)
- Total footfall within key shopping areas (data only)

Keep SK clean, green and healthy

- Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting (target)

Promote leisure, arts and culture

- Number of visits through our leisure centres (target)

Support good housing for all

- Net additional homes provided (target)
- Gross number of affordable homes delivered (target)
- Number of households on the Council's housing needs register assessed as having a housing need (data only)

Well run council

- Number of complaints received (data only)
- Working days lost due to sickness absence including first day of sickness per full-time equivalent (target)

The report showed the levels of performance achieved, and where a target had been set, the target for that period, the annual target and the direction of travel. The information also gave performance against the indicator a red, amber or green status and provided commentary which

provided a summary of progress against the indicator and gave an explanation for any exceptions.

*Town centre occupancy*

Highlighted in the quarter 1 and 2 performance report was the occupancy of shops in the four main town centres where performance exceeded the national average. Through questions members identified that the town centre with the lowest occupancy rate was Grantham. This was confirmed when a more detailed breakdown was provided for members as part of the quarter 3 performance report. Members asked questions about the steps that were being put in place to bring the occupancy of retail units in Grantham into line with the other towns in the district. One of the key projects designed to increase footfall in Grantham town centre and make the town centre more attractive to businesses was the St. Peter's Hill project, which included the multi-screen cinema. Officers were also working with the landlords in town, focusing on the shared ambition of attracting the right type of retail development. Members also recognised that through the production of the new Local Plan for the district, there would be an opportunity to bring new uses into Grantham town centre.

Notably the quarter 3 performance report showed an upward trend in the occupancy of town centre retail units in Grantham.

*Households assessed as having housing need*

During discussion on the indicator which highlighted the number of households that were on the Council's housing needs register and assessed as having a housing need members asked about the process for turning round void properties and whether the condition in which properties were left had a significant impact on the turnaround time delaying the new tenant moving in. Members were advised that the condition in which the properties were left had improved as a result of the rechargeable repairs policy. The approach would be complemented through revisions to tenancy agreements, which would be adjusted to reflect changes in government policy and the Council's housing allocations policy.

*Working days lost due to sickness*

During quarter 1 and quarter 2 members noticed that the number of working days lost due to sickness had increased from a quarter 1 value of 9.98 to 10.88 in quarter. Members learned that the overall sickness rate was affected by the number of people who were long-term sick. The Committee was concerned that there might be a trend to sickness

absence that could be attributed to stress, so they requested a breakdown of the reasons given for sickness absence.

Further detail provided at the Committee's next meeting identified that the main reasons for absence between October and December were those expected for winter months: colds, flu and digestive issues. While stress-related sickness was amongst the top three reasons for absence in October 2015, it decreased and dropped out of the top three in November and December, which gave members reassurance.

Members did note that performance against the indicator in quarter 3 was just below target but within tolerances. An explanation was given that the figures quoted in the report were projections of the number of working days lost as a result of sickness would be at the end of the year if it were to carry on at the same rate. The actual number of days lost due to sickness at the end of quarter 3 was 7.26, reflecting the interventions that had been put in place, particularly working with those people on longer term sickness.

### *Complaints*

Following receipt of the performance information for quarters 1 and 2, members of the Committee had asked for more detailed information on complaints. The Committee wanted to see whether there were any trends in relation to the number of complaints received for different areas of business. A majority of the complaints received at the end of quarter 3 related to street care services, which comprised refuse collection and street cleaning and included missed bins. Technology in the waste vehicles allowed crews to log households that failed to present bins, which meant those that were legitimate missed bin complaints could be identified. If a bin was missed legitimately on three occasions within a six-month periods, a complaint was automatically raised.

Members also considered the number of complaints relating to responsive housing repairs. There was some concern that the number of complaints was exacerbated by customers who were contacting the council about the same problem multiple times. Business managers were provided with a breakdown that included the number of times a person had called about the issue.

Committee members identified the distinction between complaints where the service of the council had not met customer expectations from those where the correct processes had been followed but the customer did not like the outcome. As an example, a number of the complaints made about the development management service were complaints where a customer disagreed with the decision made on a planning application. Going

forward, a new way of recording complaints was being introduced which would include the facility to distinguish between the different types of complaint received. This would provide a clearer picture of any trends and where it would be appropriate to take additional action.

#### *Additional homes provided*

During quarters 1 and 2, performance against this indicator was below target but within tolerances for the indicator. A piece of work was undertaken to identify the reasons that performance against the indicator was below target. This included a review to ensure completions were being accurately recorded as data could be provided through a number of different sources and to identify whether there were any wider circumstances contributing to performance, for example, material shortages.

By the time the quarter 3 report was presented to the Committee, performance against this indicator was below target and outside the tolerance levels. In questioning the reason for this the Committee learned that nationally the housing market was subdued, pending further detail on new Government programmes for building starter homes and affordable homes. No shortages of labour or materials had been identified.

Strong performance was shown against the target in 2014/15, when there was a strong appetite for development as the economy was coming out of recession; this used up available sites that were ready to be built out. Adversely, some new development land was slow to be released by landowners.

Members noted that there were a number of actions in place to try and facilitate the release of sites for development, ensuring that sufficient land was included in the emerging local plan to meet strategic housing need and the Council's growth aspirations, and provide opportunities for development where developers had an appetite to build.

## **5.0 Flooding**

During 2014/15 the Committee carried out extensive work in relation to flooding, which is summarised in the annual report for that year. The outcome of the work led to a report to be sent to Lincolnshire County Council as the lead local flood authority requesting feedback on:

- A simple explanation of who does what in the District and/or Lincolnshire as a whole and who to call/where to get information in

respect of flooding incidents, flood prevention and emergency planning

- Whether the information would be available to members of the public as a leaflet
- An explanation of which flooding incidents are investigated, the procedure for investigation and how the outcomes of those investigations are reported
- How and when the decision will be made about which organisation has responsibility for advising on SuDS
- The relevant consultee on flood risk and drainage issues for the determination of planning applications

Feedback on each of these areas was provided by officers at Lincolnshire County Council and reported to the Committee's meeting on 25 August 2015. The response included a link to Lincolnshire County Council's website, which included a number of flooding related downloads including leaflet on managing flood risk in Lincolnshire. This leaflet explained the role of Lincolnshire County Council in managing flood risk in Lincolnshire. The response also provided members with information about the role the County Council played in relation to flooding matters in consultation on planning applications following changes in legislation.

## **6.0 Safeguarding**

At the Committee's meeting on Tuesday 25 August 2015, the Community Engagement and Policy Development Officer delivered a presentation giving an overview of the Council's responsibilities in relation to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

Members of the Committee identified that Councillors could make a valuable contribution in relation to safeguarding; their responsibilities were the same as officers of the Council and they were well-placed to identify issues of concern within their own communities.

During the presentation members asked questions and sought assurance in relation to a number of issues:

- Arrangements were in place to check the suitability of taxi drivers including mandatory training for those taxi drivers with school contracts, which was delivered through Lincolnshire County Council
- The quantity and distribution of family support workers throughout Lincolnshire
- Arrangements for the scrutiny of the safeguarding function and the self-assessment process Council's were required to undertake
- Suggestions to assist Councillors as they work in their Wards
- Training arrangements

Examples were given of the wide range of issues covered by the safeguarding agenda and hypothetical examples of how concerns might be raised and dealt with using a multi-agency approach.

At the end of the presentations members decided they wanted to look more deeply at safeguarding training for members and officers and to look at the structures used to deal with safeguarding matters. Consequently, safeguarding structures and an item on training was presented to the Committee's meeting on 20 October 2015.

During the October meeting members received a report on the training pathway for safeguarding, current training levels of staff and elected members within the authority and the structure of the Safeguarding Boards for Lincolnshire.

During the discussion on attendance at training, members considered ways to optimise attendance including promotion through group leaders and whether it would be possible to provide an e-learning option. In the end, members agreed a recommendation:

- That members of the Scrutiny Committee should encourage their Councillor colleagues to attend safeguarding training sessions

## **7.0 Removal of the Spare Room Subsidy**

The Committee requested an item on the Removal of the Spare Room Subsidy. The topic was scoped at the Committee's meeting on 25 August 2015 when members decided they wanted to look at the following issues:

- The number of people affected by the removal of the spare room subsidy and the impact on council tenants
- The impact of the subsidy on housing provision and supply
- The measures put in place by the Council to support people affected by the spare room subsidy and whether those measures worked
- Whether the Council had sufficient resources in place to deal with the requirements and whether they were deployed effectively

A report was produced on the issue which was considered at the Committee's October meeting, which covered:

- The rules in relation to the removal of the spare room subsidy
- The national impact of the removal of the spare room subsidy was outlined in an evaluation produced by the Department of Work and Pensions
- The number of SKDC tenants in receipt of Housing benefit

- Discretionary Housing Payment including the numbers of applications received and the total number of housing benefit claimants that had applied for a discretionary housing payment that were linked to the removal of the spare room subsidy
- SKDC housing allocations policy and homelessness including composition of housing stock

Members identified that in stock to meet general needs, only 4.58% had one bedroom.

In terms of support for residents affected by the removal of the spare room subsidy, government introduced Discretionary Housing Payments which were a short-term measure to allow tenants to consider their position and make changes. The Council also ran a rent deposit scheme to support residents in finding accommodation in the private sector.

On Tuesday 1 December 2015, the Committee received a further update. Members had previously asked questions about the number of evictions where the removal of the spare room subsidy was a contributing factor. While there was no conclusive proof of a link between the eviction and removal of the subsidy, officers advised the total number of evictions and how many they believed were as a direct result of the removal of the subsidy. The judgement was based on whether the tenant had had a good payment history prior to the introduction of the subsidy.

Additional information was also made available as to the level of Discretionary Housing Payment made available to the Council including the percentage of payments that were made to council tenants and tenants of housing associations.

Members of the Committee concluded that they were content with the measures that the Council had put into place to support tenants and the smooth transition of the removal of the spare room subsidy.

## **8.0 Gas servicing**

The Committee had asked to look at the arrangements for gas servicing, which was managed by an external contract. The Business Manager, Property and Development attended the meeting of the Committee held on Tuesday 16 February 2016 when members considered report number P&D24.

The report explained the process used to let the contract, the contract management arrangements, the arrangements that are in place to ensure appropriate notice is served to tenants, the way in which customer



satisfaction is recorded and the procedures in place to deal with any concerns regarding contract performance.

The Committee was particularly interested in the number of broken appointments and the process that would be followed if a tenant failed to provide access to the property for gas servicing. Members considered whether the channels used to communicate with tenants were appropriate. Regular transfers of data were made between the Council and the contractor to ensure that they had access to the most up-to-date information, which included information gathered through the tenants' census on how tenants preferred to be contacted. Reassurance was also given that the contractor tried all numbers on record to speak to a tenant to arrange for servicing and where a second letter had to be delivered by hand, the officer spoke to neighbours and liaised with the housing team to try and find out why the tenant had not responded.

If the Council had concerns about the performance of the contractor, an 'Early Warning Notice' procedure would be instigated, however members were informed during the meeting that the provision had not been required to date.

Following further discussion, members were pleased to note that carbon monoxide detectors were checked at the same time gas servicing was conducted.

Members also discussed the logging of complaints about gas servicing within the debate about the quarter 3 performance report. Some members expressed concern that complaints would not be captured corporately because they were managed through the external contractor.

## **9.0 Representatives on outside bodies**

During 2014/15, the Committee received reports from representatives on the following bodies:

- Black Sluice Internal Drainage Board
- Upper Witham Internal Drainage Board
- West Lincolnshire Domestic Abuse Service
- Welland and Deeping Internal Drainage Board
- Lincolnshire Health Scrutiny Committee
- Lincolnshire Police and Crime Panel



## **10.0 Conclusion**

Members of the Committee recognise that it is important to constantly improve to help the Council to meet its priorities. Learning lessons where things could have been done better or celebrating success and identifying any strategies that could enhance delivery of other projects and policies.

The Committee was particularly pleased with changes to the way in which performance was reported, addressing comments made in previous years. The new format was considered particularly user-friendly and in a style that facilitated scrutiny by the Committee.

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