

ACTION NOTES

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, 12 JUNE 2012



COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Councillor Alan Davidson
Councillor Reginald Howard (Chairman)
Councillor Michael King
Councillor David Nalson
Councillor Helen Powell

Councillor Bob Russell
Councillor Bob Sampson
Councillor Mrs Judy Smith (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Ian Stokes

OFFICERS

Head of Legal and Democratic Services (Lucy Youles)
Head of Development and Growth (Mark Williets)
Head of People, Projects and Performance (Sue Griffiths)
Service Manager – Community Safety and Licensing (Mark Jones)
Performance Management Officer (Sam Selby)
Principal Democracy Officer (Jo Toomey)
Community Engagement and Policy Development Officer (Carol Drury)

1. COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

A question was put by a member of the public:

“What is the policy of the SKDC Scrutiny Committee towards the development of Wind Turbine energy production in the South Kesteven District Council area?”

As leaders within the SKDC Council are you prepared to review the circumstances surrounding the possible proliferation of wind turbines in South Kesteven? It would appear that localism and harm to the environment are being disregarded.

The question is, by design, of a general nature and not specific to a single application.”

The Council’s Local Plan document included a policy on renewable energy (EN3), which provided the framework on which any decisions made by SKDC’s Development Control Committee were based. Any application was considered

on its own merits and in the context of other planning policy principles, including those relating to the protection and enhancement of the character of the local area. There was also guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework and regional guidance.

Lincolnshire County Council had agreed a policy document on what it considered appropriate parameters and restrictions for the development of wind farms. It was noted that Lincolnshire County Council had no powers in respect of planning. National guidance from the Department of Communities and Local Government stated that renewable energy targets should not be a justification for the development of wind farms in inappropriate places. It also indicated that policies should be in place to ensure any adverse impacts were mitigated.

The Council was in the early stages of producing a supplementary planning document on wind farms. When it had been through the complete process for formal adoption as a supplementary planning document, it would take greater precedence in determining local applications than the national framework. Consultants had been commissioned to produce the document because there was not capacity in-house to complete the piece of work in the required time.

Informal consultation with interested parties was underway. Councillors reported that parish councils on which they sat had not received any consultation documentation. Concerns were expressed because the deadline for replies was Friday 15 June 2012. Feedback from the informal consultation would form the basis of the draft document, which would be presented to the Cabinet on 6 August 2012 recommending the content and seeking approval for formal consultation.

It was suggested that the procedure for the production of wind farm supplementary planning document be added to the PDG's work programme. This was agreed this would be discussed as part of the work plan item on the agenda

Action Point:

Consider scrutiny of the procedure for the production of the wind farm supplementary planning document as a work plan item.

Recommendation:

The process to adopt a wind farm supplementary planning document should not continue until all parish councils have been given the opportunity to participate in consultation.

2. MEMBERSHIP

The Committee was notified that Councillor Ian Stokes was substituting for Councillor Mrs Kaberry-Brown for this meeting only.

3. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Cosham and Turner.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Russell declared a personal interest in discussions about renewable energy under agenda item 1, (comments from members of the public) as his son worked for a renewable energy supplier.

Councillor Sampson declared a personal interest in respect of discussions relating to parish councils under agenda item 1 because his wife had just been appointed as chairman of a parish council.

5. ACTION NOTES FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 10 APRIL 2012

The action notes of the meeting held on 10 April 2012 were agreed as a correct record subject to the following amendments:

- Pg 8, action point should read: *“That the Committee considers a piece of work on the relationship between Portfolio Holders, senior/chief officers and Policy Development Groups as part of its work programme for 2012/13.”*
- Pg 8, question 8 should read: *“What industrial or employment sectors is the Council concentrating on?”*

6. UPDATES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

The Committee reviewed the session during which it questioned the Economic Development Portfolio Holder. A list of the portfolio holder’s responsibilities was circulated with the agenda. Based on the session, the Committee expressed some concerns about the workload of portfolio holders. There was brief discussion on how the performance and effectiveness of portfolio holders was measured. It was acknowledged that broader performance was recorded through performance against the Council’s priorities.

7. 2011/12 YEAR END PERFORMANCE REPORT

Report number PPMO01 was presented to the Committee. The report included a summary of measures that had met or exceeded their targets and highlighted measures that had not performed so well. The direction of travel was also indicated. Some of the indicators included in the report did not have data for 2011/12 because the indicator was either new for the current year or there had been changes to the way in which they were calculated.

21 measures had exceeded their targets, 6 measures did not achieve their targets but were within acceptable tolerances and 5 did not meet their targets.

Officers explained the process for setting targets. Heads of service worked with service managers to produce stretching targets which were based on previous years' performance. Additional performance indicators which measured services' performance were included in service plans.

Discussion ensued on whether targets should be adjusted if they had not been achieved. When indicators related directly to the Council's priorities it was felt that challenging targets could be retained, however when performance was influenced by other factors (for example the impact of the economic market on delivering affordable housing), it might be more appropriate to adjust the target.

Where targets were not met, improvement plans were produced.

The Committee noted in particular, the indicators which related to: long-term sickness absence, fly-tipping, ticket sales for live events, market occupancy in Grantham and the collection of non-domestic rates.

Scrutiny Committee members could have an opportunity to feed into performance targets through their performance management role and any reviews conducted.

11:23-11:38 The meeting was adjourned

8. PROCUREMENT LINCOLNSHIRE

Report number SD33 by the Strategic Director, Corporate Focus summarised responses to the Committee's review of Procurement Lincolnshire, was considered. The Committee was not clear whether the comments in the report were from Procurement Lincolnshire, one of the management boards or a combination thereof. It was confirmed that the Strategic Director sat as an officer on the Procurement Advisory Board and the report had been made in that capacity.

The following points were noted:

- The Scrutiny report was produced by the Committee at the culmination of several months' work.
- Councillors did not feel the report had been taken in the spirit in which it was intended – to help and support Procurement Lincolnshire rather than to criticise
- National indicator 179 and its definition by the Department of Communities and Local Government
- Following the removal of the Lincolnshire Finance Officer's Group as a governing body for Procurement Lincolnshire, its governance structure was unclear
- Savings against contracts procured through Procurement Lincolnshire would plateau; the Committee's report suggested other opportunities

through which Procurement Lincolnshire could demonstrate its effectiveness when that occurred

It was suggested that representatives from each of the Procurement Lincolnshire boards (the Procurement Advisory Board and the Strategic Board) be invited to a future meeting of the committee to respond directly to the recommendations. This was agreed.

Action Point:

Establish and inform members of the Procurement Lincolnshire governance structure and invite representatives from Procurement Lincolnshire's Procurement Advisory Board and the Strategic Board to a future meeting of the Committee to directly respond to the recommendations made in the Committee's review.

9. WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee was introduced to the Community Engagement and Policy Development Officer, who would have a role supporting the Scrutiny Committee and the policy development groups.

A list of topics that the Committee had previously suggested it would like to consider was circulated. Councillors added to the list during discussions:

- Defibrillator and first aid provision
- Hospital provision in South Kesteven (a special meeting had been scheduled for 11 July 2012 to consider recent media reports in respect of Grantham hospital)
- Housing policy and the impact of the Localism Act (phased investigation starting with the refinancing of the Housing Revenue Account – use of any surplus)
- Grantham Area Action Plan and Site Allocation Development Plan Document
- Planning obligations and Community Infrastructure Levy
- Changes to policing arrangements as a result of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act
- CCTV provision
- Improving Broadband in rural areas (already under consideration by the Communities PDG)
- Procurement Lincolnshire
- Relationship between Portfolio Holders, officers and PDGs, including helping Portfolio Holders work more effectively
- Wind farm Development Plan Document
- Skills agenda for young people
- Portfolio holder question and answer sessions (to be programmed over the next 18 months to 2 years)

It was suggested that priority should be given to the items on Grantham hospital and wind turbines as the most time sensitive topics.

A special meeting had been arranged for 11 July 2012 at 9:30am to meet with health service representatives to discuss public concerns about the provision of accident and emergency and mental health services at Grantham hospital.

A working group was set up to look at the procedure for the creation of the wind farm supplementary planning document. Councillors King, Sampson and Russell agreed to form the working group.

Conclusion:

To appoint Councillors King, Sampson and Russell to the working group scrutinising the procedure for the adoption of the wind farm supplementary planning document.

A concern was expressed about future provision of CCTV in the district. Officers were tasked to gather a preliminary overview and highlight any time critical issues.

Action point:

Identify any proposed changes to CCTV provision in the district that are time-critical and report to the Committee for its consideration

10. REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

The Elsea Park Community Centre in Bourne was running and had enjoyed a successful open weekend in May 2012.

11. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting was closed at 13:10.