

ACTION NOTES

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, 9 APRIL 2013



COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Councillor Paul Cosham
Councillor Alan Davidson
Councillor Reginald Howard (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs Rosemary Kaberry-Brown
Councillor Michael King

Councillor David Nalson
Councillor Bob Russell
Councillor Bob Sampson
Councillor Mrs Judy Smith (Vice-Chairman)

OFFICERS

Strategic Director, Corporate Focus
(Daren Turner)
Community Engagement and Policy
Development Officer (Carol Drury)
Principal Democracy Officer (Jo Toomey)

OTHERS

Alan Thomas – Chairman of
Procurement Lincolnshire Strategic
Procurement Board
Sharon Cuff – Head of Service for
Procurement Lincolnshire

1 Member of the public (Mr Worth)

66. COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

At the Committee's last meeting on 18 February 2013 Mr Worth had asked a question on planning pre-application advice charges. A charge for pre-application advice was approved by Council on 1 March 2013 as part of its budget. Any requests for advice and the advice given would not be entered onto the public record.

Action point:

A written response answering questions on pre-application advice to be sent to Mr Worth.

67. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Powell and Turner.

68. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

No interests were disclosed.

69. ACTION NOTES FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 19 FEBRUARY 2013

The action notes from the meeting held on 19 February 2013 were noted.

70. UPDATES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

A sheet summarising responses to actions that had arisen at the Committee's meeting on 19 February 2013 was circulated (appended to the action notes).

Pre-application planning advice was thoroughly debated and Members raised a number of concerns about its potential to increase the number of poor quality applications, retrospective applications and the process that was followed. Members stated that the Development Control Committee should have been consulted on the proposals.

The Development Management Service Manager was involved throughout. The Section 151 Officer assured Members that the correct constitutional process was followed for the introduction of a new charge (through the Resources Policy Development Group via Cabinet to full Council).

Members of the Committee said that they did not agree with the introduction of the charge.

Action Point:

To invite the Development Management Service Manager and the Chairman of the Development Control Committee to the Committee's next meeting (June 2013) to discuss charging for pre-application advice.

71. PROCUREMENT LINCOLNSHIRE

The Committee welcomed Alan Thomas (Chairman of the Strategic Procurement Board) and Sharon Cuff (Head of Service for Procurement Lincolnshire (PL)) and noted apologies from Manjeet Gill (Chairman of the Procurement Advisory Board). The PL representatives addressed the recommendations made by the Committee in its scrutiny review of the shared service.

Structure and Governance of PL

- PL had two boards:
 - Procurement Advisory Board - membership included councillors from two authorities. It advised on strategy and reported to Lincolnshire Leaders and Chief Executives.

- Strategic Procurement Board – membership: directors from all partner authorities. Responsibilities: performance monitoring, priorities and making recommendations on policy and strategy to the Procurement Advisory Board.
- The Committee considered PL’s governance arrangements. There was general consensus that officers should be involved in the day-to-day running of the service.
- When PL was created officers reported to an elected member management board; this was disbanded and replaced by the Procurement Advisory Board.

Scrutiny of PL

- Members suggested that internal performance monitoring might be more effectively conducted by people without specialist finance knowledge
- Historically the joint Lincolnshire Scrutiny Panel commissioned a scrutiny review of PL; this had previously been circulated to the Committee.
- Since the Joint Lincolnshire Scrutiny Panel was disbanded responsibility for scrutinising PL on behalf of Lincolnshire County Council transferred to the Value for Money Scrutiny Committee.
- Individual partners were responsible for conducting their own scrutiny.

Action Point

Circulate any scrutiny reviews carried out by other partners to Scrutiny Committee members.

Collaborative procurement

- SKDC enjoyed a good collaborative relationship with PL.
- Any partner that chose not to participate in a collaborative procurement exercise was required to submit a written explanation and business case supporting their decision.
- Director-level representation on the Strategic Procurement Board assisted buy-in to collaborative working across partner authorities.

Defining savings

- The baseline on which savings were calculated for the first five years of PL’s operation had been agreed by all partners.
- PL representatives agreed that the way in which savings were defined needed to be more easily understood.
- A sub-group of the Strategic Procurement Board was reviewing definitions; all partners would need to subscribe to any changes.
- The Committee recommended that the definition should be amended to: *“savings achieved or expected to be achieved by all current contracts or the latest contracts to be let) compared with the costs of the previous*

comparable contracts”.

- PL acknowledged the limits to recording savings only and recognised the need to demonstrate value added through other activities.

Target-setting

- PL acknowledged the importance of realistic challenging targets to motivate staff and enhance the credibility of the service.
- Cut-off dates in respect of year end had been introduced.
- Scrutiny Committee members recommended there should be a clear distinction between targets, estimates and actual savings.
- The methodology for calculating targets was being reviewed by the Strategic Procurement Board working group.
- Councillors suggested that targets should have been reviewed annually.

Calculating savings

- PL had previously used the definition of national indicator 179 on value for money to calculate savings.
- Councillors were critical of this methodology as it only measured contracts when money was saved. Members suggested the calculation should be the net value.

Representatives from PL broadly supported the Committee’s recommendations but advised that all 8 partners would need to approve any changes in methodology or definition. PL said they would provide a written report addressing the Committee’s recommendations and updating them on what had been agreed as part of the refresh.

Action Points

- 1. Procurement Lincolnshire to provide a written response to the Committee’s recommendations following its five-year review (September 2013)**

The Scrutiny Committee to consider Procurement Lincolnshire’s governance arrangements at its next meeting (June 2013)

72. REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS

The Chairman of the defibrillator working group provided an update on its activity. Considerations included medical papers, litigation, training and ease of use. It had also conducted interviews with the Council’s Environmental Health Services Manager and the Operations Manager from the Meres Leisure Centre. Further planned work included an interview with a representative from LIVES and a survey of first aiders. Members of the working group acknowledged the support they had received from officers.

Members discussed potential logistics of siting defibrillators in Council buildings

and whether there was a universal sign the Council would display to show there was defibrillation equipment within.

73. WORK PROGRAMME

The work programme was noted and a number of additions and alterations made:

- Move self-financing of the HRA to a meeting that complements the Resources PDG work programme
- Procurement Lincolnshire – governance – June 2013
- Pre-application planning advice – June 2013
- CCTV in Lincolnshire – invite Superintendent Vickers from Lincolnshire Police – June/August 2013
- Procurement Lincolnshire – feedback on recommendations – October 2013
- Gravity Fields Festival – review of long-term outcomes – March 2014

74. REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

The Council's representative on the Lincolnshire Health Scrutiny Committee gave an update on meetings she had attended. Key items considered by the Committee included hospital mortality indicators, Peterborough and Stamford Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, creation of and arrangements relating to clinical commissioning groups, county hospital targets and paediatric cardiology provision.

75. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting was closed at 12:42pm