

MEETING OF THE COMMUNITIES POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP

FRIDAY, 27 JANUARY 2017

2.30 PM



GROUP MEMBERS PRESENT

Councillor Ashley Baxter
Councillor Barry Dobson
Councillor Mike Exton (Vice Chair)
Councillor Breda Griffin

Councillor Charmaine Morgan
Councillor Robert Reid
Councillor Brian Sumner
Councillor Mrs Andrea Webster
(Chairman)

EXECUTIVE MEMBER

Councillor Bob Adams, Leader of the Council, Executive Member Growth
Councillor Teri Bryant, Executive Member Finance & IT
Councillor Mrs Frances Cartwright, Executive Member Governance

OFFICERS

Strategic Director Environment and Property (Tracey Blackwell)
Business Manager Legal and Democratic Services (John Armstrong)
Business Manager Environment Health (Anne-Marie Coulthard)
Business Manager Environment (Mark Jones)
Business Manager Housing (Lisa Barker)

38. MEMBERSHIP

The PDG was notified that Councillor Robert Reid and Councillor Brian Sumner would be substituting for Councillor Duncan Ashwell and Councillor Ray Wootten for this meeting only.

39. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Ray Wootten and Councillor Duncan Ashwell.

Apologies for absence were also received from Councillor Linda Wootten, Executive Member Housing and Councillor Nick Craft, Executive Member Environment.

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40. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

No interests were disclosed.

41. ACTION NOTES FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 18 NOVEMBER 2016

The Leader reminded Members that the notes from the PDGs were for recording actions only.

The action notes from the meeting held on 18 November 2016 were noted.

42. CORPORATE ENFORCEMENT POLICY

The Business Manager – Legal & Democratic Services presented report number LDS198 on the changes to the Corporate Enforcement Policy and other policies. The purpose of the report was to provide Members with an awareness of the revised draft Corporate Enforcement Policy (CEP) and of the changes to other policies that required updating.

Members of the PDG were being asked to consider the draft revised Corporate Enforcement Policy (CEP) and make a recommendation to the Executive Member for Governance to approve the adoption of these policies.

The PDG was informed that the Corporate Enforcement Policy (CEP) provided a single over-arching policy containing key factors and principles common to all aspects of enforcement undertaken by the Council. The aim was for a consistent approach that would ensure good practice when enforcement activities were undertaken. Fair and effective enforcement was essential to protect economic interests, public health and safety and the environment. The Corporate Enforcement Policy (CEP) was supported by a number of service specific policy documents that set out greater detail in respect of the enforcement practice for each particular service area. This would ensure consistency across all services as well as with the Corporate Enforcement Policy (CEP). Each service enforcement policy included a reference to the Corporate Enforcement Policy (CEP) as well as updated web links to all the relevant policies, regulations and procedures.

The review of these policies also reflected the changes in the organisational structure in respect of the Neighbourhood Team as well as the changes of remit within the wider Environmental Services Team. As a result of this it had been considered appropriate to have one service specific enforcement policy that covered Environmental Services and Waste and Recycling. This change was reflected in the Environmental Services Enforcement Policy.

Service specific policies covered were:

- Development Management

- Building Control
- Environmental Services
- Debt and recovery
- Waste and Recycling

Members discussed the following:

Whether there was a swifter way of undertaking an enforcement and what legal impact the enforcements had;

The consistency of enforcements and the public perception of whether the same process had been followed for a listed building or a private dwelling. (An example was provided)

That there did not appear to be much weight around conservation areas in the table on page 8 of the draft Management Enforcement Policy and whether this should be included

The consistency around Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) and trees being cut down without permission – how was this enforced; how would a tree that had been cut down be replaced, would it be replaced by an established tree or a sapling;

Whether fines and cautions had any impact; that cautions did carry some status as they would remain on a person's record which could be used against them should a further offence be committed and how this was applied to companies who may potentially commit a breach of the law;

The procedure used for dealing with the pursuit of enforcements; whether there were specific timelines and how these were monitored; how much evidence was required and how this could affect the timelines

Whether satellite dishes were included in any of the categories of enforcement;

Action Notes:

Consideration is given to the inclusion in the Development Management Enforcement Policy of a separate heading for conservation area into the column that is entitled "Type of Breach" in the priorities table at page 8 of the policy, and

That the Members of the Communities PDG are provided outside the meeting with information regarding the timelines when dealing with enforcement issues.

Recommendation:

That the Communities PDG recommends that after taking into account the

action note above regarding inclusion of the conservation areas in the Enforcement Policy, the Corporate Enforcement Policy (CEP) and associated service Enforcement Policies as outlined in the appendices are approved and adopted by the Executive Member for Governance.

43. CAR PARKING STRATEGY

Members were informed that the Car Parking Strategy required further work and would need to take into consideration the new recently proposed projects; the Garden Village, an outlet park in Grantham and the Barracks. These potential projects were not known about when the Communities PDG Working Group initially undertook the review of the Car Parking Strategy. A new strategy would need to look at providing effective support for economic growth in the District.

Members had an in depth discussion about the areas they wished to have included in the scoping for the new review:

When scoping for a working group or summit it would be important to take into account the work already undertaken by the Communities PDG Car Parking Working Group, and build on this;

Members also discussed the potential benefits from the inclusion of a wider group of councillors in order to gain greater insight to the issues for the District. It was also thought important to consider more comprehensive views on:

On and off Street parking

The impact of store parking

The inclusion of car parking clauses in new developments

The potential for park and ride

Economic viability and increasing capacity to help encourage and welcome visitors to the District

Consideration of other potential major changes in the district; an awareness of the impact of a potential for unitary authorities and who would have responsibility for operating the car parks;

Issues around school related parking;

Alternative approaches to managing the utilisation of car parking including the use of mobile phones;

The consistency of approaches throughout the District;

Charging mechanisms, mobile charging which would enable people running late to update their tickets through their phones, and

Blue Badge holders; consistency throughout the district; whether 2 hour free parking was sufficient; should it be extended or should there be a charge for parking.

Recommended:

That further work is undertaken to review the Council's Car Parking Strategy.

44. INTEGRATION SELF ASSESSMENT (INTEGRATING HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE)

The Business Manager Environmental Health presented report number ENV651 on the Integration Self-Assessment (integrating Health and Social Care). Members were being asked to undertake an exercise to identify the top three priority areas where they felt additional focus by the Lincolnshire Health and Wellbeing Board might help accelerate the integration of commissioning and provision of services. The three priority areas for improvement would need to be fed back to the Executive Member Environment and then to the Lincolnshire County Council Public Health by 31 January.

Members were informed of the Government's ambition for health and social care to be integrated by 2020. Local areas would be "graduated" from the Better Care Fund (BCF) once more transformative integration had been demonstrated. The BCF was a single pooled budget allocated to Local authorities and used by both the NHS and Local Government through the Health and Wellbeing Boards to encourage closer working arrangements and provide more focussed and integrated health and care services that centred on wellbeing.

A small number of (up to 10) Graduation Pilots were available and would be selected for 2017/18. Lincolnshire County Council had approved the submission of an application for pilot graduation status. The criterion for selection was set out in the report circulated with the agenda.

A self-assessment exercise had highlighted a number of areas where wider partners and stakeholders felt improvements were required. As a partner organisation, the Health and Wellbeing Board was asking for the top three areas to be identified where Members felt were a priority and would support the development of an Improvement Plan and accelerate integration of commissioning and provision of services.

Eight areas for ranking had been identified:

1. Shared Commitment

2. Shared leadership
3. Shared accountability
4. Getting it done
5. Shared vision
6. Shared decision making
7. Shared systems – models
8. Shared systems – enablers

Issues raised by Members were:

Whether this was part of the STP recently presented by the NHS at a meeting of Council. Members were informed that the Sustainability and Transformation Plans (STP) were the overarching plans of the NHS which was not directly related to the issue under discussion today. The issue being considered today was about the effectiveness of partnership working within the Health and Wellbeing Board;

The focus must be mindful of a joined up approach between social services and hospitals;

Patient need: ensuring that patients' needs were being met when they were discharged from hospital; patients were transferred into a safe environment; a better understanding of the medication requirements for patients especially during transition from hospital to their place of care; better monitoring of patients when leaving hospital; a better health care path for each patient.

That although housing was included in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy it was not a primary focus; that planning and the location of developments was also an element that affected health and may need to be highlighted more in the strategy;

Members were then asked to identify their three preferences by allocating stickers to three of the eight main areas set out on a display board.

Members preferences had ranked the areas as follows:

Joint 1 st	Getting it done in Lincolnshire
	Shared commitment in Lincolnshire
3 rd	Shared vision in Lincolnshire
4 th	Shared decision making in Lincolnshire
Joint 5 th	Shared Systems (models) in Lincolnshire
	Shared Accountability in Lincolnshire
	Shared Leadership in Lincolnshire
8 th	Shared Systems (enablers) in Lincolnshire

Action Note:

That these preferences would be shared with the Executive Member Environment and then sent to Lincolnshire County Council Public Health by

the Business Manager Environmental Health by 31 January 2017.

45. INTEGRATED NEIGHBOURHOODS TEAM UPDATE

The Business Manager Neighbourhoods presented report number ENV652 on the implementation of the Neighbourhoods Team. At a previous meeting Members had requested further information on the recently formed Neighbourhoods Team and the report outlined the reasons for the changes and the progress made to date.

A presentation was given on the Neighbourhoods Initiative which outlined the reasons why a Neighbourhoods Team had been established. The main aims were to ensure the delivery of SKDC's priorities, to align resources in line with business need and provide customers with easier access to services. The challenge had been how to merge the delivery of some of these services that would create efficiencies and improvements and provide a much improved customer service.

Some of the issues that had been integrated so far were dog fouling; abandoned vehicles, fly tipping, bonfires and hoarding.

The team had been created from people with the right skills and experience from across these services. New links and customer access routes were developed which meant that increased flexibility from staff was required along with new ways of working and significant levels of training. A new mobile IT support platform was developed which enhances the online reporting facility and enables immediate mobile updates to officers and notification of incidents on a live system.

The next stage was to look at the potential of assisting other services, such as planning enforcement and grounds maintenance. The team had a broad range of skills and experience that could be utilised. There was the potential for building knowledge and being the "eyes and ears" for such things as housing issues and empty properties.

Some specific geographical areas had been identified that required further consideration where there were regular and ongoing problems with fly tipping, highway issues and general ground maintenance such as weeds. Consideration was being given to allocating focus days on specific issues and locations.

Members discussed the potential for the Neighbourhood Services to liaise with the County Council Trading Standards team. Members also raised concerns about the impact of housing conditions and fly tipping / mis-presentation of waste in key gateways into Grantham such as the route from the railway station to the town centre.

A request was made by a Member to receive a list of the work undertaken and if there were issues with persistent offenders.

In conclusion, Members were informed that the system CIVCA had been up and running for 18 months and that customer complaints were run through this system.

Action Point:

Members welcomed the work being undertaken by the Neighbourhoods Team, and

Members would be provided outside the meeting with a list of the types of issues addressed by the Neighbourhoods Team.

46. SUPPORTED HOUSING - CONSULTATION ON FUNDING PROPOSALS

The Business Manager Housing presented report number BMH117 on the Governments Consultation with respect to proposals for future funding of Supported Housing. The report outlined the background to the Consultation and contained a number of questions to assist in the preparation of a response to Government.

The definition of the term Supported Housing encompassed a wide range of accommodation including Sheltered Housing.

Supported housing played a crucial role in supporting people to live independently. Funding for supported housing was complex and came from a variety of sources. Housing Benefit played a significant role as it helped meet the eligible housing-related costs.

Following recent Government legislation and announcements, doubt had been cast over the sustainability of Supported Housing of which there were three main elements.

The Welfare Reform and Work Act: This provided for social and affordable rents but was to be reduced by 1% per year between 2016 and 2019. Supported Housing was exempt from this rent decrease but doubt was still there in respect of the long term sustainability of some schemes.

Housing Benefit: The Government was proposing to cap Housing Benefit to the level of the Local Housing Allowance from 2018. If applied to Supported Housing schemes, where rents and service charges were high, it would remove the entitlement of residents to full housing benefit and render some schemes unviable.

Universal Credit: This was based on the premise that housing benefit would cover only the core housing costs with additional funding being available for housing support. Further announcements were expected. Universal credit was typically paid on a monthly basis which in itself created challenges for short

term accommodation such as homeless hostels and refuges.

The Government statement made in September 2015 gave a commitment to reviewing the funding for supported housing. The proposal was for a new system to be implemented from 1 April 2019 but the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) cap would not apply to Supported Housing until then. From 2019, it was proposed to introduce the LHA cap to Supported Housing and Sheltered Housing although some accommodation forms such as some refuges would be exempt. The 1% rent reduction required would apply to Sheltered Housing between 2017 and 2019. The key elements of the statement were:

- Core housing costs (rent and service charges) would continue to be funded through housing benefit or universal credit up to the level of the applicable Local Housing Allowance rate with a top up from the local authority (top tier).
- To enable the top up to happen there would be a transfer of funds from DWP to DCLG who would then allocate funds to local authorities based on a mechanism yet to be determined. Government was committed to ensuring that the devolved administrators received a level of funding in 2019/20 equivalent to that which would otherwise have been available through the welfare system.
- The top up would be ring fenced and only available to pay for Supported Housing costs.
- The shared accommodation rate would not apply to people under the age of 35 living in the supported housing sector the one bedroom rate would apply instead.

Members were informed of the main three ways that these Government proposals would impact on the Council. These being: Sheltered housing; Temporary accommodation and, partner provision of temporary accommodation and supported housing in the district including domestic abuse services which were county wide. It was noted that some of the Housing Associations had highlighted potential shortfalls.

Top tier authorities were well accustomed to commissioning however there would need to be an agreed and clear commissioning framework to enable the views and priorities of district councils to be properly considered. The current arrangements for working with the county on the commissioning and management of support housing would need to be better developed.

Across all schemes, there were concerns regarding the future development of supported housing schemes given their reliance on revenue funding through the benefits system and county council commissioning processes.

There were 12 questions in the report for Members to consider.

Members discussed the following issues:

Budget and funding reductions since Public Health had been moved to local authorities;

Top funding and how this would be distributed fairly nationally;

The methodology of how local authorities would decide to allocate funding;

The manner and speed in which the Council had been asked to look at this Consultation;

The need for a joined up connected approach and examples could be provided;

How the changes were already impacting on Housing Associations such as Housing 21;

That the 'Supporting People' funding had initially been ring fenced but this had subsequently been removed which meant the money could be open to funding for other areas;

That although the pressures might not be so bad for Councils in a good position, the additional pressures would have a significant impact for Councils that were already struggling, and

That individual Members could respond direct in addition to commenting on the consultation at this meeting.

Recommended:

That the Business Manager Housing will compile a response which would be circulated to Members of the PDG for their comments before being submitted to the Government.

47. WORK PROGRAMME

Wyndham Park would be an item on a future Agenda.

The review of the HRA Business Plan would be aligned to the completion of the Review of the Housing Strategy.