

Present: Councillor Judith Skinner (Chairman), Councillor Judy Welbourn (Vice-Chairman), Councillors Tom Ashton, Katie Chalmers, Anton Dani, Paul Skinner and Jonathan Noble

In attendance:

Officers –
Assistant Director - Regulation, Assistant Director - Assets, Assistant Director – Organisation and Corporate Services, Head of Public Protection and Deputy Monitoring Officer, Insights & Transformation Manager and Democratic Services Officer

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were tabled by Councillor Peter Bedford with Councillor Stephen Woodliffe substituting. Further apologies were tabled by Councillors Alison Austin and Paul Goodale.

2 MINUTES

The Chairman signed the minutes of the previous meeting with the agreement of the committee.

3 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None tabled.

4 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

None tabled.

5 DRAFT LITTER AND FLY TIPPING STRATEGY

The Head of Public Protection presented the report confirming that it was intended to be adopted by each sovereign Council in the South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership. The strategy set out the ambition of the Partnership to tackle and reduce litter and fly-tipping. It supported the commitment in the Partnership Annual Delivery Plan to implement a shared Enforcement contract for environmental crime, by promoting public engagement and providing transparency about enforcement.

Members were advised that the rationale for the strategy was due to the recognition of local and national increases in incidents of fly-tipping and would provide a Commitment in Partnership Annual Delivery Plan to implement a shared Enforcement Contract for Enviro-Crime.

The Strategy would support delivery of the new contract by promoting public engagement and education, providing transparency about enforcement, using intelligence to direct interventions and would build an Action Plan to detail activities and timelines.

Whilst intelligence noted that incidents had increased over the last five years, it should be considered in the context of the pandemic and increases seen nationally over that

period. However, Boston incidents were now reducing, with a reduction of 20% over recent months

The objective of the Strategy would be to reduce litter and fly-tipping across the Partnership and would be achieved by educating and engaging with the public and business to ensure it is seen as socially unacceptable and to ensure enforcement is used effectively and appropriately. To enable this collection of data and intelligence would be required to understand and target problem areas with work within the partnership and other agencies and community groups. It would also require effective use of communications to ensure the public and businesses understand the legal requirements.

The strategy would provide definitions, offences and penalties. It would set expectations around public behaviour and what would not be acceptable. Furthermore it would explain business obligations and describe how cameras would be used for deterrent and enforcement purposes and encourage public engagement and reporting.

Moving forward the next steps would include consultation with key partners including Police, Environment Agency, Lincolnshire Waste Partnership and community groups, a communication strategy would be implemented to ensure the public are informed are engaged and approval of the strategy would be sought through each Sovereign Council.

Member deliberation followed which included the following comment and questioning:

Questioning the ongoing issue of bins, particularly purple bins, being left on the pavement unemptied due to being contaminated and then used by the public as general waste bins, a member suggested that the refuse collection team be tasked to provide intelligence and report back such issues. The member was advised that the team already fed back on various issues they identified whilst collecting refuse.

In response to issues within a specific area of the town and the lack of action taken in respect of ongoing littering issues which were prevalent and continually visible, the Head of Regulatory (and Lead Officer for the committee) advised that a multi-agency approach was being undertaken to tackle the problem and that Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN's) would be issued offering the culprits the option to pay or to go to court. Members were further assured that all powers available would be used to enforce the strategy including supporting intelligence from partners and the Council's own operatives alongside CCTV surveillance on targeted areas identified as prolific hot spots.

Strong concern was noted at the ongoing problems of fly tipping on private land and the costs being incurred by the land owners at having to clear the rubbish. The Council was not working with land owners and doing nothing in supporting them with the problem. The Lead Officer for the committee advised that it was not the responsibility of the Council nor the tax payer to pay for clearing waste from private land. However, the strategy was about engagement as well as enforcement and would provide support to land owners with sustained campaigns working alongside the stakeholders.

Further comments included agreement of the need to deploy CCTV in key areas and use the equipment as much as possible both covertly and overtly. There was support and agreement of the need to take enforcement action through FPN's and to pursue through the courts to make it publicly clear that the action would not be tolerated, and to promote widely and regularly that the acts of serious offences could result in imprisonment and potential fines up to £50,000. All publicity in respect of all forms of littering should be in multi languages and be very prevalent and continual to ensure the public were aware of the impact of such action, and the ramifications once the person responsible was identified.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Environment and Performance Committee having noted the draft strategy made comment prior to the draft strategy moving forward for further consultation and then onto Cabinet for final determination.

6 QUARTER 1 AND QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE

Due to technical issues the reporting officer was unable to present the report. The Lead Office for the Committee – The Head of Regulatory provide a brief overview and advised that questions which could not be answered would be provided following the meeting. Members were asked to recognise that the data provided was now historic due to the report being deferred following adjournment of the original meeting where it was scheduled to be present in current time, and being further delayed due to the reconvened meeting being inquorate. As such the data could have changed over that period and be improved on what was tabled. Quarter 3 would be tabled at the March meeting providing current data.

Members recognised that the data was historic and whilst noting certain areas of concern, accepted that update performance data would be provided at the next scheduled meeting allowing members to discuss further in the knowledge the information would be accurate at that point.

On concern noted the inaccuracy of the homeless sleepers with a member stating that as a part of their work in that field with Centrepont, that the current numbers were in excess of those noted and a cause for concern.

It was agreed that a report by requested on the current position at the next scheduled meeting on the 21 March 2023.

7 JOINT STRATEGY OF DIGITAL STRATEGY AND ICT ROADMAP FOR THE SOUTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCILS PARTNERSHIP

Councillor Welbourn presented the report having been a member of the Task Group and confirmed that the report was being presented to each of the Partnership Council's relevant sovereign scrutiny committees prior to being presented to the Cabinet / Executive Boards. ICT alignment had been highlighted as one of the top priorities for the Partnership in the work programme agreed by the Councils. The draft Strategy covered 2023 – 2029, whilst the Roadmap was a foundational document created to support the strategy and therefore covered 2023 – 2026. The Roadmap recognised there were some initial pieces of work that would be required in the early years of the Strategy in order to lay the foundations for the Strategy's longer-term delivery.

The draft Strategy was about enabling the better use of technology and data to support the Partnership and the services provided to customers. A key strand of early work which was already funded and underway, was investment being delivered on the Assisted Self Service project identified in the roadmap, which would have a significant benefit to customers and the online experience they have with the Council.

The delivery of the Strategy and Roadmap would provide a smoother, more personalised, more responsive service for residents, members, and staff alike. That would take time and require investment. Projects identified within the Roadmap would

come forward with individual Business Cases for consideration, rather than the Councils being required to commit to an upfront investment.

The benefits of Partnership working (3 councils plus PSPS) would include greater value for money, with examples already from suppliers of small savings through joint contracting.

In terms of ways of working for Officers, it was about being joined up, seamless, the ability to access systems anywhere/anytime, plus the integration of back-office services with ICT as the facilitator.

The Strategy's delivery would be overseen by PSPS ICT and Digital Team, working closely with the Partnership Councils through the Assistant Director – Corporate. The Councils had some legacy technology, mostly business applications, that were in the process of being removed. Where there was vulnerability, the ICT Team had extra firewalls and other systems in place to attempt to mitigate where possible.

The aim was to move to a single platform for residents – phone, digital, etc. – to build something once (rather than 3 times – once for each Council) that could be rolled out across the 3 Councils in turn creating back-office efficiency and more capacity in PSPS. Usability testing was not currently carried out with residents for online systems/forms. Individual service areas can decide to do this if they want to. Testing is usually done by people familiar with the technology or software

Member comment and questioning followed which included:

Concern at the impact on members of the public who were not I.T literate and who did not use App's and other I.T strands. Members agreed the need to maintain analogue channels over a period of time to allow the change and recognised the need to still have the option for members of the public to be able to speak with a person should they so wish. Further concern was also noted at the testing proposed with a request for those testing to be from wide ranging levels of I.T literacy and competence and not just by those producing the system would not realise the impact of use on those with lesser I.T knowledge.

There was overall support of the alignment of the systems and recognition of the benefits to users enabling a consistency of use across the partnership and extending to public use over time. Whilst one member suggested a review annually to the ever changing range of I.T systems, it was agreed that the proposed bi-annual review was the preferred timeline.

RECOMMENDED:

That the Environment and Performance Committee:

1. Note the report at Appendix A
2. Agree that a Task Group meets every two years to review the progress of the new system
3. Agree that it recommend to the group that when testing is undertaken, that a cross section of I.T users, from those with only a low level of I.T literacy to those who are fully I.T literate test the systems to ensure the systems are user friendly at all levels.

8 WORK PROGRAMME

Noting the work programme for the next scheduled meeting on the 21st March 2023 members agreed that a report on the current position in respect of Homelessness in Boston be requested.

Confirmation was further provided that a report in respect of the Councils' Carbon Footprint would also be tabled.

An updated performance monitoring report was already scheduled.

9 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

10 EXEMPT MINUTE

EXEMPT MINUTE

This minute is exempt by virtue of paragraphs 1,2 and 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as they contain information relating to an individual which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual and because it also contains information relating to the financial and business affairs of any particular person including the authority holder the information.

The Meeting Closed at 9.10 pm