

Present: (Chairman), Councillor Nigel Welton (Vice-Chairman), Councillors Colin Brotherton, Jonathan Noble, Barrie Pierpoint and Sue Ransome

Officers –

Chief Executive, Head of Operations, Head of Housing, Health and Community Services, Head of Town Centre, Leisure, Events and Cultural Services, Head of Environmental Management, Transformation and Governance Manager and Democratic Services Officer

35 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Judith Skinner, Maureen Dennis, Elizabeth Ransome and Yvonne Stevens. No substitute members in attendance. Apologies were tabled from Portfolio Holder Councillor Michael Brookes.

36 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No declarations of interest were tabled.

37 MINUTES

Committee agreed that the Chairman sign the minutes of the previous meeting held on the 19 January 2017.

38 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No public questions were tabled.

39 RELOCATION OF BOSTON HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLING CENTRE

Mr Sean Kent the Head of Environmental Management for Lincolnshire County Council presented the committee with an update report on the relocation of the Household Waste Recycling Centre for Boston. Prior to beginning the presentation Mr Kent stressed that whilst he would be happy to answer as many questions as possible, certain factors were still subject to being commercially restricted but he hoped to reassure members of the future for waste recycling in Boston

Confirmation was provided of the location of the new facility and of the new road, an extension of Nursery Road, which would be constructed off Marsh Lane and would become an adopted road by highways. The layout of the new facility was one already in use at three other districts (Sleaford; Bourne and Gainsborough) and unlike the existing Boston site which was a split level facility, the new one would be at ground level. The Boston site once completed would result in the County having responsibility for all sites in all the districts.

The new site would have horizontally operating compactors which would allow more material to be loaded in containers, reducing haulage costs through the need for fewer journeys, which in turn will deliver environmental savings. The compactors also meant

no operational down time which occurred at the present site, resulting in the public having to queue whilst a crane-operated weight is dropped into the containers to try to create more room. The site would also provide an increased number of containers resulting in increased collections, improved recycling rates and financial savings to the authority. A separate entrance would be provided for the vehicles collecting the containers ensuring no disruption to the public.

By being built at ground level the facility would aid customer access. The access and egress of the site would be easier with increased parking areas and unloading areas. Canopies would be provided to offer protection in bad weather and there would be increased CCTV coverage and enforcement. At ground level there would also be less chance of drainage or vermin problems.

Committee were advised the all the staff at the existing site would transfer to the new facility and that there would be no closure of the current facility until the new one was operational. It was the County Council's intent to continue the working practice of the existing site with staff being on hand to assist the public in disposing their rubbish from their vehicles: Boston had the highest tonnage of recycling in the County alongside the Great Northern Terrace facility in Lincoln and customer assistance was vital in facilitating that. The County Council recognised that due to these high levels of usage at the facility in Boston, a seven day a week operation would continue.

It was further hoped that by the continued use of the existing staff that were very experienced in the Boston operation, issues relating to the disposal of trade waste could be identified. Whilst it was not the authorities policy to ban 'vans' – it was their intent to monitor any high level of activity of individual vehicles that may be dropping trade waste. The site would have ANPR to support enforcement on any illegal activity at the site.

Concluding, committee were advised that the site would be operation seven days per week with the only closures being Christmas Day and New Years Day. Opening hours would be 0900 – 1600 hours daily.

General committee comment and questioning followed which included:
responses when provided by Mr Kent are noted in italics

Concern was noted at the proposed opening hours which members felt was restricted and failed to provide any option of early evening / late night opportunity for the public to use the site. Noting that many people worked past 1600 hours during the working week, it left many with little option but to use the site on a weekend and even with that option, it restricted use to only 1600 hours on the weekends. Members felt that during the summer months weekend working hours should be extended and the suggestion was also made that one late night opening per week be provided to accommodate those who could not make the 1600 hours closure time due to work constraints.

The opening times were in line with premium time use which was over the Saturday, Sunday and Monday period. Later opening times had occurred previously when there had been 'summer' opening times when the site had been open until 6pm. The concern in respect of extended opening hours was it would require the attendance of the staff which would incur additional costs. Other facilities within the County opened on fewer hours and fewer days, it was only due to Boston's tonnages that the County had agreed the 7 day opening. The County Council had reference extensive records of public usage of all the facilities and the decision on the opening hours based on maximisation of use of available funds. The records had noted very low levels of usage in the evening periods.

Appreciation was voiced at the reassurance that the existing site would remain in operation until the new facility opened and the question asked as to when the new site would be open.

The information was currently commercially restricted and as such no answer could be given.

Referencing the current Transfer Station a member asked if it would remain in its current location.

Confirmation was provided that it would and that the Boston site also had waste delivered to it from South Holland and the south of East Lindsey. In order to take residual (green bin) waste to the Energy from Waste facility at Lincoln and dry recycle (blue bin) to MidUK in Caythorpe, the County Council had built Waste Transfer Stations at Boston, Sleaford, Grantham, Gainsborough and Louth to enable all the District Councils to deliver them via their refuse vehicles. The waste would then be bulked up and loaded onto larger articulated vehicles to be taken to Lincoln or Caythorpe.

On receiving an enquiry into financial matters relating to the existing site Mr Kent advised that the information was once again commercially sensitive but did confirm that once it was in order for him to release the information, he would willingly come back to the committee to do so.

Seeking confirmation that the cost of the new site was £1.5 million and that the projected pay back would be 5.3 years, a member questioned what action had been taken when it had been identified that the existing site would be out of contract.

Confirming the cost and projected pay back time, Mr Kent confirmed that numerous avenues and variables had been looked into with the first pint of negotiation held by Lincolnshire County Council being with FCC the operator of the Boston site.

Questioning the layout a member queried what pedestrian access there would be and also what the policy would be for vans in line with height restrictions.

The layout did have a pedestrian walkway alongside the vehicle lanes and there was a separate area for vans near the entrance where drivers could off load onto trolleys to take their waste in the various containers. The reason for having the staff actively involved in assisting at this site (which had not necessarily been the case at other facilities) was to allow them to assist with off loading waste and monitor the flow through the site. Furthermore they were also able to monitor the movement of vans to identify potential trade waste operatives.

Referencing the need for clear signage both on arrival at the site and also within it, to allow a clear understanding by motorists of where they needed to go, a member asked what level of signage was being provided bearing in mind that it was very easy to drive straight past the section required due to inadequate direction.

Clear / large and easily readable signage would be installed both under the canopies and at the entrance coming into the site. The signs would all be colour coded and very easily identifiable. However they had resisted installing signage at the entrance to the site as it did lead to bottlenecks with drivers stopping to read it. The concern of missing the actual area did not mean a driver would need to exit and re-enter the site, but that due to the active staff on site they could pull over in one of the canopied areas and go back to the relevant container and an operative would assist in taking the waste.

Furthermore the third lane at the far end of the site would provide additional parking for the busiest section of the site where green and residual waste was off loaded. The actual design of the site being both on ground level and larger than the current facility, would give far more room with no blind bend going up to the upper level which currently caused queuing.

The chairman concluded the item by thanking Mr Kent for attending for his informed presentation.

40 QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE

The Business Support & Transformation Manager presented the quarter 3 performance report and referred members initially to page 8 of the report which provided a detailed update in respect of Business Rates Assurance. Confirmation was provided that Internal Audit had carried out a review of the comparatively new function and the outcome had been a high level of assurance level being issued.

The following items were then highlighted:

Performance issues relating to planning had been addressed with a fundamental review of planning having taken place. Performance for Quarter 3 for 16/17 on applications being determined within 8 weeks had risen to an actual of 80.25% as against 74.05% in 15/16, resulting in it no longer being a red flag item. The local development scheme was on track with the SELLP: the plan being on target for the revised date.

Problems in respect of the market performance with income continued to be worse than target. A project was underway to try to identify the reasons for the decrease in trade to try to work towards a break even model. Promotion of the markets was being looked into by communications to try to increase footfall: Phase 3 of the Prosperous Boston review would be looking at the promotion across the town in greater detail alongside event scheduling to support the markets which it had identified in Phase 1 of the review.

Ongoing reviewing of car parking charges continued with certain sites having seen reductions in charges. Footfall throughout the town was down and there had been a 6% increase of usage of private car parks compared to the previous year.

Usage of the Guildhall in 15/16 had been higher due to the number of events held during that period: however, the figures for use for the period 16/17 were the highest since 2009 - 15/16 use notwithstanding.

Benefits and housing continued to perform and maintain a high level of performance. Food safety performance measures were higher than the national average across businesses not risked as at April 2016; rated establishments achieving broad compliance and on percentage of food hygiene interventions achieved.

Fly tipping incidents had increased significantly throughout 16/17 to date: there had been a slight increase in green and domestic waste but the highest increase had been in 'other house' and 'other' suggesting the issue could be around informal household clearance. Enforcement had already started targeting the problem.

Prior to moving to committee debate, members were asked to note that there would be significantly more detailed report under the quarter 4 performance across most service areas, as there was significant activity taking place which had not been detailed within the report tabled.

Pre submission of questions for the meeting allowed the reporting officer to source the respective answers from across the various services areas. The information was tabled at the meeting for reference of members and is noted below:

1. P5. 'LCC were producing a county wide policy for 'A' Boards'. Please explain. What are 'A' Boards? **'A' boards are pavement signs with a frame in the shape of a letter A.**
2. P13. Why is the target figure for the percentage of minor planning applications to be determined within eight weeks set so low (65%)? **The target is based on the old national standard for processing minor planning applications.**
3. P 13. How do planning officers account for the pleasing improvement in the number of minor planning applications being determined on time as shown for December in the bottom graph? **As part of the improvement project we have reviewed and improved processes and this is already starting to have an effect.**
4. P14. What is the nature of other planning applications? Please give examples. **Other planning applications are those which are not major or minor, for example householder applications and change of use applications.**
5. P.15. Quarterly performance measures. What are the milestones of the Local Development Scheme? **The timetable for the Local Plan is on the website: <http://www.southeastlincslocalplan.org/>**

Milestone	Original milestone	New milestone
Formal submission	August 2016	June 2017
Independent examination	December 2016	Autumn 2017
Adoption	February 2017	Spring 2018

6. P15. What are the external factors referred to on this page? **The external factors were external sources of information on housing, employment, flood risk, transport etc to complete the evidence base.**
7. P15. Quarterly performance measures. How much has the deadline been extended by? **The deadline has been extended by a year (see table above).**
8. P16. Boston Market Performance. What is the 'comms plan'? **The 'comms plan' is a communications plan to promote the market to customers and stallholders.**
9. P24. The unique page views – tourism home page shows a disappointing downward trend. What are the Council's plans to reverse this trend? **This forms part of phase 3 of the Prosperous Boston task and finish group.**
10. P.28. Why are the target figures for Household Waste Recycling set so low? **The targets are based on the actual performance for the same period the previous year.**
11. P.29. What is being done to counteract the increase in fly tipping? **We have been given authorisation to set up covert surveillance – full details to be reported in Q4. In part, the increase is because we are promoting multiple ways of reporting fly tips including online reporting. Whilst there has been an increase, Fly Swat are responding quickly to reports and clearing fly tips within 2 working days.**
12. P.31. Is the marked increase in the amount of construction waste being illegally tipped (2015/16 – 2016/17) related to an increase in Council charges for the disposal of

commercial waste or have Council charges for this service remained unchanged? **There has been no increase in the Council's trade waste collection charges. There has been an increase in the landfill tax and skip hire charges (neither levied by the Council).**

13. P35. Sickness Absence Performance. 'We have actions in place to manage and reduce sickness in Q4'. What are these actions?
 - **We have implemented 'call back' systems for staff calling in sick for HR to gain further understanding of absence and to support speedy return to works**
 - **Implementation of a computerised sickness recording system allows real time recording and monitoring of absence**
 - **Analysis to identify patterns and trends of illness and absence**
14. P49. 'There was no evidential proof that the provision of free parking actually increased footfall in the longer term'. How could there be any evidential proof as more free parking has not been trialled? **This was part of the presentation by the Boston Town Team in May 2016 from their observations of previous free parking initiatives e.g. Small Business Saturday in 2014 and free parking during Christmas shopping evenings.**
15. P51. Acronym. PSiCA =? **Partnership Scheme in Conservation Areas.**
16. P52. What is the 'potential fourth business' which is considering joining the Town Centre Community Toilets scheme? **Asda**

On conclusion of the officers presentation the following committee comments and questions were noted as follows:

Referencing Planning and the percentage of minor applications determined being so low the suggestion was made that the existing target be looked at as the Council needed to be more ambitious in its aims for planning overall. The reporting officer advised that the targets would be looked into for next year.

Questioning what was being done to address the issue of benefit cheats and how they were dealt with a member sought clarification on what enforcement procedures were in place. The Chairman advised that there had been a recent report on the subject of fraud and the reporting officer confirmed that the report would be provided to the member.

Addressing the customer service provision the questions was asked as to how the Council satisfied its customers in respect of complaints and what redress did a member of the public have to the outcome of a complaint?

The reporting officer confirmed that the Council had its own policy for complaints. If a complaint could not be resolved simply without full investigation, the Manager would instruct the investigation and the outcome of this would be provided to the complainant in letter form: the end of each letter would note the persons' right to appeal to the Local Government Ombudsmen should they feel the outcome to be unsatisfactory.

Concern was voiced at the situation in respect of the ongoing lack of market income and decline in footfall with a request that the Council needed to be doing all it could to promote the Market. The reporting officer confirmed it would be reported back in greater detail in Quarter 4 and noted that the Prosperous Boston review would also be addressing the issue of the promotion within Phase 3 of the review.

Noting the changes in the re-evaluation of Business Rates, officers were asked what work was underway and what impact the changes would have across the businesses in the town. The Chief Executive confirmed he had received a briefing note which he would circularise to members.

RECOMENDATION:

No recommendation within the report. Committee noted the report.

ACTIONS:

That the recent copy of the Fraud Report by forwarded to Councillor Barrie Pierpoint. S. Rolfe

That a copy of the briefing note on the re-evaluation of business rates be forwarded to all members of the committee. P. Drury

41 PROSPEROUS BOSTON TASK AND FINISH GROUP PHASE 2

The Head of Town Centre, Leisure, Events & Culture presented the report confirming it was the outcomes and recommendations of phase 2 of the review.

A quick overview of the group was provided confirming that due to the scope of the review, it had been agreed to undertake it across a three phased schedule. Phase 1 which had concentrated on the retail experience and facilities currently provided within the town had concluded in July 2016 with the final report gong through Cabinet in September 2016 who had approved the actions therein.

Phase 2 of the review which was scoped to look at car parks; environmental issues (including anti social behaviour and cleanliness), together with signage and the provision of flora and statement art and held its first meeting in May 2016. A significant amount of information had been received at that meeting to allow the group to identify how it wished to progress that phase with actions and outcomes having been identified.

Following a change of lead officer, the groups' second meeting of phase two was held in January 2017. This was primarily to allow the group to overview its work up until that time: the first item of business had been to receive a detailed update on all the actions and recommendations agreed within phase one.

The group were reassured that certain actions had already been implemented including the increase in public toilet provision via a community toilet scheme; notification of a food festival scheduled for September 2017 along with new promotion material for the markets action taken to address wrong data relating to the borough issued on professional web sites used by large developers when considering suitable investment potential.

The success of a new Boston Townscape Heritage project was noted together with the successful outcomes achieved from the PSiCA scheme. Furthermore the group were advised that the Council was actively encouraging and promoting living above shops

within the town centre: the Council's planning committee had already granted a number of such applications.

In addition to the Food Festival already scheduled, youth markets were being investigated for the summer months. New strands of promotion already on board included social media posting every Wednesday and Saturday encouraging local shopping and linking into atonal food days and national events. *(Promotion to be addressed in Phase 3)*

Confirmation was provided that a significant amount of work was underway with the Commercial Agents at looking to re-develop the market place itself, alongside progressing economic development for the Borough was a whole with a lot of activity taking place.

Agreeing they felt most reassured at the progress of the phase one recommendations the group concurred that it would conclude its review of that stage.

The second item of business at the January 2017 meeting provided update information on all the actions identified and requests for further information required, from the May meeting.

Part of the Explore and Discover Project which had been funded by HLF; LCC and BBC had resulted in fingerpost throughout the town having been reprioritised and redecorated into a more accessible blue and white colour scheme.

New mapping of the town highlighted attractions, retail areas and places of interest: it also had its own design toolkit permitting consistency for future signage with a second phase looking at car park related signage. 6 monoliths had been installed at key arrival points within the town depicted historic interpretations of key stories of the town.

Confirmation was provided that officers continued to explore the possibility of commercial sponsorship / voucher systems and advertising on car parking tickets: costs of tickets and advertising timescales had been provided. Certain car parks had been subjected to a decrease in charges and Coach parking charges were also being reviewed to encourage Coach companies to the town. Pay by phone had been introduced in all but five of the Council's car parks.

Addressing the public realm the group had been advised that a makeover of Pilgrims Patch had been completed. Boston Big Local had funded further planters across the town and Doughty Quay had been enhanced with funding through the RHS and Western Power Distribution. North Sea Camp were assisting in improvements outside the Police Station which would compliment the scheme along the Haven. The White Hart Hotel would fund improvements to the small area near the Town Bridge which would feature a maritime theme.

Transported had funded an award winning garden designer to develop a new design for the Jubilee Gardens to include metal arches and Art Deco Sculptures.

Boston in Bloom had agreed to host the RHS East Midlands in Bloom Awards on the 13 September 2017 at the Stump.

Further Lincolnshire Long Wool silhouettes would be installed on Bargate Roundabout and discussions were on going with the Harbour Master in respect of the potential use of redundant navigation bouys.

Liquorpond Roundabout was due to be tidied and the County Council had agreed to put a permanent base on it to allow sculptures to be put on it.

Referencing environmental enforcement, the group had been advised that a preferred partner had been identified who were actively recruiting staff. Additionally the Council had been due at the Magistrate's Court on the 1st February to propose their first RIPA surveillance operation.

The Big Boston Clean Up was scheduled for April 2017 and it was hoped the Kayak Club would once again assist in clearing the river.

A schedule of works was underway for the removal of chewing gum from the streets.

The PSPO for dog control had been activated in February with certain officers having been empowered through the Chief Executives delegated powers, to issue £100 fines for dog fouling.

The Chairman thanked the Head of Head of Town Centre, Leisure, Events & Culture for presenting the report and asked that it be recorded that the gratitude of the group to all the officers involved in the review, be noted: he stated that the supporting officers had shown enthusiasm and commitment to the review which had helped to drive it forward. The Chairman then stressed that it was a substantial review and as such, had been fluid throughout with many of the actions agreed having been implemented alongside the review to enable the outcomes to be achieved ahead of conclusion of the review.

On conclusion of the officers presentation and Chairman's comments the following committee comments and questions were noted as follows:

Referencing the possibility of a voucher system and businesses using the car parking tickets a member asked for costs and information on what action had been taken. The officer confirmed that costs were being sourced and that the information would be forward once to hand: officers were actively looking at how to promote and source advertisers / sponsors and once the costs had been identified would take promotion forward with local businesses in the town. A further question in respect of the position of environmental enforcement could not be answered but assurance given the information would be sourced and forwarded to the member.

RECOMMENDATION:

That having considered the report the committee noted that the group had completed both Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the review and that the committee recommend that Cabinet be recommended to agree the actions agreed within Phase 2.

ACTIONS:

That an update on the situation regarding environmental enforcement be forwarded to all members.

P Perry

That information in respect of costs for the provision of car parking tickets and charges for sponsorship / advertising thereon be provided for all members.

P Perry

42 WORK PROGRAMME

Members noted the work programme.

Committee agreed that the April schedule which was very busy would not be suitable for any additional reporting.

A member questioned the tabling of the County Council Policy for A Boards and the clerk advised it was expected to be scheduled for consultation during the late sprint possibly at the June meeting.

The Chairman referred the committee to the forthcoming meetings for the new municipal year and asked that members consider the scope of the committee and submit any suggestions for scrutinising to allow the schedule to be constructed.

43 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

To consider resolving – that under Section 100(A)(iv) of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to information) (Variation) Order 2006, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the follow item of business on the ground that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Order.

44 PROPOSED RELOCATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF WORKS AND PENSIONS INTO THE MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS

An exempt minute for this item has been lodged separately with the Council

The Meeting Closed at 8.30 pm