

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Council held in the Council Chamber at the Guildhall, Gainsborough, on Monday 3 March 2014, at 7.30pm.

Present: Councillor Irmgard Parrott (In the Chair)
Councillor Malcolm Parish (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Gillian Bardsley	Councillor Angela Lawrence
Councillor Owen Bierley	Councillor Giles McNeill
Councillor Mark Binns	Councillor Pat Mewis
Councillor Nigel Bowler	Councillor Jessie Milne
Councillor Ken Bridger	Councillor Roger Patterson
Councillor Jackie Brockway	Councillor Judy Rainsforth
Councillor Alan Caine	Councillor Sue Rawlins
Councillor David Cotton	Councillor Di Rodgers
Councillor Stuart Curtis	Councillor Lesley Rollings
Councillor Chris Darcel	Councillor Reg Shore
Councillor Chris Day	Councillor Lewis Strange
Councillor David Dobbie	Councillor Jeff Summers
Councillor Richard Doran	Councillor Mick Tinker
Councillor Ian Fleetwood	Councillor Geoff Wiseman
Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan	Councillor Anne Welburn
	Councillor Trevor Young

Apologies: Councillor Burt Keimach
Councillor Stuart Kinch
Councillor Malcolm Leaning
Councillor Tom Regis

In Attendance:
Manjeet Gill Chief Executive
Mark Sturgess Chief Operating Officer
John Rice Interim Commercial Director
Russell Stone Chief Finance Officer
Alan Robinson Head of Central Services and Monitoring Officer
Dinah Lilley Governance and Civic Officer

Also in Attendance: Reverend Penny Green

Also Present: 2 members of the public

89 PRAYERS

The meeting commenced with prayers by Reverend Penny Green.

90 MEETING START TIME

It was questioned whether the meeting was legally convened as the agenda had advertised a start time of 7pm, and that following the Governance workshop and Group meetings, the meeting had convened at the previously notified 7.30pm.

A short adjournment took place whilst the legal status was clarified and it was affirmed that it would only be illegal to commence a meeting prior to the advertised start time.

The meeting reconvened at 7.50pm.

91 WELCOME TO NEW COUNCILLOR

The Chairman welcomed the newly elected Member for the Scotter Ward, Councillor Pat Mewis.

92 COUNCIL MINUTES 27 JANUARY 2014 (Paper A)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of Council held on 27 January 2014 be confirmed and signed as a correct record, subject to the amendment that Councillor Day had not had his vote recorded at minute 85.

93 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None at this point of the meeting. It was clarified that no declaration was required for all Members in terms of Council Tax, as a dispensation would apply.

94 MATTERS ARISING (Paper B)

The Council Chairman introduced the Matters Arising Schedule which set out the current position of all previously agreed actions as at 21 February 2014.

Councillor Wiseman gave a brief update on progress following the meeting with ACIS.

95 ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman of the Council

The Chairman noted that her list of engagements had been circulated to Members, but made mention of one event, the turf cutting at Lincolnshire Showground in preparation for the new Riseholme College.

Leader of the Council

The Leader of the Council noted that a meeting had taken place earlier that day of the Central Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee. The Local Development Scheme had been approved and plans were set out for engagement. The proposed next steps would be circulated shortly.

Head of Paid Service

The Chief Executive echoed the Chairman's welcome to the newly elected Councillor Mewis.

96 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions from the public.

97 QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 9

There were no Questions Pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 9.

98 FINANCIAL STRATEGY AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2014/15 – 2018/19 (PAPER C)

The Chairman asked the Chief Finance Officer to present the report and informed Members that due to a change in the law, a recorded vote was now required on the setting of the Council budget.

Note Councillor Cotton declared a personal and non-pecuniary interest in the item as a practising minister, as page 56 referred to fees and charges for burials.

The Chief Finance Officer introduced the report which set out the Medium Term Financial Strategy and set the financial operating position for the coming year. Its key purposes were to support sustainable financial decision making and to support delivery of the Corporate Plan through the allocation of resources.

The priorities resourced within the Financial Strategy were those currently identified in the Corporate Plan, but as this was a live document the activities were likely to change and evolve as initiatives were delivered. It was confirmed that reserves were adequate and that the estimates used were robust.

The Leader of the Council told the meeting that the budget report set out the financial strategy to take the Council forward in a positive manner to deal with the

current economic situation. It presented a proactive and robust approach to tackling finding £3m savings. The first million had been saved without any service reductions or compulsory redundancies, however the scale of the challenge could not be understated, a further £2m still needed to be found.

Careful planning and efficient management were needed to protect front line services and invest more in those areas valued by the public. There could be no complacency in these testing times for public services. Ways were being explored to generate income and reduce costs and to help communities help themselves. Partnership opportunities were being considered to share costs and maximise potential. Support was being focused on Council priorities such as Active and Healthy; Green; Connectivity and Prosperous Communities.

There was to be an increase of £1k for each Councillor's Initiative Fund, and £300k had been allocated for rural transport matters, which would include a study of national best practice and local needs. A Council Tax relief scheme had been established to give assistance to those households affected by recent flooding. A joined up strategic approach to Local Planning to promote growth and regeneration, and an empty homes strategy worth £1.1m were also ongoing strategies.

The Council was asset and cash rich, but in times of low interest rates investments were being made to generate capital and revenue streams in order to negate the need for Council Tax rises. The focus was on getting the job done. The proposals were about growth and investment and not taking the easy route of cutting services and making staff redundant.

The Leader of the main opposition stated that whilst he had no problems with the majority of the report he had concerns regarding a third year with no Council Tax increase. If there was no increase again next year, being an election year, that would mean a four year deficit and problems were anticipated for the future. The public were generally in favour of small incremental rises.

One million pounds of the required three million saving had been achieved but opportunities had been missed. As well as Council Tax which could have been increased, there was still no charge for green waste. Realistic action needed to be taken and problems such as connectivity in the area needed to be addressed.

Councillors requested clarification on some points such as the freeze grant, the transport appraisal and the business relocation grant scheme. It was affirmed that the current ongoing management costs had been budgeted for.

Acknowledgement was made of the hard work of officers, and tribute was also paid to previous administrations in setting the baseline for the Council's robust position.

The recorded vote was then proposed and seconded.

For: Councillors Bardsley, Bierley, Bowler, Brockway, Caine, Cotton, Curtis, Day, Doran, Fleetwood, Howitt-Cowan, Lawrence, McNeill, Mewis, Milne, Parish, Parrott, Patterson, Rawlins, Rodgers, Strange, Summers, Tinker, Welburn and Wiseman.

Against: Councillors Binns, Bridger, Darcel, Rainsforth, Rollings, Shore and Young.

Abstained: Councillor Dobbie

A total of 25 votes for, 7 against and one abstention.

RESOLVED that:

- a) the external environment be noted and recognition given to the severity of the financial challenges being faced as detailed in the Financial Strategy;
- b) the Medium Term Financial Plan be approved;
- c) the Revenue Budget be set (Appendix A);
- d) the Fees and Charges Policy and Fees and Charges 2014-15 be set (Appendix B&C);
- e) the Capital Programme 2014/15 to 2018/19 be set (detailed in Appendix F);
- f) the Treasury Management Strategy be approved and the Investment Strategy, the detailed Counter Party criteria, the Treasury and Borrowing Prudential Indicators be adopted (Appendix H);
- g) the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy as contained in the Treasury Management Strategy be approved (Appendix H);
- h) the Council Tax be approved (Appendix I-M);
- i) the 2014/15 Pay Policy Statement be approved (Appendix N); and
- j) the Council Tax Relief Flooding Scheme be approved (Appendix O).

99 AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION (PAPER D)

The Head of Central Services presented the report seeking proposed changes to the Constitution which had emanated from the Member Forum and had been approved by the Governance and Audit Committee. The changes were principally around delegations and training requirements for the Governance and Audit Committee.

Councillor Cotton proposed an amendment that Street Naming suggestions could be put forward by Ward Members as well as those persons listed. This was seconded.

Councillor Curtis also proposed an amendment that the Vice Chairman of the Planning Committee be consulted on referrals to the Committee in the event that the application was situated in the Chairman's ward. This was seconded.

The amendments were then voted upon.

RESOLVED that the following amendments be agreed:

- i) To approve new street names and numbering in respect of new development submitted by
 - a) Parish Councils

b) Ward Members

- c) Private developers, following approval by the local parish council concerned **and Ward councillors.**

ii) Part IV/Page 33 Paragraph 1 (b)

It will be for the Head of Service, appropriate Team Manager or Senior Officer within the Development and Neighbourhoods or Strategic Growth to decide, **in consultation with the Chairman of the Planning Committee (or the Vice Chairman in the event that the application is in the Chairman's Ward)**, on the basis of the planning reason/s given by the Councillor or planning policies referred to, whether the application should be referred to the Planning Committee for determination.”

The amended Recommendations as a whole were then moved, seconded and voted upon.

RESOLVED that the changes to:

- Land and Purchase Delegations
- Planning Delegations
- Street Naming and Numbering
- Training requirements for the Governance and Audit Committee

be supported and approved.

100 TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS PUBLISHED SINCE THE LAST COUNCIL MEETING ON 27 JANUARY 2014.

RESOLVED that the minutes of Committee meetings published since the last Council meeting on 27 January 2014 be received.

The meeting concluded at 8.40 pm.

Chairman