

## WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Challenge and Improvement Committee held in the Council Chamber at the Guildhall, Gainsborough on Thursday 1 September 2011 commencing at 6.30 pm.

**Present:** Councillor Alan Caine (Chairman – In the Chair)  
Councillor Paul-Howitt-Cowan

Councillor Owen Bierley  
Councillor Richard Doran  
Councillor Malcolm Leaning  
Councillor Irmgard Parrott  
Councillor Geoff Wiseman

**In Attendance:** Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Resources  
Director of Strategy and Regeneration  
Chief Finance Officer  
Business Improvement Manager  
Senior ICT Support Officer  
Democratic Services Team Leader

**Also Present:** 1 Member of the public

### 14 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Angela Lawrence  
Councillor Roger Patterson  
Chief Executive

### 15 MINUTES

Meetings of the Challenge and Improvement Committee held on 21 June and 3 August 2011.

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Challenge and Improvement Committee held on 21 June 2011 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Special Challenge and Improvement Committee held on 3 August 2011 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

## **16 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE (CAI.06 11/12)**

The Democratic Services Team Leader presented the Matters Arising Schedule and updated Members on recent changes.

Discussion ensued on the matter of more accessible West Lindsey District Council services particularly in the rural settlements. It was noted that Housing Benefits surgeries operated in some areas. Officers undertook to investigate the matter further.

**RESOLVED** that progress on the Matters Arising Schedule be noted.

## **17 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

A declaration of personal interest was made by Councillor Dobbie as he was a member of Gainsborough Lions Club which had made funding donations to GAPA.

A declaration of personal interest was made by Councillor Howitt-Cowan as he was a past vice-chairman of GAPA.

## **18 RENEWABLE ENERGY TASK AND FINISH GROUP**

Councillor Howitt-Cowan gave an update on the work of the Task and Finish Group. He noted that the group could not work alone, and were in partnership with Alan Freeman of Lincolnshire County Council, who was scheduled to give a presentation on Renewable Energy at the Council meeting on 12 September 2011. The Group had been on a field trip to Hockerton, and hoped to look at many different types of renewable energy sources, not just wind farms. Councillor Howitt-Cowan stressed that it was important for everyone to be involved, and participation and suggestions were welcome.

Councillor Dobbie suggested that a field trip to CORE (the Centre for Renewable Energy) near East Drayton would be useful and informative.

## **19 PAPERLESS OFFICE PROJECT**

The Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Resources gave Members an update on progress with the Council's initiative to be as paperless as possible. Seven members had made claims for their IT equipment so far and support had been given to Members in several different ways. Physical additions such as extra power outlets, wireless access points, spare equipment were all being provided. A skills assessment was to be undertaken and training would be provided particularly on Sharepoint. The advice was that a West Lindsey email account was the preferred option as there were fewer limits on capacity and file sizes. Every effort was to be made to keep file sizes to a minimum

and in the event that this is not possible a hyperlink to be given instead. Adobe pdfs were the preferred format.

Agendas and reports for meetings will continue to be sent by post as well as by email to all Councillors, unless specified otherwise, until January 2012, when hard copies will cease. No further printer consumables will be provided once current stocks had expired.

Members discussed the various aspects of being paperless, and some sought assurance that Sharepoint was compatible with Linux. The Trusted Client device was no longer to be issued. The question was also asked about progress with officers being paperless, this was confirmed as being an ongoing project to use laptops and reduce paper. The Business Improvement Team would investigate how Members could create a 'my site' that would provide email alerts for matters of particular interest for each individual.

It was raised as to whether paper copies of reports should continue to be provided for the public, particularly at full Council meetings and Development Management. It was suggested that a minimal amount be supplied and the situation be monitored. The issue of providing Parish Councils with Planning documents and maps was also discussed.

Broadband access was still problematic in some areas, and it was suggested that West Lindsey District Council apply to be included in the BT initiative Race to Infinity which was to provide £43m to enable broadband access in rural areas.

It was agreed by all that the steps being taken were in a positive direction and that other Councils were looking to West Lindsey as an example of good practice.

## **20 WORKPLAN (CAI.07 11/12)**

The Democratic Services Team Leader presented the Challenge and Improvement Committee workplan and updated Members on recent changes.

**RESOLVED** that the Workplan be noted.

## **21 FORWARD PLAN (CAI.08 11/12)**

The Democratic Services Team Leader presented the Forward Plan which listed all those items pending for other Committees of the Council.

It was suggested that the Committee Timetable (scheduled for the Policy and Resources Committee in January 2012) be presented for Member consultation prior to final approval.

**RESOLVED** that the Forward Plan be noted.

**22 GAINSBOROUGH ADVENTURE PLAYGROUND ASSOCIATION  
(CAI.09 11/12)**

The Director of Strategy and Regeneration presented the report which was to provide Members with a detailed update as to the position regarding the Gainsborough Adventure Playground Association (GAPA).

A history of the Association was given, describing how its remit had grown and that it had progressed from being almost fully reliant on grant funding to reducing their dependency and becoming a limited company charity. The work of the Association was acknowledged as being of significant benefit to both Gainsborough and the wider district, to all age ranges and social needs. Other organisations such as the police commended the work of GAPA, in such matters as reducing anti-social behaviour.

Despite all the work of officers at GAPA and assistance given, in the current financial climate, funding reductions meant that the Association was at crisis point and staff were becoming extremely concerned.

Members praised the work done by the Association and acknowledged the contribution it made to the community, although there was some concern that the assistance given was to the detriment of the rural areas and other settlements within West Lindsey. It was, however, felt that there was nowhere else in West Lindsey that had the same level of deprivation or anti-social behaviour as the area in which GAPA was based. Although Members were keen not to see the association fold and agreed that officer support and advice should be maintained, there was a reluctance to provide further funding on a longer term basis, and it was felt that any financial assistance given should be an interim measure only. Members stated that they would be interested in seeing a breakdown of financial support given to such organisations across the district.

It was suggested that it would be useful if a West Lindsey Councillor had a seat on the Board, particularly if this was a non Gainsborough Councillor who would have a more objective viewpoint.

It was agreed that any decision on funding would have to be made by the Policy and Resources Committee, but that this should only be an interim measure to help GAPA out of its current financial difficulties.

**RESOLVED** that:-

- a) the Policy and Resources Committee be asked to consider an appropriate level of financial support to be offered to the Gainsborough Adventure Playground Association.
- b) any future funding be considered in line with the Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy being adopted, and not in isolation.

**Note** Councillor Dobbie requested that it be recorded that he had abstained from voting.

### **23 BUDGET TIMETABLE (CAI.10 11/12)**

The Financial Services Manager presented Members with details of the timetable to be followed for activity and decision making around setting the Medium Term Financial Plan 2012/13 to 2015/16.

The report set out four key activities:- Option identification, development and appraisal; Engagement; Option selection; and Formal decision making.

An overview of the timetable of future activity was set out in the report, although flexibility was required.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

### **24 SHAPING THE FUTURE FOR THE EX MOD COMMUNITIES IN WEST LINDSEY: PROGRESS SO FAR AND NEXT STEPS (CAI.11 11/12)**

The Director of Strategy and Regeneration presented the report setting out the actions taken so far and the proposed next steps.

Work with the MOD sites was operating at three levels:- Political/Strategic; Cluster/Collective; and by Individual Settlement, and these were set out in the report. Although Scampton was not yet an ex MOD site the likelihood was that this was pending.

A bid had been submitted to the Lloyds TSB Foundation for funding to assist, an Action Plan was to be submitted to the joint management team with Lincolnshire County Council, and a second summit meeting was planned for 20 September 2011.

The report set out the timeline for subsequent action and steps to be taken.

Members praised the work undertaken to date by all officers concerned.

**RESOLVED** that:

- a) Members note the action taken so far, and
- b) Members support the proposed next steps.

The meeting concluded at 8.10 pm

Chairman