

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Challenge and Improvement Committee held in the Council Chamber at the Guildhall, Gainsborough on Tuesday 10 April 2012 commencing at 6.30 pm.

Present: Councillor Alan Caine (Chairman)
Councillor Paul-Howitt-Cowan (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Owen Bierley
Councillor David Dobbie
Councillor Richy Doran
Councillor Angela Lawrence
Councillor Irmgard Parrott
Councillor Roger Patterson
Councillor Jessie Milne

In Attendance:

Alan Robinson	Revenues Benefits and Customer Services Manager
Alex Reeks	Business Development Officer
Lynne Marlow	Customer Relations Manager
Rachel Hughes	Housing Renewal Team Leader
Dinah Lilley	Democratic Services Team Leader

Apologies Councillor Malcolm Leaning

Membership Councillor Jessie Milne substituted for Councillor Geoff Wiseman

71 CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

Councillor Caine welcomed Members and officers to the final meeting of the Civic year for 2011/12.

72 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Malcolm Leaning

73 MINUTES

Meeting of the Challenge and Improvement Committee held on 28 February 2012.

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Challenge and Improvement Committee held on 28 February 2012 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

74 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

75 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE (CAI.37 11/12)

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

It was noted that the Chairman had asked to see a further update on progress made on dog fouling and litter management and that this should be presented to the next meeting. Councillor Caine further informed the Committee that a new campaign was in progress the address dog fouling and a full update would be given in due course.

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RESOLVED that the Matters Arising Schedule be noted.

76 PLANNING ENFORCEMENT UPDATE (CAI.38 11/12)

The Housing Renewal Team Leader presented the report which provided Members with a quarterly update on the current caseload with enforcement matters. It was noted that the information in the report was from the previous full quarter of October to December, but it was hoped to be able to present more up to date information in the future.

There had been continued significant improvements over the last year, with cases having quicker resolutions. This was due to a robust policy which was supported by Councillors. There were currently 79 cases open, and an update on the current status of appeals pending was given.

Photographs showing examples of direct action taken were appended to the report.

Members welcomed the report and noted that Planning Enforcement was a priority for the Council and showed that a firm message was being sent out. Outcomes of appeals being dismissed by the Planning Inspector affirmed that

correct decisions were being taken, as was also the case with Development Management decisions.

Members asked that the Committee's thanks be passed to the enforcement team for all their hard work.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Note Councillor Dobbie arrived at the meeting.

77 CUSTOMER EXCELLENCE (CAI.39 11/12)

The Customer Relations Manager highlighted work that had been undertaken in Customer Services. Baseline figures for 2011/12 were set out in the report, and quarterly reports would be submitted to the Challenge and Improvement Committee for monitoring. The figures set out all general enquiries, not just complaints. The project plan for the future was to increase assisted self serve, as because West Lindsey was such a rural county face to face service could be difficult at times.

Members questioned the graph which showed that 'other' was a significantly high figure in 2009/10 and asked if there was a particular reason. It was clarified that at that time there were two big issues ongoing at that time, namely noise from Faldingworth airfield, and the proposed closure of the Trinity Arts Centre.

Members asked if the very low customer numbers at some of the rural outlets could justify holding the surgeries. It was explained that this was the reason for making improvements to self service and the facilities on the website. Members commended staff on the usefulness of the website and the way social media was utilised, this was very informative and much appreciated.

The possibility of using Skype was questioned and it was noted that this was to be trialled in the near future. It was acknowledged that there were people who would never use electronic communication, and also that Broadband was still not available to everyone, so the best possible choice of service had to be provided for all.

The Customer Relations Manager said that Member involvement was needed to help trial new systems so that assistance and information could then be passed on to communities. It was acknowledged that more work was needed with Town and Parish Councils to co-ordinate their information.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

78 CHALLENGE AND IMPROVEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2011/12 (CAI.40 11/12)

The Chairman of the Committee introduced the report which set out the details of the work undertaken by the Challenge and Improvement Committee in the preceding year and also looked forward to the proposed work plan for 2012/13.

Members commented that it had been a pleasure to serve on the Committee, it had undertaken some useful work and assisted the Council in its 'can do' attitude. It was hoped the Committee membership continued to work together in this way, and credit was awarded to the Chairman and Vice Chairman for their leadership.

RESOLVED that the Challenge and Improvement Annual Report for 2011/12 be approved for submission to the meeting of Annual Council.

79 FORWARD PLAN (CAI.41 11/12)

The Democratic Services Team Leader updated the Committee on the Forward Plan which set out forthcoming items for consideration by all Committees of the Council.

Members queried some items on the Forward Plan which appeared not to have Committee dates allocated, one being Agile Working. The Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services Manager explained to the committee that this was an ongoing project within the Council – 'working where the work is' – to facilitate the most efficient use of resources.

RESOLVED that the Forward Plan be noted.

80 WORK PLAN (CAI.41 11/12)

Members discussed the Work Plan which set out the programme of work for the Challenge and Improvement Committee in the coming months.

The Democratic Services Team Leader reported that the Review of the Community Safety Partnership arrangements had been deferred as it was still work in progress with the County Council.

It was noticed that there was only one item for the agenda at the next meeting in May.

RESOLVED that the Work Plan be noted.

81 CHAIRMAN'S CLOSING REMARKS

The Chairman expressed his personal thanks to all members of the Committee, officers and the Committee Clerk, and noted that the past year

had been interesting but also fun. A number of improvements had been implemented, notably paperless working which had achieved a significant financial saving. The Chairman noted that there seemed to still be problems with Parish Councils and planning applications and it was important that if a Parish needed certain applications by post then this should be provided.

The meeting concluded at 7pm

Chairman