

**WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL**

MINUTES of the Challenge and Improvement Committee held in the Council Chamber at the Guildhall, Gainsborough on Tuesday 26 June 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 Malcolm Leaning  
Councillor Irmgard Parrott  
Councillor Roger Patterson  
Councillor William Parry

**Also Present:** Councillor Geoff Wiseman  
One member of the public

**In Attendance:**  
Mark Sturgess Director of Regeneration and Planning  
Alex Reeks Assistant Chief Executive  
Steve Leary Team Leader – Admin & Recycling  
Dinah Lilley Governance and Civic Officer

**Apologies** Councillor Mick Tinker  
Nicci Turnbull – Governance and Civic Officer

**11 MINUTES**

Meetings of the Challenge and Improvement Committee held on 29 May 2012.

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Challenge and Improvement Committee held on 29 May 2012 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

**12 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**13 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE (CAI.05 12/13)**

The Governance and Civic Officer presented the Matters Arising Schedule and updated Members on recent changes.

Open for Business

The Director of Regeneration and Planning had circulated a briefing note on the Open for Business working group and gave Members a verbal update. The briefing note set out the scope of the group and future meeting dates. It was proposed that the group would work in an inquisitorial way like a government select committee, and hold interviews with national experts and best practice councils. The aim was to determine what were the key barriers to business success and how the council could help. All Heads of Service were to be sent a questionnaire to determine how each service interacted with businesses.

It was emphasised that rather than previous council decisions being criticised, the wider implications of actions and how they were publicised would be looked at.

The group comprised Councillors Bierley, Bowler, Kinch and Patterson, and Councillors Parry and Doran volunteered to also take part.

Dog Fouling and Litter

The Governance and Civic Officer updated the Committee on the revised date.

Access to WLDC services

The Governance and Civic Officer informed the meeting that work was underway on a report on Customer Excellence. In the meantime there had been a recommendation from the Policy and Resources Committee that officer accessibility be considered by the Challenge and Improvement Committee. Further discussion with officers had suggested that this was also something that could be addressed through the work on Customer Excellence. It was therefore proposed that two Members work with officers from Customer Services and Human Resources to consider the matter. Councillors Howitt-Cowan and Councillor Welburn (Governance and Audit Committee) agreed to undertake the task.

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

**14 VERBAL UPDATE FROM THE BROADBAND WORKING GROUP**

The Committee Chairman gave the meeting a verbal update from the Broadband Working Group. Mobile connectivity was now being included in the study, and Members were requested to publicise the fact that views were being sought from the wider district on where there were problems with either Broadband or mobile reception.

The group had met with the Director of East Midlands BT, who informed them that more fibre was being routed to cabinets. Elsewhere in the UK vacant whitespace was being used, such as that previously used by teletext.

The Chairman read out a list of those village halls with wifi connections, and Members cited problems that still existed in these areas. It was agreed that this needed investigation as the Council paid for the installation and billing of this.

It was proposed that the ICT Team Leader be invited to attend a future meeting of the working group to verify the situation with village halls.

## **15 WEST LINDSEY HONOURS (CAI.06 12/13)**

In the absence of the Civic Officer who was unwell, the Chairman introduced the report on West Lindsey Honours. The report had been submitted to the previous meeting of the Committee, and members had requested some changes to the criteria and procedures. Those changes had now been incorporated into the revised report and the support of the Committee was sought prior to the report being submitted for approval by full Council.

Subject to approval by Council an Honours Panel would be created to consider nominations for awards.

### **RESOLVED** that:

- a. the amendments to the suggested role, limitations, criteria and process for conferring the title of Honorary Alderman, Freedom of Entry and Honorary Freeman of West Lindsey District be agreed and submitted to Council for approval; and
- b. the proposals for an 'Honours Panel' and its composition be agreed and submitted to Council for approval

## **16 REVIEW OF THE IMPACT OF THE CLOSEDOWN OF THE GREEN GARDEN WASTE SERVICE DURING THE WINTER MONTHS (CAI.07 12/13)**

The Team Leader – Admin and Recycling attended the meeting to update Members on the outcome of the review undertaken of the impact of the closedown of the green garden waste service during the winter months.

The decision had been taken in July 2011 to suspend the collection of green garden waste between 4 November 2011 and 27 February 2012. On assessing the outcome of the exercise in January 2012, the objectives had been achieved in that: financial savings of £150,000 were predicted, plus a carbon reduction; there had been only a minor impact on the recycling rate and little increase in residual waste. West Lindsey District Council offered home composters for sale and was the top authority in Lincolnshire, achieving sales of around half of the total.

However, some members of the public had made complaints that the dates were wrong and that the cessation of collections had commenced too early. A survey of parish councils and residents had taken place and the general opinion was that the start and end dates should be later i.e. December to March.

Some Members felt that because of the unpredictable British weather it would be difficult to ascertain which were the best dates for cessation of collections, and what worked well in one year could be inappropriate in another. What was vital was that sufficient publicity be undertaken to ensure that residents knew what to expect.

Councillor Dobbie proposed that the cessation be phased, with a single collection in November and March and none for the three months between. However the amendment was not seconded, and the Team Leader – Admin and Recycling verified that a total shut down for 16 weeks was necessary for the savings to be made.

Members had concerns about the staffing involved and questioned what they did during the shut down. The Team Leader – Admin and Recycling stated that either casual or agency staff were employed and that there were no job losses involved.

It was clarified that the report was to be submitted to the Prosperous Communities Committee for approval, with the recommendations that:

- a) the cessation of green waste period be delayed by a month with the suspension now starting on 3 December and collections resuming on 25 March;
- b) further publicity be given through available channels to enable residents to plan for the cessation and to also understand the reasons why the cessation period takes place;
- c) officers continue to investigate the viability of a “bespoke” service for those residents who miss the convenience of doorstep collections, and are prepared to pay for this service;
- d) the analysis following the cessation of green waste for the 2012/13 period be reviewed in six months time.

**RESOLVED** that the above recommendations be supported and submitted to the Prosperous Communities Committee for approval.

**Note** Councillor Dobbie wished for it to be recorded that he had voted against the recommendation.

## **17 CORPORATE PLAN REFRESH (CAI.08 12/13)**

The Assistant Chief Executive presented the Corporate Plan refresh report for consideration by the committee. Draft objectives were set out in the tables contained within the report and feedback was sought.

Issues raised by Members included whether the Council should be involved with Gainsborough market, and the level of Member training. It was clarified that the 'outcome' column of the tables was the target aimed for. Members expressed the hope that this Corporate Plan would achieve its objectives, and sought assurance of action on the objective of Member Training.

Members commented that the corporate plan used to be a document that was approved and sat on the shelf until further refreshes, however this year they felt that it had been referred to more in the work that was going through committees and that this was positive.

**RESOLVED** that the Corporate Plan refresh be noted and that members wishing to provide further comments outside of the meeting would forward them through to the Assistant Chief Executive.

## **18 PROGRESS AND DELIVERY REPORT - CORPORATE PLAN - REPORTING PERIOD 1 (CAI.09 12/13)**

The Assistant Chief Executive presented the Progress and Delivery report which was an update on progress with the Corporate Plan. The report was set into three sections by Directorate, and showed that current performance was as anticipated.

Items discussed or questioned by the Committee included: why were there no projects in the Witham Area? (page 7); what did CEC stand for? (page 12); what was the future of Sharepoint? (page 32); and which community had been selected to be a Neighbourhood Planning Front Runner? The Assistant Chief Executive affirmed he would find the answers to Members' questions.

Members also noted on page 26 the baseline for the % of appeals dismissed, and that training for officers would be a factor, however it was felt that training for Members was as great an issue, and that it was hoped that the Member Appraisals listed on page 36 would be carried through, and that an appropriate level of Member training be undertaken.

Committee Members referred to the recent Area Summits and stated that they had been enjoyable and very positive, and it was hoped that the ideas put forward would be acted upon.

Mention was made of the impending anniversary of Sweyne Forkebeard being the King of England when Gainsborough was the capital in 1013, which was a potential opportunity for local celebration.

**RESOLVED** that the Corporate Plan Progress and Delivery report be noted.

**19 FORWARD PLAN (CAI.10 12/13)**

The Governance and Civic Officer updated the Committee on the Forward Plan which set out forthcoming items for consideration by all Committees of the Council.

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

**20 WORK PLAN (CAI.11 12/13)**

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

The Committee suggested that the previously mentioned Sweyne Forkebeard anniversary could be combined with other events (e.g. the 100 year anniversary of WWI), and the recent discovery of war graves at Scampton. It was felt that Heritage Lincs could be involved and that Members form a working group 'creating local wealth through tourism', and a possible promotion at next year's Lincolnshire Show. Councillor Dobbie would have further discussion with Gainsborough Town Council after the summer recess.

**RESOLVED** that:

- a) the Work Plan be noted;
- b) a new entry be put into the Forward Plan to establish a 'creating local wealth through tourism' working group; and
- c) Councillors Howitt-Cowan, Leaning, Parrott and Patterson form the working group in liaison with the appropriate lead officer.

The meeting concluded at 8.18pm

Chairman