

## WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Challenge and Improvement Committee held in the Council Chamber at the Guildhall, Gainsborough on Tuesday 28 February 2012 commencing at 6.30 pm.

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

Councillor Owen Bierley  
Councillor David Dobbie  
Councillor Angela Lawrence  
Councillor Irmgard Parrott  
Councillor Roger Patterson  
Councillor Jessie Milne  
Councillor Mick Tinker

**In Attendance:**  
Matthew Clarke Business Improvement Manager  
Alex Reeks Business Development Officer  
Dinah Lilley Democratic Services Team Leader

### Membership

Councillor Jessie Milne substituted for Councillor Geoff Wiseman

## 62 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Malcolm Leaning

## 63 MINUTES

Meeting of the Challenge and Improvement Committee held on 17 January 2012.

It was noted that an alternative Member would be required to take the place of Councillor Wiseman on the Broadband working group as agreed at the last meeting.

The Business Development Officer reported on behalf of the Chief Executive that James Nicholson had agreed to co-ordinate the group, and suggested that the objectives of the group include:

- an understanding of the issues surrounding technology
- an understanding of work ongoing with the private sector in Broadband provision, and
- the scrutiny of the BDUK funding for Broadband.

**RESOLVED** that

- a) the Minutes of the meeting of the Challenge and Improvement Committee held on 17 January 2012 be confirmed and signed as a correct record, and
- b) Councillor Irmgard Parrott be nominated as the alternate Member to take part in the Broadband working group.

**64 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**65 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE (CAI.29 11/12)**

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

Further discussion took place on the matter of FPNs and whether any Town Council officers had been authorised to issue these. It was understood that some people had received training to do so, so further investigation would be undertaken.

Members discussed the item on Metal Theft which had been raised at a previous meeting. It was acknowledged that other organisations were already doing much work to tackle this problem, ie the Police and Lincolnshire County Council. The government was aiming to crack down on cash payments for scrap metal, and there was an e-petition on the government website for measures to be taken to establish the source of any scrap metal being sold.

It was therefore **AGREED** that whilst the Committee supported all the work that was ongoing, and encouraged publicity for such, it was not felt that the Members could add any further value to the matter, so the issue be closed within the matters arising schedule.

**66 CHAIRMAN'S INTENTION TO VARY THE ORDER OF BUSINESS**

The Chairman announced that with the Committee's agreement he would take the first part of item 6 on the agenda, prior to item 5.

It was **AGREED** that the order of the agenda be changed.

**67 AGILE WORKING – E-DELIVERY UPDATE (CAI.34 11/12)**

The Business Improvement Manager gave a presentation on progress being made with technology and agile working. Various initiatives had already been

put in place since the Council moved into the new Guildhall, and West Lindsey District Councillors had made the move to paperless working which staff were being encouraged to follow.

The key enabler was about changing the way we work. This was not all about technology but IT would help facilitate change. The concept of 'place of work' was changing, with staff hot desking and home working. The future lay in the use of mobile devices and self service, all enabled by high speed Broadband.

It was acknowledged that high speed Broadband was not yet available in all areas of West Lindsey, and work was ongoing to facilitate access to this in at least 90% of the District, with the remaining 10% in rural areas having a minimum of 2Mb per second. The project was being funded by a Rural Broadband grant, and innovative solutions were being sought.

Electronic Document Management was being rolled out, and self serve online transactions for customers, following initial assistance, was to be encouraged. It was noted that at any one time the Guildhall was rarely occupied to over 60%, and the aim was to reduce desk space in the building by 50% by the end of 2012. Assurance was given that this did not mean a reduction in staff.

Members agreed that the presentation had been very interesting, and that the use of technology and more flexible working were the only way forward. Working and service provision would be more efficient and also more cost effective.

Members asked for an update on progress with wireless networking at village halls, and were told that this was still an ongoing project.

The Business Improvement Manager was thanked for his interesting presentation and Members looked forward to receiving the next update.

**RESOLVED** that the report and presentation be noted.

## **68 RECOMMENDATION FROM PROSPEROUS COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE**

The Prosperous Communities Committee had resolved on 1 February 2012:-

"Members unanimously supported and welcomed the proposed way forward and on that basis it was **RESOLVED** that:

- (a) the contents of report PRCC.28 11/12 be noted; and
- (b) in the light of comments and suggestion made throughout the course of the debate the Challenge and Improvement Committee be requested to undertake a review of the Council's activities in order to determine "How open are we for business" and report their findings and any recommendations

arising there from back to a future meeting of the Prosperous Communities Committee for further consideration, in accordance with the adopted Overview and Scrutiny Procedure rules.”

The Democratic Services Team Leader had circulated the Prosperous Communities Committee report and minutes to the Challenge and Improvement Committee Members to clarify the matter. The report had been an Analysis of Income and Expenditure Streams in the Building Control, Planning and Land Charges Functions, and it was proposed that the Challenge and Improvement Committee further consider how helpful, or otherwise, the Council was in the provision of its services. Are we competitive with other Councils, whilst also giving consideration to the quality of the service provided?

The Chief Executive had recommended that the committee spend some time considering the objectives of the group and recommended the following for consideration:

1. that the committee invite a member of the prosperous community committee to join the working group

### **Proposed Objectives**

1. Survey businesses to understand how they feel and what the issues are,
2. Understand the regulations to see whether or not we enforce in a customer friendly way. This should include other forms of regulation is well such as Lincolnshire County Council trading standards.
3. Look at forms of business support that we offer and what is available from central government and how our offering benchmarks against other councils, as suggested by the P&R committee.

It was recommended that the group also get offset support from a member of the regulatory service team.

The group should consider in their final recommendations:

1. How West Lindsey and other regulators can make improvements, and
2. Proposed changes to feed into the central government review of better regulation.

It was agreed that the project could be a big task, and it was suggested that Members of the Challenge and Improvement Committee, also be assisted by Councillor Kinch as well a further Member from the Prosperous Communities Committee.

**RESOLVED** that Councillors Bierley and Patterson, along with Councillor Kinch and an additional Member from the Prosperous Communities Committee form a working group to consider “How open are we for business?”

## **69 FORWARD PLAN**

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.

Clarification was sought on some items, and comments made on other items which were awaiting the insertion of dates.

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

## **70 WORK PLAN**

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

The Chairman noted that he would like to see a further update on progress made on dog fouling and litter management and requested that this be followed up.

Councillor Howitt-Cowan noted that the Renewable Energy Statement was to be re-submitted to Council at its next meeting on 5 March 2012.

The meeting concluded at 7.36pm

Chairman