

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Challenge and Improvement Committee held in the Council Chamber at the Guildhall, Gainsborough on 29 January 2013 commencing at 6.30 pm.

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

Councillor Owen Bierley
Councillor Stuart Curtis
Councillor Richy Doran
Councillor Angela Lawrence
Councillor Irmgard Parrott
Councillor Malcolm Leaning
Councillor William Parry
Councillor Roger Patterson

In Attendance:
Alex Reeks Assistant Chief Executive
Alan Robinson Head of Central Services
Lyn Marlow Team Manager Customer Strategy and Services
Steve Bolan Senior Officer Business Development
Dinah Lilley Governance and Civic Officer

Apologies: Councillor Mick Tinker

The Committee sent its best wishes to Councillor Tinker for a continued recovery.

36 MINUTES

Meeting of the Challenge and Improvement Committee held on 27 November 2012.

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Challenge and Improvement Committee held on 27 November 2012 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

37 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

38 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE (CAI.22 12/13)

The Governance and Civic Officer introduced the Matters Arising Schedule, noting that all items were showing as completed.

The Senior Officer Business Development attended the meeting to give a further update on progress with Broadband provision. A response had been received from BDUK and an evaluation of problem areas was being undertaken. Two months of work was commencing to understand the required roll out and the Broadband working group was due to meet again on 21 February following which a report would be submitted to the 12 March committee meeting.

Members sought the answers to questions on specific areas and assurance was given that the range of wifi connections would be as wide as possible.

Members then pursued a discussion on Member development, noting that the timing of the seminar on Sustainable Urban Extensions the previous day had not been ideal. The Governance and Civic Officer explained the rationale behind the decision for the seminar to take place at that particular time.

Members felt that training and seminars would be an appropriate topic for a meeting of the Member Forum, and that a consultation could be undertaken to establish what Members wanted in terms of training and the best times. It was proposed that perhaps officers could also be invited to attend certain training sessions.

It was noted that the Council meeting the previous evening had also suggested a Member Forum meeting to discuss the Protocol on Operational Conventions in the Constitution.

RESOLVED that the Matters Arising Schedule be noted.

39 UPDATE ON THE CUSTOMER EXCELLENCE PROGRAMME (CAI.23 12/13)

Councillor Howitt-Cowan introduced the report which gave an update on the progress made with the Customer Excellence Strategy. Councillor Howitt-Cowan showed a presentation and described how he and Councillor Welburn were part of the working group which had been established by the Challenge and Improvement Committee, and had undertaken shadowing exercises in both Customer Services and Planning.

Councillor Howitt-Cowan noted that it had been an interesting and informative exercise and it was a recommendation of the group that any new Councillors also take part in a shadowing exercise to aid understanding of the work of the Council. The Committee felt that this would also be useful for established Councillors and that a volunteer list be compiled.

Training was underway for staff within the Council to understand the Customer Service protocol, and a new system was to be in place from 1 April, through which Members' enquiries were submitted initially to Customer Services and then forwarded to appropriate officers. If responses were not dealt with they were to be escalated to other officers and an audit kept of completion times. Members expressed concerns about the proposed extranet and barriers to accessibility.

The Team Manager Customer Strategy and Services resolved to follow up on Members' concerns, and a further update report was to be submitted to the June Committee meeting.

A review of service provision to support Localism (hubs or mobiles) was currently on hold and a review was due in February.

RESOLVED that the report be noted and a further update be submitted to the 11 June Committee meeting.

40 FORWARD PLAN (CAI.24 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.

Members discussed the savings made by the paperless initiative and questioned if the matter of Parish Councils receiving hard copy plans had been resolved, and it was suggested that whilst some Parishes did have connectivity problems, others would benefit from training. It was suggested that the Parishes that were experiencing problems be visited either by officers, local Ward Members or Challenge and Improvement Committee Members to see if there was a solution to the problems.

It was noted that the Forward Plan showed a review of the Community Awards to be submitted to the Prosperous Communities Committee. Members of Challenge and Improvement felt that they would also like to see this report, and it was suggested that the Committee be involved in pre-scrutiny prior to the report being considered by Prosperous Communities. It was felt that publicity for nominations could be more widely disseminated and that the scheme be complementary to the West Lindsey Honours scheme approved by Council on 28 January.

RESOLVED that the Forward Plan be noted.

41 WORK PLAN (CAI.25 12/13)

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

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The Governance and Civic Officer gave an update on further reports which had been added to the Forward Plan for Challenge and Improvement since the report was circulated.

Members expressed concerns that the Tourism working group had only met once and that they did not wish to see the work of this group not progress. Councillor Howitt-Cowan assured Members that work was ongoing and that a database of all interested groups was being built and that a seminar was to take place at RAF Scampton in March. It was proposed that a full meeting of the group take place prior to the March seminar.

RESOLVED that the Work Plan be noted.

The meeting concluded at 7.30 pm

Chairman