

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

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

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

 - Councillor Stuart Curtis
 - Councillor David Dobbie
 - Councillor Angela Lawrence
 - Councillor Malcolm Leaning
 - Councillor Roger Patterson
 - Councillor Sue Rawlins
 - Councillor Lewis Strange
 - Councillor Mick Tinker
- In Attendance:**
- | | |
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| Jeanette McGarry | Interim Director |
| Alex Reeks | Assistant Chief Executive |
| Tracey Bircumshaw | Group Accountant |
| Mike Sofianos | Consultant Project Manager |
| Jeanette Anderson | Team Manager, Corporate Systems Development |
| Katie Coughlan | Governance and Civic Officer |
- Also Present:**
- Councillor Geoff Wiseman
- Also in Attendance**
- Matthew Hird – Procurement Lincolnshire
 - Alina Hackney – Procurement Lincolnshire
- Apologies:**
- None
- Membership:**
- No substitutes were appointed for the meeting.

34 MINUTES

Meeting of the Challenge and Improvement Committee held on 10 September 2013.

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Challenge and Improvement Committee held on 10 September be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

35 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

36 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE (CAI.20 13/14)

The Governance and Civic Officer presented Paper A to the Committee noting that all Black items were completed for closing.

In respect of the 1 outstanding red action, Members again expressed the view that the provision of hard copies needed to cease as soon as feasibly possible, in light of the associated costs to the Council.

In responding to Members' questions it was noted that approximately 12 parishes still received hard copies

RESOLVED that the Matters Arising Schedule be received and noted.

37 MEMBERS' VERBAL UPDATE REPORTS

(a) Wi-fi (Councillor Alan Caine)

Councillor Caine was pleased to confirm the Lincoln Mast had been erected and he considered this would be the gateway to resolving some of the hard copy issues referred to earlier in the meeting.

Councillor Caine indicated a number of parishes which would becoming on-line in the next few months, these included Langworth, Reepham, Scothern, Scotton, East Stockwith, Tealby and Riby.

It was noted that connections were expected to be slow initially but the equipment would be upgraded late November increasing both speed and bandwidth.

A Member indicated that one of his parishes was not on the list and Officers advised that a request needed to be submitted.

In responding to Members' questions, Officers advised that it was unclear as to when the Retford Mast would be erected.

Members placed on record their thanks to the team and were very optimistic for the future.

(b) Members' Portal (Councillor Malcolm Leaning)

Councillor Leaning indicated that slow but steady progress was being made. The search facility was now operational. However there was a presumption that Members could transfer direct from the portal to Minerva and this was not the case and thus some functionality was lost.

Up-to-date information was not always available on the extranet, and Councillor Leaning indicated that this needed to be the case, in order that Members had confidence in the system.

Members again placed on record their thanks to Officers.

38 PROCUREMENT LINCOLNSHIRE ANNUAL REPORT (CAI.21 13/14)

Members gave consideration to a report which presented the 2012/13 Procurement Lincolnshire Annual Report.

Mr Matt Hird addressed the Committee and gave a presentation outlining the background to the partnership, the drivers for it having been established, the legal framework within which it operated, the governance arrangements, what had been delivered so far, the benefits of the shared service and highlights which particularly related to West Lindsey.

It was noted that savings were worked out based on the GERSHON principle. The target set for the current year was £200,000 and this had already been achieved.

The plan's main aim was to reduce barriers around the procurement of services and the ways in which this was being achieved was explained at length. It was noted that the Partnership worked closely with the Chamber of Commerce and the Federation of Small Businesses.

The Committee thanked Mr Hird and Ms Hackney for their very informative presentation and congratulated them on their achievements. Members acknowledged the importance of the Council engaging the services of the Partnership particularly in large scale projects.

Debate ensued and Members asked a number of pertinent questions particularly around the level of savings achieved and the contributions made.

In responding, it was noted that West Lindsey had achieved lesser savings than some of the other Lincolnshire authorities for a variety of reasons

including, in view of the authority having no housing stock, the fact that the authority's budget was smaller and also that the authority had started from a different baseline position in that it already had a resource in-house, which was transferred to the Partnership, meaning the authority had a head start.

The level of contributions was based on a two tier approach, and whilst it was still not ideal, a number of things had been tried and tested over the years.

Members indicated their experience of the Partnership had been a positive one, Members were very supportive of the approach the partnership was taking in supporting local suppliers. The Committee were of the view that the LGA should be doing greater promotion of the Partnership's work.

In response to a question, Officers confirmed the current arrangement was not open to third tier councils, but may be in the future.

RESOLVED that the content of the report be noted.

NOTE: - Councillor Dobbie declared an interest in the above item as a serving Town Councillor

39 MOBILE ACCESSIBILITY ROUNDTABLE (CAI.22 13/14)

Members gave consideration to a report which outlined proposals to hold a roundtable discussion on mobile accessibility in order to identify potential options to progress the priority.

Members welcomed the recommendations and were of the view that this was an important issue as it would help businesses, something the Council were keen to support.

Some Members expressed caution in that any proposals needed to be worked up into a proper business case and all due diligence undertaken.

Comment was passed that the move to digital had made mobile coverage worse across the District. It was suggested that maybe a planning policy for the erection of masts may be something the Council could do to assist with increasing coverage.

RESOLVED that: -

- (a) the roundtable debate and objectives outlined within the report (CAI.22 13/14) be approved;
- (b) Councillors Alan Caine, Lewis Strange and Mick Tinker be appointed by the Challenge and Improvement Committee to be part of the roundtable debate; and

- (c) a further report be submitted to the January meeting of the Challenge and Improvement Committee, detailing the findings from the roundtable debate and proposals for next steps.

40 FORWARD PLAN (CAI 23 13/14)

The Governance and Civic Officer presented a report setting out the items of business due to be considered through the committee system and asked Members to identify any reports that they wished to be brought before the Challenge and Improvement Committee for scrutiny.

With regard to item 23 (Policy for Small Agricultural Wind Turbines), Members sought a progress update and Officers undertook to provide this outside of the meeting.

It was noted that item 21(Whittons Garden Petition) had been superseded by the establishment of the new group to investigate alternative proposals for the Old Guildhall site and thus would be removed from the forward plan.

It was envisaged that Item 24 (Rural Broadband Investment) would be heard at a special meeting, although no date had been set as yet.

RESOLVED that the Forward Plan be noted.

41 WORK PLAN (CAI.24 13/14)

The Work Plan for the business of the Challenge and Improvement Committee was discussed.

It was noted that Items 3 and 5 of the Work Plan (Update on ASB and Crime in West Lindsey and South West Ward Update) would roll back to the January meeting, and thus the recent work referred from the Governance and Audit Committee could be easily accommodated at December's meeting.

RESOLVED that the Work Plan be noted.

42 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED that under Section 100 (A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

43 E-ACCESSIBILITY (CAI.25 13/14)

The Consultant Project Manager, gave a presentation setting out how, as a result of a refresh, 36 actions had been changed into eight key strategic recommendations/objectives. These were:

- the adoption of a new e-accessibility service delivery model
- the procurement and implementation of a customer facing web based technology solution
- a refresh of the Council's web site to provide a new look, feel and improved usability with the introduction of a "Citizen Account"
- the introduction of self service facilities across the District
- the introduction of the capability for customers to use mobile devices to access council services remotely.
- a re-fresh and re-launch of the Council's customer care standards
- the introduction of a corporate "customer feedback loop"
- implementation of a channel shift strategy

The presentation set out the benefits along with the strategic, commercial, financial, operational/technical and legal cases. A description was then given of how and when the eight objectives would be implemented, along with the capital and revenue costs, with examples from other authorities of efficiency savings made by using the programme.

Further questions were asked about the financial implications and whilst details were given it was also explained that the project was not simply about making savings, it was a Council priority to be more accessible to the residents of the District.

Members urged officers to ensure that the contract was clear and defined and all due diligence was undertaken in advance of committing. It was suggested that should be made available in full to the Policy and Resources Committee. In responding Officers confirmed they were working closely with Procurement Lincolnshire.

Assurances were given that existing points of contact, i.e. telephone or face to face would not be lost to those that required it, but that to progress along this route would be to embrace the 21st century, and give customers the opportunity of online transactions, which were the expectation of present day society.

In responding to members questions regarding progress on implementation and savings achieved, it was confirmed that regular reports would be submitted setting out such.

The pay-back period for the investment was expected to be in the region of four years.

Members' suggested that wherever possible costs should be capitalized to assist in financing the project.

RESOLVED that:

- (a) recommendations 1 – 8 as detailed in the report be noted;
- (b) the intention to establish a project team with dedicated resources to manage and implement the recommendations being made; and the implementation of a marketing and communications plan to run in parallel with the implementation of the recommendations be noted; and
- (c) the Policy and Resources Committee be **RECOMMENDED** to approve the funding arrangements for the implementation of the recommendations being made.

The meeting concluded at 9:12 pm

Chairman