

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 17 March 2015 commencing at 6.30 pm.

Present: Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan (Chairman)
Councillor Nigel Bowler (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Geoff Wiseman (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Stuart Curtis
Councillor Chris Darcel
Councillor Stuart Kinch
Councillor Angela Lawrence
Councillor Malcolm Leaning
Councillor Pat Mewis
Councillor Mick Tinker

In Attendance:
Ian Knowles Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer
James O' Shaughnessy Team Manager Business Improvement and
Corporate Governance
Katie Coughlan Governance and Civic Officer

Also Present: Councillor Alan Caine
Councillor Ian Fleetwood
Councillor Irmgard Parrott

Also in Attendance Mr Andy Gutherson – Lincolnshire County
Council, Highways
Mr Paul Little – Lincolnshire County Council,
Highways
Mr Steve Wiles – Lincolnshire County Council
Highways

Apologies: Councillor Sue Rawlins

Membership: There were no substitutes appointed for the meeting.

54 MINUTES

- (a) Meeting of the Challenge and Improvement Committee held on 27 January 2015

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Challenge and Improvement Committee held on 27 January 2015 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

55 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

56 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE (CAI.31 14/15)

The Committee gave consideration to the Matters Arising Schedule, setting out the current position of previously agreed actions, as at 9 March 2015.

RESOLVED that the Matters Arising Schedule be received and noted.

57 SCRUTINY OF PUBLIC BODY – LINCOLNSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL – HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENT

The Chairman welcomed Mr Andy Gutherson, Mr Paul Little and Mr Steve Wiles, all from the Highways Department at Lincolnshire County Council, and invited them to make their presentation to the Committee. The presentation aimed to answer all of those questions, previously agreed by the Committee and set out in Appendix A to the agenda.

These were responded to as follows: -

What are the strategic highway priorities for West Lindsey?

The Strategic Highways priorities for West Lindsey are, or are detailed in the following documents: -

- Maintaining the existing asset in accordance with the Transport Asset Management Plan (TAMP) 2012-2016
- The Gainsborough Transport Strategy and the Lincoln Integrated Transport Strategy (LITS) - produced in partnership with WLDC.
- The LITS Progress Report dated 2013 includes an update on progress and what is planned to be delivered over the coming years.
- The 4th Lincolnshire Local Transport Plan 2013/14-2022/23 issued in 2013 includes a section on Gainsborough and proposals for the LTP4 period

- The main strategic priority is the Lincoln Eastern Bypass which will create a strategic north /south highway route by joining the A158 Wragby Road (2km within WLDC) to the A15 in the south.

What recent bids has LCC made in the recent past for funding strategic road schemes in West Lindsey?

- The County Council have been successful in securing £49.95m from the Department for Transport for the Lincoln Eastern Bypass
- LTP4 highlighted the success in achieving funding of £1.85m from the Homes and Communities Agency and Community Infrastructure Fund
- Public Realm works in the Market Place, Lord and Market Street, Gainsborough. Also Caistor and earlier Market Rasen, attracted regional funding.
- Within Gainsborough there has been the new secondary school and associated infrastructure build using the County Community Travel Zone initiative, e.g. cycleways and pedestrian crossings along Corringham Road
- New Growth Deal/Single Local Growth Fund process
- Central government's competitive funding allocations nationally do not always favour large parts of Lincolnshire?
- Not always possible to forward fund feasibility work with no guarantee of success

How Will LCC Ensure That Highways Support Growth And Development In West Lindsey

- LCC and WLDC continue to maintain a dialogue and work together on aspirations for growth - as we have done with WLDC and achieved significant Highway investment over the past 15 years.
- In Gainsborough there has been the Gainsborough Town Centre Traffic Study and Key Junction Assessment in 2005, Gainsborough Regained Master Plan and Area Action Plan 2007
- Impact of growth on highway network will be assessed and mitigated through the planning process using Section 38 and Section 278 Agreements
- Progression of Central Lincolnshire Local Plan, together with the associated Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Infrastructure Plan, will ensure growth is adequately catered for and impacts have been assessed adequately.

What Arrangements Are You Putting In Place For Local Transport Bodies? What Or How Can West Lindsey Support This Arrangement?

- The Lincolnshire Strategic Transport Board was formed in 2013 as a partnership between the County Council (as local transport authority) and the Greater Lincolnshire LEP in line with guidance issued by the DfT
- Its sole purpose was to agree how to use the £11.9m allocation from DfT for major schemes between 2015/16 and 2018/19

- Voting membership is restricted to the County Council (3 representatives) and the GL LEP (1 representative). Non-voting members include N and NE Lincolnshire Councils, Highways Agency and Network Rail
- The Board has prioritised the £11.9m to the proposed A52 Grantham Southern Relief Road
- Discussions are ongoing in respect of the future role of the Board following the introduction of the Growth Deal/Single Local Growth Fund process

What Are LCC Currently Lobbying Central Government On In Terms Of Highways? How Can WLDC And Its Members Support This Process?

- The County Council have submitted two bids to the Department for Transport that will have potential to benefit WLDC –
 - Local Highways Maintenance Challenge Fund bid
 - Street Lighting bid
- Dialogue continues with DfT regarding funding of LEB.

Traffic Models – Why Do We Have Them?

- To predict how things will change in the future
- To provide input to the design and evaluation of transport infrastructure
- To assess the impact of strategic planning decisions on the transport network
- To assess the impact of third party proposals on the transport network
- Traffic models are tools to assist in making informed decisions. They do not give the answer alone.

What Are The Steps In Building A Traffic Model?

- Trip generation – how many trips start / end at each location?
- Trip distribution – how many trips will there be between different locations
- Assignment – which roads or public transport services will be used.

How Are Traffic Models Built?

Base Year Model

- Designed to replicate present day networks, demands and conditions
- Built using observed information on current travel behaviour and other information from sources such as the Census
- Accuracy of the model tested with independent data - 'validation'
- Forecasting
- Changes in population, employment, education, retail, etc together with future travel costs allow us to model how transport demand will change in the future
- Schemes or plans can be added to assess the effects of interventions

- *Processes generally follow Department for Transport (DfT) 'best practice' – and this is required when bidding for central government funds*

What Current Traffic Models Are There?

- There is a Transport Model for Gainsborough built in 2009 that can simulate the internal highway and public transport movements within the town. Pedestrian flows are not directly included but pedestrian signalised traffic signal delays will have been simulated.
- The County Council are currently building the Lincolnshire Local Planning Tool (LLPT) that will enable local authorities, working together, to identify at a strategic level the combined effect on the county's highway network of land use proposals both within the county and immediate surrounding areas. Whilst LLPT will be focussed on the transport impacts of proposals, further development after the completion of this project could enable the Tool to assess impacts on wider infrastructure networks. This planning tool is likely to be available for use in late 2015.

With Regard To Large Planning Applications – Do LCC Take Into Consideration The Cumulative Effect On Schools, Village Centres, Services Rather Than Looking At Each On A Case By Case Basis, Specific Examples Referred To Including, Saxilby, Welton, Belt Road And The A159.

- Committed development (schemes that have planning consent) is taken into account during the assessment of any new planning application.

Has There Been A Change In Standards / Assessment Criteria In Recent Years? Do You Always Visit The Sites Before Making Your Representations? And Please Explain Some Of The Terminology Used?

- Most sites are visited by the Development Control Officer.
- It is usually only sites which have no obvious impact/effect on the public highway, such as a rear extension, or a replacement dwelling with no access alterations, which would not be inspected.
- A no observation response does not mean that the site has not been fully assessed against current highway standards. It means that following a site inspection and assessment, it meets the required criteria and as such no further comment from the highways authority is required.

How Does LCC Prioritise Maintenance And Repair Schemes In The Current Economic Climate? What Is Currently Planned Within West Lindsey?

- The larger sections of maintenance work, eg significant "A" road schemes are priorities at a County level. Several criteria are used to assess the condition, residual life being the main one. Schemes

programmed for this year include Torksey Lock, Harpswell Hill, Glentham Nettleton and Saxilby

- Other maintenance schemes are assessed and managed by the Area Highway Managers and their teams, who have a detailed knowledge, and data for their areas. (Proposed Surface Dressing Sites were shared with the Committee)

How Are Road Safety Schemes Instigated And What Influence Can WL And Members Have In Drawing Attention To The Need For Such Schemes?

- The network is monitored for Personal Injury Accidents and where there are clusters of accidents the Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership (LRSP) investigate to see if accident mitigation measures can be introduced, any proposals are justified on a cost benefits analysis.
- In a similar way linear cluster locations are investigated, that is, road link lengths such as the work undertaken on the A631 improvements between Corringham and Middle Rasen.
- Currently LRSP are working through and investigating an extensive list of locations within the County.
- Recommend WLDC staff liaise with their LCC Area Highways Manager to discuss local concerns; Steve Wiles is keen to have quarterly meetings with WLDC Officers to “touch base” on any points of interest or highway concerns.
(a list of current sites under investigation were shared with the Committee)

Hawthorn Road, Cherry Willingham, How Did You Reach This Decision? What Would Be The Estimated Cost Of Making This A Full Access Road?

- Change in central government in 2010 required descoping of scheme to fit within their budget.
- This resulted in the scheme changing from a dual carriageway to a single carriageway and also included other changes including the removal of Hawthorn Road road bridge.
- Without this descoping central government funding (approx £50M) would not have been available and the scheme would almost certainly not have progressed.
- The removal of the road bridge was estimated to save approximately £1M. This has been offset by the reintroduction of the NMU bridge at approximately £0.5M.
- The reintroduction of the road bridge would require a new full planning application which would add significant delay to the scheme and would need to assess any additional impacts on the surrounding areas.

If Not Already Covered...what Is Planned For The A15 ?

- The A15 Route Management Strategy 2006 and the A15\A16\A16 Route Actions Plan both investigated intervention options to enable the

County to be in a position to bid for grant funding if an opportunity occurred although no priority scheme was identified in the WLDC area.

- The estimated cost of dualling the A15 from Lincoln to M180 (22 miles) is some £350m - £450m based on cost of other similar recently constructed schemes. This compares with just £40m secured in the first round of the Growth Deal.

The Chairman thanked Officers for their informative presentation and a period of supplementary questioning followed.

Members raised issues regarding the condition of a number of the roads within their local area, particularly in respect of potholes.

In response Officers indicated of the significant budget constraints and the need to prioritise work programmes.

Indication was also sought from Members as to how the changes from S106 agreements to CIL payments would affect funding going forward.

Members expressed concern that highways failed to comment on a number of planning applications, when local ward Members were clearly aware of highways issues.

In respect of the latter there was an acceptance that the comments made could be more informative, better language used and more context. However assurance was offered that the majority of sites were visited and Highways Officers needed to make their comments based on Highways Standards and Traffic Modelling scenarios. It was also noted that developers mitigating actions often resulted in Highway concerns being alleviated hence there were no objections.

A Gainsborough Member raised issues with the crossing outside of Marshall's Yard, requesting that barriers be erected to prevent people crossing in inappropriate places putting both themselves and others at risk. Enquiries were also made as to whether improvements would be made at the Corringham Road/ Thorndike Way junction, which continued to be an accident hotspot, with the Member citing a number of incidents only that week.

In responding Officers advised again that budgets and funding were major constraints and hence all safety measures and road improvements had to be based on statistics and risk in a priority order. It was noted that the latter, whilst on the Road Safety Partnerships radar, had had recent improvements and this had resulted in a drop of the number of accidents resulting in personal injury.

Visiting Member Councillor Caine, raised a very localised issue which had been on-going for a number of years and one in which he considered Highways had been particularly obstructive.

Officers undertook to take this matter away for further investigation.

Finally questions were asked regarding the Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) that currently existed and how this would be enforced bearing in mind it was not legally binding in nature; how it was proposed the bypass would be funded; and how much it would cost to revert back to a full vehicle access bridge in the Hawthorn Road area.

In responding it was noted that the MOU had been developed as a result of the delay in preparing the local plan, it aimed to address short term issues to ensure developer contributions were not missed. Whilst it was not legally binding in nature, it was stressed that if all partners did not honour their commitments, this would result in less infrastructure delivery, hence it was in all parties' interests.

A funding breakdown of the bypass was provided, which in summary was £50m from the DFT, £30m LCC and the remainder from CIL Contributions.

With regard to the access bridge, it was stressed and emphasised that one bridge could not simply be swapped for another bridge, and this was not as a result of cost alone.

Officers undertook to provide the presentation slides to all Members and to display them on the Members Portal for future reference.

Note: A full recording of the session will be available on the Council's website for a period of six months at [Home - West Lindsey Webcasting](#)

Note: The Committee adjourned for a short comfort break and resumed at 7.45 pm

58 PROGRESS AND DELIVERY (SERVICES) PERIOD 2 (CAI.36 14/15)

Members gave consideration to the second of the newly styled Progress and Delivery reports, which highlighted areas where services were "off target", the reasons for this and the proposed rectifications. The report also provided Members with an opportunity to examine the reasons why performance was off track and seek assurance that the measures which had been put in place were sufficient to tackle the issues which had been identified within the service.

Members sought an update on the current performance within the Land Charges Service and were advised that search process times were currently running at around 5 days. This was an improved position, primarily as a result of having increased staffing resources within the area. There was a commitment from the management team to maintain this level of resource to ensure processing times did not increase again, until such time as automation was achieved. However it was now likely that this project would have to be re-scoped, as the software developer had not been able to overcome the issues previously identified.

In response to a Member's comments, Officers confirmed that the cost of complaints would be included in future reports.

RESOLVED that having examined the areas where service performance was off target and having sought assurance from Officers, agreed that the rectifications proposed would deal with the issues identified.

59 PROGRESS AND DELIVERY (PROJECTS) PERIOD 2 (CAI.37 14/15)

Members gave consideration to the second of the new style Progress and Delivery reports which dealt with projects. The report was an exceptions report, in that it dealt with those projects which were off track and in danger of not delivering by their deadline. The report also highlighted those projects which had been delivered within the period in order that Members could determine where progress was being made.

In responding to Members' comments, Officers re-iterated the current position of the land charges project as detailed above.

Members enquired as to the current funding position for the young persons' accommodation project. In responding Officers outlined the current position, confirming that whilst a large proportion of the revenue funding had been secured, there was still a funding gap, which the service provider was confident could be bridged. It was stressed that it was the level of support the units would offer which was increasing the price per head, as opposed to build costs and the Project would open in April as planned.

A Member enquired as to whether it was still intended to house only young people, as he had received conflicting information of late. Indication was also sought as to whether the units would be managed on a similar basis to that of the revised arrangements at the Market Rasen Foyer. In responding Officers outlined the current position, as they understood it, in that there would be twelve units, 6 high level support, 6 of lower level support for persons aged 16 – 17 years old or persons of a similar age with similar needs. However Officers undertook to provide Members with an update of the provider's intentions outside of the meeting, in the absence of further information.

RESOLVED that having examined the areas where a project was off target and having sought assurance from officers, it was agreed that the rectifications proposed would deal with the issues identified.

60 FORWARD PLAN (CAI.38 14/15)

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 pre-scrutiny.

No additional reports were identified for pre-scrutiny. Parking and Markets had been identified at previous meetings.

Cllr Tinker enquired as to how his petition item was to be dealt with as council had resolved that the petition be moved forward and work be undertaken to resolve the issues.

It was noted that this would be considered as part of the Parking Review and the Market Review.

RESOLVED that the Forward Plan be noted.

61 WORK PLAN (CAI.39 14/15)

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

RESOLVED that the Work Plan be noted.

62 REVIEW OF THE YEAR AND TO FORM A WORK PLAN FOR 15/16

Members were asked to share their views on how they felt the year had gone and asked to make suggestions for areas to be considered for inclusion within the 15/16 Work Plan.

A general discussion ensued during which the follow comments were made: -

- Members welcomed the introduction of the public body scrutiny element to the Committee's meetings and encouraged that these continue
- Format of Scrutiny suggestions – Members preferred the question/answer style as opposed to the presentation/question style
- Some Members felt an hour for scrutiny sessions was not long enough whilst others felt this made the sessions more focussed. Some suggested they be held on separate nights – no general consensus

The following areas were suggested for consideration into the Work Plan

- Neighbourhood Plans – their successes, impact, the level of support offered, take-up (Councillor Lawrence)
- Report from the Commercial Director, 1year + into post – An assessment of the Commercial viability of the Authority, the District, the Commercial Activity ongoing and planned, income generation position (Councillor Kinch)

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- Health (and Well-Being) Local Provision of Services (Councillor Tinker, whole Committee support)
- Director report from each service area (Councillor Wiseman)

The meeting concluded at 8.21 pm

Chairman