

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of a Meeting of the Prosperous Communities Committee held in the Council Chamber at the Guildhall, Gainsborough on Wednesday 8 June 2011 at 7.00 pm.

Present : Councillor Malcolm Parish (Chairman – In the Chair)
Councillor Jeff Summers (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Nigel Bowler
Councillor David Dobbie
Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan
Councillor Stuart Kinch
Councillor Jessie Milne
Councillor Lesley Rollings
Councillor Ray Sellars
Councillor Lewis Strange
Councillor Anne Welburn
Councillor Geoff Wiseman
Councillor Trevor Young

In Attendance : Director of Strategy and Regeneration
Director of Neighbourhoods and Health
Public Protection Services Manager
Business Improvements Manager
Group Accountant
Senior Democratic Officer

Also Present : Councillor Chris Underwood-Frost

Apologies : Councillor Gillian Bardsley
Councillor Jackie Brockway

Membership : Councillor Anne Welburn substituting for Councillor
Gillian Bardsley
Councillor Jessie Milne substituting for Councillor
Jackie Brockway

6 CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

This being the first meeting of the newly constituted Prosperous Communities Committee, the Chairman welcomed all Members of the Committee, particularly those newly appointed as well as visiting Members to the meeting. A welcome was also extended to Officers.

The Chairman briefly outlined his aspirations for the Committee over the next twelve months and commented on the extensive remit and significant role he considered it would play. It was anticipated that the forthcoming year would be a busy one and in closing he invited the Director of Strategy and Regeneration to address the Committee to provide Members with further contextual information regarding the Committee's role and remit, following agenda item 4 (Members' Declarations of Interest).

7 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

8 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT – INTENTION TO VARY ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Chairman announced his intention to vary the order of business. It was proposed that Paper E (PRCC.05 11/12 - Taking the Localism Agenda Forward) be considered after Paper C (PRCC.03 11/12 – New Ways of Working), in view of them being connected, and having been seconded it was:

RESOLVED that the order of business be varied as detailed above.

9 MINUTES

- (a) Meeting of the Economic Development and Regeneration Committee – 24 March 2011

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Meeting of the Economic Development and Regeneration Committee held on 24 March 2011 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

- (b) Meeting of the Community and Waste Services Committee – 30 March 2011

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Meeting of the Community and Waste Services Committee held on 30 March 2011 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

(c) Meeting of the Prosperous Communities Committee – 23 May 2011

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Meeting of the Prosperous Communities Committee held on 23 May 2011 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

10 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

11 FORMAL INTRODUCTION BY THE DIRECTOR OF STRATEGY AND REGENERATION – OUTLINE OF THE COMMITTEE'S ROLES, REMIT AND RESPONSIBILITY AND ASPIRATIONS FOR THE ENSUING YEAR

As previously indicated by the Chairman, a formal introduction to the Committee's role, remit, responsibilities and aspirations for the ensuing year was made by the Director of Strategy and Regeneration.

All Members were provided with a further copy of the Committee's Terms of Reference and reference was made to the revised constitution and the benefits its adoption had afforded, which included preventing policies being developed in a piecemeal fashion; more scrutiny of budgets and performance, particularly in relation to effective business cases and the delivery of programmes; and a greater ability to meet the needs of a modern local authority; the new leadership roles and to develop local approaches to service delivery.

12 NOTICE OF MOTION PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 10

At the Annual Meeting of Council on 23 May 2011 the following motion submitted by Councillor Chris Underwood-Frost was proposed and seconded and in accordance with the provisions of Council Procedure Rule No.10 was referred to the Prosperous Communities Committee for consideration.

“Chairman

Following my question that was submitted on time for the full Council meeting of the 18 April 2011. I wish the council to know that Officers were very uncomfortable that I had submitted a question regarding a subject that many people in the Gainsborough/WLDC area are very concerned about. I was asked at that time to alter the question and soften the contents, the change then made my question unconstitutional following the full Council where (former) Cllr K Smith challenged the question. I will now ask this question in full hard fact. The article in the 225 issue of BBC Focus magazine stated "Do coal fired power stations produce radioactive waste"?

The first word in the article is "YES" I asked if the council could set up a Task and Finish group (TFG) to look at pollutants in the district.

Therefore, when the Chernobyl nuclear power station exploded, Environmental Health Officers (EHO) Officers in West Lindsey DC allegedly checked radiation fallout by taking specialist equipment readings on local vegetables. I so move that Radiation fallout data from the time the Chernobyl power station exploded and that any data over a 20 plus year period after the Chernobyl disaster is now made public and submitted on a non confidential basis to the Task and Finish group.

Following the BBC Focus (issue 225) article, I so move that the Task and Finish group is set up from the appropriate committee to work with Members, Officers and appropriate external experts to ascertain a detailed understanding of pollutants affecting the West Lindsey DC area. The (TFG) remit must include tests in West Lindsey to see if burning coal has had a health impact on the people of WLDC from power stations, this data must show any details of uranium and or thorium in the atmosphere, soil and local food.

I so move. That the council publishes a report for the people of WLDC on the findings of the (TFG) and the data is of a local nature, local people want answers!"

At the invite of the Chairman Councillor Underwood-Frost addressed the Committee, outlining the intentions of his Motion

13 MOTION REFERRED FROM COUNCIL – 23 MAY (AS SET OUT ABOVE) POLLUTANTS (PRCC. 02 11/12)

Officers referred to the report which had been prepared to assist Members in their deliberations and to the suggested way forward detailed at paragraph 2 therein.

Debate ensued and Members as a whole welcomed the Motion and were supportive of the work it had suggested be undertaken therein.

Whilst Members were in agreement that any work would need to be scoped, there was a general consensus that in the first instance a Member Task and Finish Group should be established to analyse all of the available data.

Members commented on the awareness the Motion had raised with the Public, and whilst accepting sources of data were available in the public domain, the need for a very local study was strongly supported. Reference was made to several very local issues and incidents which could potentially be affecting the environment.

A variety of methodologies for collating such data were suggested as well as organisations which may be able to assist.

In closing, Councillor Underwood-Frost urged Members for their support and indicated that the opportunity for him to serve on any Task Finish Group formed as result of his Motion would be welcome.

On that basis it was: -

RESOLVED that a Task and Finish group comprising those members detailed below be established in order to firstly analyse available data with a view to undertaking a scoping exercise thereafter.

Councillor Nigel Bowler
Councillor Jeff Summers
Councillor Chris Underwood-Frost
Councillor Geoff Wiseman
Councillor Trevor Young

14 IMPLEMENTATION OF “NEW WAYS OF WORKING” TO ENHANCE THE DECISION MAKING CAPABILITIES OF COMMITTEES (PRCC.03 11/12)

Members considered a report which outlined the “New Ways of Working” process which had recently been implemented in relation to policy and strategy formulation, Committee effectiveness and delivery against the Corporate Plan.

Debate ensued, during which Members welcomed the new approach and commented on the positive benefits it would afford, particularly in terms of productivity; improving relationships between members and senior Officers and allowing Members more opportunity and greater ability to directly shape strategic decisions as well as policies and strategies.

In response to comments regarding the arrangements for reviewing the new processes, Officers emphasised that this would be a “moving feast” and thus monitored and reviewed on an ongoing regular basis.

RESOLVED that the contents of report PRCC.03 11/12 be noted and its aims and objectives supported.

15 TAKING THE LOCALISM AGENDA FORWARD (PRCC. 05 11/12)

Consideration was given to a report which sought to inform Members of the progress made to-date in delivering the localism agenda in the District. The report further outlined the next steps to be undertaken and included the revised process for the Local Councillor Initiative Fund and revised procedure for dealing with Community Led Plans, and member’s approval thereof was sought.

Debate ensued during which members welcomed the ambitious intentions and aspirations the Authority had in achieving Localism.

Much discussion was had in respect of the proposed revised “Process and Guidance for Members” document for the Local Councillor Initiative Fund, as set out at Appendix 1 of the report and a number of Members commented on hurdles applicants had experienced in previous years when trying to access the funding. Members considered it of paramount importance that the funding should be as accessible as possible and thus requested that the minimum funding level be removed. Furthermore the invaluable nature of local village halls and community buildings in very rural locations was stressed. There were considerable adverse effects on such communities when community buildings were no longer viable and again Members requested that for this reason general repairs and maintenance to the fabric of any building should be deemed within the scope of the funding scheme.

Officers gave their assurances that the intention was to make the funding as accessible as possible and were in agreement that it was essential that the criteria be applied and interpreted flexibly. Officers undertook to work with applicants to overcome any barriers identified.

The important and growing role of partnership working was also raised by Members and considered to be the key to success in the future, as resources became more and more limited. Officers outlined the role of Area Managers, the rationale for their creation and the facilitating role they would play and undertook to provide all Members of the Committee with a District Map identifying the 6 proposed areas.: -

On that basis it was **RESOLVED** that:

- (a) the Vision Statement of “Localism” in West Lindsey, as set out at paragraph 2 of report PRCC.05 11/12 be approved;
- (b) the revised “process and guidance for members” document for the Local Councillor Initiative Fund, as set out at Appendix 1 of report PRCC.05 11/12 be approved subject to the following amendments
 - (1) (i) that there be no minimum funding level set and as such all such references to it be removed (paragraph (c) on page 1;
 - (1) (ii) that general repairs and maintenance to the fabric of any building are deemed within the scope of the funding scheme if the applicant can demonstrate the public usage / community benefit of the building and any adverse effects arising from the building’s state, and as such paragraph 1 (c) on page 2 of the document be amended to reflect such;

(1) (iii) the word “must” be replaced with the words “should wherever possible” throughout the document;

(1) (iv) the Year 2 application deadline set out in paragraph 2 (a) of the document be amended to read 31 December 2012 as opposed to 2013;

and the following additions : -

(2) (i) an operating note to the effect of:

“This criteria should be applied and interpreted flexibly. Officers should work with the applicant to overcome any barriers identified.”

be included in the document and applied when assessing / processing applications; and

3 (i) the Local Councillor Initiative Fund, as amended, be launched and the associated paper work despatched to Members;

(c) the headline scope for each of the localism projects, as set out at paragraph 3.4 of report PRCC.05 11/12, be approved;

(d) the revised procedure for dealing with community led plans, as set out at Appendix 2 of report PRCC.05 11/12, be approved; and

(e) the provision of support for the Neighbourhood Planning Vanguard in Caistor be committed to.

16 DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN 2011/2015 AND WORK PROGRAMME AND PRIORITIES (PRCC.04 11/12)

Members considered a report which provided an update on the development of the 2011/2015 Corporate Plan priorities and outcomes. The report set out details of the work undertaken to-date and sought Members’ comments and views on its content and which outcomes the Committee considered should form the priorities for the ensuing 12 months.

By way of background and context, Members were also provided with a summary of the evidence which had been used to determine the five Themes.

Debate ensued and the following topics / outcomes were suggested:

Theme: Entrepreneurial Council
Affordable Housing

Making Best Use of S106 Monies / Contributions
Safeguarding affordable housing in perpetuity
Use of Assets / Resources
Making use of Council owned land to generate income
Putting financial resources into projects that generate further income

Theme: Accessible & Connected

Addressing Poor Quality Broadband
Rural Communities
Addressing Transport Links
Providing local facilities
Village Hall Funding

Theme: Prosperous

Safe guarding good quality agricultural land for the future

Theme : Safe Communities

Safe Community (including peoples' perceptions and fears related to crime)

District Wide

MOD Sites
Ageing Population
Community Facilities
Councillor Initiative Fund – Criteria to fit Localism Agenda
Tourism

In response to Members' comments regarding outputs and the importance of ensuring those identified were the correct and most appropriate ones, reference was made to the management team workshops which had been held and Members were of the view that it would be beneficial if the Committee were afforded a similar opportunity.

On that basis it was **RESOLVED** that:

- (a) the progress made to-date be noted;
- (b) the comments expressed throughout the course of the debate, summarised above, be viewed and used as the Committee's formal feedback on the content of the Plan;
- (c) the comments expressed throughout the course of the debate, summarised above, be viewed and used as the Committee's formal feedback as to its priorities from the Plan for the ensuing 12 months; and
- (d) in order to further discuss, consider and determine both the Committee's short term and long term priorities from the

Corporate Plan an informal facilitated workshop for Members of the Committee be arranged as soon as practicably possible.

17 MONITORING CORPORATE PLAN AND REVENUE BUDGET PERFORMANCE FOR THE PERIOD 1 APRIL 2010 – 31 MARCH 2011 – YEAR END POSITION (PRCC.06 11/12)

Members gave consideration to a report which presented the performance and budget monitoring position for the quarter ended 31 March 2011, the 2010/11 revenue outturn position. The report focused on those areas where significant variances from either performance targets and/or budgets were evident and reflected the results of the budget management strategy of generating income and delivering efficiencies early.

A number of questions were posed and responded to as required and included explanation of the District Council's role and the services it provided in respect of Tourism.

Further explanation of the new earmarked reserve in respect of the Football Co-ordinator post was requested. In the absence of the information being on hand to those Officers present, Members were advised that a response would be provided outside of the meeting.

RESOLVED that:

- (a) contents of report PRCC.06 11/12 and the current Corporate Plan performance and revenue budget outturn position for 2010/11 as at 31 March 2011 be noted; and
- (b) further explanation of the new earmarked reserve in respect of the Football Co-ordinator post be provided to all Members of the Committee outside of the meeting.

The meeting concluded at 9.26 pm.

Chairman