

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of a Meeting of the Prosperous Communities Committee held in the Council Chamber at the Guildhall, Gainsborough on Wednesday 2 November 2011 at 7.00 pm.

- Present :** Councillor Malcolm Parish (Chairman – In the Chair)
Councillor Gillian Bardsley (Vice-Chairman)
- Councillor Nigel Bowler
Councillor Jackie Brockway
Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan
Councillor Stuart Kinch
Councillor Jessie Milne
Councillor Lesley Rollings
Councillor Ray Sellars
Councillor Lewis Strange
Councillor Geoff Wiseman
Councillor Trevor Young
- In Attendance :** Chief Executive
Director of Neighbourhoods and Health
Housing Renewal and Community Safety Services Manager
Operational Services Manager
Gainsborough Growth Point Project Manager
Group Accountant
Senior Democratic Officer
- Also Present:** Mr Alan Monighan – Independent Member of the
Standards Committee (observing proceedings)
Councillor Irmgard Parrott
- Apologies :** Councillor Jeff Summers (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor David Dobbie
- Membership :** Councillor Jessie Milne substituting for Councillor Jeff Summers

38 CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENT RE: INTENTION TO VARY THE ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Chairman welcomed all Members and Officers to the meeting and in opening announced his intention to vary the order of business. It was proposed that Paper F (PRCC.22 11/12 Trinity Arts Centre – Future Proposals) be the first public report considered under agenda item 6.

Having been proposed and seconded it was:

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

39 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

40 MINUTES

Meeting of the Prosperous Communities Committee – 28 September 2011

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Meeting of the Prosperous Communities Committee held on 28 September 2011 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

41 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE SETTING OUT THE CURRENT POSITION OF PREVIOUSLY AGREED ACTIONS AS AT 25 OCTOBER 2011. (PRCC.17 11/12)

Members gave consideration to the Matters Arising Schedule which set out the current position of all previously agreed actions as at 25 October 2011.

It was noted that all actions had been completed on target.

RESOLVED that progress on the matters arising scheduled as set out in report PRCC.17 11/12 be noted.

42 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Gillian Bardsley declared a personal interest in report PRCC.21 11/12 (Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy, Policy and Procedure) as a serving Magistrate.

Councillor Lewis Strange declared a personal interest in report PRCC.20 11/12 (Lincolnshire County Council's Review of Household Waste Recycling Centres)

as a serving Member of Lincolnshire County Council and the Executive Portfolio Holder for Waste Services & Green Issues thereon.

43 TRINITY ARTS CENTRE – FUTURE PROPOSALS (PRCC.22 11/12)

Consideration was given to a report which provided Members with a position statement with regards to Trinity Arts Centre. The report further detailed and sought Members' approval of a proposed way forward for the Centre over the next 12 months.

In presenting the report, Officers outlined the benefits afforded by the proposal including a further reduction in the facilities' operating costs and an opportunity to develop the wider usage of the key community asset, currently under utilised by the local residents, in line with the needs of the community. The rationale for reducing the artistic programme was explained and Officers considered the proposals were in line with comments made to-date through informal consultation.

Debate ensued and on the whole Members supported the proposal. Whilst acknowledging the current difficult financial and economic climate, all were in agreement that it was vital that the centre remained open if the Corporate Plan Outcomes were to be delivered. Reference was also made to the detrimental social and environmental impact its closure could potentially result in. Members' were fully supportive of the proposed work to develop the Centre's wider community usage and services on offer and considered a "Hub Approach" could prove successful.

Officers welcomed Members suggestions and undertook to liaise with the Member outside of the meeting regarding useful contact details.

Whilst supportive of the short term proposals, some Members expressed concern that greater consideration needed to be given to the Centre's longer term position, and the strategic view in respect of Arts and Culture as whole within the town. Members' also sought details of the public consultation undertaken to date, and the outcome of the work undertaken by Consultants in developing the Arts for Trinity Group.

In respect of the latter, a brief resume was provided by the Chief Executive. In responding, Officers acknowledged the need for greater engagement with the public sector and local community regarding the Centre's future. By reducing the artistic programming, capacity would be released allowing detailed and thorough consultation and engagement with stakeholders to commence. Therefore, a Strategic decision to approve the "change in direction" was being sought, in order that the process may begin. Assurance was afforded that consideration was and would be given to the wider strategic view and made reference to the pending refresh of the Gainsborough's Masterplan, "Gainsborough Regained".

The Chairman undertook to consider this matter at a future strategic monthly Chairman's briefing meeting.

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

- (a) the proposal to develop the Trinity Arts Centre as an arts and community venue as outlined in Section 5 of report PRCC.22 11/12 be approved ;
- (b) Policy & Resources Committee be **RECOMMENDED** to consider and approve the proposed use of the Council asset and the implications on the Authority's resources of the proposal approved by the Prosperous Communities Committee;
- (c) further work be undertaken with the public sector and community to identify future opportunities to develop the usage of Trinity Arts Centre; and
- (d) a progress report be scheduled into the Committee's Forward Plan and submitted to the Prosperous Communities Committee for consideration in 12 months time (November 2012).

44 MONITORING OF REVENUE BUDGET PERFORMANCE BASED ON INCOME AND EXPENDITURE IN THE PERIOD – 1 APRIL 2011 TO 31 AUGUST 2011 (PRCC.18 11/12)

Consideration was given to a report which outlined spend against budgets for the period 1 April to 31 August 2011, and which focused on areas that were material to the Council's budgets.

In presenting the reports Officers made reference to the revised reporting style, explained the rationale for this and highlighted paragraph 3.3 of the report which detailed those areas where there was currently budget pressures. Feedback on the revised reporting style was sought and provided.

Debate ensued arising from which Members expressed concern at the continuing pressure caused by under achieved income and therefore considered it would be useful to better understand the detail behind the income and expenditure streams in respect of the Planning, Building Control and Land Charges functions, and would assist in possibly identifying solutions to rectify the situation going forward.

Some Members expressed concern that the decision to introduce a fee for pre-application planning advice from April 2011 had not had the desired effect and may be a contributing factor in the current budget position. There was a view, that the need to ensure the Council's services were competitively priced was vital, if income levels in these areas was to improve in the future. To this end,

Members requested that a comparative fees and charges report, setting out the difference between the fees levied by the public sector and the private sector be submitted for consideration at a future meeting. In responding to Members' comments Officers outlined the work being undertaken in Building Control to reduce operating costs. Members were also reminded of the statutory requirement to undertake a number functions within this area and in some areas this presented fewer opportunities to find efficiencies.

Having been proposed, seconded and duly voted on, it was **RESOLVED** that:

- (a) the contents of report PRCC.18 11/12 and the forecast annual budget position for 2011/12 based on income and expenditure to 31 August 2011 be noted;
- (b) a further in-depth report detailing the varying income and expenditure streams in respect of the Planning, Building Control and Land Charges functions be submitted to the next meeting of the Prosperous Communities Committee (January 2012); and
- (c) a comparative fees and charges report, setting out the difference between fees levied by the public sector and the private sector (in relation to the three service areas set out in (b) above) be submitted to a future meeting of the Prosperous Communities Committee for consideration.

45 REVIEW OF PUBLIC CONVENIENCE PROVISION THROUGHOUT WEST LINDSEY (PRCC.19 11/12)

Consideration was given to a report which advised of a recently undertaken review of Public conveniences provision across the District, and set out options for the rationalisation of the Service and thus a reduced expenditure, for Members' consideration.

In the ensuing debate Members sought reasoning for the differing approaches being proposed namely why the District Council were seeking to transfer assets outside of Gainsborough whilst retaining those sited within the Town. Some Members were of the view that this amounted to double taxation, and believed a uniform approach should be adopted. Furthermore, a number of members considered asset transfers in their broadest sense had a massive impact on the level of precept charged by parish / town councils and shared their previous experiences.

In responding to the points made, the rationale for the proposals was further explained, particularly the differing strategic value between those assets in Caistor and Market Rasen compared to those within Gainsborough. Furthermore, it was intended that the public conveniences in Caistor and Market Rasen would form part of a potential basket of assets available for transfer, and would included some assets where the Town Councils would have the ability and

opportunity, if they so desired, to generate income eg. Car parks, and thus reduce the impact on precept levels. In responding to some reservations it was stressed the underlying principle was to give local people, local choice about services in their area. The District Council could not and would not mandate Town Councils to take on the ownership of any facilities and all asset transfers could be achieved by mutual agreement.

In respect of the facilities located on Whitton's Gardens, members expressed disappointment that closure had been given preference over investment in and modernisation of the facility. It was considered that the presence of anti-social behaviour in the area could be affecting usage figures and therefore the facilities' viability and thus should be tackled in the first instance. There were further concerns that by not addressing the anti-social behaviour and closing the facility would mean the problem would migrate elsewhere rather than be resolved.

A number of Committee Members who were also serving Members of Gainsborough Town Council considered that the Town Council, if an attractive package of assets was on offer, would be interested in entering into negotiations with a view to a possible asset transfer in the future. The strategic value of the Gainsborough's assets was re-iterated and Members were reminded that the review undertaken had been borne out of the need to achieve budget savings.

Following much lengthy debate during which a number of differing views were expressed it was:

RESOLVED that:

- (a) the alterations to the Roseway Public Conveniences, namely, the inclusion of a single cubicle night time facility, be approved and the alterations be carried out during the current financial year (2011/12);
- (b) upon completion of the alterations to the facility at Roseway (resolution 1 set out above refers), the closure of Whittons Gardens Public Conveniences be approved; and
- (c) Officers be supported in continuing to seek the transfer of the facilities at Caistor and Market Rasen to the respective Town Council, and dependent upon successful negotiations, any formal proposals to transfer assets be submitted to the Prosperous Communities Committee for consideration in the first instance for consideration and final approval.

Note: Councillors Trevor Young and Lesley Rollings declared a personal interest in the above item of business as serving Members of Gainsborough Town Council.

Note: Councillor Lewis Strange left the meeting prior to consideration of the next item of business.¹

46 LINCOLNSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S REVIEW OF HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLING CENTRES. (PRCC.20 11/12)

Consideration was given to a report which advised of Lincolnshire County Council's proposals to change the provision of Household Waste Recycling Centres across the County. Members' views thereon were sought and would be feedback to the County Council at the Lincolnshire Waste Partnership's next meeting.

Discussion ensued, and lengthy consideration was given to the proposals and their possible resulting implications for the District and its residents during which the following points were raised and noted: -

- The proposals in respect of The Rasen facility are welcomed;
- The proposals in respect of the Summergangs Lane Facility in Gainsborough :
 - Are considered to be too severe and equate to almost a 50% reduction in its opening hours. A reduction by 1 or 2 days, or alternatively reducing the hours the facility is open each day, would be more reasonable and more acceptable;
 - do not support, and have the potential to undermine, the District Council's intentions/ aspirations of regenerating the nearby Railway Station;
 - could have an adverse effect on fly-tipping levels, and if so the additional costs in addressing this would fall down to the District Council to meet. Members would welcome negotiations regarding possible financial assistance from the County Council during the interim bedding in period if an increased level of fly-tipping was demonstrable;
 - have the potential to adversely effect recycling rates and thus increase the amount of waste sent to landfill;
 - do not take into consideration Gainsborough's growth point status and its projected population increase;
 - do not complement recent decisions taken by the District Council, namely the cessation of green waste collections during winter months.

In responding to the points raised, Officers advised that in comparison to the other Lincolnshire Districts, West Lindsey would be affected to a lesser degree than some of its neighbours. The driver for the review had been the need to achieve significant budget savings, in the region of £1.2 million and thus change

¹ Point of Clarity: Councillor Strange confirmed his earlier declaration of having a personal interest in this matter. However, in light of the position Executive position he currently holds at Lincolnshire County Council, took the decision to withdraw from the Chamber during consideration of this item of business.

was inevitable. With reference to the points raised regarding the recent decision to cease the collection of green waste during winter months, it was noted that if the proposals were accepted, implementation would take effect from 1 April 2012 and thus negate the potential issues cited by Members. Furthermore, as result of the current contract arrangements, any revision to the operating hours for the facility within Gainsborough would not be implemented until September / October 2012. Officers were therefore of the view that this provided sufficient time to undertake a major publicity and promotion campaign, with a view to minimising / preventing any of the potential implications arising.

Having considered all of the issues raised, there was general consensus that equality of service provision across the effected sites would be more favourable and acceptable to the mass. It was suggested that by simply re working a number of the proposals, a 5 day service provision across all of the effected sites was achievable and thus this aim should form the basis of West Lindsey's consultation response.

On that basis it was: -

RESOLVED that having considered the implications of the revisions proposed to the Household Waste Recycling Service, the Lincolnshire Waste Partnership representative be requested to report back the views of the Committee, in line with the comments and views expressed during the debate particularly the aim of achieving equality across all of the effected sites, outlined above, to the next meeting of the Lincolnshire Waste Partnership.

Note: Councillors Ray Sellars and Stuart Kinch declared a personal interest in the above item of business as serving Members of Lincolnshire County Council.

Note: Councillor Lewis Strange re-joined the meeting following the conclusion of the above item of business.

47 ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR STRATEGY, POLICY AND PROCEDURE (PRCC.21 11/12)

Members gave consideration to a report which presented the draft Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy, Policy and Procedure documents for approval.

In presenting the report, Officers outlined the rationale for introducing a single approach to tackling Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) across the whole of Lincolnshire, making reference to the "Pilkington Findings" and its implications, and finally highlighted the key outcomes the new approach would facilitate.

Lengthy debate ensued during which Members shared their experiences of dealing with ASB matters within their wards, highlighting the confusion which

existed within local communities regarding the correct reporting procedures and difficulty in identifying the responsible authority, which often differed, dependent on the circumstances. Members were of the strong view that there was a real need for further promotion and clear simple information for residents on how and who to report ASB incidents to. Inappropriate housing allocations were considered to be a common root cause in a number of the cases in which Ward Members had been involved with. Ensuring the needs of tenants were met by the area in which they were allocated housing was considered a critical tool in easing the number of ASB incidents, which were often based on a communities or individuals perception of one another. Members therefore considered ensuring commonality between residents had the potential to facilitate greater cohesion.

Failing to respond to reports of this nature was considered unacceptable, and a number of Members were critical of the Out of Hours system which they considered, based on their previous experiences, to be ineffective and offered little help or support to local residents or their ward members in trying to resolve incidents.

In responding, Officers outlined the ways in which the new process aimed to not only address the issues and concerns raised by Members, some of which were shared by Officers, but to assist in the better identification of potential hotspots and or repeat incidents, perpetrators and victims. It was noted that periodic formal and informal reviews of the system would be undertaken and modifications made if required. In reference to a Members recent experience of the Service, apologies were offered and any Members experiencing similar difficulties were encouraged to contact the Service Manager direct. Officers acknowledged that confusion was evident within local communities and undertook to devise information leaflets and actively promote the new simpler reporting procedures.

Following full and lengthy debate it was:

RESOLVED that the draft Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy, Policy and Procedure documents as attached to report PRCC.21 11/12 be approved for adoption for the intended purpose.

Note: Councillor Geoff Wiseman declared a personal interest in the above item of business as West Lindsey's representative on the West Lincolnshire Community Safety Partnership.

Note: Councillor Ray Sellars declared a personal interest in the above item of business as a serving Member of Lincolnshire County Council and Lincolnshire Police Authority.

**48 CHAIRMAN'S CLOSING REMARKS – VOTE OF THANKS TO THE
DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOODS AND HEALTH ON HIS PENDING
RETIREMENT**

At the conclusion of the meeting, the Chairman made reference to the pending retirement of the Director of Neighbourhoods and Health and thus this was the last meeting of Prosperous Communities Committee at which he would be in attendance. The Chairman and all Members of the Committee paid tribute to Mr Nicholson for his service to the Authority expressed their best wishes to him for the future and bid him a fond farewell with a round of applause.

The meeting concluded at 9.29 pm.

Chairman