

## WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of a Meeting of the Prosperous Communities Committee held in the Council Chamber at the Guildhall, Gainsborough on Tuesday 12 February 2013 at 7.00 pm.

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

Councillor Nigel Bowler  
Councillor Jackie Brockway  
Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan  
Councillor Jessie Milne  
Councillor Irmgard Parrott  
Councillor Judy Rainsforth  
Councillor Lewis Strange  
Councillor Geoff Wiseman  
Councillor Trevor Young

**In Attendance :**  
Russell Stone Section 151 Officer and Head of Financial Services  
Grant Lockett Head of Strategic Growth Services  
Joanna Riddell Head of Localism Services  
Tracey Bircumshaw Group Accountant – Service Accounting  
Sue Leversedge Principal Accountant  
Nicola Calver Governance and Civic Officer

**Apologies :** Councillor Gillian Bardsley (Vice-Chairman)

**Membership :** Councillor Jessie Milne to substitute for Councillor Gillian Bardsley

### 51 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

### 52 MINUTES

Meeting of the Prosperous Communities Committee – 8 January 2013

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Meeting of the Prosperous Communities Committee held on 8 January 2013 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

**53 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE SETTING OUT THE CURRENT POSITION OF PREVIOUSLY AGREED ACTIONS AS AT 4 FEBRUARY 2013 (PRCC.29 12/13)**

Members gave consideration to the Matters Arising Schedule which set out the current position of all previously agreed actions as at 4 February 2013. It was noted that all actions had been completed on target.

**RESOLVED** that progress on the Matters Arising Schedule, as set out in report PRCC.29 12/13 be received and noted.

**54 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations were made at this point.

**55 INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING IN CENTRAL LINCOLNSHIRE (PRCC.30 12/13)**

The Head of Strategic Growth presented Paper B to the Committee which outlined progress on the key work areas that that been undertaken by a working group of officers from the JPU and partner authorities on infrastructure planning in central Lincolnshire.

The progress outlined was to provide an introduction and context for members for forthcoming decisions on the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) which would be presented to Prosperous Communities Committee in June 2013. The forthcoming report on CIL would invite debate around charging for residential and commercial development and prioritising infrastructure.

It was noted by members that CIL would not replace Section 106 funds, but work alongside this, and that the Council had already in it's employ an officer whose role was to check the viability of schemes. Contributions would be charged on a per square metre basis and be non-negotiable, and all final decisions on the expenditure of CIL monies would be made by the District Council. Officers assured Members that market tests and reviews were planned to take place before CIL was implemented.

Members looked forward to receiving the report in June and supported encouraging, investing and facilitating growth within the district of West Lindsey. The Committee wished to ensure that all Members were fully informed on this subject prior to decision making in June, and therefore it was requested that an informal session be held for all Members of Council where Section 106 and CIL would be explained at length to ensure good decision making on this matter.

**RESOLVED** that:

- i) the progress on the development of an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) and the plan for it's future development be noted;

- ii) the general approach set out in the report be agreed;
- iii) the CIL timetable be approved and appropriate process, resources and political agreements be put in place for the production of CIL charging schedules; and
- iv) an informal training session on Section 106 and CIL be held for all Members of Council prior to June 2013.

**56 CORPORATE PLAN PROGRESS AND DELIVERY REPORT – REPORTING PERIOD THREE (PRCC.31 12/13)**

The Head of Strategic Growth was invited to present Paper C to the Committee which updated on progress against delivery of the Corporate Plan and outlined performance in each Council service area.

The Committee noted that the Council's Health Walks programme continued to deliver the highest participation rates and involvement of volunteers in the County, that the Growth Board had been working to scope projects to deliver it's agenda, and that the main focus of the Resources directorate had been to deliver 'Working Where the Work Is'.

The Head of Strategic Growth referred Members to the Chief Executive's overview within the report which stressed the severe financial challenges the Council was facing.

Members welcomed the report and applauded the format in which it was presented which was clear and precise.

**RESOLVED** that:

- i) the content of the report be noted; and
- ii) corrective action outlined within the report be approved.

**57 PROGRESS AND DELIVERY REPORT – FINANCE REPORT (BASED ON INCOME AND EXPENDITURE IN THE PERIOD 1 APRIL 12 TO 30 NOVEMBER 12 (PRCC.32 12/13)**

The Chairman welcomed the newly appointed Group Accountant and Principal Accountant who were in attendance at the meeting and invited the Head of Financial Services to present Paper D to the Committee.

It was noted that the forecast end of year position was an estimated deficit of £14,000 with both Building Control and Local Land Charges showing a deficit against the predicted budgets, whilst Planning income had a surplus against the predicted budget. It was identified that income is more volatile in the current

climate and harder to manage than expenditure budgets and going forward the Council need to be mindful of this.

The finances of Operational Services were discussed with reference to the selling of street cleaning services which created an unbudgeted income of £19,000 and a reduction in land fill costs. The bulky waste service had a lower take up following the increase in charges for this service, but this had also created reduced operational costs. It was confirmed that the change to this service had not had a direct affect on fly-tipping levels.

**RESOLVED** that the contents of the report be noted along with the forecast annual budget position for 2012/13 based on income and expenditure to 30 November 2012.

## **58 PROPOSED FEES AND CHARGES 2013/14 (PRCC.33 12/13)**

In order to assist the debate around reports PRCC. 33 12/13 (Proposed Fees and Charges 2013/14) and PRCC.34 12/13 (Draft Revenue Estimates 2013/14) the Head of Financial Service gave a brief presentation to the Committee on the financial factors that the Council is currently facing and set the scene around the budget. The Committee considered both reports in their discussions around finances.

The Committee discussed potential changes to Car Parking charges, and it was reported that this was a particular issue of note that had been discussed earlier that day in a meeting with Mary Portas, a leading retail marketing consultant. Suggestions such as free periods of parking and reduced fees in exceptional circumstances were noted, and a report would be forthcoming to the committee on this matter for their consideration.

Councillor Mrs Milne raised the issue of pest control which had previously been a non-statutory service which was no longer provided by the Authority with the suggestion of working with a selected service provider through a referral system to create an income. Officers advised that this was an area of work that was currently being investigated, and outlined some of the legal risks about contracting this service. A business case on this matter would be drawn up and considered through the Council's governance system for its viability.

**RESOLVED** that the proposed fees and charges as set out in the report are recommended to the Policy and Resources Committee for approval.

## **59 DRAFT REVENUE ESTIMATES 2013/14 – 2016/17 (PRCC.34 12/13)**

Members made note that Capital funds were for investing in projects and programmes that would deliver a return for the Council and were not allocated to balancing the revenue budget. Savings which had not yet been achieved were not

included in the reporting. The Committee were supportive of radical change, which would be inevitable to tackle the current financial situation.

It was considered that the residents of West Lindsey should be involved in consultation around the Council's financial situation, and supported the proposed arrangements for open meetings and workshops within the community. The Chairman undertook to personally work with the relevant service managers on this matter. In addition, it was requested for a workshop to be held on the budget for Parish Councils to keep them better informed.

Within the debate, officers confirmed that alternative energy use was being investigated as an investment opportunity, which Members welcomed. Short term investments to help regenerate and create community resilience were discussed and would form one of several ideas totalling a potential £2.4M of savings which officers would be investigating for viability over the following six to nine months.

It was noted that the Open for Business Group had been due to report back to this Committee on the work they had been undertaking, although this had been somewhat delayed due to circumstances outside of the officers control. The Director of Regeneration and Planning had now taken the personal lead on this project and a report would be forthcoming to a future meeting of the Committee.

**RESOLVED** that the 2013/14 to 2017/18 base budgets be referred to Policy and Resources Committee for approval.

## **60 FAMILIES WORKING TOGETHER (PRCC.35 12/13)**

The Head of Localism Services presented Paper G to the Committee which set out the Families Working Together approach for Lincolnshire and reminded Members of the Family Intervention Project (FIP) which was initiated by WLDC in 2009.

Following the riots in 2011 the Government made a pledge to turn around 120,000 troubled families across the country, and reduce their cost on the public purse which is estimated at £75,000 per year per family. It has been identified that approximately 1300 troubled families reside in Lincolnshire and a WLDC officer has been assigned to work with Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) within the Families Working Together team on a secondment basis with her post being backfilled by LCC funds.

Members applauded the success of the FIP, and the consensus of the Committee was that this was to be a sound investment in the district's communities.

**RESOLVED** that:

- i) the Families Working Together approach for Lincolnshire be endorsed; and
- ii) the secondment of an officer to the Lincolnshire County Council's Families Working Together team be supported.

**61. FUTURE DELIVERY OF DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS IN WEST LINDSEY (PRCC.36 12/13)**

The Chairman invited the Head of Strategic Growth to present Paper H to the Committee which updated on the options considered and the work that was currently underway to improve the future delivery of the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG).

It was noted that this was the only statutory grant remaining within housing, and it was designed to be used to help people with disabilities live more independent lives or assist the way in which they choose to live with their disability.

The service that had been provided prior to the recent pilot had been consistently poor, with service users waiting an unacceptable amount of time for their DFG improvements. The pilot was established to combat this and a number of key issues were identified (highlighted under point 2 of the report) but not satisfactorily resolved. From this officers have undertaken an options appraisal to reevaluate the best way in which this service can be delivered and proposed to the committee to bring the service back in house and be directly managed by WLDC. This would then be supported by the Lincolnshire Home Improvement Agency (LHIA) over a two year contract.

The relationship with the social housing provider Acis was discussed as well as the current work being undertaken to cross reference Acis residents on the DFG waiting list with the provider's own maintenance plan. In terms of bathroom adaptations, this would provide a saving of £2,000 per bathroom, which could be used to support other DFG applicants.

Officers assured Members that although the DFG service was not deemed 'affordable', the resources would be better managed to deliver for the full 12 months of the year.

Although planning legislation prevents the Council prescribing the development of wet rooms in properties, officers would begin to communicate with developers around the basis of DFG and how they might assist.

**RESOLVED** that:

- i) the content of the report be noted; and
- ii) the proposals for the future management of the DFG service be supported.

The meeting concluded at 9:09 pm.

Chairman