

**WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL**

MINUTES of a Meeting of the Prosperous Communities Committee held in the Council Chamber at the Guildhall, Gainsborough on Wednesday 20 July 2011 at 7.00 pm.

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

Councillor Nigel Bowler  
Councillor David Dobbie  
Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan  
Councillor Jessie Milne  
Councillor Judy Rainsforth  
Councillor Ray Sellars  
Councillor Lewis Strange  
Councillor Geoff Wiseman  
Councillor Trevor Young

**In Attendance :** Director of Strategy and Regeneration  
Public Protection Services Manager  
Operational Services Manager  
Business Improvement Manager  
Group Accountant  
Operational Services Team Leader  
Senior Democratic Officer

**Apologies :** Councillor Stuart Kinch  
Councillor Lesley Rollings  
Councillor Jackie Brockway

**Membership :** Councillor Jessie Milne substituting for Councillor  
Stuart Kinch  
Councillor Judy Rainsforth substituting for Councillor  
Lesley Rollings

**18 CHAIRMAN’S ANNOUNCEMENT – INTENTION TO RECEIVE AN URGENT ANNOUNCEMENT AND TO CONSIDER AN URGENT ITEM OF BUSINESS**

The Chairman indicated his intention to take an urgent item of business, namely Priorities for the Prosperous Communities Committee 2011/12, after Agenda Item 6 (c). The reason for urgency being in view of the forthcoming summer recess, Committee would not meet again until 28 September 2011, and thus work would not be able to commence until after this date.

Furthermore, the Chairman indicated his intention to receive an urgent announcement, following agenda item 2, in connection with the Affordable Homes Programme and recent announcement made by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA).

**19 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was no public participation.

**20 URGENT ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR OF STRATEGY AND REGENERATION – AFFORDABLE HOMES PROGRAMME.**

The Director of Strategy and Regeneration made the following urgent announcement: -

“Last week the Homes and Communities Agency announced which housing associations, local authorities and house builders had successfully bid for grant funding to assist with the delivery of the Government’s 2011 – 15 Affordable Homes Programme. It is anticipated that this programme will deliver 170,000 affordable homes across the country over its four year timescale.

West Lindsey District Council has been working closely with its key developing partners to put together a bid, which works towards meeting our corporate priorities and delivering affordable homes to meet the needs of our District. We were unable to bid directly as a District Council as we are not a “stock holding” Local Authority.

Unfortunately for Lincolnshire and West Lindsey, our largest provider, the Blue Skies Consortium was not successful in its bid. The consortium is made up of 16 housing associations, all of which have a good track record of delivery in Lincolnshire and the surrounding area and their proposal was set to deliver around 75% of the overall programme in the County.

In its simplest form, this means that the vast majority of affordable homes delivered over that period will now need to be done so without the usual

government grant (circa £21k per unit). It will be up to the Local Authority, the housing association and developers to fill that gap to ensure delivery. On a broader scale it may also mean that due to land values in the area and the smaller profit margins available on developments there may be less desire from providers to develop in the area.

The Waterloo Housing Group and East Midlands Housing Association have been successful in their bids along with a handful of other house builders, but their bids contained far fewer affordable homes and we are unclear as to where these will be delivered and when.

Officers across the County are now working closely with the HCA to understand what this means for affordable housing development in Lincolnshire and to look at what our options are as we move into the future. In reality this presents a number of challenges and questions for West Lindsey, which we will need to address and respond to over the coming months. Some of the key challenges and questions are:

- Understanding what level of affordable homes will be delivered in the District as a result of the announcement. The number delivered with government grant assistance as a result of this announcement will be significantly reduced;
- To recognise the increased difficulty for delivering affordable homes and propose ways to overcome these;
- To ensure that planning policies and the Core Strategy recognise the challenges faced and assist in overcoming them;
- To ensure best use of S106 monies to ensure future affordable homes delivery; and
- Ensuring that other methods for delivering affordable homes are explored, considered and implemented.”

Debate ensued during which Members expressed their concerns at the seriousness of the situation and sought indication of the ways in which Officers proposed to resolve / appeal the decision. Whilst there was undoubted concerns Members also expressed optimism at the potential positives and opportunities the situation had created such as seriously looking at creative and alternative build designs, considered fitting for the rural environment.

In response, Officers advised that the decision could not be appealed and indicated of the work that had already commenced. Securing land at a nominal fee had now become the critical factor in achieving delivery and details of those parties / organisations that had been approached were shared with Members.

The Committee raised a number of other avenues they considered worthy of exploring to assist in overcoming the difficulties faced including lobbying all seven Lincolnshire MPs to raise this matter with the relevant Government Minister; and approaching farmers with poor quality / low yield land in the first instance. A number all suggested land which may be available in their Wards.

Officers thanked Members for their suggestions and, in closing, advised of the forthcoming Workshop (22 September) to which all Members would be invited to attend and encouraged to put forward creative solutions.

## **21 MINUTES**

(a) Meeting of the Prosperous Communities Committee – 8 June 2011

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Meeting of the Prosperous Communities Committee held on 8 June 2011 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

## **22 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Trevor Young declared a personal interest in report PRCC.09 11/12 (Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) 2011) as he was employed by the NHS in the mental health field.

## **23 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE SETTING OUT THE CURRENT POSITION OF PREVIOUSLY AGREED ACTIONS AS AT 11 JULY 2011. (PRCC.07 11/12)**

Members gave consideration to the Matters Arising Schedule which set out the current position of all previously agreed actions as at 11 July 2011.

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

**RESOLVED** that progress on the matters arising scheduled be noted.

## **24 LINCOLNSHIRE JOINT STRATEGIC NEEDS ASSESSMENT (JSNA) 2011 (PRCC.09 11/12)**

Consideration was given to a report which advised Members of the publication of the draft Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment by the Joint Director of Public Health for NHS Lincolnshire and Lincolnshire County Council, and of the current consultation exercise being undertaken thereon. Members were asked to comment on the document in order that West Lindsey may respond to the consultation.

Debate ensued, during which Members commented on the importance of the document which they considered clearly evidenced how many physical and environmental issues were intrinsically linked and determined a person's health.

Members indicated their support for the five priorities proposed within the JSNA but expressed their concerns as to how the following factors would undoubtedly

further affect and impact on residents of the District in the coming years namely; Fuel Poverty; the Government's approach to the sale of alcohol, particularly by supermarkets and the pressures alcoholism / drunken behaviour was putting on all public services; and the recent decisions regarding the closure of residential and respite facilities across the County including within West Lindsey and Gainsborough due to Government funding cuts.

Officers advised of the work being undertaken and the role of the District Council regarding Fuel Poverty. It was noted that this area had been identified as a priority within the draft Corporate Plan and Members considered the District Council should strongly support any future national campaigns relating to this issue as they feared rising fuel prices had the potential to significantly affect the quality of life for a large percentage of residents.

In closing, Members indicated they would welcome an update on progress in due course.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (a) the content of the draft Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2011 and the five priorities proposed therein be supported; and
- (b) Officers respond to the Consultation Exercise being undertaken on the draft JSNA in line with the comments expressed during the course of the debate.

**Note:** Councillor Ray Sellars declared a personal interest in the above item of business as he was in receipt of the Winter Fuel Allowance.

**Note:** Councillor David Dobbie declared a personal interest in the above item of business as a member of the Gainsborough Lions who had recently started a campaign to support those persons affected by the closure of the Cedars facility in Gainsborough.

**25 THE REVIEW OF OPTIONS FOR THE COLLECTION OF GREEN GARDEN WASTE (PRCC.08 11/12)**

In an endeavour to reduce expenditure Members gave consideration to a report which presented proposals to reduce the green garden waste collection service currently offered to residents by ceasing collections during the four winter months November to February inclusive. The report further set out additional savings which could be achieved by reviewing the collection rounds and introducing the collection of green garden waste to approximately 5000 properties on Saturdays and Members were further asked to give consideration to this proposal.

In presenting the report, Officers highlighted the consultation which had been undertaken, the results of which had been used to inform the recommendation. It was noted that whilst the marginally preferred option had been to cease collections during December to March, Officers were recommending collections cease November to February. The reasons for this were explained at length. In closing, Officers drew Members' attention to the Communication Plan and the budgets savings which could be realised if the recommendations were supported.

Debate ensued and Members posed a number of questions to Officers and in responding were advised that the proposals would have a minimal effect on recycling rates nor would they result in any landfill penalties for the Authority.

Gainsborough Ward Members were of the view that there were inequalities with the current green waste collection service. This was an issue Members had previously raised and they considered the proposals failed to address this matter. They urged Officers to review the service offered in those affected Wards and requested that a report with delivery timescales / alternative options eg. composters, be forthcoming.

In response to a number of recent individual Ward issues raised through the course of the debate, Officers highlighted the campaign which was currently underway, aimed at retrieving second green bins.

Members indicated their support for the option to provide a service for the collection of Christmas Trees.

Several Members expressed the view that would wish to see collections made during November and provided reasoning for this, resulting in it being proposed and seconded that the collection of green garden waste cease for the four winter months of December to March inclusive.

Prior to being put to the vote Members sought clarification as to whether there would be implications should the amendment be supported. Officers responded accordingly and highlighted the reduced budget savings which would be realised due to set up costs being increased. Officers also considered there would be greater risks / potential difficulties operationally and thus, the likelihood of a successful and smooth service change was lesser. However, Officers were open to reviewing any decision made in twelve months time.

On being put to the vote, the amendment was declared lost and on that basis it was **RESOLVED** that:

- (a) the proposals to cease the collection of green garden waste for the four winter months of November to February inclusive; and the commencement of green garden waste collections on Saturdays for approximately 5,000 properties be approved and adopted; and

- (b) the option to provide a service for the collection of Christmas Trees following the festive period be supported, approved and adopted.

**Note:** Councillor Lewis Strange declared a personal interest in the above item of business as the serving Executive Member for Waste at Lincolnshire County Council.

## **26 MONITORING CORPORATE PLAN AND REVENUE BUDGET PERFORMANCE FOR THE PERIOD – 1 APRIL 2011 TO 30 JUNE 2011 – QUARTER 1 POSITION (PRCC.10 11/12)**

Members gave consideration to a report which presented the performance and budget monitoring position for the quarter ended 30 June 2011. 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.

Officers wished to flag up the already evident pressures on income within the Planning Department.

A number of questions were posed and responded to as required and included explanation of the continued improvement works being undertaken within Development Management Services and the temporary impact this could be having on performance.

**RESOLVED** that contents of report PRCC.10 11/12 and the current Corporate Plan performance and revenue budget position for 2011/12 as at 30 June 2011 be noted.

## **27 URGENT ITEM – PRIORITIES FOR THE PROSPEROUS COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE 2011/12**

Consideration was given to a report which presented Members with proposals regarding the corporate priorities for the 2011/12 financial year for this Committee. Members were also asked to consider whether they wished to include any Committee specific priorities, arising from the Workshop held in June 2011, as set out in paragraph 4.1, to the list of suggested corporate priorities for the ensuing year.

Finally, the report informed Members of the Income and Trading Task and Finish Group (ITTF) which had been constituted by the Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 16 June 2011 and the work it was undertaking. In view of the cross-cutting nature of the ITTF Group's work, the Committee were asked to nominate two of its members to serve thereon.

Debate ensued during which a number of Members put forward a number of areas from those listed at 4.1 of the report, that they would wish to see form the Committee's priorities for 11/12; namely items 3, 6, 9, and 10.

Members referred to the proposed new 6 area forums within the District and it was suggested that it would be useful for all Members of the Council to be provided with a map setting out these boundaries, together with details of the area manager for each. Officers undertook to provide Members with the requested information.

There was a view that most of those additional areas suggested were incorporated or covered by the four suggested corporate priorities and / or the areas of work being investigated by ITTF Group and as such, it was considered that no further items should be added to 11/12 priority list.

Members indicated their agreement to this view and made reference to having four years in total in which to address its entire list of priorities.

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

- (a) the contents of the urgent report be noted;
- (b) the four corporate priorities listed at paragraph 2.6 of the report, namely :-
  - Localism,
  - Business Growth, Jobs, Skills and Employability
  - Housing Strategy and
  - MOD Sitesas well as the four areas being addressed by the Income and Trading Task and Finish Group (ITTF), listed a paragraph 3.1 of the report, namely : -
  - Old Guildhall Site
  - Markets (Including Gainsborough)
  - Better use of Council Owned Land and property and
  - Car parksbe the agreed priorities for the Prosperous Communities Committee during the 2011/12 financial year; and
- (c) Councillors Ray Sellars and Geoff Wiseman be appointed as the Committee's representatives to serve on the Income and Trading Task and Finish Group (ITTF), constituted by the Policy and Resources Committee at it's meeting on 16 June 2011.

The meeting concluded at 9.05 pm.

Chairman