

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of a Meeting of the Prosperous Communities Committee held in the Council Chamber at the Guildhall, Gainsborough on Tuesday 3 September 2013 at 7.00 pm.

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

Councillor David Dobbie
Councillor Richard Doran
Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan
Councillor Giles McNeill
Councillor Anne Welburn
Councillor Geoff Wiseman
Councillor Trevor Young

In Attendance :
Mark Sturgess Director of Regeneration and Planning
Russell Stone Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer
Alex Reeks Assistant Chief Executive
Grant Lockett Head of Strategic Growth
Chris Allen Head of Public Protection
Karen Whitfield Area Development Officer
Ady Selby Team Manager Operations
Steve Leary Team Leader Admin and Recycling
Rob Lawton Area Team Manager
Cara Thornhill Business Improvement Officer
Katie Coughlan Governance and Civic Officer

Also Present : Ian Fytche, Chief Executive North Kesteven District Council

Apologies : Councillor Irmgard Parrott (attending other Council business in her capacity of Chairman of Council)
Councillor Lewis Strange
Councillor Lesley Rollings
Councillor William Parry (Vice-Chairman)

Membership : Councillor McNeill substituted for Councillor Parrott
Councillor Welburn substituted for Councillor Strange

25 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

26 MINUTES

(a) Meeting of the Prosperous Communities Committee – 16 July 2013

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Meeting of the Prosperous Communities Committee held on 16 July 2013 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

27 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE SETTING OUT THE CURRENT POSITION OF PREVIOUSLY AGREED ACTIONS AS AT 23 AUGUST 2013 (PRCC.12 13/14)

Members gave consideration to the Matters Arising Schedule which set out the current position of all previously agreed actions as at 23 August 2013.

The Head of Strategic Growth provided Members with an update in respect of the one remaining amber item, during which it was noted that Officers were currently liaising with the Directors of the Mr Big Project with a view to arranging a site visit, followed by a presentation to a future meeting of the Committee.

In responding to Members questions, the Governance and Civic Officer confirmed it had been intended to submit a report to this Committee regarding car parking and the impact of having offered free parking, however due to the Committee's huge workplan this had had to be deferred until the October meeting.

RESOLVED that progress on the Matters Arising Schedule, as set out in report PRCC.12 13/14 be received and noted.

28 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were made at this point.

29 TO VARY THE ORDER OF THE AGENDA

In light of there being no public present, it was suggested that Paper H (Review of the Council's Role in Joint Planning Policy Arrangements in Central Lincolnshire) be the first item of business for consideration. On being proposed and seconded it was :-

RESOLVED that the order of the agenda be varied.

30 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED that under Section 100 (A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act

31 REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S ROLE IN JOINT PLANNING POLICY ARRANGEMENTS IN CENTRAL LINCOLNSHIRE (PRCC.19 13/14)

Members gave consideration to a report which reviewed the Council's participation in the joint policy planning arrangements across central Lincolnshire and which aimed to assist them in understanding the process and how it benefited the District. The report further set out two options for consideration and Members were asked to evaluate each and give a steer to Officers on the way forward.

In presenting the report the Director of Planning and Regeneration outlined at length the context and history in relation to the JPU's creation. Members were also provided with detailed information as to the costs, advantages and disadvantages of each of those options included within the report.

In the ensuing debate Members' as a whole indicated that they were broadly in supporting of remaining within the partnership and the JPU being re-shaped to meet changing priorities. It was suggested that governance needed to be strengthened to ensure West Lindsey achieved the outcomes it desired.

Members did express concerns regarding some weaknesses in the way the JPU had operated and outlined their personal experiences. A number of the concerns related to the lack of consultation, lack of stakeholder engagement and none response to questions and correspondence.

In responding to Members concerns, the allocations process was outlined to the Committee along with the statutory requirements the JPU were bound by. That being said, Officers acknowledged that there were lessons to be learnt and in re-structuring the JPU they hoped to address the issues raised by Members during the course of the debate.

Members indicated they would have welcomed the proposed workshops in the first instance, but were understanding of the associated budgets issues in need therefore for a speedy decision. Members also commented on the misunderstanding amongst Parish Council's and the concerns particularly the allocations process was causing, and therefore requested that Parish Councils be afforded the opportunity to attend the planned workshops.

Officers were open to the suggestion and undertook to look at the mechanics of this.

RESOLVED that: -

- (a) having evaluated the options set out in the report, the partnership be continued based on the re-shaped model outlined within the report; and
- (b) a programme of workshops, aimed at assisting Members understanding of the Planning Policy Function and how it operates across West Lindsey be arranged for during Autumn 2013. (consideration to be given to inviting parish councils)

Note: The meeting resumed in public session.

32 CAISTOR NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REVISED AREA BOUNDARY DESIGNATION (PRCC.13 13/14)

Members gave consideration to a report which recommended the re-designation of the area for the Neighbourhood Plan of Caistor

RESOLVED that the revised Neighbourhood Plan Area of Caistor be formally designated.

33 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (PRCC.14 13/14)

The Director of Regeneration and Planning introduced the report which explained the charging regime of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and that charging authorities were required to produce a Regulation 123 list, which would subsequently enable Section 106 agreements to still be used. The draft list was appended to the report and identified those projects for which CIL was proposed to be charged.

Members of the Committee discussed the report and the 123 list. Some had concerns regarding the level of charging focused around Gainsborough rather than the rural areas of West Lindsey. It was pointed out that the Government wished a portion of funding to be allocated to those communities affected by development and there was 15% available to such areas, which could be increased to 25% if a Neighbourhood Plan existed.

There were concerns that the 123 list as it stood contained nothing that was of benefit to rural communities. Members also cited a number of key projects they felt should be incorporated thereto, for example, the Trent Bridge, Market Rasen Pool and Gainsborough's Old Railway system.

It was stressed that Members were been asked to approve the list for consultation purposes and that once the consultation was open, other local (rural) infrastructure projects could be suggested for inclusion.

It was therefore suggested that a further report be submitted to the Committee's next meeting in order that they could submit a formal consultation response, and on that basis it was: -

RESOLVED that:

- (a) the content of the report be noted;
- (b) the Draft Regulation 123 list be approved for consultation alongside the CIL draft charging schedule; and
- (c) a further report be submitted to the next meeting of the Prosperous Communities Committee, in order to afford the Committee an opportunity to formally respond to the consultation.

34 OPEN FOR BUSINESS – CONCLUSIONS / RECOMMENDATIONS (PRCC.15 13/14)

In 2012 the Prosperous Communities Committee established a task and finish group to examine how “open for business” the council was and to make recommendations on how it could become more open to business through the services it delivers, the support it offers to businesses and how it procures goods and services.

Also in 2012/13 the Council asked a “best practice” Economic Development Council to peer review the service it offered. As part of that review the Council's interaction with local businesses was assessed. This process and the recommendations it made will replace one of the final steps in the work of the Open for Business working group.

On the 30th July 2013, the work undertaken was reported to the Challenge and Improvement Committee and the group held a workshop, arising from which they recommended three short term matters to be progressed and also three longer term issues to be developed.

RESOLVED that:

- (a) the work reported to the Challenge and Improvement Committee be reviewed;
- (b) the three short term matters to be progressed and also the three longer term issues to be developed in line with the table at Appendix 1 be agreed; and
- (c) the issues (referred to at (b) above) be developed by the Head of Service and reported back to this Committee with options appraised at the earliest date possible, including how the work

links to the economic, social and environmental profiles of the six areas of the District.

35 LEISURE STRATEGY FOR WEST LINDSEY (PRCC.16 13/14)

Members gave consideration to a report which presented the results of the recent work undertaken to produce a Leisure Strategy for the District. The report further sought approval for the adoption of the resulting Leisure Strategy.

Members welcomed the work.

RESOLVED that the Leisure Strategy for West Lindsey be approved and adopted.

36 GREEN WASTE CHARGE (PRCC.17 13/14)

Consideration was given to a report in which Members were asked to consider the introduction of a charge for the provision of green waste collections. If in agreement, Members were asked to further consider increasing collections in winter months and to approve a call on ear-marked reserves to fund the set-up costs of implementing such a service change.

Debate ensued and in responding to Members' questions, Officers confirmed that Food Waste Collections would be looked at as part of a wider Waste Strategy. However initial investigations had shown that to introduce such a service would be a cost to the Council rather than an income stream.

The general consensus amongst Members was that the proposals did not meet the green agenda. There were also concerns that the set-up costs were significant and there was some doubt as to whether the projected income would be achieved.

Members indicated they would like to have more information and alternative options before making a decision.

In responding Officers stressed that the proposals were finance driven. Members were reminded of the financial challenges which lay ahead and the need to find further efficiencies / incomes. Officers further stressed that delaying a decision would potentially mean, if approved subsequently, implementation would not be achievable within the allotted timescales.

However Members re-iterated their previous comments stressing that they would first like to see a "menu of options" before making any decision.

On that basis it was

RESOLVED that the report be deferred pending further information on other potential income streams / efficiencies within the waste services department.

37 CIVIC SOLAR PROJECT (PRCC.18 13/14)

Consideration was given to a report which provided members with information concerning a potential civic renewable project as part of the Council's commitment to both creating a Green District and undertaking entrepreneurial activities which support the continuation of service delivery at a time of severe financial pressure.

Members welcomed the ongoing work.

RESOLVED that: -

- (a) the proposed future actions referred to in the report be noted; and
- (b) further update reports be submitted to this Committee as the project develops through the Policy and Resources Committee.

38 WORK PLAN (PRCC.20 13/14)

The Governance and Civic Officer presented the Committee work plan. Members noted that Officers would be meeting in the coming days to review the plan and more evenly align work, wherever possible, for forthcoming meetings.

RESOLVED that the Work Plan as set out in report PRCC.20 13/14 be received and noted.

The meeting concluded at 9.05 pm.

Chairman