

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of a Special Meeting of the Prosperous Communities Committee held in the Council Chamber at the Guildhall, Gainsborough on Monday 24 September 2012 at 6.00 pm.

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

Councillor Owen Bierley
Councillor Nigel Bowler
Councillor Jackie Brockway
Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan
Councillor Jessie Milne
Councillor Lesley Rollings
Councillor Geoff Wiseman
Councillor Trevor Young

In Attendance:
Mark Sturgess Director of Regeneration and Planning
Russell Stone Financial Services Manager and S151 Officer
Simon Sharpe Senior Growth Strategy and Projects Officer
Dinah Lilley Governance and Civic Officer
Katie Coughlan Governance and Civic Officer

Also Present: Councillor Chris Darcel
Councillor Burt Keimach
Councillor William Parry
Councillor Reg Shore
Councillor Tom Regis

Also in Attendance: Representative from the potential development partner
(for minute no. 32 only)

Apologies: Councillor Gillian Bardsley
Councillor Lewis Strange
Manjeet Gill Chief Executive

Membership: Councillor Owen Bierley substituted for Councillor
Lewis Strange
Councillor Jessie Milne substituted for Councillor Gillian
Bardsley

28 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

29 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

Councillor Owen Bierley declared a non pecuniary interest in report PCC. 17 12/13 (Elswitha Quarter Regeneration – Next Steps) as he was also a serving member of the Policy and Resources Committee who were also been asked to consider a similar report, later in the evening, based on the outcome of this meeting.

Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan declared a non pecuniary interest in report PCC. 17 12/13 (Elswitha Quarter Regeneration – Next Steps) as he knew the Whitton family.

30 EXCLUSION OF 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 3 of part 1 of schedule 12a of the Act.

32 PRESENTATION BY POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT PARTNER

A representative from the potential development partner made a short presentation to the Committee by way of context, background. Members were reminded of the original scheme which had been presented to them at a Special Meeting of the Committee in February 2012, the work which had been undertaken since that time, and as result of such and arising therefrom were presented with a revised scheme, which it was intended would be delivered in phases.

In concluding Members were advised of the current position, the risks associated with delivering the scheme to the next stage and thus, subject to Members agreement, the next steps to be taken to secure the first phase of the development.

33 ELSWITHA QUARTER REGENERATION NEXT STEPS (PCC.17 12/13)

The Director of Regeneration and Planning gave a brief introduction on the report and in doing so emphasised, that this was the first phase of the development, proposed to act as an anchor to attract other business ventures such as a cinema and restaurant, to Gainsborough.

Members discussed the recommendations at length and in detail, giving consideration to the amount of consultation that had taken place; the ownership, status and covenants attached to the land, the quality and also proposed siting of the development; alternative options that could be considered; the implications of not pursuing the recommendations in the report; and the financial information included therein.

Whilst acknowledging the need and desire for a hotel in Gainsborough, some Members had strong concerns about the proposed site, and were of the view that there were numerous other sites in and around the town which were far more suitable and in much greater need of redevelopment. Members indicated they would have liked to have seen an options appraisals report in the first instance. The same Members were of the view that the proposed site was an attractive, valued piece of open space within the town centre and in light of the land been held in trust for the people of Gainsborough and having covenants around usage attached to it, much greater and wider consultation with residents should be undertaken in the first instance.

Assurances were given that officers and members of the working group had given due consideration to all the options available, it was also noted that should the Committee decide not to pursue the current proposals, it would mean starting from scratch with the project and other options may not be forthcoming in the future, given the economic climate. It was re-iterated that the first phase of the development was proposed to act as an anchor to attract other business ventures such as a cinema and restaurant, to Gainsborough. Whilst there would be the advantage of not having to pay business rates on the old Guildhall, once demolished, the primary objective of the development was the regeneration of Gainsborough. Further assurance was offered that issues regarding ownership and covenants on the site and been fully investigated.

In responding to Members comments regarding the quality of the development Members were reminded that the proposals would still have to be considered by the Planning Committee and it would be at that stage that a quality development would be secured as well as the principle of a hotel in this location.

In light of the concerns some Members held over the lack of public consultation and engagement which had taken place, particularly given the trustee status of the land concerned it was proposed and seconded that in the first instance a public referendum should be held to ascertain the views of the town's residents.

It was further moved and seconded that a recorded vote be taken and on being put to the vote with a total of 3 votes for and 7 votes against (see below) the motion was declared lost.

For: Councillors Rollings, Wiseman and Young

Against: Councillors Parish, Summers, Bowler, Brockway, Howitt-Cowan, Bierley and Milne.

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Subject to call-in. Call-in will expire on 3 October at 5.00 pm

The recommendations as set out in the report were subsequently moved and seconded, and again it was further moved and seconded that a recorded vote be taken.

For: Councillors Parish, Summers, Bowler, Brockway, Howitt-Cowan, Bierley and Milne.

Against: Councillors Rollings, Wiseman and Young

with a total of 7 votes for and 3 votes against (see above) the motion was declared carried and on that basis it was : -

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to Policy and Resources Committee that:

- 1) the sale of the land at Whitton's Gardens to the potential development partner for the purposes of the development of a hotel in accordance with the financial terms outlined in section 4.2 of the report be approved. This to be at the best consideration reasonably obtainable;
- 2) the continuation of discussions with the potential development partner on an exclusive basis for a period of not less than 24 months to attract a cinema and other operators of cultural and leisure facilities to the site of the former Guildhall, be authorised:
- 3) the landscaping of the former Guildhall site once the building is demolished be approved. The details of which to be finalised by officers;
- 4) authority be delegated to the Director of Regeneration and Planning to negotiate and approve the entering into of all documentation necessary to give effect to resolution 1.

Note: Councillor Owen Bierley declared a non-pecuniary interest in the above item of business as a serving Member of the Planning Committee

The meeting concluded at 7.07 pm.

Chairman