

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of a Meeting of the Prosperous Communities Committee held in the Council Chamber at the Guildhall, Gainsborough on Tuesday 14 October 2014 at 6.30pm.

Present: Councillor Owen Bierley (Chairman) (In the Chair)
Councillor Gillian Bardsley (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor David Dobbie
Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan
Councillor Jessie Milne
Councillor Roger Patterson
Councillor Lesley Rollings
Councillor Jeff Summers
Councillor Geoff Wiseman
Councillor Trevor Young

In Attendance :

Mark Sturgess	Chief Operating Officer
Penny Sharp	Commercial Director
Alan Robinson	Head of Central Services
Chris Allen	Head of Public Protection
Ady Selby	Team Manager – Operational Services
Sue Leversedge	Principal Accountant
Katie Coughlan	Governance and Civic Officer

Also Present: Councillor Chris Day

Apologies: Councillor Lewis Strange (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Mark Binns
Councillor Richy Doran
Councillor Malcolm Parish
Councillor Irmgard Parrott
Councillor Di Rodgers

Membership: Councillor Roger Patterson to substitute for
Councillor Irmgard Parrott
Councillor Jeff Summers to substitute for Councillor
Lewis Strange
Councillor Geoff Wiseman to substitute for
Councillor Di Rodgers

Councillor Giles McNeill¹ to substitute for Councillor Malcolm Parish

43 CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed all those present to the meeting but opened with the sad news of the death of fellow Councillor, Councillor Cotton's mum earlier in the day. As a mark of respect the Committee joined the Chairman in a minute's silence.

44 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

45 MINUTES

- (a) Meeting of the Prosperous Communities Committee – 2 September 2014

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Meeting of the Prosperous Communities Committee held on 2 September 2014 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

46 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT

The Chairman advised that Paper B (PRCC.24 14/15) (Local Plan – Consultation Response) on the published agenda had been withdrawn. The reason being that in light of a petition recently received, this matter would be considered at an Extraordinary Meeting of Full Council on 22 October 2014.

47 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE SETTING OUT THE CURRENT POSITION OF PREVIOUSLY AGREED ACTIONS AS AT 6 OCTOBER 2014 (PRCC.23 14/15)

Members gave consideration to the Matters Arising Schedule which set out the current position of all previously agreed actions as at 6 October 2014.

RESOLVED that progress on the Matters Arising Schedule, as set out in report PRCC.23 14 14/15 be received and noted.

¹ Did not arrive

48 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at this point of the meeting.

49 PROGRESS AND DELIVERY – PERIOD 1 - SERVICES (PRCC.25 14/15)

Members gave consideration to the first of the newly styled Progress and Delivery report, which highlighted the areas where services were “off target”, the reasons for this and the proposed rectifications. The report also provided Members with an opportunity to examine the reasons why performance was off track and seek assurance that the measures which have been put in place were sufficient to tackle the issues which have been identified with the service.

In presenting the report, Officers outlined how performance data assisted in managing services, giving the examples of Enforcement and Land Charges. Members sought and received assurance that the position in terms of Enforcement was being closely monitored. At present it had been deemed that the increased case load could be managed within service, however if the position became overwhelming, assurance was again given that additional resources would be drafted in. The rectification proposed was accepted.

With regard to Land Charges, all accepted that the current turnaround times were unacceptable. Officers advised that all agents had been contacted by the Chairman of the Planning Committee to advise of the delays and Members requested that customers be informed at the start of the process of the time it was likely to take to process a search. It was also noted that in the short term staff had been re-deployed into the service to assist with the backlog. The automated system was expected around Christmas 2014 and should result in significantly better turnaround times and a more robust service. However this was caveated with the fact that a number of dual runs would be required when the system was first installed. The rectification proposed was accepted, again with the need to monitor the service to ensure that the performance improves within a reasonable length of time.

Challenge was offered around the measures relating to Housing and Council Tax Support, with Members welcoming the additional resource which had been recently approved to assist the service performance. Officers indicated they would expect performance to be back on track by the next reporting period.

With regard to Gainsborough Markets, some Members were of the view that the rectification actions, detailed within the report, were not far reaching enough. In response, Officers outlined the other activities which were ongoing including feasibility studies around car boot markets, investigating additional signage leading into Gainsborough and closer working with the Town Centre Partnerships. Some Members were of the view it was time to radically review our approach to the Market, which was seen by some as a

commercial venture. Furthermore, Members indicated in the future, it would be useful if it could be clarified when referring to income whether this was a net figure.

Finally, challenge was offered around Youth Unemployment and Members asked a number of questions to aide their understanding in how the Council helped deliver against this partner issue.

RESOLVED that having examined the areas where service performance is off target and having sought assurance from Officers, agreed that the rectifications proposed will deal with the issues identified.

Note: Councillor Dobbie arrived during consideration of the above item of business at 7.05 pm

50 PROGRESS AND DELIVERY – PERIOD 1 – PROJECTS (PRCC.26 14/15)

Members gave consideration to the second of the new style Progress and delivery reports which dealt with the projects. The report was an exceptions report, in that it dealt with those projects which were off track and in danger of not delivering by their deadline. The report also in the future would highlight those projects which had been delivered within the period in order that Members could determine where progress was being made.

Lengthy debate ensued with Members constructively challenging those projects detailed with the report.

Members requested that they be provided with additional data around the location of those empty properties which had been brought back into use along with the number of empty properties currently within the South West Ward.

In respect of the project entitled “Gainsborough Young Person’s Accommodation” Councillors expressed concern that, without the revenue support for the scheme being secured, the project would not deliver against its original brief. They cited a previous housing project where this had been the case and they did not wish a repeat performance. Officers indicated that discussions were ongoing with the funding partners concerned.

In conclusion, Officers advised that it was intended, in the future, to display the whole of the performance monitoring information on to the Members extranet so that they could see the performance information as a whole should they so wish.

RESOLVED that having examined the areas where a project is off target and having sought assurance from Officers, agreed

that the rectifications proposed will deal with the issues identified.

51 FISKERTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN (PRCC.27 14/15)

Members gave consideration a report which sought agreement to formally designate the Neighbourhood Plan Area of Fiskerton.

The Committee commended the work undertaken by Fiskerton Parish Council in producing the Plan and urged other local communities to follow suit.

The existence of Neighbourhood Plans would be of great assistance in planning development, both now, and in the future

RESOLVED that the Neighbourhood Plan Area of Fiskerton be formally designated.

52 BRITISH CYCLING CHAMPIONSHIPS (PRCC.28 14/15)

The Committee gave to consideration to a report which sought to update Members on the current plans for the 2015 British Cycling Championships. The report further asked that Members give consideration to a request for £5,000 by way of financial assistance.

The Committee acknowledged what a fantastic opportunity this was for the District, the extra revenue it would generate in the area and the increased support for local businesses. Members hoped that this would springboard further events being organised.

In responding to Members' comments, assurance was given that Officers had already begun liaison with affected Parish Councils and the Safety Group had used the information gained through the trial run to improve on such matters as signage, timings and routing.

RESOLVED that: -

- (a) the positive impact of the National Cycling Championships being held in West Lindsey be noted; and
- (b) a financial contribution of £5,000 be approved.

53 HEALTH CHAMPION (PRCC.29 14/15)

Consideration was given to a report which informed Members of the role of the Member Health Champion.

The Committee placed on record their thanks to Councillor Caine for the work he was currently undertaking in this role.

In responding to Members' comments, Officers advised that the main provider of Mental Health Services was the Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust.

RESOLVED that:

- (a) the details of the role of Member Health Champion be noted;
- (b) an annual report be submitted to the Prosperous Communities Committee setting out the work undertaken during the civic year; and
- (c) quarterly liaison meetings between the Health Champion and the Chairman and Vice Chairmen of the Prosperous Communities be established.

Note: Councillor Trevor Young declared a non-pecuniary interest in the above item of business as an employee of the NHS

54 WORKPLAN (PRCC.30 14/15)

Members gave consideration to the Committee work plan.

RESOLVED that the Work Plan as set out in report PRCC.30 14/15 be received and noted.

55 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 items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 3 and 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

Note: The Committee adjourned for a short comfort break and re-convened at 8.10 pm

56 REQUEST FOR FREE CAR PARKING – CHRISTMAS LIGHTS SWITCH ON (PRCC.31 14/15)

Consideration was given to a report which sought Members' response to a request for free parking to support the Christmas lights switch on. The request had been received from Marshall's Yard asking that Members re-consider their previous decision made on 2 September 2014, in light of the additional information they had provided. The report also included the potential benefits of granting the request, a suggestion to maximise the benefit for the intended beneficiaries of free parking and estimates of the financial cost to the council in terms of lost parking revenue.

Lengthy debate ensued with Members offering vastly opposing opinions. Those who were in favour of granting free parking cited the numerous benefits an event of this size would bring to the town, the undoubted support it would provide to local businesses and thus the income that would be generated, and as such considered the cost to the Council was minimal when compared to the benefits.

However those who were opposed to granting the request expressed concern at the lack of detail provided by Marshall's Yard, the fact that no business or financial case had been submitted and of the already existing budget pressure. Some Members of the Committee felt that there were other, more cost effective, ways in which the event could be given support.

Referring to the information contained within the appendix, Members expressed deep concern that it was implied a decision had been made to move the traditional Saturday Market on 22 November. Indication was sought as to whether this was the case and if so where the Market would be re-located to. In the absence of this information Officers undertook to investigate the situation as a matter of urgency and feedback to the Committee outside of the meeting.

The recommendations as set out in the report were moved and seconded. Two Members subsequently requested that the vote be recorded.

For: Councillors Rollings, Dobbie, Summers, Bardsley and Bierley

Against: - Councillors Young, Wiseman, Patterson, Milne and Howitt-Cowan

With a total of 5 votes for and 5 votes against the Chairman used his casting vote, voting in favour and therefore the motion was carried

On that basis it was: -

RESOLVED that having considered the additional information, it be **RECOMMENDED** to the Policy and Resources Committee that the request for free parking for the Christmas Light's switch on, in view of the offer from Marshall's Yard to make their parking

free on that day, be supported, with free parking commencing from 10.00 am

Note: Councillor Bardsley declared a non-pecuniary interest in the above item of business as the Council's representative on the Gainsborough Town Partnership.

Councillor Rollings declared a non-pecuniary interest in the above item of business as a Member of Gainsborough Town Council.

57 BEAUMONT STREET CAR PARK (PRCC.32 14/15)

Consideration was given to a report which sought Members' approval to issue a notice to Lincoln Co-operative Services Ltd indicating the Authority's wish to extend the lease on the Beaumont Street car park at a market rent.

Members acknowledged the reasons why the proposed course of action had been recommended and whole-heartedly supported the move.

RESOLVED that having had regard to the social and economic implications of each of the options set out in the report: -

- (a) the issuing of a Section 26 notice to Lincoln Co-operative Services Ltd, indicating the Council's desire to extend its lease on the Beaumont Street Car Park at a market rental level be approved; and
- (b) any detailed negotiations with Lincoln Co-operative Services Limited on rental terms be delegated to the Commercial Director in consultation with the s151 Officer, Leader of Council and Chairman of Policy & Resources.

Note: Councillor Young left the meeting at this point and did not return

58 UPDATE ON PROJECTS WITHIN OPERATIONAL SERVICES (PRCC.33 14/15)

Members gave consideration to a report which sought to update them on progress with developing income and efficiency opportunities within Operational Services.

With regard to Recycling Credits / Income and the recent decision to sign up for a Countywide solution, the Leader outlined to the Committee negotiations to date.

RESOLVED that Officers re-assess opportunities for income generation and efficiencies, and any proposals be reported through the annual budget report.

Note: Councillor Rollings left the meeting at this point.

56 TEEP REQUIREMENTS FOR COUNTY COUNCIL WASTE CONTRACT (PRCC.34 14/15)

Members received a report which informed of upcoming changes in waste legislation and its impact on the collection methodology in West Lindsey.

Members applauded our current collection system and considered it should be used as an exemplar model for other Councils.

RESOLVED that

- (a) the outcome of the TEEP Assessment be endorsed; and
- (b) the continuation of the current household waste collection regime be approved.

The meeting concluded at 9.13 pm.

Chairman