

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of a Meeting of the Prosperous Communities Committee held in the Council Chamber at the Guildhall, Gainsborough on Thursday 29 October 2015 at 6.30pm.

Present:

Councillor Owen Bierley (Chairman) (In the Chair)
Councillor Gillian Bardsley (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Lewis Strange (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Michael Devine
Councillor Steve England
Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan
Councillor Jessie Milne
Councillor Di Rodgers
Councillor Lesley Rollings
Councillor Trevor Young

In Attendance:

Manjeet Gill	Chief Executive
Mark Sturgess	Chief Operating Officer
Ruth Farningham	Team Manager – Community Action
Karen Whitfield	Leisure and Cultural Services Team Manager
Katie Coughlan	Governance and Civic Officer

Also Present: Councillor Jeff Summers (Leader of the Council)

Apologies: None received

Membership: There were no substitutes appointed for the meeting.

41 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT

(a) Update on Car Parking Strategy

It was noted that a Member workshop on this subject had been held and as a result the Chairman of the Prosperous Communities Committee had requested that Challenge and Improvement Committee first give consideration to the options available. This had happened at their meeting on 13 October and as a result the

proposals would be submitted to this Committee's next meeting on 8 December 2015 for consideration.

(b) Clarification over revised draft CIL Charging Schedule

It was noted that Committee at their last meeting had given consideration to the draft CIL Charging Schedule for consultation purposes. However, Committee had inadvertently been provided with the wrong figures. This had subsequently been amended between meetings, and Members advised of such, but for the avoidance of the doubt the correct charging schedule had been appended to Agenda for Members attention.

42 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

43 MINUTES

(a) Meeting of the Prosperous Communities Committee – 15 September 2015

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Meeting of the Prosperous Communities Committee held on 15 September 2015 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

45 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE SETTING OUT THE CURRENT POSITION OF PREVIOUSLY AGREED ACTIONS AS AT 21 OCTOBER 2015 (PRCC.21 15/16)

Members gave consideration to the Matters Arising Schedule which set out the current position of all previously agreed actions as at 21 October 2015.

With regard to the green item entitled "SWW" the Committee were provided with the following update: -

Investigations took place in 2014 on the ownership of the land and information gathered indicated that the land was not owned by WLDC but could be owned by Thonock Estates with a Covenant attached to it that lays out specific conditions on the use of the site. These investigations were undertaken to try and secure WREN funding for sports and leisure facilities for young people. At that time, Gainsborough Town Council were cutting the grass to allow use of the land, and Positive Futures provided activities for young people.

Committee were advised that the following actions were to be undertaken:

1. Ownership of land being confirmed – Land registry search instructed and legal advice would be taken if required

2. Liaise with Gainsborough Town Council as they have taken on the responsibility of cutting the grass in the past
3. Funding opportunities to be explored for improvements and / or facilities
4. Positive Futures to be consulted as they have used the site for activities with young people
5. An update would be provided to a future chair's briefing meeting in the first instance.

RESOLVED that progress on the Matters Arising Schedule, as set out in report PRCC.21 15/16 be received and noted.

46 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

47 VARIATION TO THE ORDER OF THE AGENDA

The Chairman proposed that the order of the agenda be varied to allow for Paper F to be taken prior to Paper E .

It was moved and seconded that this be agreed.

RESOLVED that the order of the agenda be amended as detailed above.

48 MAYFLOWER 2020 (PRCC.22 15/16)

Members gave consideration to a report which sought to make the Committee aware of the Mayflower 400 project and to start to consider how best West Lindsey District Council could both support the project and ensure maximum benefit for the town.

In presenting the report, Officers outlined the background to the Project, current ongoing work and the actions which had been taken date, detailed at Section 3.4 of the report. Members were asked to make further suggestions for local activity which they felt should be considered to ensure the maximum potential for Gainsborough and the local area.

Debate ensued during which Members offered a number of comments and suggestions including; making the offer of wider appeal to American visitors for example both Epworth and Scotter had historical links to John Wesley, the Trent Bridge had been designed by the famous American bridge designer, Weston and the Earl of Abingdon, who had supported the colonists had been born at Gainsborough's Old Hall.

Members welcomed the Partnership approach that was being adopted and considered the Council was engaging at the appropriate level. It was suggested that the Tourism Working Group should also get involved and that suggestions should be sought from local history groups. Members also suggested Aviation Heritage Lincolnshire.

The facilitating of the building of a hotel within Gainsborough was considered a key area where the Council could make a difference, and it was important that visitors to the area had somewhere to stay.

RESOLVED that:

- (a) the contents of the report and the current work being undertaken on the Mayflower 400 Project be noted; and
- (b) members suggestions, as set out above be taken into consideration as further activities to ensure the maximum potential for Gainsborough and the local area. This should include working with local partners to ensure that the broadest possible offer is available in the locality.

49 HUMBER LEP (PRCC.23 15/16)

Members gave consideration to a report which outlined the benefits to West Lindsey and its economy of approaching the Humber LEP with a view to joining the LEP in addition to membership of the Greater Lincolnshire LEP. This would allow an opportunity to further develop economic links with both sides of the Humber. It was noted that a District like West Lindsey had an economic focus across more than one County and could be Members of more than one LEP.

The report set out in detail both the potential benefits to West Lindsey and the potential benefits to the Humber LEP.

In responding to a Members minor concerns over capacity, Officers again stressed the undoubtable benefits membership could bring about. Furthermore Growth and District Prosperity were Corporate Priorities and thus it was considered the Council could not afford to at least investigate the avenue. These views were echoed by the Leader of the Council who again stressed the importance of the District being “in the mix” if it was to achieve its ambitions.

RESOLVED that the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, be delegated to meet with the Chairman of the Humber LEP to further explore membership.

50 RURAL TRANSPORT (PRCC.24 15/16)

Consideration was given to a report which asked Members to agree the approach and methodology of supporting Rural Transport activity and initiatives across the Council.

The report set out the background, how it related to the Corporate Plan, the issues challenges and opportunities and finally the proposed methodology and five key themes to be addressed.

Members had also been provided with the full consultants report entitled “Review of Rural Transport Provision across the District of West Lindsey”. This review gave clear insight into current services and areas and where there were gaps or improvements that could be made. The review also included recommendations on how the Council could play an active role in supporting and developing different rural transport improvements or initiatives.

Full and lengthy debate ensued and the majority of Members welcomed the report and the joined up approach that had been adopted. However some Members expressed concern that some of the smaller villages were again be starved, Newtoft being the initial cited example, a former MOD site and therefore in Members view a priority community. Some Members indicated that they had not been consulted with, else would have raised villages within their wards that were in dire need of assistance. There were concerns that communities were not been selected on a “greatest need” basis.

However Members were in agreement that five achievable themes had been identified including some quick wins. Members urged Officers to ensure the scope was restricted and specific in order to ensure delivery and suggested that this model if successful could be replicated across the District.

By way of managing expectations the Chief Executive reminded Members of the difficult financial challenges which the Council faced, the fact that it was not the transport authority and the limited resources it had available to tackle such issues. This approach would at least allow the authority to explore options and go some way to improving connectivity.

A Member suggested that a working group be established to assist officers in working up projects and the following names were put forward: -

Councillors Strange, Rollings, Rodgers, Milne, England and Howitt-Cowan.

RESOLVED that:

- (a) the approach and methodology West Lindsey District Council will use in supporting Rural Transport activity and initiatives be approved.
- (b) a working group, comprising of those Members listed above be established to assist officers in working up projects.

51 REVIEW OF THE LOCALISM STRATEGY (PRCC.26 15/16)

Consideration was given to a report which reviewed past Localism Policies and which asked Members to agree new priorities for Localism based on the corporate plan priorities which had been agreed.

The report set out in detail the background to the Localism Strategy having been introduced, what the previous focus had been and what had been achieved over the past five years. The report further set out the envisaged challenges for the future together with a number of proposals detailed at Sections 2 and 3 of the report.

The proposals were whole heartedly supported with Members acknowledging that the Authority had key facilitation roll to play, citing examples of where this has worked. Continuation of the broadband programme was also welcomed.

RESOLVED that the review be approved and noted and the priorities for future years be agreed as set out in the report.

52 LOCAL PLAN FORMAL CONSULTATION RESPONSE (PRCC.25 15/16)

Consideration was given to a report which outlined how members and communities were being engaged in the consultation process on the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan (2nd Draft) which started on October 15 2015.

The report described the process undertaken so far and how the Council had responded. The report also outlined the next steps in the process towards the adoption of the local plan.

The Chief Operating Officer outlined the key areas members should give consideration to when formulating their responses, for example did the document meet the authorities strategic objectives ie growth within Gainsborough and The Market Towns? Growth along the A15 Corridor? Did it assist in resisting development in the Lincoln fringe villages? Did it help our small villages by allowing some development to ensure sustainability?

The Chairman requested that e-mail reminding Members of this deadline be circulated as a matter of urgency.

Members also wished to place on record their thanks to Officers for the recent workshops on this matter, which they considered had proved invaluable.

RESOLVED that Members consider the content of the Local Plan and make their views known (in writing) to the Chairman of the Committee by the end of business on 3 November 2015 to allow them to be incorporated in the report to Council on 16 November 2015.

53 PROGRESS AND DELIVERY (SERVICES) – PERIOD 2 (PRCC.27 15/16)

Members gave consideration to the second of the newly styled Progress and Delivery reports for 2015/16, 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 had been put in place were sufficient to tackle the issues which had been identified with the service.

The report also updated Members on those areas which had been highlighted in the first quarter report, these being: -

- Complaints Received
- Health Trainers
- Gainsborough Markets
- Local Land Charges
- Development Management
- Waste Collections

and further updates were given on each.

It was explained that following previous comments by Members the format had slightly changed in order to make the report more legible, with tables including a red ‘R’ or green ‘G’ to indicate their status.

The figures for the number of complaints received were now available to the end of September and had risen. Members questioned how many of these were related to Development Management. The response was that only 18 of the 77 complaints reported were about Development Management, and a future report would list complaints received by Service Area.

With regard to Development Management, the Chief Operating Officer outlined some immediate and forthcoming changes that had been made within the department as a result of the Peer Challenge held the preceding week, aimed at improving communication. All direct phone lines were now open, as opposed to the

duty planner arrangement. The definitive case file for all applications would now be available on line, and the way in which Members would be notified of new applications within their Wards would be changed with effect from 9 November, meaning all Members would receive a list bespoke to them. All of the changes were welcomed by Members.

Referring to page 11 of the report, the Chief Operating Officer provided Members with some updated figures, in respect of major planning applications, minor applications and other applications. Data cleansing had taken place and the revised figures were now 64%, 43% and 55% respectively, which was a much more acceptable level of performance.

Much work was being undertaken on NEETs ('Not in Employment, Education or Training') to address the unemployment statistics which were of concern but Members indicated they were confident in the work being undertaken.

The currently high cost shown for the provision of service to Members was explained as being due to profiling issues, in that some one-off costs had shown in the budget (e.g. webcasting equipment) and by the end of the year this would balance out. The increasing cost of running the Gainsborough markets was due to declining income from stalls and the fixed costs of erecting the stalls on a Tuesday and Saturday.

Attention was also drawn to the Empty Homes Targets and Housing Register Targets, Members expressed concern that referrals were not been readily accepted and expressed concern that this could create problems elsewhere. Assurance was given that Officers were liaising closely with ACIS to tackle this issue.

Finally Members expressed disappointment at the continuing trend of the Market and also the timeline established for the review. Again, capacity was raised as a real concern and there was a view that more creative thinking, such as bespoke markets, was required.

RESOLVED that having given consideration to the matters listed in the report assurance was received that the rectifications proposed would deal with identified issues.

54 PROGRESS AND DELIVERY (PROJECTS) – PERIOD 2 (PRCC.28 15/16)

Members gave consideration to the second of the newly styled Progress and Delivery reports for 2015/16, which dealt with the projects.

The Chief Operating Officer reminded Members that the Progress and Delivery reports were by exception only, either above or below target, and only reported on those projects currently in delivery stage which were regularly monitored.

The report contained updates on the items contained in the previous report and introduced one new item.

- Selective Licensing was now on track to deliver within the revised timescale.
- Rural Public Transport had earlier been considered by the Prosperous Communities Committee and was now deemed back on track.
- Flare in the Field and Comet – work was ongoing to resolve IT issues, and a report was due through the next governance cycle.
- The bungalows on Corringham Road has encountered unforeseen difficulties so were not being progressed.

RESOLVED that that having given consideration to the matters listed in the report, assurance was received that the rectifications proposed would deal with identified issues.

55 SOUTH WEST WARD PARTNERSHIP DELIVERY PLANS (PRCC.29 15/16)

Members gave consideration to a report which provided a summary of the current position and progress of the programme of work being undertaken in the South West Ward of Gainsborough through the tactical delivery plans.

It was stressed that this was a pilot approach with a focus on tackling the causes rather than simply addressing the issues. Action within the Ward was being progressed on a 'Total Approach' or 'Communities Working Together' approach. It was hoped this would lead to a more sustainable long term solution to problems affecting residents in the area as it had been recognised that a single partner could not tackle the complex social mix of problems alone and therefore the programme of work was being delivered by a multi-agency partnership.

The aims and objectives of the programme of work were outlined and it was noted that the delivery plans would contribute to the agreed outcomes of this approach namely: -

- Social
- Environmental
- Safe

The service delivery plans were initial plans that would be delivered and were living documents that would be updated and amended. The Plans centred around five themes, namely: community; contact point/co-location; early intervention; environment; and substance misuse.

In conclusion, the next steps, as set out in section 5 of the report, were highlighted to the Committee.

Detailed and lengthy debate ensued during which the Local Ward Member expressed concern. He was of a view that the situation was getting much worse, citing recent examples. He was not convinced that the partnership was being effective, despite lots of resources be assigned and there was a view that having seen meeting minutes, not enough partners were attending the meetings to make a real difference. However he did thank West Lindsey for their efforts which had been noticeable recently.

Reassurance was offered that the Tactical Group meetings were well attended by Officers who worked “on the ground”.

Referring to the contact/co-location delivery plan concern was expressed regarding the purchase of an empty property, simply down to the cost involved, as Members were of belief that a more cost effective and sustainable solution could be found, for example locating in the School or Trinity Arts Centre.

In response Officers advised that following investigation it was not now intended to pursue the purchase and agreement had been reached with the Trinity Arts Centre to run the contact centre from there. Sessions would be commencing soon and Members indicated that they would welcome information regarding the dates and times of these. Furthermore it was noted that the local school had a new headteacher who was fully engaged and committed to the work of the Partnership.

The Chairman of the Challenge and Improvement urged the Committee to monitor progress on a regular basis, particularly in light of the South West Ward been a priority for the Council.

In light of concerns, Members requested that a further update report, monitoring progress be submitted to the Committee in February 2016. Members also indicated it would be useful to have a breakdown of the crimes in the area and actions which had been taken in response, something they had previously requested.

The Chairman of the Licensing and Regulatory Committee made reference to a recent licensing hearing and the actions the Committee had taken to try and safeguard the community and residents.

Having heard examples of some of the incidents evident in the South West Ward, a Member questioned what other agencies were doing to assist. He urged the Corporate Leadership Team to request meetings with the Chief Constable and Police Commissioner as a matter of urgency.

RESOLVED that:

(a) having consider the contents of the report they be noted; and

- (b) a further update report, monitoring progress of the Partnership be submitted to the Committee for consideration in February 2016.

56 WORK PLAN (PRCC.30 15/16)

Members gave consideration to the Committee work plan.

RESOLVED that the Work Plan as set out in report PRCC.30 15/16 be received and noted, subject to the inclusion of an update report on the South West Ward Activity in February 2016 as resolved above.

The meeting concluded at 9.21 pm.

Chairman