

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Extraordinary Council held at the EPIC Centre at the Lincolnshire Showground, on Wednesday 22 October 2014, at 6.30pm.

Present: Councillor Malcolm Parish (In the Chair)

Councillor Gillian Bardsley	Councillor Angela Lawrence
Councillor Owen Bierley	Councillor Malcolm Leaning
Councillor Nigel Bowler	Councillor Pat Mewis
Councillor Ken Bridger	Councillor Giles McNeill
Councillor Jackie Brockway	Councillor Jessie Milne
Councillor Alan Caine	Councillor Roger Patterson
The Revd Councillor David Cotton	Councillor Judy Rainsforth
Councillor Stuart Curtis	Councillor Di Rodgers
Councillor Chris Darcel	Councillor Reg Shore
Councillor Chris Day	Councillor Lewis Strange
Councillor David Dobbie	Councillor Jeff Summers
Councillor Ian Fleetwood	Councillor Anne Welburn
Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan	Councillor Geoff Wiseman
Councillor Burt Keimach	

Apologies: Councillor Sue Rawlins (vice chairman)
Councillor Mark Binns
Councillor Richard Doran
Councillor Irmgard Parrott
Councillor Tom Regis

In Attendance:

Manjeet Gill	Chief Executive
Mark Sturgess	Chief Operating Officer
Alan Robinson	Head of Central Services and Monitoring Officer
Dinah Lilley	Governance and Civic Officer
Nicola Calver	Governance and Civic Officer
Katie Coughlan	Governance and Civic Officer
Jacqueline Gartside	Temporary Facilities Officer

Also Present 120 members of the public
The Revd Canon Mike Cooney
Richard Wills – Executive Director, Lincolnshire County Council

46 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Cotton, Summers and Curtis declared that they were the West Lindsey District Council's representatives on the Central Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Unit (CLJSPU), and Councillor Fleetwood noted that he was the reserve Member. Councillor Keimach declared that he had previously been the Chairman of the CLJSPU and had been involved in drafting the policies.

Councillors Milne and McNeill declared that they worked for Sir Edward Leigh MP who had been contacted by residents regarding the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan, however they had not been involved in any discussions.

Councillor Brockway declared that she was the Ward Member for Saxilby from where the petition had principally emanated.

The Chief Executive then described to those present the procedures that would be gone through for the meeting.

47 PRESENTATION OF PETITION

The Chairman of Council then invited Mrs Elizabeth Hillman to present the Petition.

Mrs Hillman then described how the residents of Saxilby were concerned about the large housing estates that were being proposed, a recent application being the catalyst for the petition. A meeting had been held in Saxilby and was well attended by residents, who were concerned that over 900 houses could be built in the settlement.

Several applications were pending and if approved, could have impact on the infrastructure which was already under strain, particularly in terms of: health provision; sewerage disposal; school capacity; traffic; etc.

Urban sprawl was not welcome, there was a need to protect green spaces and local heritage. Saxilby's strength had become its weakness. Residents were not 'NIMBYs' but felt that there were more appropriate places to build and regenerate brownfield sites. Villages were becoming towns. The 558 signatures on the petition had been obtained in just 6 days.

Mrs Hillman then presented the Petition to the Council Chairman.

Note – Councillor Cotton questioned if he needed to make a declaration of interest as he was currently assisting in the defence of an appeal for an application which had been refused in Saxilby. The Monitoring Officer advised that he did not feel that this would be prejudicial to Councillor Cotton taking part in the meeting.

The Chief Executive then explained to Councillors and the public that the Council had to work within constitutional parameters and Government policy. The Secretary of State had transferred strategic planning authority, with associated powers, to Central Lincolnshire, so to reverse that decision would require an application to the Secretary of State.

Three options were set out in the report and the Council needed to decide which route to take in responding to the petition.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting of Council was then adjourned at 7.10pm, to facilitate open public debate. The forum was chaired by Revd Canon Mike Cooney in order to ensure impartiality and independence from the Council. The political group leaders were available for questions, along with the Council's Chief Executive, Chief Operating Officer and Richard Wills, Executive Director from Lincolnshire County Council.

The Chief Executive firstly gave the meeting a powerpoint presentation giving the background to the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan and its process.

Lengthy debate then ensued, with members of the public and councillors asking questions and raising concerns, which were responded to in turn. Officers and Councillors stressed that to withdraw from the JPU would leave settlements even more vulnerable to inappropriate development, and the best defence that residents could have would be to establish Neighbourhood Plans.

The Council meeting reconvened at 9.10pm.

Councillor Cotton moved a recommendation to allow for suspension of Standing Orders so as to allow Councillors more than three minutes to speak. This was seconded.

RESOLVED that Standing Order 12.4 be suspended to not restrict Councillors to a time limit for speaking.

48 CENTRAL LINCOLNSHIRE LOCAL PLAN

The Leader of the Council summed up the discussion that had been held during the adjournment, emphasising that the Council wanted as much public involvement as possible, and there was scope for change. However, it would not be feasible to pull out of the JPU as this would likely take many months, would require Secretary of State approval, and the time and resources required to establish a new Planning Unit would mean a long delay in creating a new Local Plan. It was much better to be around the negotiating table than being told what to do. Councillor Summers then moved that Option 1 be approved.

The Leader of the Opposition acknowledged that it was not possible to just walk away from the JPU, but that West Lindsey had to fight. The views of residents and Councillors needed to be recognised. Councillor Shore then proposed an amendment to Option 1 to propose that the situation be revisited in 12 months.

Other Members of the Council echoed the views of the two Leaders, acknowledging that whilst it was important to have regard to the views of the residents of West Lindsey, pulling out of the JPU would cause more problems than it solved. Several Councillors suggested that the answer could be the creation of a new village, which

could fulfil the requirement for a five year supply of housing. The importance of Neighbourhood Plans was again emphasised.

Councillor Cotton pointed out that all Councillors had voted to join the JPU, and noted that Government Policy on Planning changed frequently. The best way to get a Local Plan would be to continue the route already being taken. Councillor Cotton proposed a further amendment to Councillor Shore's, to include part of Option 3.

A brief adjournment took place to clarify and write the recommendation to be voted upon.

RESOLVED that West Lindsey District Council continue to work with the CLJSPU and JPU and at the Council meeting on 10th November 2014 agree West Lindsey District Council's response to the Preliminary Draft Local Plan and to include consideration of comments made by residents during the public debate at the EPIC Centre. If we discover during the next year that the CLJSPU is not listening to residents, because major concerns are not being reflected in outcomes, then we will reconsider our position. In the meantime support will be given to individuals/residents to make their own representations to the CLJSPU as accommodated in the framework.

Note Councillors Brockway and Darcel voted against the resolution.

The meeting concluded at 10.21pm.

Chairman