

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Council held in the Council Chamber, The Guildhall, Gainsborough, on Monday 26 January 2015, at 7pm.

Present: Councillor Malcolm Parish (In the Chair)

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

In Attendance:

Manjeet Gill	Chief Executive
Mark Sturgess	Chief Operating Officer
Ian Knowles	Director of Resources
Penny Sharp	Commercial Director
Alan Robinson	Strategic Lead for Democratic and Business Support and Monitoring Officer
Alison McCulloch	Revenues Team Manager
Dinah Lilley	Governance and Civic Officer

Also in Attendance

Reverend Richard Crossland
Jayne Thomas, Partnership Engagement Co-ordinator, AGE UK
Mick King, Agency Director, Lincolnshire Home Improvement Agency
David Lomas - Chairman, Independent Remuneration Panel

Also Present two members of the public

62 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Chris Darcel
Councillor David Dobbie
Councillor Giles McNeill
Councillor Sue Rawlins (Vice Chairman)
Councillor Lesley Rollings
Councillor Mick Tinker
Councillor Trevor Young

Note Councillor Brockway arrived at 7.02 pm.

63 PRESENTATION - 1st Contact, AGE UK

The Chairman introduced Jayne Thomas, Partnership Engagement Coordinator, for AGE UK and Mick King, Agency Director, Lincolnshire Home Improvement Agency, to give a presentation on the Wellbeing Service.

The presenters set out the aims of the Wellbeing Service as being to Promote health, wellbeing, independence and choice;

- by increasing the number of people who are able to live independently with support and technology in their own home;
- by providing more proactive, integrated, high quality care - through multi-disciplinary working;
- by joining up information and advice services;
- by making equipment, minor adaptations and assistive technology available quickly on a low level preventative basis.

It was described what the service covered and who provided the elements, and information was given on how to access the services. The achievements of the service to date had been widely recognised.

The Chairman thanked the presenters for the information provided, and some Members described their own experiences of the service stating that it was invaluable and a life saver at times.

Leaflets were also distributed.

64 COUNCIL MINUTES

- a) **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of Council held on 10 December 2014 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

65 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

66 MATTERS ARISING (PAPER D)

The Chairman noted that all items were showing as black as having been completed.

RESOLVED that the Matters Arising be noted.

67 ANNOUNCEMENTS

i) Chairman of the Council

The Chairman noted that the Elections Officer, Graham Spicksley, had made significant progress since his stroke before Christmas and wished him well.

The Chairman highlighted some of his recent engagements, the full list having previously been circulated around Members. Councillor Parish noted that he had visited several Care Homes over the Christmas period and found this very moving. The Chairman also stated that he was delighted to be involved in the Illuminate the Mayflower 400 event in Plymouth celebrating the 400th Anniversary of the Mayflower's voyage to America. Several Christmas Lights switch-ons had been attended, and the Chairman had also visited businesses in the District including Wefco, Smiffy's and EH Thorne which made beehives.

The Chairman then invited Councillor Milne to speak. Councillor Milne referred to the recent works undertaken in the Guildhall reception area to accommodate Job Centre Plus within the building. The disruption caused and extra work involved were noted and Councillor Milne commended the relevant staff for how they had managed during this transitional time, and requested that this be acknowledged. The Chairman echoed Councillor Milne's comments and it was agreed that thanks be passed to all Customer Services staff for their patience and hard work during the transition.

ii) Leader of the Council

The Leader of the Council also echoed the Chairman's good wishes for the recovery of Graham Spicksley.

It was noted that a vacancy in Spatial Planning was being advertised to enable the development project to move forward. The Leader also commented on the recent approval granted for Planning Permission for development of the site on Corringham Road following the results of the Housing Needs Survey. Progress was ongoing with the Council's Commercial Strategy to enable the Council to compete with businesses.

4 January 2015 saw the completion of a six week consultation on the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan. Over 3,000 representations had been received from over 500 respondents. These comments were now in the process of being logged and analysed, and 100 new sites had been suggested for allocations, for which a selection process would be undertaken.

The Leader set out five elements to be highlighted:

- Growth targets
- Appraisal of sites (in the context of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment)
- Analysis of comments
- Establishment of viability
- Recommendations from Consultants on the Sub Lincoln Growth Strategy

West Lindsey Councillors would be kept informed of progress. The Leader then set out the 10 key principles which included: keeping the Plan brief and simple; locally specific; encouraging sustainable growth; clarification of edge of settlement site policies in the absence of development boundaries; viability and deliverability; and clear effective consultation.

iii) Head of Paid Service

The Chief Executive reiterated Councillor Milne's comments regarding the Customer Services staff during the transition phase and noted that the Volunteer Service was also sited in the reception area.

The Chief Executive also passed on her good wishes for the recovery of Graham Spicksley and assured Celia and Danny of continued support in the run up to the biggest election the District has held.

Note was made of a recent Rural Sounding Board survey, the results of which had been published. This would be circulated to all Members of the Council. Thanks were passed to Councillors Bierley and Strange, the Council's and County Council's representatives in rural matters.

The Chief Executive emphasised the importance of attending the recent Commercial Plan workshops and encouraged all Councillors to be involved in this project, and their input was important. Members were encouraged to contact Penny Sharp if they had not made workshops to inform the Commercial Plan before its submission for approval at March Council.

Councillor Caine, as the Council's Community Safety champion sought to thank Members for input to Government regarding Police underfunding.

68 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions from the public.

69 QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO. 9

There were no questions pursuant to Council procedure rule 9.

70 MOTIONS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO. 10

Dear Mr Chairman

We have an issue in West Lindsey where village and public amenity spaces are being used for unsightly utility boxes which cause an eyesore, and use valuable village greens. They could be sited in areas approved in consultation with our parish councils and respect public space. My own village centre has several

ugly boxes sited right in the middle of our village green; I believe that this happens in other places too.

Whilst we appreciate an increase in access to such services, especially in rural areas, there is no excuse for placing junction boxes, poles and access holes on valuable green spaces, which often give an identity to small villages and hamlets. This would never be allowed to happen in affluent southern counties so why should we put up with such insensitive behaviour.

These providers can only be doing this to save money. They argue that it is the most convenient place for them as that is where all the wires etcetera meet. However, for little extra cost they could easily site them up against a wall or somewhere out of the way.

I move that West Lindsey District Council reviews this issue and writes to all service providers who conduct their business in such ways, indicating that we feel that it is an affront to residents to blight village centres with such pollution and ask them to promptly change their policy to ensure that this practice is discontinued asap.

Thank you

Cllr Reg Shore

The Chairman responded by thanking Councillor Shore for his motion.

“I think many Members in this Chamber would agree with the sentiments it expresses. Therefore I will be asking the Chief Executive to write to the utility companies operating in this District – along the lines you suggest – to ask them to be generally more sensitive where they install their operational equipment. I will also ask that the letter requests them to consult parish councils when siting this equipment on open land within villages.

I hope that these actions address the concerns expressed in your motion”

It was suggested that the letter come from the Chairman of the Council and in consultation with the Chairman of the Planning Committee, and it be copied to Parish Councils.

Note Councillor Bardsley left the meeting at 7.45pm

71 COLLECTION FUND SURPLUS AND COUNCIL TAX BASE (PAPER C)

The Director of Resources presented the report which set out the declaration of the estimated surplus on the Council’s Collection Fund relating to Council Tax at the end of March 2015 and how it was shared amongst the constituent precepting bodies. It also set out the Council tax base calculation for 2015/16. The tax base was a key component in calculating both the budget requirement and the council tax charge.

Members commented that the collection rate was commendable and the team be congratulated.

RESOLVED that:

- i) the estimated surplus of £711,000 be declared as accruing in the Council's Collection Fund at 31 March 2015 relating to an estimated Council Tax surplus, be noted;
- ii) the Council uses its element of the Collection fund surplus in calculating the level of Council Tax in 2015/16; and
- iii) the calculations of the Council's tax base for 2015/16 as set out in Appendix A be approved, and that in accordance with the Local Authorities' (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1993 (as amended), the tax base for each part of the Authority's area shall be as set out in Appendix B.

72 LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME (PAPER D)

The Strategic Lead for Democratic and Business Support introduced the report, reminding Members that the scheme replaced Council Tax Benefits three years ago. The recommendation was that the current scheme be maintained, but that the minimal Government prescribed changes be built into the 2015/16 scheme (these being legislative changes that had occurred since April 2013 and the annual increases in allowances that came into force every April).

The Reverend Councillor Cotton requested that thanks to the Revenues and Benefits Team for their work, be recorded.

RESOLVED that:

- i) the content of the report be noted; and
- ii) the Local Council Tax Support Scheme for West Lindsey DC for 2015/16 be agreed.

73 COUNCIL TAX DISCRETIONARY RELIEF (SECTION 13A OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE ACT) (PAPER E)

The Strategic Lead for Democratic and Business Support described the Section 13A policy on Council Tax Discretionary Relief. Section 13A was about special circumstances in which relief was discretionary and approval was sought for delegation to be given to the Director of Resources to be able to make the decisions on individual applications.

The Strategic Lead for Democratic and Business Support informed Members that the ability to make an application already existed but that the Council needed to have a policy for its own protection. High usage was not anticipated, and no awards had been made in the last year, however it was important that there was a policy to enable a speedy response in special circumstances e.g. severe flooding.

Councillor Mrs Rodgers sought assurance from the Strategic Lead for Democratic and Business Support that there would be support for organisations such as the Citizens

Advice Bureau in dealing with enquiries regarding this scheme as the application forms were particularly lengthy. It was agreed that the Strategic Lead for Democratic and Business Support would meet with Councillor Mrs Rodgers to discuss this.

RESOLVED that:

- i) the Section 13A Policy (See Appendix A) in determining whether a reduction in Council Tax should be granted in the case of individual applications for reductions in Council Tax due, be approved;
- ii) it be agreed that individual applications for Section 13A Discretionary Relief be determined by the Director of Resources under his delegated powers; and
- iii) in the event of an appeal, it be heard by the Housing Appeals Board.

Note Councillor Lewis Strange left the meeting at 8.03pm

74 MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES (PAPER F)

The report was presented by Mr David Lomas, Chairman of the Independent Remuneration Panel, who noted that it had been a difficult job, but that in light of there being only 36 Councillors following the election, the proposed increase of 1.5% would be funded by the reduction in cost. Mr Lomas thanked those officers who had assisted and also those Councillors who had taken part in discussions.

The Leader of the Council stated that he felt that following the rearrangement of Committees in 2011 there had been an increased workload for Chairmen and Vice Chairmen, with a particular need to work smarter to allow community aspirations to evolve. In light of this the Leader was not able to support the recommendation that Vice Chairmen share the Allowance. It was proposed that the recommendations be voted upon separately and the Leader moved approval of recommendation 1. This was seconded.

The Leader of the Opposition agreed that the recommendations be voted upon separately, however felt that Vice Chairmen should share the remuneration as set out in the recommendation. Debate then ensued as to whether two Vice Chairmen were required on any Committees, however this was a debate to be had at Annual Council when Committee positions were appointed. It was suggested that the Remuneration Panel gather a stronger evidence base for proposals regarding the workload of Chairmen and Vice Chairmen.

RESOLVED that a 1.5% increase in Basic Allowance be accepted.

A recorded voted was then called for by the requisite two Members, on the second recommendation.

For: Councillors Bowler, Bridger, Cotton, Day, Doran, Leaning, Rainsforth, Rodgers and Shore.

Against: Councillors Bierley, Brockway, Caine, Curtis, Fleetwood, Howitt-Cowan, Keimach, Mewis, Parish, Parrott, Patterson, Regis, Summers and Welburn.

Abstained: Councillors Lawrence, Milne and Wiseman.

A total of 9 votes for, 14 against and three abstentions.

RESOLVED that the recommendation, that on Committees with two Vice Chairs the allocated remuneration be shared, not be agreed.

75 TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS PUBLISHED SINCE THE COUNCIL MEETING ON 10 NOVEMBER 2014.

RESOLVED that the minutes of Committee meetings published since the last Council meeting on 10 November 2014 be received.

The meeting concluded at 8.27pm.

Chairman