

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Council held in the Council Chamber, The Guildhall, Gainsborough, on Monday 27 July 2015, at 7pm.

Present: Councillor Roger Patterson (In the Chair)

Councillor Sheila Bibb	Councillor Giles McNeill
Councillor Owen Bierley	Councillor John McNeill
Councillor Matthew Boles	Councillor Pat Mewis
Councillor David Bond	Councillor Richard Oaks
Councillor Alexander Bridgwood	Councillor Malcolm Parish
Councillor Jackie Brockway	Councillor Judy Rainsforth
Councillor David Cotton	Councillor Di Rodgers
Councillor Stuart Curtis	Councillor Lesley Rollings
Councillor Michael Devine	Councillor Thomas Smith
Councillor Adam Duguid	Councillor Lewis Strange
Councillor Steve England	Councillor Jeff Summers
Councillor Ian Fleetwood	Councillor Anne Welburn
Councillor Paul Howitt - Cowan	Councillor Angela White
Councillor Stuart Kinch	Councillor Trevor Young

In Attendance:

Manjeet Gill	Chief Executive
Ian Knowles	Director of Resources
Alan Robinson	Strategic Lead for Democratic and Business Support and Monitoring Officer
Dinah Lilley	Governance and Civic Officer

Also in Attendance Deacon Stephen Boulter

Also Present 5 members of the public

19 MINUTE'S SILENCE

The chairman opened the meeting by requesting that a minute's silence be held for the victims of the recent terrorist attack in Tunisia.

A further minute's silence was then held for past Councillor and Chairman Peter Addison who had passed away at the weekend.

20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Gillian Bardsley
Councillor Chris Darcel

Councillor Angela Lawrence
Councillor Hugo Marfleet
Councillor Jessie Milne
Councillor Tom Regis
Councillor Reg Shore

21 PRESENTATION OF PETITION

The Chairman invited local businessman and resident Guy Crosskill to present the petition which had been submitted to the Council.

The petition requested that serious consideration be given to the provision of up to two hours free parking in the town centre car parks, which it was believed would entice shoppers to see what Gainsborough had to offer, encourage visitors and make the town more attractive to businesses.

The Leader of the Council thanked Mr Crosskill for his presentation and responded by stating that it was important to consider all options, including social and economic, and the petition would be taken into consideration during the ongoing review of the parking strategy scheduled for Committee consideration later in the year.

22 COUNCIL MINUTES (PAPER A)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Annual meeting of Council held on 21 May 2015 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

23 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Patterson declared a pecuniary interest in Paper E and stated that he would leave the room for consideration of the item.

24 MATTERS ARISING (PAPER B)

It was noted that all items were showing as black as having been completed.

RESOLVED that the Matters Arising be noted.

25 ANNOUNCEMENTS

i) Vice Chairman of the Council

The Vice Chairman informed the meeting that he was receiving regular updates on the progress of the Chairman in her recovery and that she was now at home during the day, but was having to return to hospital each evening. Councillor Lawrence was wished a speedy recovery and return to back where she belonged.

The Vice Chairman then thanked Councillors Bierley, Parish and Milne who had assisted by attending functions to represent the Council's Chairman. Several functions had also been attended by the Vice Chairman, in particular a Russian medal presentation in Hemswell, 'Caistor goes Medieval' and a Cancer charity event.

ii) Leader of the Council

The Leader of the Council made mention of several events which he had attended, including the LGA conference with the Deputy Leader, at which Greg Clark had spoken on Devolution. Also attended was the NFU LEP seminar at which different ways of working were discussed.

The Local Plan was making progress and the Gypsy and Traveller issue had been sorted. Council officers had worked hard and the second draft was to be presented in September before the next six week consultation stage. There would be in-house training prior to this and it was important that all Members attend to be sufficiently informed and to be prepared for the launch events in the parishes.

Work was ongoing with both North Lincolnshire and North Kesteven Councils seeking efficiencies.

iii) Head of Paid Service

The Chief Executive echoed Councillors' good wishes for the Chairman on behalf of officers.

Work had been ongoing with the Devolution and Growth agendas. The Chief Executive had attended a meeting with Melanie Dawes, the permanent secretary for DCLG. The door was now open to devolution and it was important to scenario plan. Public spending was to be reduced even further, with Districts seeing a large proportion of their budget cut in recognition of the social care financial challenges. Over the Autumn options will be discussed with reports to Committees – there were a lot of unknowns.

26 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions from the public.

27 QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO. 9

Councillor Sheila Bibb had posed the following question:-

"The Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Rt. Hon. George Osborne MP, has announced in his Summer Budget that on top of an increase of 20p to the National Minimum Wage in October, in April next year the Conservative Government will introduce a National Living Wage of £7.20 an hour for over

25s. Could the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee explain the effect of this decision on West Lindsey District Council?"

The Leader of the Council responded

"The lowest pay band in West Lindsey District Council is currently £7.43 per hour, therefore there IS no immediate effect on the Authority.

The fact we are in front of the game in terms of remunerating our staff demonstrates our awareness of the cost of living.

At present we have a financial strategy within the councils forward budget to ensure we keep apace of inflation etc. This will no doubt have to be addressed in future years."

Councillors Judy Rainsforth and Trevor Young had posed the following question:-

"Ashcroft Rd was once a peaceful, lovely place to live. Many residents have lived on the road for 40 plus years.

In the past three years there has been a dramatic decline on the road due to anti social behaviour.

As Leader of the Council would you agree that all residents in the district deserve the right to live without the fear of their personal safety.

If so, why on a weekly basis do residents on Ashcroft Road have to endure the following anti social behaviour:

1. Verbal and Physical Aggression
2. Intimidation / Threats
3. Rubbish Dumping
4. Fires
5. Vehicle Dismantling
6. Tyre Dumping
7. Speeding Vehicles
8. Large Scale Car Repairs on the road

Despite numerous request to both the police and the authority nothing appears to be done?

As ward members we request your assistance as Leader of the Council to ensure both the Police and WLDC take the necessary enforceable action?"

Response by the Leader

"Cllr. Young. And Cllr. Rainsforth.

Thank you very much for your question. Depressing as this subject matter is, it is an element of our business which urgently needs addressing.

I can only imagine how debilitating it can be for civilised law abiding residents living with this constant menace!

We pulled together a group of agencies to work together..... Months ago.

Some of those meetings I initially attended myself and judged we had the right content within that group to resolve these recurring issues.

No matter whether you are a growing family or of later years, this type of lifestyle cannot be tolerated.

The situation is creating numerous social issues, for example a range Of specific crimes, all punishable. Health issues. And perhaps worst of all, the

influencing of the most impressionable, our children, the ones who will be following in our footsteps.

Therefore this subject will go immediately for consideration by the Challenge and Improvement Committee to first analyse what has worked with past initiatives and what has not worked, identifying where an improved effort is required and finally make recommendations for a new approach.”

28 MOTIONS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO. 10

The following motion had been received from Councillors Judy Rainsforth and Trevor Young:-

“The residents of West Lindsey expect and deserve quality, effective and responsive services. Over the past few years we have seen some of our local communities change and more often there is a need for services outside of the normal 9-5 working day.

In the past local Police have responded very effectively with issues such as low level anti social behaviour, noise nuisance, drink related incidents however now they state it is a local authority responsibility?

West Lindsey have failed to put the necessary resources in place to deal with the impact of these changes and meeting the growing demand.

Residents are left feeling powerless, resulting in them having to report incidents the WLDC ‘Out of Hours Service’ knowing that it offers no more than a tokenistic service.

Recently one of us had experience of contacting the ‘out of hours service’ in the early hours of the morning following a disturbing incident. West Lindsey failed to respond after the initial call?

We are informed residents share similar poor experiences, very little action being offered to them and having to ‘put up’ with unacceptable situations.

Residents are having to live in fear.

We believe residents deserve better, and would like to request that an indepth review be carried out of our ‘out of hours services’, We so move.”

Cllr Trevor Young
Cllr Judy Rainsforth

Response by the Leader

“West Lindsey District Council does have an out of hours service which involves senior officers being on call to deal with Emergencies and Major incidents i.e. Flooding, earth quakes, plane crashes and domestic fire which creates the need for rehousing of victims outside of normal working hours.

Your motion appears to be centred around responses to Anti Social Behaviour and where the responsibility for such response lies. We do not currently have a 24 hour anti-social behaviour service.

I would suggest that as a council we ask our Challenge and Improvement Committee to consider looking into the serious matter in detail. It would not be appropriate to have WLDC officers trying to respond to incidents in the early hours.”

29 DEVOLUTION IN LINCOLNSHIRE (PAPER C)

The Chief Executive summarised the report which sought Council’s approval to devote financial, officer and political resources to work with the Greater Lincolnshire local authorities and others partners to develop options and the business cases for devolution.

‘Greater Lincolnshire’ was a partnership between all neighbouring local authorities including the LEP and police etc. There could be up to a 40% budget reduction in some areas and it would be a challenge to deliver services. Working together was important to address the challenge of the largest public reform in many years.

Areas to be focussed on included: skills; health; infrastructure etc. The benefits system was described as an example which was run by many different agencies, duplicating responsibilities. Local government was closer to communities and it was important to be more efficient and innovative in managing change. The Government had been challenged to devolve and decentralise. Many Councils were considering combined authorities and forming partnerships. There had to be a collective voice from all partner members, the Government would not act as referee in disagreements. Problems and collective ambitions had to be identified and there was a focus on leadership.

Four recommendations were set out in the report and the Chief Executive recommended a fifth that she be given delegated authority to sign an Expression of Interest in consultation with Group Leaders.

The Leader of the Council emphasised that a good quality submission was required, and there was time to work on a list of headings and broad outline of proposals. It was suggested that a signed concordat which gave equal status to each of the partners would be useful.

An amendment was proposed to recommendation 4, that the budget delegation to the Chief Executive, also be in consultation with the Leader. This was seconded. Debate ensued as to whether the consultation in recommendations 4 and 5 be with the Leader of the Council or all Group Leaders. It was agreed that full consultation with all would delay progress and that Members had faith and trust in the Leader.

Councillors expressed general support for the principles of Devolution but stressed that it was important that all authorities were equal partners, and that all Members be kept fully updated on progress. It was suggested that there be regular updates at every meeting of full Council.

The Leader stressed that structural changes were different to the Devolution agenda and there were no proposals at this point to make any changes. The concept of unitary authorities was not popular.

Some Members felt that the recommendations were ambiguous and questioned the accountability of spending, and that whilst Devolution was a high priority it was important that the provision of services continued for the residents of the District.

The Chief Executive responded to matters raised by Councillors, stating that the details would remain ambiguous for some time yet. A collective understanding based on facts and figures was initially required. Financial accountability would work similar to other council budget mechanisms and be reported back to Members. The project was not just about finance, it was about different bodies controlling services, the £100,000 budget was to fund work to investigate what was possible. It was the Chief Executive's job to make a judgement on priorities, to take a strategic role. New Directors and Strategic Leads were almost all in position and the Local Plan work was nearing completion, so it was important to focus on moving quickly with the Devolution agenda.

The amendment to Recommendation 4 and the additional fifth recommendation were voted upon and **AGREED**.

The five recommendations were then moved, seconded and voted upon en bloc and it was **RESOLVED** that:-

- a) having considered the report of the Chief Executive, Council:
- b) recognises that devolution is the opportunity the Council focuses on and endorses our engagement with partners;
- c) endorses that the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive develop this work as their top priority;
- d) approve a budget of £100,000 to be delegated to the Chief Executive, in full consultation with the Leader of the Council, which can be used to make contributions to any partnership work required to develop case for a deal. This budget will be funded from the General Fund Reserve;
- e) delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive of the Council for the signing of the initial submission by the Leader of the Council.

30 PRIORITIES FOR A REFRESHED CORPORATE PLAN 2016-2020 (PAPER D)

The Director of Resources introduced the report which set out the Members' initial strategic priorities, developed in Member workshops, and asked Council to agree these in principle for further work over the next few months.

The proposed priority areas were set out in Table 1 in the report, and the State of the District document was appended to the report.

The recommendations were moved, seconded and voted upon and it was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) the priorities as set out in the appendix to the report be agreed in principle;
- b) officers be asked to develop these priorities over the next few months to create a refreshed four year Corporate Plan;
- c) the appropriate success measures for the outline priorities be considered and in particular those identified as the top five priorities.

31 TO ELECT A TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN TO TAKE THE FOLLOWING ITEM OF BUSINESS.

The Vice Chairman invited nominations for a temporary Chairman to take the following item, having declared a pecuniary interest.

Councillor Bierley was proposed and seconded, and on being voted upon and agreed, Councillor Bierley took the Chair.

Note Councillor Patterson left the room at 8.28pm.

32 REMUNERATION FOR CIVIC DUTIES (PAPER E)

The Strategic Lead for Democratic and Business Support introduced the report which sought to inform Members of recommendations made by the Independent Remuneration Panel with regard to Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) and Allowances for the roles of Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Council and to bring these into line with other allowances as per the published scheme.

Members agreed that the changes were sensible and moved the recommendations which were then seconded and voted upon.

RESOLVED that:

- a) the introduction of a combined SRA for Chairing Council and the Civic role be agreed and separate allowances be paid to the Chairman and Vice Chairman of Council;
- b) the SRA for Chairman of the Council be aligned to the Deputy Leader;
- c) the SRA for Vice Chairman to be aligned to Committee Vice Chairs;
- d) the payment of a Civic Allowance of £1,500 for the Chairman of Council be approved;
- e) the payment of a Civic Allowance of £400 for the Vice-Chairman of Council be approved;
- f) £1,100 from the Civic Allowances budget code be moved back into the events budget;
- g) any necessary amendment of the Constitution be approved;
- h) the recommendations be approved to take effect from Annual Council on 21 May 2015. This amends the approved Scheme which came into effect on 1 April 2015.

Note Councillor Patterson returned to the Chamber at 8.31 pm

33 AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION (PAPER F)

The Strategic Lead for Democratic and Business Support introduced the report which advised of proposed amendments to the Constitution particularly in relation to budget management by the Prosperous Communities Committee.

During the annual review of the Constitution concerns were raised about the current Committee Structure and that the wording of the two main Policy Committees' Terms of Reference could make decision making a lengthy process at times, with some decisions requiring "sign off" by both Policy Committees.

The Terms of Reference for the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee included "the control and management of resources including land, property, finance and staff to the further the Council's objectives". It was proposed that as part of this remit the Corporate Policy and Resources (CPR) Committee be permitted to assign a specific budget (which must have already been approved by them) for a specific purpose, to the Prosperous Communities Committee for the services quoted in their Terms of Reference.

It was therefore recommended that the following amendments be made to the Constitution to facilitate the above.

(a) Terms of Reference for the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee

Item 2 be amended to read "the control and management of resources, including land, property, finance and staff to further the Council's objectives including the delegation of specific budgets to the Prosperous Communities Committee for a specific purpose, for the services quoted in their Terms of Reference"

(b) Terms of Reference for the Prosperous Communities Committee

Additional Term of Reference be included to read "to manage any budget assigned to the Committee by the Corporate Policy and Resources in relation to the service areas listed under item 4"

RESOLVED that the proposed amendments to the Constitution be supported and approved for adoption with immediate effect.

34 TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS PUBLISHED SINCE THE COUNCIL MEETING ON 2 MARCH 2015.

RESOLVED that the minutes of Committee meetings published since the Council meeting on 2 March 2015 be received.

The meeting concluded at 8.36 pm.

Chairman