

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee held in the Council Chamber at the Guildhall, Gainsborough on Thursday 17 December 2015 commencing at 4 pm.

Due to technical issues it was not possible to record or webcast this meeting.

Present: Councillor Tom Regis (Chairman)
Councillor Ian Fleetwood (Vice Chairman)

Councillor Owen Bierley
Councillor Matthew Boles
Councillor David Bond
Councillor Giles McNeill
Councillor John McNeill
Councillor Reg Shore
Councillor Jeff Summers

In Attendance:

Ian Knowles	Director of Resources
Mark Sturgess	Chief Operating Officer
Sarah Troman	Strategic Lead Housing and Regeneration
Tracey Bircumshaw	Financial Services Manager
Hannah Cann	Empty Homes Property Officer
Kim Leith	Health and Safety Co-ordinator
Dinah Lilley	Governance and Civic Officer

Apologies: Councillor Alex Bridgwood
Councillor Michael Devine
Councillor Adam Duguid
Councillor David Cotton
Councillor Anne Welburn

Membership: Councillor David Bond substituted for Councillor Devine
Councillor Giles McNeill substituted for Councillor Welburn

53 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

54 MINUTES

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee held on 10 November 2015 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Joint Staff Consultative Committee held on 25 November 2015 be noted.

55 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Giles McNeill declared a personal and non-pecuniary interest in Paper E, the Fees and Charges report, in that he was the holder of a small lotteries licence.

Councillor Tom Regis declared a personal and non-pecuniary interest in Paper D, Housing Enforcement Policy, in that he was a landlord.

56 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE SETTING OUT CURRENT POSITION OF PREVIOUSLY AGREED ACTIONS AS AT 2 NOVEMBER 2015 (CPR.31 15/16).

Members gave consideration to the Matters Arising Schedule which set out the current position of all previously agreed actions as at 9 December 2015.

The Chairman of the Governance and Audit Committee questioned whether the item regarding Planning Policy would be submitted to the Committee. The Governance and Civic Officer noted that the Governance and Audit Committee would only need to consider any proposed changes to the Constitution and the Matter Arising had been about clarifying existing policy. The Chief Operating Officer elaborated on the specific instance which had given rise to the issue.

The Director of Resources clarified the discrepancy in the elections figures quoted in the MTFP. The Supplies and Sundries figure covered stationery costs and the Third Party Payments was for additional staffing costs required during elections.

RESOLVED that progress on the Matters Arising Schedule as set out in report CPR.38 15/16 be noted.

57 DRIVING POLICY (CPR.39 15/16)

The Health and Safety Co-ordinator presented the report to the Committee following it being considered by the Joint Staff Consultative Committee.

The Health and Safety Executive in partnership with the Department for Transport and the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents had published guidance for employers on "Driving at Work – Managing Work-Related Road Safety".

The Guidance clearly stated their view that the requirements of Section 2 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and Regulation 3 of the Management of

Health and Safety at Work Regulations applied to all work related activities, including “work-related driving”.

The Guidance went on to state that it was essential to have an effective policy which covered the issue of work-related driving, clearly defining responsibilities for both the employer and employee and the measures to be taken. Therefore a Policy had been developed, its purpose to ensure that adequate controls were in place to protect the individual, the organisation and anyone else who may be affected by the Council’s activities.

The policy applied to all drivers on Council business and the checks to be made were set out in iTrent.

Robust debate ensued as it was pointed out that some Members, and Directors in particular, frequently used travelling time using ‘hands-free’ to undertake business over the telephone and to be prevented from doing this would have time management implications. It was clarified that whilst the ROSPA guidance advised the prohibition of ‘hands free’ calls, a compromise had been sought which enabled the use for those that required it, but also that employees had the right to refuse to take or make calls whilst driving.

Whilst expressing concerns Members agreed that the proposals were the best compromise available and the recommendations were moved, seconded and voted upon. It was subsequently **RESOLVED** that:

- a) the Driving Policy be approved for formal adoption; and
- b) delegated authority be granted to the Strategic Lead responsible for Customer First to make minor house-keeping amendments to the Policy in the future, in consultation with the Chairmen of the Policy and Resources Committee and Joint Staff Consultative Committee.

58 HOUSING ENFORCEMENT POLICY UPDATE (CPR.40 15/16)

Consideration was given to a report which presented to Members a reviewed and up to date Housing Enforcement Policy that included relevant legislative amendments for approval. The Empty Homes Property Officer outlined the proposed fees and fines and potential staff resource implications in connection to the legislative changes.

It was noted that three additional key pieces of legislation were now reflected within the Policy, namely: -

- The Mobile Homes Act 2013
- Redress Schemes for Lettings Agency Work and Property Management Work (Requirement to Belong to a Scheme etc.) (England) Order 2014
- The Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations 2015

The statutory requirements placed on landlords, letting agents and the Authority as a result of these pieces of legislation were outlined in detail to the Committee.

The Chairman of the Prosperous Communities Committee informed the meeting that the report had been considered and thoroughly debated at the Prosperous Communities meeting on 8 December 2015, and noted that it was important for landlords to be aware of the requirement of Carbon Monoxide Detectors.

RESOLVED that:

- a) the report be noted, and
- b) the report be submitted to full Council for approval of the fees and charges as set out in Appendix 1 of the report and within the policy at Appendix 2(a).

59 CHAIRMAN'S INTENTION TO VARY THE ORDER OF THE AGENDA

It was noted that Paper F, the Car Parking Strategy contained proposed charging policies, which had been incorporated into the Fees and Charges report at Paper E, so it was necessary to consider the Car Park Strategy first.

RESOLVED that the Car Parking Strategy be considered prior to the Fees and Charges report.

60 STRATEGIC REVIEW OF CAR PARKING (CPR.42 15/16)

The Strategic Lead for Housing and Regeneration introduced a report which presented a proposed new Car Parking Strategy for adoption.

Members were provided with background information demonstrating the need for a Strategy. The challenging financial climate of recent years had resulted in the need to radically re-align local public services and finances. Maximising the use and effective management of assets had become even more central to the way local authorities were seeking to deliver services and provide value for money.

The Council had recognised that the effective and prudent management of its car parking played a vital role in supporting the delivery of wider corporate objectives through supporting local businesses and the visitor economy.

In mid-2015, Car Parking Matters had reviewed the Council's approach to parking and had identified a number of issues to be addressed in order to get the best use from WLDC parking provisions. These had been incorporated into the proposed Car Parking Strategy 2015-20 that would act as a specific document to guide implementing change.

This Strategy aimed to set out a comprehensive approach to car parking in order to improve transparency of decisions and to ensure that the provision in the district was operated equitably and to best effect.

The plan was structured in two parts – the first part set out an overview of the offer and provided the high-level policy framework to guide the Council's approach to car parking. The second part of the plan included an Implementation Plan and proposed a number of specific Key Performance Indicators.

The key performance indicators would be used to monitor and inform the effective management of car parks going forward and capital funds were in place to upgrade the current parking meters in order to provide more meaningful and useful to data to assist in setting baselines and reviewing fees and charges in future years.

In summary, the Strategy recommended that the Council adopt a more uniform approach across the district, ensuring consistency in the implementation of charges. This would mean that all WLDC car parking provision would be chargeable, with the aim of supporting local retailers by freeing up space for shorter term parking to be used by shoppers and visitors to encourage footfall and spend in the local economy.

The Chairman clarified that financial implications in that £35k was to upgrade existing ticket machines and £65k was for new machines and the upgrade of car parks. The Director of Resources added that it was hoped to generate an additional £50k income and that the intention was that parking in the district would operate on a cost neutral basis.

The Strategic Lead for Housing and Regeneration pointed out that with the upgraded ticket machines usage data would be available to assist with analysis of customer use and to highlight any problem times or areas that needed addressing.

The Chairman of the Prosperous Communities Committees noted that the report had been considered by the Committee and noted that there was a requirement for the Council to provide services on a cost recovery basis and that this was not just a money making exercise.

Note: Councillor Shore joined the meeting at 4.34pm.

Members debated whether the policy of free parking after 3pm would be beneficial, and also whether the proposals would assist with footfall in the town and improve business. It was noted that if parking were free, spaces were generally taken by workers for full days, leaving none for shoppers. It was also hoped that CCTV would eventually be in situ to make parking safer.

Members appreciated the upgrading of the Market Rasen car park, but it was noted that the Festival Hall was adjacent the car park and it was hoped that work would not impede business or events.

RESOLVED that the WLDC Car Parking Strategy 2015-20 funding requirements of £65,000 from the current year (2015-16) Capital Programme to support implementation of pay and display parking in

Market Rasen, (in addition to the £35,000 already in the Capital Programme to upgrade the existing ticket machines in Gainsborough), plus an ongoing £31,000 revenue funding to cover enforcement, operating and maintenance costs at Market Rasen, be approved.

61 FEES AND CHARGES (CPR.41 15/16)

The Financial Services Manager outlined a report which presented the proposed revised Fees and Charges, to take effect from 1 April 2016.

By way of background, introduction and context it was noted that the Council had in place a corporate Fees, Charges and Concessions Policy which aimed to provide clear guidance on a number of areas. In particular this focused on how fees and charges could assist in the achievement of corporate priorities, the setting of new and reviewing of existing charges, the Council's approach to cost recovery and income generation from fees and charges and eligibility for concessions.

It had been recognised that although full cost recovery would be the customary approach, this would not be appropriate in all circumstances and the amount charged would need to reflect many factors including Council objectives, market conditions, the cost of collection and the potential impact on customers.

Work had been undertaken to bring the fees and charges in line with this policy, through reviewing existing fees and charges and considering the introduction of new charges for Council services, to recover costs and control demand. As a minimum, inflationary increases would normally have been applied where possible with the exception of those set by statute.

The Chairman of the Prosperous Communities Committee noted that the part of the report which covered the remit of the Prosperous Communities Committee had been previously considered on 8 December 2015, and welcomed the clear concise report.

Members debated some aspects of the report, namely the 6% increases against the 2.4% rate of inflation. All fees and charges were reviewed every year and those set at a rate higher than inflation were all detailed within the report. As part of the review process an extensive benchmarking exercise had been undertaken to furnish officers with greater levels of strategic information than had previously been used. This level of information combined with applying a more commercial approach, where applicable, had led to the proposed fees and charges.

As had been raised at the Prosperous Communities Committee it was suggested that a rounding up of car parking fees was more customer friendly if machines were not capable of giving change.

It was questioned as to why market stall fees were being reduced. This was an attempt to attract more traders, following extensive work on a review of

Gainsborough markets, on which a report was due to be submitted to the Committee in 2016.

Councillor Shore requested that a further review be presented to the Committee in six months. Although regular quarterly monitoring took place and was reported to the Committee, Cllr Shore requested an assessment of impact, not just financial figures.

The cost of burials was also questioned, as it appeared that West Lindsey District Council charged significantly less than many Parish Councils. This was affirmed and prices were being raised at a rate appropriate to the market to bring the Council more into line with other authorities.

The recommendations in the report were moved en bloc and it was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) having considered the proposed fees and charges, as detailed in Appendix A of the report, the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee recommend them to Council for approval;
- b) the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee recommend to Council for approval the proposed Fees and Charges as recommended by Prosperous Communities Committee and detailed at Appendix B of the report;
- c) it be agreed that in future, budget monitoring incorporates monitoring income reporting on volume and price variances; and
- d) the £94k ongoing income that is estimated to be generated by these proposals be acknowledged.

Note Councillor Shore had left the chamber at 4.52pm

61 COMMITTEE WORK PLAN (CPR.43 15/16)

RESOLVED that the Committee Work Plan be noted.

The meeting concluded at 4.54 pm.

Chairman