

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Council held in the Council Chamber - The Guildhall, Marshall's Yard, Gainsborough, DN21 2NA on 4 September 2017 at 7.00 pm.

Present: Councillor Mrs Angela Lawrence (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs Pat Mewis (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Mrs Gillian Bardsley	Councillor Mrs Sheila Bibb
Councillor Owen Bierley	Councillor Matthew Boles
Councillor David Bond	Councillor Mrs Jackie Brockway
Councillor David Cotton	Councillor Stuart Curtis
Councillor Michael Devine	Councillor Steve England
Councillor Ian Fleetwood	Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan
Councillor Stuart Kinch	Councillor Hugo Marfleet
Councillor Mrs Jessie Milne	Councillor Giles McNeill
Councillor John McNeill	Councillor Mrs Maureen Palmer
Councillor Malcolm Parish	Councillor Roger Patterson
Councillor Tom Regis	Councillor Mrs Diana Rodgers
Councillor Mrs Lesley Rollings	Councillor Thomas Smith
Councillor Lewis Strange	Councillor Jeff Summers
Councillor Mrs Anne Welburn	Councillor Mrs Angela White
Councillor Trevor Young	

In Attendance:

Ian Knowles	Director of Resources and S151 Officer
Mark Sturgess	Chief Operating Officer
Alan Robinson	SL - Democratic and Business Support
Katie Coughlan	Senior Democratic & Civic Officer
Katy Allen	Corporate Governance Officer

Also Present 3 Members of the Public

Apologies Councillor Chris Darcel
Councillor Richard Oaks
Councillor Judy Rainsforth
Councillor Reg Shore

31 CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed all Members and Officers present to the Meeting, with a special welcome to newly elected Member for the Scotter and Blyton Ward, Councillor Bruce Allison.

It was also with sadness, the Council bid a fond farewell to former District Councillor Stuart Curtis who had recently took the decision to resign from his position, as District Councillor for Sudbrooke Ward, due to ill health. The Chairman advised that formal tributes would be

paid under the Leader's announcements agenda item.

32 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

(a) Minutes of Meeting held on 3 July 2017

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting held on 3 July 2017 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

33 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made at this stage of the meeting.

34 MATTERS ARISING

The Monitoring Officer noted that all items due for completion were showing black, as having been completed.

Of the three remaining green items, two were not yet due for completion but remained on track, the third entitled "motion – flying of flag" had, since the reports were published, been completed and as such was now deemed completed.

RESOLVED that the Matters Arising be noted.

35 ANNOUNCEMENTS

i) Chairman of the Council

The Chairman addressed Council advising it had been a very busy period. Over recent weeks she had had the pleasure of attending a number of Events and Award Ceremonies, making reference to the following: -

- The Bishop Burton Student Awards Ceremony
- National Citizens Service – both Groups in Caistor, Market Rasen and Gainsborough and a graduation in Lincoln
- Judging the Gainsborough in Bloom competition.
- The Scout and Guide Jamboree at the Lincolnshire Showground
- The Pedal Car Grand Prix at the High School in Gainsborough

She had also had the pleasure of recently planting a tree at "Cherry Fields" in Cherry Willingham to officially open a wonderful community project. The project was home to a "growing to eat" area, cycle track, woodland walk and footpaths linking to the Viking Way. A total of nearly 2000 trees had been planted in the area.

The Chairman had also recently raised the Red Ensign to celebrate Merchant Navy Day at the Guildhall and expressed thanks to those Members who had supported this event.

In conclusion the Chairman thanked all those Members who had attended the "Meet the Officers and Staff Event" held earlier in the evening.

ii) Leader of Council

The Leader in opening his announcements paid tribute to a dear friend, good colleague and ally for a number of years, Councillor Stuart Curtis, who had recently taken the decision to resign from his position due to ill health. He praised Councillor Curtis for his pragmatic approach, his working together approach and positive attitude, commenting on his stewardship in his Planning Committee Chairman role, which he had held for a number of years. The Leader indicated that in the interim he would manage ward duties in the area. He shared with Council a message he had early received from Councillor Curtis' daughter regarding the most current position.

Fellow Members across the Chamber joined the Leader in paying tribute to their former colleague, commenting on his unwavering professionalism and the fair and balanced way in which he approached his role and duties. All were in agreement that Councillor Curtis would be sorely missed in the Chamber by all.

The Leader then returned to his announcements, making reference to the recent demolition of the Sun Hotel and the motion which was evident across the Town in terms of regeneration. A number of key projects were moving forward at a good pace and he awaited the outcome with excitement and anticipation. The Council continued to support regeneration across the District as whole, including the creation of Business units at Hill Crest, Caistor. The Leader had recently visited the development and was encouraged by the enthusiasm surrounding the project.

The Local Plan was also proving an invaluable document, and was assisting the Council in defending a number of planning appeals successfully

iii) Head of Paid Service

This was the first update from the new joint executive management team.

Members noted that over the summer the new management team had been finding its feet.

The key piece of work which had needed completing was a new structure for the staff below director level. This had now been done and the Head of Paid Service indicated the Management Team would be sharing with members in the near future a "family tree" (together with contact details and major responsibilities).

Alongside this work the Management Team had been working to communicate key messages to the staff. As part of this process the first whole staff meeting had been held at Trinity Arts Centre on 18 July. The meeting was very well attended and, along with the Leader, had provided the Management Team with an opportunity to be able to explain to the staff the management arrangements following the retirement of the Chief Executive, the roles of the three directors in managing the council and that as far the delivery of services was concerned it was business as usual.

It was also noted the event held earlier in the evening whereby Councillors had had the opportunity to meet with staff, was also part of the process of continuing to involve staff in the work of the council.

Looking forward, the Chamber were advised that the Autumn period look set to be a busy one. The briefings for the committees have recommenced after the summer break and all had important business to transact over the coming months

The first Scampton Airshow was due to be held at the weekend and officers would be heavily involved, both using the event to promote business opportunities in the District and ensuring appropriate emergency planning cover was in place.

It was also noted that the Council had been shortlisted for the Association of Public Service Excellence award for the best commercialisation and entrepreneurship initiative for its acquisition of "Surestaff".

The regeneration of Gainsborough was proceeding at pace and was now clearly evident, with the development of the new Lidl store and the construction of the new Travelodge on the site of the old Sun Hotel.

The annual budget consultation round would also be starting later this month and Members were encouraged to promote the events and avenues to engage across communities.

In conclusion Members were advised consultation on the crematorium project was also shortly due to commence.

36 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions from members of the public.

37 QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO. 9

Councillor Matthew Boles submitted the following question to the meeting:

Councillor Bibb, Do you consider the councils selective licencing scheme to have been a success or to have solved any of the issues it was sent up and envisaged to do?

Or do you agree with many residents in the North Ward and myself that it has not solved any issues it has simply moved them from one area of Gainsborough to another?

The Chairman of the Prosperous Communities Committee, Councillor Mrs Sheila Bibb, responded:-

Thank you Madam Chairman, and thank you Councillor Boles for raising this question.

Selective licensing was introduced in a limited area of Gainsborough just over 1 year ago and we are now reaching the end of the first phase of the process. As with all such things it takes a while to see results and even longer before we can draw any substantiated conclusions. In this case, where the focus has been on the landlord, we are starting to see the anticipated results with regard to the properties involved. The vast majority of landlords have engaged with the scheme proactively and positively and are meeting its requirements. The first set of prosecutions for rogue landlords are underway and improvements to property

conditions across the area have been made. As we move into Phase 2, where the focus will be on further addressing unlicensed and criminal landlords, alongside tenant behaviour, we can expect to see further changes. An update on Selective Licensing will be coming to Prosperous Communities in October and this should give a better understanding of the success of this measure to date.

With regard to the second part of the question concerning the movement of issues to other areas of Gainsborough, I too note these reports. However, at this time there is nothing, so far as I am aware, to directly tie any such movement to the work which has been done to date with Selective Licensing. I will be seeking regular reports on this situation as it is one of concern. Officers involved in the scheme are happy to meet with Cllr Boles directly to discuss this and consider it further.

Councillor Boles indicated he welcomed the offer to meet with Officers and the Chairman of the Committee to further discuss his concerns.

Councillor Matthew Boles had also submitted the following question to the meeting:

Councillor Summers your long term support for the re-introduction of car parking in Gainsborough Town centre is well documented and appreciated. However during the recent car parking review by WLDC this option seemed to be overlooked and discarded which was a disappointment to many in the town especially Town Centre businesses.

I have recently been asked by town businesses to facilitate a meeting with Lincolnshire County Council's highway department, West Lindsey District Council, Gainsborough Town Council and Business representatives to discuss this matter and all possible options available.

Could you please commit to supporting and attending such a meeting?
(I will be asking for a similar commitment from the County Council portfolio holder for Highways at LCC full council on 15/9/17)

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Jeff Summers, responded:-

Thank you for your question Councillor Boles.

As you quite rightly say, I have been a supporter of bringing car parking back into the market place. I am delighted to now be supported by a Gainsborough Town, and County Councillor.

Once again I must reiterate there is a need for us to create commercial equity across the town centre, and I am prepared to work with all parties to secure the best commercial and social arrangements possible for the town.

Recently I have discussed the issue with County Council Officers, who have offered to investigate what the process would be to have the highways designation removed from the market place, establish it as a car park and potentially hand it over to West Lindsey.

Please do not run away with the idea this will happen, it is being investigated.

Thank you. Councillor Boles

Councillor Boles thanked the Leader.

38 MOTIONS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO. 10

Councillor Jeff Summers had submitted the following motion:-

At our recent Lincolnshire Leaders meeting it was agreed around the table, we should collectively lobby government for a fairer funding deal.

Chairman.

I am asking if you would in the first instance allow a show of hands from members who would support a united county wide effort to lobby Government for a fair and equitable funding settlement for Lincolnshire.

Second, would you allow a short debate and suggestions from Members for subjects which may be more specific to the needs of West Lindsey which could be added to future spending initiatives? This would enable me to return to the next County meeting with hopefully your councils support.

I so move.

Councillor J Summers
Leader of Council

Before moving to debate the Leader was permitted to put his motion into context, and stated the following: -

During my time as a West Lindsey Councillor, 15 years in all. We as a council have complained about the unfair distribution of Government Funding to Rural Authorities. A justified stance when you compare the rate of investment per capita between a city resident and one living in an area designated as suffering the inequalities described under sparsity. Much of this inequity could have been resolved with a devolution deal, however this was not to be. As a result we cannot negotiate but only look for allies and lobby.

It has been calculated, if Lincolnshire were to receive the average payment across England, then the Geographical County would receive a further £116 million extra per annum.

Obvious areas where this extra support could be spent are Highways and maintenance, broadband, flood defences, health, leisure and attracting more business with improved work opportunities. As you will have noticed many of these items are not the responsibility of district councils but all do affect our living environment and wellbeing.

The motion was seconded by the Deputy Leader and debate ensued.

All Members across the Chamber were supportive of the stance, there was a view that greater use of all the Lincolnshire MPs should be made in any lobbying campaign and these MPs should make a united stance.

The Leader confirmed that North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire Councils were engaged in these discussion, however this was not an attempt to re-unite devolution

conversations.

Members also encouraged greater use of such organisations as SPARSE and the LGA to support the Council in its quest for a fairer funding deal.

All were in agreement that there was a need to make the Government clearly understand the extra costs that came with being a rural area. It was further suggested that other shires such as Norfolk and East Yorkshire should also be encouraged to join the campaign as there was a genuine belief the greater the number the stronger the message.

Further debate ensued and during the course of this the following areas in need of greater investment were suggested: -

- Transport
- Schools and Education
- Police
- Social Services and Adult Social Care
- Infrastructure

The Leader thanked Members for their support and undertook to take the views expressed by Members to the next County Leaders Meeting.

39 BUDGET CONSULTATION - SOFTWARE DEMONSTRATION

The Chairman advised that Budget Consultation was shortly due to commence and this year it had been agreed to use a piece of on-line software as an additional consultation tool. The Director of Resources was invited to introduce the purpose of the tool to Members and the benefits it would afford.

Officers advised that through the budget simulator, residents would not be offered the opportunity to increase budgets in service areas, the reason being that if consultation responses of this nature were sought and received, arguably they would be of little value, as currently the Authority did not have additional funds to commit.

Members were then given a demonstration of the software, the features it offered and the questions and options respondents would be asked and given.

Members welcomed the piece of software commenting on its friendly and inclusive nature. In response to questions Officers outlined the safeguards included to ensure multiple responses from any one individual would not be accepted.

Some Members indicated the option of a Council Tax freeze should have been included, it was also considered that providing additional context alongside people's choices and explanation as to what this would mean for services would have been useful.

It was acknowledged that the simulator could provide more flexibility in the future, however at the same time this was the first year the software was being used and there would be an opportunity to refine it further in the future.

In response to Members questions regarding how the software would be used to analyse responses, the Director of Resources offered to hold a workshop for those Members interested. This offer was welcomed by Members.

The Chairman thanked Officers for the demonstration.

40 DISTRICT COUNCIL BY-ELECTION FOR THE SCOTTER AND BLYTON WARD - RESULT OF POLL

Members were asked to note the outcome of the District Council By-Election held on 27 July 2017 in the Scotter and Blyton Ward.

The report set out the number of votes polled and the percentage turnout.

The Chairman, Leader and fellow members took the opportunity to welcome newly elected Councillor Allison to the Chamber.

RESOLVED that the outcome of the By-Election be duly received and noted.

41 AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION TO PERMIT CONCURRENT MEETINGS OF THE TWO POLICY COMMITTEES

Members gave consideration to a report which sought agreement to make amendments to the Constitution to permit concurrent meetings of the Policy Committees.

In responding to a Members comment that concurrent meetings should be extended wider than to just the two policy committees, the Chairman of Governance and Audit Committee, indicated that whilst he was happy to look at this suggestion as part of the wider annual review of constitution, to date the need had never arisen. This report and suggested amendment was in response to circumstances that the organisation currently found itself in.

RESOLVED that: -

(a) the following amendments be made to the Constitution: -

- Part IV / Page 3 - Corporate Policy and Resources Committee Terms of Reference, the following footnote be added: -
“This Committee can meet concurrently with the Prosperous Communities Committee”
- Part IV / Page 4 - Prosperous Communities Committee Terms of Reference, the following footnote be added: -
“This Committee can meet concurrently with the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee”
- Part IV/ Page 29 – Responsibility for Functions - Head of Paid Service, the

additional delegation be added: -

“to call concurrent meetings of the policy committees when it is considered prudent and efficient to do so in accordance with the agreed protocol.”

- (b) the Monitoring Officer, through the Governance and Audit Committee work towards establishing a protocol for running concurrent policy committee meetings. The protocol should establish a criteria for calling such meetings, establishing consultation requirements, address chairmanship, casting votes, and the process of voting.

42 APPOINTMENT OF AN ELECTORAL REGISTRATION OFFICER

Following the retirement of the Chief Executive, the Council was required to appoint an Electoral Registration Officer in accordance with Section 8 of the Representation of the Peoples Act 1983.

RESOLVED that the Monitoring Officer be appointed as the Council's Electoral Registration Officer.

Note: The Monitoring Officer, left the Chamber prior to the above item being considered and returned after the above vote had been taken.

43 APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL AUDITOR

Members gave consideration to a report, the purpose of which was to consider the consultation of and determine the appointment of our External Auditor for 2018/19 onwards.

Members were provided with details of the proposed appointment, the consultation process and how objections to the appointment could be raised.

RESOLVED that having consider the consultation on the appointment of the External Auditor, the appointment of Mazars as the Council's External Auditor from 1 April 2018 for a period of 5 years be approved.

The meeting concluded at 8.18 pm.

Chairman