

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Council held in the Council Chamber, The Guildhall, Gainsborough, on Monday 11 April 2016, at 7.30pm.

Present: Councillor Angela Lawrence (Chairman)
Councillor Roger Patterson (Vice Chairman)

Councillor Sheila Bibb	Councillor John McNeill
Councillor Owen Bierley	Councillor Pat Mewis
Councillor Matthew Boles	Councillor Jessie Milne
Councillor David Bond	Councillor Judy Rainsforth
Councillor Jackie Brockway	Councillor Di Rodgers
Councillor David Cotton	Councillor Lesley Rollings
Councillor Stuart Curtis	Councillor Reg Shore
Councillor Chris Darcel	Councillor Thomas Smith
Councillor Michael Devine	Councillor Lewis Strange
Councillor Adam Duguid	Councillor Jeff Summers
Councillor Ian Fleetwood	Councillor Anne Welburn
Councillor Paul Howitt - Cowan	Councillor Angela White
Councillor Stuart Kinch	Councillor Trevor Young
Councillor Hugo Marfleet	
Councillor Giles McNeill	

In Attendance:

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

Also in Attendance

Michelle Howard	Home Choices Team Manager
Sarah Shaw	Countywide Homelessness Strategy Co-ordinator

Also Present four members of the public

93 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Gillian Bardsley
Councillor Alexander Bridgwood
Councillor Steve England
Councillor Richard Oaks

Councillor Malcolm Parish
Councillor Tom Regis

94 COUNCIL MINUTES (PAPER A)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of Council held on 3 March 2016 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

95 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

96 MATTERS ARISING (PAPER B)

The Strategic Lead for Democratic and Business Support noted that one item was shown as having been completed and the other was not due for immediate completion.

RESOLVED that the Matters Arising be noted.

97 ANNOUNCEMENTS

i) Chairman of the Council

The Chairman noted that it had been a particularly busy month and she had attended several civic services, as well as the openings of new businesses. It had been an honour to meet with Pritti Patel, the Minister of State for Employment when she visited Gainsborough, and also to host the flag raising at the Commonwealth Day service on 14 March. Of particular note were the farewell to Wing Commander Harrop, who was retiring from RAF Scampton, and also the handing over of the Ushakov medal to Ernie Buckley who had sailed on Arctic convoys delivering supplies to Russia during WWII.

ii) Leader of the Council

The Leader noted that the next stage of consultation on the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan was progressing.

iii) Head of Paid Service

The Chief Executive expressed her gratitude to staff who had been involved in the process of the adoption of Selective Licensing over the last year, during which feedback had been taken on board and the programme had been a significant achievement.

Also of note was the successful bid for Gainsborough Housing and Regeneration funding. The overall budget situation was becoming more and more difficult each year and various options to deliver outcomes were under consideration.

98 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions from the public.

99 QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO. 9

None received

100 MOTIONS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO. 10

None received

101 PRESENTATION ON THE HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY

The Home Choices Team Manager and the Countywide Homelessness Strategy Co-ordinator spoke to Councillors and showed a brief video on the Lincolnshire Homelessness Strategy.

Delivery of the strategy was via a partnership of the seven housing authorities and over 25 voluntary and statutory sector organisations. The partnerships aimed to ensure there were effective strategies in place prevent homelessness through early intervention and prevention, increased access to good quality suitable accommodation and support where homelessness had already occurred.

Members approved the current strategy in 2012, this strategy was now nearing its conclusion and work was ongoing to develop a strategy for the period 2016 to 2020.

In West Lindsey, whilst there was no rough sleeping problem, there had been an increase in homelessness and in the complexity of the cases presenting. Across Lincolnshire vulnerable people had been unable to access critical and much needed housing and health support early enough to prevent their needs from escalating and their circumstances deteriorating.

Work had been ongoing with stakeholders to reflect on the successes and work completed during the life of the current strategy and to outline the challenges and thematic priorities that would shape the future strategy.

The Thematic Priorities were shown as:-

- Impact of commissioning changes
- What can we do as a partnership to protect our most vulnerable?
- Rough sleeping and non-priority homeless
- Implications of Government budget and policy changes affecting social housing and supported housing
- Access and affordability in the Private Rented Sector
- Strategic relationships, influence and devolution

Officers were keen to ensure meaningful engagement with Members, service users and all other relevant stakeholders – any suggestions for how best to do this would be very welcome. The homelessness strategy was on the Forward Plan and would be presented at Prosperous Communities Committee on 7 June 2016 for approval. This was a countywide homelessness strategy and would be for the period 2016 – 2020.

Councillors asked a number of questions and an interested debate ensued. Issues such as those of ex-offenders, migrants, domestic abuse victims etc, and work with other organisations such as Border Agencies and Registered Providers were discussed. The big part played by the Foyer in Gainsborough was acknowledged.

The two officers were thanked for their very informative and enlightening presentation.

102 RECONFIGURATION OF THE COUNCIL CHAMBER (PAPER C)

The Chairman of the Challenge and Improvement Committee presented the report to the Council meeting, noting that it had been considered by the Committee, on recommendation of the Democracy Working Group, on 5 April 2016.

Three options on the layout of the Council Chamber had been considered and trialled, (including the existing layout), and Members had been requested to provide feedback on each of the options and express their preferences. The analysis of the feedback was set out in the report.

The report noted that the Democracy Working Group at their meeting on 16 March 2016 had considered the comments made and the scores received and favoured recommendation of Option 1 for adoption. Consideration was also given by the Challenge and Improvement Committee to the cost implications of each of the options, which could be as much as £2,000 depending on the option chosen.

It was acknowledged that specific seating arrangements would be Group decisions and it was simply the layout which was for determination at this stage. Note was made that no option had received an overwhelming preference, and the investigation of other options had already been undertaken prior to the trials at previous Council meetings, and discounted as being not feasible.

The recommendation from the Challenge and Improvement Committee was therefore set out as:-

“RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to Council that Option 3 be the preferred option and as such there be no change in configuration.”

Further brief debate ensued and it was generally agreed that there was no need to make a change just for the sake of it and particularly given the potential costs involved. The Chairman of the Democracy Working Group acknowledged the work of, and thanked, all those who had been involved in the project.

It was moved and seconded that the recommendation of Option 3 from the Challenge and Improvement Committee be agreed, it was subsequently voted on and:

RESOLVED that there be no change to the current configuration of the Council Chamber.

103 GREATER LINCOLNSHIRE DEVOLUTION DEAL (PAPER D)

The Chief Executive introduced the report, the purpose of which was to update Members on the devolution deal and the next steps, including governance. Greater Lincolnshire's ten Councils had agreed with the Government a 'devolution deal'. This would now act as the basis for agreeing the formal governance.

An extra Council meeting was proposed for May 2016, at which Council would receive the Scheme, ratify the Deal and process for public consultation. This would outline the powers and responsibilities for a proposed Mayor and Combined Authority. Following public consultation a submission would need to be made to Government for approval by way of a Statutory Order by November 2016, and it was anticipated that Mayoral elections would be in May 2017.

The proposals were for devolution to a local level for responsibilities and the funding for:

- a) Transport and Highways
- b) Economic Development and Skills
- c) Planning, Housing and Infrastructure
- d) Public Protection
- e) Water Management and Flooding
- f) Health

The agreed Deal proposed an additional £15 million a year for 30 years, and funding devolved for areas such as skills, further education and public protection. Areas such as Housing, Water Management and Health that required further negotiations would be subject to the next stage of Devolution discussions.

In addition, arrangements were being made to implement the Devolution Deal agreement, which would require formal governance arrangements, including a Parliamentary Order to create a new Mayor and Combined Authority for Greater Lincolnshire.

A report would be brought to a special Council meeting in May 2016 which outlined the governance proposals, timelines for government approval and public consultation. It was anticipated that the same report would be presented to all ten authorities at around the same date, and the Chief Executive agreed to circulate the dates of the individual meetings to Members.

A number of appendices were attached to the report, which set out:-

- a) A fuller briefing on the Devolution Deal (circulated to Group Leaders);
- b) A Frequently Asked Questions as prepared for press and public queries;
- c) Government letter outlining arrangements for implementation;

- d) Government timeline for implementation;
- e) The final signed Deal Document.

The Chief Executive offered to attend Group meetings, if required, to give clarification or answer any questions which Members may have.

Debate ensued during which differing opinions were voiced, along with some concerns, particularly around the need for an elected mayor. However it was acknowledged that the proposals would raise the status of West Lindsey from its usual low priority, to being 'in the driving seat', as each constituent member authority would be entitled to one vote. It was generally felt that the Mayoral appointment should be non-political and have the right skills.

It was questioned as to whether there were any other proposed cross-boundary devolved authorities. It was affirmed that as the proposals generally started from the basis of the Local Enterprise Partnerships rather than Council boundaries, there were others, including Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire. It was felt that it would be beneficial to resolve common issues between the authorities at a more local level rather than from central government, hence devolving Greater Lincolnshire's powers to a local level.

Some Members still expressed doubts and felt that the proposal merely created an additional tier of government, and that the funding was not additional but just reallocated. Some felt that the appointment of a Mayor was being imposed and feared that the proposals could eventually lead to a unitary authority.

The Chief Executive resolved to provide more information at the additional meeting in May, and requested that Members give consideration to the details they require and to the pros and cons of the various aspects, and to submit questions to either herself or the Leader.

The Chief Executive also noted that the Market Rasen Mail had featured an article on Questions and Answers around Devolution, and she would email the weblink to Members to be able to view this.

The recommendations in the report were then moved, seconded and voted upon. It was therefore **RESOLVED** that:

- a) the contents of the report be approved and noted;
- b) the additional proposed Council meeting in May at which the draft scheme would be presented for approval, be noted; and
- c) the offer of the provision of further information or discussion be noted.

104 TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS PUBLISHED SINCE THE COUNCIL MEETING ON 3 MARCH 2016.

RESOLVED that the minutes of Committee meetings published since the Council meeting on 3 March 2016 be received.

West Lindsey District Council – 11 April 2016

The meeting concluded at 9.05pm.

Chairman