

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Prosperous Communities Committee held in the Council Chamber - The Guildhall, Marshall's Yard, Gainsborough, DN21 2NA on 11 October 2023 commencing at 6.30 pm.

Present: Councillor Mrs Lesley Rollings (Chairman)
Councillor Emma Bailey (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Trevor Young (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor John Barrett
Councillor Owen Bierley
Councillor Frazer Brown
Councillor Karen Carless
Councillor Roger Patterson
Councillor Jim Snee

In Attendance:
Russell Clarkson Development Management Team Manager
Sally Grindrod-Smith Director Planning, Regeneration & Communities
Ady Selby Director - Operational & Commercial Services
Ele Snow Senior Democratic and Civic Officer

Apologies: Councillor Stephen Bunney
Councillor Jacob Flear
Councillor Paul Lee
Councillor Mrs Diana Rodgers

Membership: Councillor John Barrett attended for Councillor Paul Lee
Councillor Jim Snee attended for Councillor Stephen Bunney

33 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

34 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Prosperous Communities Committee held on 12 September 2023 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

35 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest at this point in the meeting.

36 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE

The Democratic and Civic Officer indicated there had been several meetings recently, so the matters arising as were published on 3 October had already been updated. The next set of papers would be coming out on 18 October and would show the updated version.

With no further comments, questions or requirement for a vote, the Matters Arising schedule was **DULY NOTED**.

37 COTTAM SOLAR PROJECT - LOCAL IMPACT REPORT (LIR)

The report of the Director of Planning, Regeneration & Communities seeking consideration of the Local Impact Report (LIR) prepared for the Cottam Solar Project DCO examination was received.

The Development Management Team Manager introduced the report and explained this was the second solar project in the district to be considered by the government under the Planning Act 2008.

The location and size of the proposed site were outlined. It was noted that the site was divided across a number of areas. The committee was advised of the timescales for submitting information and the requirements for the Local Impact Report (LIR) were explained.

The committee was informed that the recommendation was to submit a LIR and a draft response was included in the agenda for consideration. Members noted that the submission was broadly in line with the application with each section setting out the positive, the neutral and the negative impacts.

The comments of members were requested and the response would be amended as necessary taking in to account those views. Delegation to finalise the response in consultation with the Chairman of the committee was being sought.

A member expressed disappointment that the decision was not within the remit of the council and took away local accountability in the process. It was suggested that a response needed to be submitted and the recommended response should be supported. A councillor concurred and thanked officers for providing such a comprehensive report.

A councillor raised concern regarding the potential fire risk of such developments and requested that reference be made in the submission. In response it was confirmed that the developer had a fire risk management strategy and Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue were a consultee.

The potential economic and employment opportunities were highlighted by a councillor and it was suggested this needed to be balanced against the loss of jobs in the agricultural and tourism sectors. The concern was acknowledged and it was agreed that the immediate direct job losses could be highlighted together with losing significant hectares of agricultural land.

A member raised the issue of disruption to local communities during construction. It was

noted that there would need to be identified construction routes for the development which was complicated by the layout of the site. A councillor agreed with previous speakers and emphasised the need to make residents aware of the process and the councils role.

Having been proposed and seconded the recommendations were put to the vote and were carried.

RESOLVED:

- 1) To accept the invitation and approve the submission of a Local Impact report (LIR) to be made on the Cottam Solar Project DCO examination; and
- 2) To review the draft Local Impact report (LIR) prepared for the Cottam Solar Project examination, and to delegate authority to the Director of Planning, Regeneration and Communities following consultation with the Chair of this committee, to complete, finalise and submit the LIR by Deadline 1 (17th October) as set by the Examining Authority, taking into consideration the committee's comments.

38 COTTAM SOLAR PROJECT - WRITTEN REPRESENTATIONS

Consideration was given to the report of the Director of Planning, Regeneration & Communities regarding the Written Representations (WR) prepared for the Cottam Solar Project DCO examination.

The Development Management Team Manager presented the report and explained that written representations could cover any relevant matter and was not restricted to the matters set out within their initial assessment of the principal issues. The recommended response in the report was outlined. It was explained that officers were recommending that significant objections should be forwarded relating to specific impacts, many of which arose from the ad hoc nature of the development. The cumulative impact of solar developments was also highlighted.

The recommendations were proposed and seconded and on being put to the vote were carried.

RESOLVED:

- 1) To accept the invitation and approve the submission of Written Representations (WR) to be made on the Cottam Solar Project DCO application; and
- 2) To review the draft Written Representations (WR) prepared for the Cottam Solar Project examination, and to delegate authority to the Director of Planning, Regeneration and Communities following consultation with the Chair of this committee, to complete, finalise and submit the WR by Deadline 1 (17th October) as set by the Examining Authority, taking into consideration the committee's comments.

39 GARDEN WASTE SERVICE BUSINESS PLAN

The report of the Director of Commercial & Operational Services in respect of the performance of the Garden Waste Service during the 2023 season and, through the refreshed Business Plan, making recommendations for a service standard for the 2024 season was received.

The Director of Commercial & Operational Services introduced the report and advised that it reflected on the current and previous year's performance of the garden waste service and made recommendations about the service level for the 2024 season. It was noted that the service remained popular despite a slight decline in uptake due to the cost-of-living crisis and the implementation of the purple lidded bin scheme.

The improved efficiencies both in the service provided resulting from the introduction of digital devices for crews and the implementation of the new customer relationship management system was emphasised.

A number of risks were identified including an as yet unconfirmed government proposal to make garden waste collections free for all, the continuing cost of living crisis and changing environmental conditions.

This was balanced against opportunities such as the predicted housing growth in the district, the low subscription levels and number of collections. It was noted that the service operated on a cost recovery basis so as not to burden the wider Council taxpayer who did not subscribe to the service. The financial impact of cost increases relating to staff, fuel and vehicle maintenance were outlined and therefore an increase in the subscription to £44 was being recommended.

It was anticipated that the service could achieve full cost recovery and other options were outlined in the business plan. The community engagement exercise to accompany the scheme was highlighted and it was noted that the survey would be bought to members in due course and the results would be included in the 2024 garden waste business plan.

A member welcomed the report and emphasised that the service was highly valued by residents. It was noted that it was not statutory service but had a positive environmental impact and supported the need to get feedback from residents. The increase in fees was supported.

A councillor concurred and expressed the hope that the service provided value for money and could be extended in the future.

Clarification regarding the increase in costs was sought by a councillor. The concern was acknowledged and options were explained and could form part of the consultation process. It was explained that the current collection frequency and costs were in place following previous surveys.

A member referred to smaller households who may not want as many collections and whether this had been considered. In response it was confirmed that residents could choose to share bin space with neighbours, smaller bins were not offered at the moment and, a standard service was the easiest and most efficient to deliver and any deviation from that

would increase costs. However technology was improving and there may be the ability moving forward to implement some deviations from the standard service.

A member highlighted the flexibility of the service and that it adapted to conditions to ensure collections were made at the right times. A councillor asked if any discount could be offered to residents with more than one bin. It was explained that this had been considered previously and when a vehicle was full it would have to go the tip and return again so it was not any cheaper. It was indicated that this approach could be reviewed.

The recommendations were proposed and duly seconded and on being put to the vote were carried.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the subscription for the Garden waste Service be increased to £44 for eighteen collections in 2023/24; and
- 2) That a draft community engagement proposal be presented to the Prosperous Communities Committee in June 2024 for approval

40 WORKPLAN

The committee was advised that the next meeting that was due to be held on 31 October had been moved to 26 October and after that the scheduled meetings were as previously agreed.

With no further questions or comments, the work plan was **DULY NOTED**

The meeting concluded at 7.18 pm.

Chairman