

## 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 24 October 2017 commencing at 6.30 pm.

**Present:** Councillor Mrs Sheila Bibb (Chairman)  
Councillor Mrs Gillian Bardsley (Vice-Chairman) and  
Councillor Steve England (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Owen Bierley  
Councillor Christopher Darcel  
Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan  
Councillor Mrs Pat Mewis  
Councillor John McNeill  
Councillor Mrs Maureen Palmer  
Councillor Richard Oaks  
Councillor Reg Shore  
Councillor Mrs Angela White

**In Attendance:**  
Eve Fawcett-Moralee Director Economic & Commercial Growth  
Tracey Bircumshaw Financial Services Manager  
Nev Brown Senior Neighbourhood Planning Policy Officer,  
Andy Gray Housing and Communities Team Manager  
Julie Heath Senior Communications Officer  
Emily Holmes Selective Licensing Officer  
Michelle Howard Home Choices Team Manager  
Rachael Hughes Developer Contributions Officer  
Ian Knowles Director of Resources and S151 Officer  
Rachel Parkin Senior Home Choices Officer  
Alan Robinson Monitoring Officer  
Mark Sturgess Chief Operating Officer/Head of Paid Service  
Grant White Lead Officer Enterprising Communities

**Apologies:** Councillor Michael Devine  
Councillor Mrs Lesley Rollings  
Councillor Trevor Young

**Membership:** Councillor Angela White Substituting for Councillor Lesley Rollings  
Councillor Richard Oaks substituting for Councillor Mick Devine  
Councillor Reg Shore substituting for Councillor Trevor Young

**Also Present:** Councillor Tom Smith  
Councillor Lewis Strange

**Also in Attendance:** 3 Members of the Public

## **54 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Mr Adrian Campbell, a recently retired local business man, addressed the Committee regarding car parking in Market Rasen, he started by firstly thanking the Council for being true to its word and re-visiting the issue of car parking in the town of Market Rasen. Mr Campbell advised that not only were the parking charges not re-couping their costs, businesses in Market Rasen, since the installation of the parking machines, were reporting a loss in turnover of around a quarter of million pounds.

Mr Campbell went on state that the Council could be forgiven for presuming a 30p charge would make little difference, and for striving for equity presuming that what works for Gainsborough would work for Market Rasen too. Mr Campbell stated at the time he could not have been sure what the impact of the change would likely be however at the time he had also requested more research be undertaken to understand the current position, economically of Market Rasen in the first instance, because he feared it would damage the town and in his view it had.

He considered the report before Members was a pragmatic step and immediate rectifier “to put the fire out” before Christmas. Mr Campbell then quoted from the report referencing the indication that the Committee, in the future would be asked to vote on future proposals regarding Market Rasen and, therefore, questioned how the process of consultation had gone wrong on this occasion and sought reassurance this would not be the case going forward.

He considered democracy was not working across the District suggesting that most Members and Officers were located around Gainsborough and thus it was easy to forget Market Rasen. He suggested that if Members of the Committee were to vote in the future regarding proposals for their town, they should get to know the area, read the local paper, visit local shops and restaurants, hold meetings there, research the statistics available, learn from past mistakes.

He shared with the Committee the Venue scores for both towns to demonstrate the economic differences between the two. Mr Campbell considered a bespoke approach to regeneration was required in the town of Market Rasen to take into account its current economic challenges.

In concluding Mr Campbell again urged the Committee to “put out the fire” and vote in support of the proposals before them to give Market Rasen 2 hours free parking at anytime and help the town on the run up to Christmas.

The Chairman thanked Mr Campbell for his statement.

## **55 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

- (a) Meeting of the Prosperous Communities Committee – 12 September 2017

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Prosperous Communities Committee held on 12 September 2017 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

## **56 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE**

Members gave consideration to the Matters Arising Schedule which set out the current position of all previously agreed actions as at 16 October 2017.

**RESOLVED** that progress on the Matters Arising Schedule, as set out in the report be received and noted.

## **57 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Owen Bierley declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 6 (d) (Neighbourhood Plan: Priorities and Work Programme) as he was a Member of Keelby Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

## **58 TO VARY THE ORDER OF THE AGENDA**

The Chairman indicated that with Committee's leave she wished to vary the order of the agenda, so as to take agenda item 6 (k) (Market Rasen Car Parking) as the first public report, in light of the public interest in the report present in the Chamber, following which the agenda would be resumed in that order as published.

On being put to the vote it was:

**RESOLVED** that the order of the agenda be varied as detailed above.

## **59 MARKET RASEN CAR PARKING**

The Committee gave consideration to a report which outlined the outcome of the review into car parking charges in Market Rasen, in terms of ease of car parking and town centre viability over the last 8 months and responded to local concerns in this regard. The report further set out a number of proposed changes to the charging regime as a result of the review.

Members noted the background to the charges having being introduced and the opposition that had been expressed at the time. Members were also provided with details of how the review had been undertaken and the conclusions drawn therefrom.

It was noted that at the time of introducing car parking charges in the town a key risk was noted as the potential negative impact on footfall in the town centre and local businesses. The Free after 3pm policy was introduced to mitigate this risk by encouraging trade during quieter periods, while managing the supply of car parking during peak times. The feedback from local consultation advised that this policy had not been effective in maintaining town

centre viability; and provided evidence that two hours free any time would provide the best balance between management of length of stay and turnover of spaces and town viability.

The proposed amendment to the charging regime would result in a loss of income to the Council, as detailed in the financial implications section of the report, for one year, but also sought to maintain the self-financing principles of the original policy in April 2019.

It was considered the impact of not amending the charging regime presented significant risks as specified in the risk assessment, hence the recommendations being proposed.

Debate ensued and the Chamber as a whole was supportive of the proposed revisions.

In response to a Members question, Officers advised that 6 hours a day enforcement was allocated in Market Rasen. Some Members were of the view that Gainsborough parking also needed to be revisited, however assurance was offered that this continued to be monitored during the on-going regeneration projects.

The Local Ward Member expressed his delight that the Council had re-considered its position on this matter.

**RESOLVED** that it be **RECOMMENDED** to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee that: -

(a) the car parking charging regime be amended as follows:

- Cessation of the free after 3pm, in favour of
- Introduction of free two hours, at any time
- Maintain car parking charges between the hours of 8am and 6pm Monday to Saturday, and
- Continuation of the no charge policy for Blue badge holders.

(b) the loss of revenue arising from the above be regarded as “match funding” to support the evolving regeneration plans for the town over a 12 month period.

(c) the amendment to the car parking charging regime be reviewed in 12 months’ time and options to secure cost recovery be developed and consulted on in October 2018, for implementation in April 2019.

## **60 MEMBERSHIP OF THE CREMATORIUM WORKING GROUP**

The Committee gave consideration to a report which sought the formal appointment of Members to a working party for the crematorium project.

**RESOLVED** that Members named at paragraph 2.2 of the report be formally appointed to the Crematorium Working Group, namely: -

Councillor Gillian Bardsley  
Councillor Mick Devine  
Councillor Judy Rainsforth

Councillor Bruce Allison  
Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan  
Councillor David Cotton  
Councillor Jessie Milne  
Councillor Stuart Kinch

## **61 LEA NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

Consideration was given to a report which presented the up-to-date position in terms of the development of the Lea Neighbourhood Plan. The report recommended that the Plan proceed to the Public Referendum stage following a successful independent examination.

The Committee commended the work undertaken by the community to date, acknowledging the significant work required to get to this stage in the process, particularly for smaller communities. The Committee further welcomed the submission of many more Neighbourhood Plans to come.

**RESOLVED** that the Lea Neighbourhood Plan be formally approved to advance to the Public Referendum stage, in line with the advice received from the Independent Examiner.

## **62 SCOTTER NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

Consideration was given to a report which presented the up-to-date position in terms of the development of the Scotter Neighbourhood Plan. The report recommended that the Plan proceed to the Public Referendum stage following a successful independent examination.

The Committee commended the work undertaken by the community to date, acknowledging the significant work required to get to this stage in the process. The Committee further welcomed the submission of many more Neighbourhood Plans to come.

**RESOLVED** that the Scotter Neighbourhood Plan be formally approved to advance to the Public Referendum stage, in line with the advice received from the Independent Examiner.

## **63 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN: PRIORITIES AND WORK PROGRAMME**

Consideration was given to a report which reviewed the Council's support to neighbourhood planning groups in helping them to prepare their plans and sought Members' support to the revised arrangements and approval of the report's recommendations, prioritising Council assistance including the provision of top-up funding.

The Chief Operating Officer indicated a further inclusion he would wish to see added to the recommendations to ensure the support being offered was consistent with previous reports, namely: -

"Top up funding will only be available to those NP Groups who have exhausted all other forms of grant assistance or assistance in kind and the money is essential to help them complete the statutory stages of their neighbourhood plan. "

This was to ensure the raft of external funds available were maximised thus meaning the Council had enough funds to support parishes across the District.

Councillor England as Member Champion agreed with the content of the risk assessment, however expressed concern with the wording used.

Referencing section 2.2 of the report Councillor England considered the reason a number of early made plans had not reached their full potential was simply because of how new the legislation and work area was. He considered three plans would benefit from a review.

Councillor England wholeheartedly supported the notion of Groups presenting their plan to Full Council in a recognition of the hard work they had undertaken and what they had accomplished, whilst at the same time accepted the view of the Independent Examiner superseded any views the Prosperous Communities Committee may have.

A Member expressed concern regarding recommendation 5 and was concerned that if this was implemented there would not be the appropriate checks and balances in place. There would be no opportunity for Members to express concern. Reassurance was offered that delegations in place did not have to be used. Furthermore, the role of the District Council and the Independent Examiner in Neighbourhood Planning was re-iterated, as was defined in Statute hence this proposed change to streamline the process.

The early addition, as proposed by the Chief Operating Officer on being put to vote was accepted.

On that basis it was:-

**RESOLVED** that: -

- (a) the revised arrangements for providing Council support to neighbourhood plan groups as outlined in this report be noted and supported
- (b) the Council continues to support all neighbourhood planning groups in the preparation of their plans. The provision of such support is a corporate priority, embraces the requirements and aspirations of the Localism Act, contributes to good planning decision making in the district, and enhances community cohesion. Neighbourhood planning in the district enables local people to take a proactive role in shaping the future of the settlements they live in, and by providing them with support gives the Council a good reputation.
- (c) the level of support provided by the Council to neighbourhood planning groups be made on an individual basis taking into account the needs of that settlement. Priority to be given to those neighbourhood planning groups that are positively planning for growth or facing significant development pressures in their areas. The Council will also prioritise support to those neighbourhood plans which have reached these key statutory stages: designation; draft publication: submission; examination; referendum; and the making of the plan.

- d) it be agreed, that in its partnership with the Council, Community Lincs support on neighbourhood plans will be directed towards the initial/pre-designation stages of plan preparation where the assistance it has available can be best utilised. This will be confirmed in an updated version of the service level/partnership agreement. Parish and town councils will be informed that there will be no charge for this support from Community Lincs.
- e) it be **RECOMMENDED** to Full Council that the decision, currently made by Prosperous Communities, to accept the examiner's report and hold a referendum on a neighbourhood plan, in future be made through delegated powers given to the Chief Operating Officer. This stage raises few issues and using delegated powers will save time at a critical stage in the neighbourhood plan process when statutory deadlines must be met.
- f) it be agreed that the Members Champion for Neighbourhood Plans and the Neighbourhood Planning Team should meet on a quarterly basis to review the timetable of neighbourhood plans and consider those at planned referendums and forthcoming committees. The Neighbourhood Planning Team should also provide Members with monthly bulletins on neighbourhood plans progress in the District.
- g) it be agreed that for this financial year 2017/18 and 2018/19 the Council, subject to availability, continue to provide 'top-up' funding to neighbourhood planning groups and this should be awarded where project costs are essential to the formal adoption of the neighbourhood plan such as but not limited to:
- identified gaps in evidence for example towards specialist studies;
  - engaging a planning expert to help produce the submission document;
  - contribution to undertaking a strategic environmental assessment ;
  - support with collecting and analysing responses from the six week draft plan consultation and deciding how to modify the neighbourhood plan;
  - help with understanding whether the plan is ready for examination (meeting the basic conditions and other legal requirements);
  - provide training in the legal requirements which may be tested at the examination stage; and
  - costs associated with planning and undertaking public engagement and consulting on the plan at submission and referendum stages such as venue hire, publicity materials and printing costs.
  - Top up funding will only be available to those NP Groups who have exhausted all other forms of grant assistance or assistance in kind and the money is essential to help them complete the statutory steps of their neighbourhood plan.
- h) it be agreed that the Council introduce a formal application process to administer claims from neighbourhood planning groups for 'top-up' funding. Application forms and guidance notes for 'top-up' funding to be made available on the Council's website and submissions should be dealt with on a first come first served basis. Submissions will be overseen by the Council's Enterprising Communities team manager responsible for grant applications to the Council. This procedure will ensure that claims for limited 'top-up'

funds have been scrutinised in a fair and reasonable way as possible.

**Note:** Councillor Darcel requested that his vote against the above decision be recorded.

#### **64 ADOPTION OF CIL FOR WEST LINDSEY**

Members gave consideration to a report regarding proposals for West Lindsey District Council (WLDC) to formally adopt the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The Committee was asked to accept the recommendations in the report and recommend these to Full Council for formal adoption. The report had previously been considered by the Challenge and Improvement Committee who had supported the recommendations.

The Developer Contributions Officer explained the concept of the CIL and Members were provided with a list of frequently asked questions and corresponding answers to assist with their understanding of the scheme. Discussion ensued about the level of charges and how they had been capped. The Developer Contributions Officer explained that the charges and capping had been set by the Inspector and could not be changed by the Council. It was noted that, should the CIL be formally adopted, guidance notes and training sessions would be provided, to include parish councils, once the scheme was implemented. Information would also be made available on the Council's website.

Debate ensued and some Members indicated slight concern that the proposals would be adopted prior to any workshops, however it was also acknowledged that the partnership arrangements had not necessarily made this feasible on this occasion.

Clarification was sought as to whether the rates could be increased in the future or alternately reduced in the future, and as such whether there was a review mechanism. Clarification was also sought as to whether payment in kind was acceptable for smaller developments.

Whilst Members welcomed the distribution of funds to communities affected directly by development, it was noted that usually it would be the services of the larger nearby settlements which would be put under strain and this arrangement would not offer those communities additional funding.

In response, Officers outlined how such impacts could and were mitigated.

Some Members did not consider that the 25% being offered to communities was enough considering the amenities they would need to provide to offer the healthy communities strived for.

In response Officers clarified that CIL would work in conjunction with S106s, and whilst CIL would contribute to the large infrastructure projects identified, this being the Lincoln Eastern Bypass and secondary education, there would still be opportunity for other stakeholders, such as Health to secure a contribution from developers through S106, if deemed necessary and appropriate. Equally public open space could still be secured through a Section 106. Furthermore the Policy was now more flexible and did not necessarily require a percentage of land to be contributed but could require contributions to upgrade current facilities, focussing on quality not just quantity. CIL did not replace all the other avenues available to the Authority to mitigate the impact of development on communities.

**RESOLVED** that it be **RECOMMENDED** to Full Council that: -

- (a) The modifications set out in the West Lindsey Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Examination Report (Appendix A) to the Draft Charging Schedule be approved and incorporated into the West Lindsey CIL Charging Schedule.
- (b) The West Lindsey CIL Charging Schedule, (Appendix B), which has been amended to reflect the Examiner's modifications, be adopted;
- (c) The position statement provided by Lincolnshire County Council, as requested by the Prosperous Communities Committee, be accepted;
- (d) The supporting policies Instalments and In-Kind and Regulation 123 List (Appendix C, D & E), that were consulted upon alongside the Draft CIL Charging Schedule consultation, also be approved;
- (e) The CIL Charging Schedule be implemented on a date as soon as is practicable on or after 1 January 2018 and in alignment with the other Central Lincolnshire authorities;
- (f) The Chief Operating Officer be authorised to:
  - set the implementation date as per recommendation 5 above
  - make minor changes to improve the presentation of the CIL Charging Schedule
  - improve the presentation, and where necessary, clarification of supporting policy documents; and
- (g) A maximum 5% administration charge be agreed when CIL is adopted

**Note:** Councillor Gillian Bardsley declared a pecuniary interest in the following item of business, as a landlord, and withdrew from the Chamber prior to its consideration.

## **65 SELECTIVE LICENSING PROGRESS REPORT AND TENANT PASSPORT**

The Committee gave consideration to a report which sought to update Members in regard to the Selective Licensing Scheme. The report also sought approval to the introduction of a Tenant Passport Scheme in the area.

In presenting the report, Officers outlined the current position including the financial position, the support being offered to Landlords and the approach to Enforcement. Information was also provided in respect of the Tenant Passport Scheme, future timescales associated with

the project and the associated work being undertaken to reduce anti-social behaviour.

Debate ensued and Members welcomed the work which had been undertaken to date, in particular the introduction of the Passport scheme to further assist landlords.

Some Members expressed concern that anti-social behaviour including drug use was still a major issue in the area. Officers re-iterated that Selective Licensing was never intended to be the solution but rather one tool which could be used. Officers outlined the numerous other joint initiatives which were taking place in the Ward to reduce and prevent anti-social behaviour. Information sharing between agencies was much improved, key issues, key addresses and residents in the area were regularly discussed. Joint warrants had been executed. Other tools being used were PSPOs and consideration of greater CCTV coverage in the area. Regarding drug use, reference was made to the motion to Council in July regarding crack cocaine use. To date there was little evidence to suggest this drug was an issue within the area, however what had been identified by agencies was the impact drug use by adults was having on young people in the Ward and this had become a focus and priority for agencies concerned.

It was confirmed that the introduction of the Passport Scheme in the Ward would not result in any additional costs, however if the Scheme was to be extended costs would likely be incurred. Any such proposal in the future would be subject to a separate report.

Officers clarified and apologised for the drafting error in recommendation two, its intent was to grant the Chief Operating Officer delegated authority to make any minor technical or house-keeping amendments to the Policy in the future, following consultation with the Chairman of the Prosperous Communities Committee, as was often recommended with new policies. Alternative wording was offered to the Committee and on that basis it was

**RESOLVED** that: -

- a) the contents of the report be noted and a further update be provided in 12 months time; and
- b) the Tenant Passport Policy be approved to come into effect on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2018 and the Chief Operating Officer be granted delegated authority to make any minor technical or house-keeping amendments to the Policy in the future, following consultation with the Chairman of the Prosperous Communities Committee.

**Note:** Councillor Gillian Bardsley returned to the Chamber following consideration of this item.

The Chief Operating Officer advised that he should have earlier placed on record that he was a trustee of Community Lincs, referenced in the Neighbourhood Planning Report.

## **66 PERFORMANCE AND DELIVERY - PERIOD 2**

Members gave consideration to a report which assessed the performance of the Council's

services and key projects through agreed performance measures. Members were asked to review performance and recommend areas where improvements should be made, having regard to any remedial measures already included within the report.

The report summary was structured to highlight those areas that were performing above expectations, those areas where there was a risk to either performance or delivery and those areas where further work was required to either improve the quality of the information provided to Members or where work was already underway to address poor performance.

Areas described as performing well included: Local Land Charges; Development Management (Planning) Customer Services, Trinity Arts Centre and Electronic Service Delivery.

Those areas described as risks included: Enforcement, Gainsborough Markets, Homelessness, Community Grants and Call answering.

Future work was to be undertaken regarding the measurement of customer satisfaction.

Further information was given on each of the above.

Debate ensued and it was suggested that take up of grants may be slow as it was difficult to find information regarding these on the website. A Member who sat on a grant funding panel also suggested that the reported position could be a profiling issue as the Funding Panel had met earlier in the week and awarded in excess of £40,000 which was not referenced within the report. Officers undertook to review the location of website information.

It was suggested that it should be investigated whether CCTV recordings should be held longer than 31 days. Officers indicated that they could speak with Police to see if the retention policy was sufficient, however Members were also reminded that the Authority had to give due regard to data retention legislation.

Members questioned whether the homelessness targets set had been realistic enough in the first instance. In response Officers advised at the time the target was set this had been considered achievable. Since that time, nationally the homelessness picture had considerably changed affected by a number of factors including the welfare reform changes, and reduced access to other support services such as mental health and addiction.

Locally, the increase in demand related to an increase in those individuals and families who were finding themselves in difficulty and seeking support from the Council. There was also a shortage of appropriate accommodation, particularly for young people and large families. Officers had worked closely with Acis to reduce the length of time between a person being allocated permanent accommodation and actually moving from temporary accommodation, this was helping to alleviate the pressure on temporary accommodation.

Unfortunately the Authority did on occasion have to use Bed and Breakfast establishments as temporary accommodation, this was never the preferred option. It was stressed that Members would be advised when such establishments had been used, as this was now a performance measure.

Assurance was offered that homelessness prevention was being closely monitored and was

a matter due to be considered by the Challenge and Improvement Committee.

Members questioned why the volume of missed calls remained so high. In response Officers advised that at key times the service had been understaffed, this had now been addressed. The figure quoted also contained all those calls which went to voicemail and therefore as previously advised Officers were investigating ways to better record performance around this target. Customer Service Standards were also being developed around voicemail messages and would be monitored, this was a priority for the Authority.

In response to Members questions Officers confirmed 6 days was the average length of time it took to resolve a complaint however acknowledgements/ holding responses were sent sooner.

Members welcomed the much improved position of Food Inspections this period.

On that basis it was:-

**RESOLVED** that having critically appraised the performance of services and key projects, and having had regard to the remedial measures suggested in the report, and the information provided in response to Member questions, no further formal action be requested at this stage, however the suggestions made throughout the debate be considered.

## **67 FEES AND CHARGES - PROSPEROUS COMMUNITIES**

Members gave consideration to a report which detailed proposed fees and charges for service areas and functions, within its purview, to take effect from 1 April 2018.

In presenting the report the fees and charges policy and process was summarised to Members.

The review of fees for 2018/19 had built on the robust exercise carried out in 2017/18 combining the benchmarking previously undertaken with an assessment of the level of cost recovery.

Section 3 of the report summarised the main increases, it was noted that 237 of the 513 fees reviewed were statutory, thereby set by Central Government. 76% had experienced no change whilst 24% had seen an increase. The increases in fees and charges for statutory services sat primarily within Environmental Services and related to charges set by DEFRA. A 4.5% increase across all charges they set had been agreed following national consultation.

Of the 273 non statutory fees and charges (charges set locally) 62% had experienced no change with 38% having increases proposed. Some of the increases were as a result of business cases already having been approved in 2017/18, car parking for example. Other areas proposing increases were Land Charges, Pre-Application advice and Licensing by a standard RPI increase of 3.5%

Debate ensued and Visiting Member Councillor Smith expressed concern at the proposed

increase in respect of pre-application advice at time when he considered the service to not be performing satisfactorily, suggesting that this was simply about raising money.

The Head of Paid Service responded thanking Councillor Smith for the questions he had posed. However Councillor Smith's view of the service and its performance was wrong. Recent independent assessment of the service, including a recent audit by Audit Lincolnshire and DCLG returns confirmed the service is performing well. The Head of Paid Service concurred the service had previously underperformed but this was not now the case. Members were reminded that if they had specific examples of service failure with evidence they should raise these with the relevant team manager. With regard to pre-application advice this was a discretionary fee, yet despite this, demand for the service had increased year on year, suggesting it was valued by the people that took advantage of it and assisted in managing demand within the service.

Councillor McNeill suggested the wording regarding parking charges in Market Rasen could be more kindly phrased.

**RESOLVED** that: -

- (a) having considered the proposed fees and charges, as detailed in Appendix A - L of the report, they be **RECOMMENDED** to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee for approval;
- (b) Managers keep fees and charges under review throughout the year and to implement changes during the year if required

## **68 REVIEW OF THE WEST LINDSEY COUNTY NEWS**

Consideration was given to report which sought agreement to change the future format for communicating with residents. In summary the report proposed ceasing the partnership with Lincolnshire County Council in relation to the hard copy County News and replacing this with a digital Newsletter.

The report detailed the consultation which had been undertaken, the financial implications of the proposals and the advantages and disadvantages of the two methods of communication.

Debate ensued and whilst some Members were supportive of the proposals others were concerned that the proposal to go digital alone would exclude some sections of the community. Whilst accepting the idea of a digital newsletter and the benefits it afforded there were calls to also investigate other alternative methods of communication. Options cited included making use of the waste services teams to dispatch news in hard copies; and making use of parish council magazines and distribution networks, making the news relevant to the local community rather than the District as a whole.

It was also accepted that any newsletter regardless of its format needed to deliver news as opposed to history.

In light of the comments expressed throughout the debate the Chairman proposed and sought agreement for an additional recommendation to be included, namely

- (b) “In addition the Prosperous Communities Committee requests a report be produced for a future meeting detailing further additional options to improve channels of communication with its electorate”

On being seconded and put to the vote the amendment were carried. It was therefore: -

**RESOLVED** that:

- (a) the West Lindsey District Council hard copy County News currently delivered in partnership with Lincolnshire County Council cease and be replaced with a digital newsletter; and
- (b) In addition the Prosperous Communities Committee requests a report be produced for a future meeting detailing further additional options to improve channels of communication with its electorate.

## **69 BROADBAND OPTIONS**

Consideration was given to a report which provided Members with an up to date position with regard to Broadband Provision across the District.

It was noted that since the last report the Authority had been notified by On-Lincolnshire that West Lindsey was now back in the BDUK Scheme and therefore could be considered as part of Phase 3. Further information regarding the impact of this were detailed in Section 2 of the report.

In light of this changed position, although it came with no guarantees, in order to progress forward, the Council would now need to consider whether it wished to pay the partnership contribution allocated in the Capital Programme back in 2013/14.

Officers were still proposing to continue to lobby Central Government for 100% coverage across the District, however in light of the changed position, previous proposals to offer in-house support to communities had not been further investigated at this time.

It was being proposed that this could be considered further in the future in light of the results Phase 3 may or may not deliver.

Debate ensued and Officers re-iterated that it was not being proposed to investigate additional support at this time. Caution was also expressed that Phase 3 of the contract ran until December 2019 and therefore no guarantees could be offered around speed of delivery. However a number of those postcodes identified for proposed inclusion in Phase 3 did fall within those communities identified within the report. Once BT’s definitive plans were understood the Authority could consider how it may wish to support areas not included going forward.

In response to a Members questions Officers clarified that the coverage figure quoted in the report (86.4%) did relate to superfast broadband and did not include any provision offered by Quickline. When comparing coverage to other Districts, ELDC had 83%, NKDC had 91% and city of Lincoln had 99.5%. Lincolnshire as whole averaged at 88% coverage. If Phase 3 delivered what had been indicated, West Lindsey would be ranking as one of the Districts

with the highest coverage of superfast broadband in Lincolnshire. Any services offered by Quickline were additional to this.

**RESOLVED** that: -

- (a) the Director of Resources be granted delegated authority to sign the partnership agreement with On-lincolnshire and pay the amount of £555k;
- (b) Officers work with BDUK and On-Lincolnshire as part of Phase 3; and
- (c) Officers lobby Central Government to deliver 100% coverage across West Lindsey.

## **70 WORKPLAN**

Members gave consideration to the Committee Work Plan.

**RESOLVED** that the Work Plan as set out in the report, be received and noted.

The meeting concluded at 8.56 pm.

Chairman