

## WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Council held in the Council Chamber - The Guildhall, Marshall's Yard, Gainsborough, DN21 2NA on 9 April 2018 at 7.00 pm.

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

Councillor Bruce Allison	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 Christopher Darcel	Councillor Michael Devine
Councillor Steve England	Councillor Ian Fleetwood
Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan	Councillor Giles McNeill
Councillor John McNeill	Councillor Richard Oaks
Councillor Mrs Maureen Palmer	Councillor Malcolm Parish
Councillor Mrs Diana Rodgers	Councillor Thomas Smith
Councillor Lewis Strange	Councillor Jeff Summers
Councillor Robert Waller	Councillor Mrs Anne Welburn
Councillor Mrs Angela White	Councillor Trevor Young

**In Attendance:**

Ian Knowles	Executive Director of Resources and S151 Officer
Mark Sturgess	Executive Director of Operations and Head of Paid Service
Alan Robinson	Strategic Lead Governance and People/Monitoring Officer
Katie Coughlan	Senior Democratic & Civic Officer
James O'Shaughnessy	Corporate Policy Manager & Deputy Monitoring Officer
Karen Whitfield	Communities & Commercial Programme Manager

**Also in Attendance** Mr Roy Enever – Lead Petitioner

**Also Present:** 78 members of the public

**Apologies:** Councillor Stuart Kinch  
Councillor Hugo Marfleet  
Councillor Jessie Milne  
Councillor Roger Patterson  
Councillor Judy Rainsforth  
Councillor Tom Regis  
Councillor Lesley Rollings  
Councillor Reg Shore

## 82 CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed all Members to the last meeting, of the current Civic Year, of Full Council.

Welcomes were also extended to the Officers and Members of the Public who were in attendance.

### **83 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

(a) Minutes of Meeting held on 5 March 2018

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Meeting held on 5 March 2018 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

### **84 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No Declarations of Interest were made.

### **85 MATTERS ARISING**

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

The two remaining green items, were not yet due for completion but were on track to be completed within their respective due dates.

**RESOLVED** that the Matters Arising be noted.

### **86 ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**i) Chairman**

The Chairman addressed Council advising it had been a fairly busy, but enjoyable period, again snow had seen some events being cancelled or postponed.

Over recent weeks she had had the pleasure of attending a number of Events, Civic Services and exhibitions making note of the following: -

- Market Rasen Town Council's Civic Service held on 25 March.
- It had been an enormous privilege to attend a celebration of Mr and Mrs Foster's 70<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary.
- The Bastion of the Air exhibition at RAF Scampton which recognised 100 years of the RAF and included displays of British and German planes, uniforms, equipment and other items from across the era, and was well worth a visit.

The Chairman had also hosted a number of events herself including a Flag Raising Event for Commonwealth Day, at the Guildhall, for which she expressed thanks to those Councillors who had attended.

The Chairman had also had the pleasure of hosting an afternoon tea for 8 special couples, from across the District, who were celebrating their 60<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversaries. This had been a most pleasurable afternoon.

The Chairman concluded her announcements by making reference to the upcoming Annual Community Awards Evening, which she would be hosting on 23 April and which was expected to be a thoroughly enjoyable evening.

## **ii) Leader of Council**

The Leader addressed Council and advised that on 22 March he had attended the Lincolnshire Pension Fund Committee. The new Coast to Coast group was now established with the new appointments completed to take the twelve member authorities combined fund of £45bn into a new era of investment.

The Lincolnshire fund had grown by £85.3m to £2,246m over the last quarter to 31st Dec. 2017. The Coast to Coast fund now valued at £45 billion was estimated to cost each member authority £420,000 in the first year.

This new arrangement was expected to yield a £2m saving ongoing annually, equating to a saving of £166,000 per annum per member authority on average.

At the Meeting the Committee had heard guidance from Committee Advisor, Peter Jones with regard to expectations in respect of interest rate rises, contributing factors, Bank of England predictions, and status of markets

The funding of the Lincolnshire pension fund was considered to be progressing well, with approximately 84% of commitments now funded.

The Leader had also held a meeting with Stagecoach to discuss present usage and future strategy to include the growth areas for the town and district.

A lead economic development meeting had been held at Hemswell Cliff including a tour of the Anaerobic Digestive plant. The Leader had been very impressed with the Plant, especially to see the inclusion of a gas terminal, established as part of the plant, and which would eventually be supplying gas into the national grid.

Finally, last Friday, the Leader had attended a meeting of the Lincolnshire Leaders and Chief Executives, accompanied by the Executive Director, Eve Fawcett Moralee. This group regularly met to discuss a range of issues which affect all Councils of the County. A summary of issues discussed and outcomes reached was outlined by the Leader and had included: -

- Details of a Housing and Infrastructure bid, which if successful would result in the Authority receiving 25 days of free consultancy.
- The Fairer funding debate
- Lincolnshire Police's funding deficit by 2019/20
- A new Devolution framework which would be unveiled this Summer.
- Agreement had been reached across the districts to prioritise young people leaving care

by waiving their council tax to allow them time to become employed and established in society. It would apply to approximately 300 people across Lincolnshire and would have a minimal impact upon the Medium Term Financial Plan.

### iii) **Head of Paid Service**

The Head of Paid Service addressed Council on behalf of the Management Team during which the following points were made: -

- Thanks were expressed to all those Members who had attended the Fairer Funding workshop on 12 March. The workshop had been well attended and following on from that a consultation submission had been made. This would be circulated to all Members via the next Bulletin/Newsletter.
- The Well-Being Service which was now being operated jointly by East Lindsey DC, City of Lincoln Council, North Kesteven DC and West Lindsey DC was now live.
- Training had taken place for both Officers and Members on the new AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) Management Plan and the importance of the AONB in West Lindsey.
- Finally reference was made to the recently published Gender Pay Gap. West Lindsey had featured in the news recently as it had a pay gap that favoured women, unlike the majority of organisations nationally. On average women were paid 22% more across the organisation, this in the main was due to the proportion of women in management roles.

### **87 TO RECEIVE A PETITION - HELP SAVE THE BOWLS HALL**

“West Lindsey District Council had been presented with a Petition on Friday 23 February 2018.

The Petition was entitled “Help Save the Bowls Hall” and contained over 400 signatures at that date.

The Petition asked the Council to: -

“Reconsider the closure of the purpose built Bowls Hall which gives so many residents of Gainsborough and the surrounding district the chance to continue their hobby providing exercise mentally and physically, competitiveness, a social life, camaraderie and friendship that the Bowls Club provides”.

The Chairman advised that the matter would now be debated, in accordance with the agreed Petition Scheme and therefore she welcomed Lead Petitioner, Mr Roy Enever to the meeting and invited him to make his five minute address to Members.

Mr Enever made the following Statement to Council: -

“I am here today on behalf of the West Lindsey Bowls Club, to present a statement in support of the petitions provided to the Council regarding their

decision to close the Bowls Hall at the Leisure Centre.

The Bowls Hall has operated at the Leisure Centre since 1990, during which time the Bowls Club has provided its Members with competition, social and emotional well-being and, because of this, it has survived! It provides neutral costs to the Council and satisfies the primary principal which Members agreed to in a new contract.

Members have been misled on sustainability, value for money to taxpayers, usage residency and availability of sites prior to voting on the closure on the Bowls Hall. The Bowls Hall has been used and survived for the last 27 years. It is used all year round, with one of the three rinks being available for public use sessions at all times. 70% of bowls users reside in the District with an age range from 50-90 including many severely disabled users.

There is overwhelming local support from local tax-payers and the Council do not own or control another Indoor Bowls facility. Bowls would be ranked top of any sports participation list, if the list was changed to those aged 65 years and over. Has there been an audit of all activities at the Leisure Centre to see what's going on there? Do not under estimate the value of social and emotional well-being for Bowls Club Members. We fit in the age bracket, where over a third undergo a severe "later life crisis" including mental health illnesses ranging from anxiety to dementia, diabetes, loneliness often manifesting as agoraphobia and physical health problems, especially in the bones, joints and muscles.

We are tackling these likely disadvantages proactively. We are a fully functioning community. We keep ourselves healthy, engage in competition and teach and learn new skills through our membership. We save the National Health Service vital resources by supporting each other, engaging socially, sharing experiences, looking out for one another and sharing a common purpose. Our life has value and should not be frittered away on some money saving exercise.

We have been excluded from any dialogue in your decision to the close the Bowls Hall. You have repeatedly told us there is no need, it's commercial, in confidence. This is not acceptable; it is simply not good enough.

Are you satisfied that you have co-operated fully with us in making the decision to close the Bowls Hall? Have you been open and honest in your actions in reaching the decision? Have you been prepared to give reasons for actions and decisions or have you restricted information when the wider public interest clearly demands it? Have you complied with the Members Code of Conduct?

We still do not know why you decided that the Bowls Hall should be closed over other activities. Edward Leigh MP has given his full support to our objectives. Gainsborough Town Council have recorded their support to us and that it is disappointed at the decision that has been taken to close the facility. They have also respectfully asked for an urgent review of your decision. We believe the original funding from the Sports Council was conditioned with a clause that the Centre had to remain as a sports hall for 30 years, including the Bowls Hall. You will know the significant media attention given to the Council's decision, with on-line and hard copy petitions. Members are reminded that local elections are due

to take place next year.

Thank you”.

The Chairman thanked Mr Enever for his statement. Before opening the matter for debate, Members were reminded of three options available to them when considering Petitions. These being: -

- Take the action the petitioners have requested
- Not take the action requested for the reasons put forward during debate
- Or commission further investigation into the matter.

Debate ensued with the Leader of the Council making the initial response.

“Thank you for your work on the petition and giving us the opportunity to debate this matter tonight. I understand that you are disappointed with the changes we are planning to make at the Leisure Centre. These kind of decisions are not taken lightly but as a District Council we have to provide services for a wide range of residents across our whole district in a way that provides Value for Money for all our Tax Payers.

When we commissioned this work we set our Officers clear expectations and outcomes to be delivered. These included

- Increasing participation and the reach of the leisure services across the district as a whole
- Providing more opportunities for people across the District to be healthy and active.
- To provide health outcomes to relieve the pressure on our local health services
- The contract to be cost neutral at worst but ideally to generate a revenue to both secure the service and other vital services.

I believe that the current proposal delivers the objectives set at the beginning of the project.

I understand that the team have entered a dialogue with representatives of your club and I would like to ask my colleague Councillor Mrs Sheila Bibb to update the Council on the progress that has been made so far.”

Councillor Mrs Bibb, Chairman of the Prosperous Communities Committee addressed Council and advised that she along with other Members and Officers had met on 3 occasions with the Club so far and discussed the rationale for the Council’s decision. She further indicated that the Council was committed to continuing to engage with the Club and provide alternative provision. To-date a number of solutions had been offered, including, transportation to visit alternative indoor bowls facilities at Dunholme and Scunthorpe at the expense of the Council; and free access to short mat bowls for a year at the Leisure Centre. Furthermore, SLM (the contractor) had offered to purchase bespoke mats which would be comparable to the current rink size.

Council representatives had agreed to continue this dialogue with the Club after this

meeting.

The Leader confirmed the provision of such mats emphasising they were extremely close to current specification and size. The offer of 12 months free use of the Centre was also confirmed and thus the Leader was of the view bowling would continue, provision would be continuing and therefore proposed the request of the petitioners be rejected.

Further debate ensued and it was questioned why the current Bowls Hall could not be retained and have alternative flooring laid when it was not in use. This would address the Club's concerns regarding the move to "short-mat bowls" whilst still allowing the wiser usage to be increased. The objectives of the Leisure Contract were not disputed.

The Leader of the Opposition addressed Councillor, making reference to the support shown by Edward Leigh MP, despite West Lindsey Conservatives being responsible for the decision.

A point of information was raised clarifying that Edward Leigh was not the Leader of the West Lindsey Conservatives and that this statement was mis-leading.

The Leader of the Opposition continued his address, this was the largest petition debated and he was of the view that this suggested that the process had gone wrong somewhere. Strong public objection had been demonstrated to the facilities closure not just from the Bowling Club. 2000 had signed the petition and 4000 had viewed the BBC Report. These figures he considered spoke for themselves and without doubt he believed they could have been increased. He therefore urged the Council to listen and review its decision as a matter of urgency.

It was not being suggested that the whole contract be reviewed but the options around the Bowls Hall and its usage. He commended the Club for the way in which they had campaigned and the passion they has shown in trying to retain this important facility. He suggested the Council had to take some level of responsibility for reducing Club numbers, having not invested in Sports Development for the last 10 years. He questioned which other activities would be targeted like this in the future, if usage measures were to be applied. Reference was made to other bespoke sporting facilities which had been lost in the past and this was considered to be at the detriment of sporting excellence being achieved in the District. It was suggested there must be a way to combine the proposed Health and Well-being centre and the current Bowls Club and therefore he proposed that Members support Option 3 and commission further investigation into the issues raised by the Petition.

Further debate ensued and Members spoke of the risks and serious consequences associated with not proceeding with the decision, in view of the contract decision having been awarded. The Council had no alternative contract in place after the 1<sup>st</sup> of June meaning all services at the Leisure Centre would be at risk. Suspending a contract at such a late stage would also damage the Council's reputation and jeopardise the likelihood of a provider even being found in the future. It was also suggested there would be further legal ramifications and claims for damages creating further financial burden to the Council.

Members questioned the life span of a refurbished rink and when the rink at the Centre was last re-furbished. However Officers did not have this level of detailed information available at the meeting but undertook to provide it outside of the meeting if required.

The Leader again addressed the meeting and reminded Members that the Council had a duty to deliver services across the District. The new contract would deliver a new facility at Market Rasen, a full refurbishment of the Leisure Centre in Gainsborough and an outreach service. The contract was a multi-million pound investment into the District as whole, this had been well considered and delivered a number of agreed objectives and outcomes.

The Leader was of the view that this demonstrated Members were taking leisure and health provision seriously and it was stressed that Bowls at the Leisure Centre would continue.

With debate drawing to a close, Members stressed that the emotional and social side of the Club did not need to change. There was a commitment to continue dialogue, and an acceptance to understand the differences between the two games to provide a suitable solution to allow the Club to continue.

The petitioners were again congratulated for the passion and determination shown throughout the campaign, although it was questioned that a high number of the petitioners were not from Gainsborough and were not Bowl Club Users.

Continued negotiation, as opposed, to amending the contract was seen as the most practical and pragmatic solution.

The Leader's early proposal to reject action requested by the petitioners was seconded.

It was moved and seconded that any vote taken on the matter be by way of recorded vote.

Following procedural clarification the Monitoring Officer indicated that Councillor Young's written motion under Procedure Rule 10, was a matter of separate debate. The Leader's motion having been duly seconded would move to the vote and if the majority of Members were in favour of rejecting the action requested by the petitioners, as had been proposed, then the other options available would subsequently fall.

Having been proposed and seconded earlier in the meeting, the motion was then put to a recorded vote, having had the earlier request for such also duly seconded.

Votes were cast as set out below:

**For:** - Cllrs, Allison, Bardsley, Bibb, Bierley, Brockway, Devine, England, Fleetwood, Howitt-Cowan, Lawrence, G McNeill, J McNeill, Mewis, Oaks, Palmer, Parish, Rodgers, Smith, Strange, Summers, Waller, Welburn, White

**Against:** - Cllrs Boles, Cotton, Darcel, Young

**Abstain:** - Cllrs Bond

With the majority of Councillors voting in favour of the motion, the motion was declared **CARRIED** and therefore it was **RESOLVED** that the request of the petitioners be rejected.

Mr Enever, as Lead Petitioner, was advised that he would be sent written notice of the decision and also a copy of this would be displayed on the Authority's website.

**Note:** The majority of petitioners left the meeting following consideration of the above

item and prior to the next agenda item being discussed.

## **88 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

No questions had been received from members of the public.

## **89 QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO. 9**

Councillor Chris Darcel submitted the following question to the meeting: -

### **1) Question to Cllr Jeff Summers, Leader of the Council**

"I am most grateful for your enthusiastic support for the Neighbourhood Plans in general and the help you have given me in sorting out problems that I've had in making sure the Fiskerton plan is a fair reflection of local opinion.

My question is simple, what is going on and what did both you and the Council Champion for Neighbourhood Planning say to the Neighbourhood Plan Group that persuaded them to withdraw their plan from the West Lindsey website when you met them in February this year?

I would also like to know, following this intervention, what will happen now with the Neighbourhood Plan? Will there be a full and fair consultation on any revised proposals, where residents can be fully involved in the process? Will the process start again with a blank sheet of paper or will it be simply a restating of previous proposals?

I make this last point as some residents consider that the process up till now has lacked the full involvement of the community and transparency as required by the rules and regulations that govern neighbourhood planning and I would like to know whether you and the Council Champion for Neighbourhood Planning were given any assurance on these matters at this meeting."

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

"Thank you for your question Councillor Darcel.

As the Leader of our Council I feel it is incumbent of me to ensure wherever possible all business across the District is conducted in a fair and equitable manner.

It appeared there were some issues with the Fiskerton Neighbourhood Plan (NP) as it was very slow in it's progress. As you are aware you have raised issues with myself and others regarding the emerging document and the way in which it was being produced.

In fact, I took your comments seriously and invited you to spend two hours one Saturday morning scrutinising the process after which you were unable to present to me any form of evidence which suggested the plan was not a true and accurate reflection of the community or that the process was flawed.

Councillor England and I visited the NP Chairman and Parish Council Chairman for an update on their Plan's preparation. Councillor England and I simply discussed the options and legal requirements needed to fulfil their obligations to produce a Plan within all the statutory guidelines.

The decision to withdraw the NP was entirely that of the Working Group and the Parish Council. Neither of us were involved in that.

Your second question regarding what happens next? Our understanding is that the Group will work with their consultant to produce a compliant document and once completed they will submit the Plan to a statutory Regulation 14 six week public consultation during which all members of the community and a range of statutory external bodies, including WLDC will be invited to respond.

Our Officers will give a detailed and constructive assessment, to ensure the plan meets "THE BASIC CONDITIONS" required by the Regulations.

All members of the community will be able to access the plan at various publicised events and online. The group will at the end of the consultation period then review the Plan and make appropriate amendments if needed from the comments received.

Once any changes have been made the Group will then request WLDC to proceed to the next statutory stage Regulation 16, again a public consultation lasting 6 weeks. Subject to the outcome of this, and provided our Officers are satisfied that it is still compliant with the Regulations they will put the plan forward for an independent examination.

If the Examiner is satisfied that the Plan, subject to any changes he/she may recommend meets the basic conditions, it will be recommended to go forward to a public referendum organised by our Electoral Team and subject to the law governing any Election.

This process is designed to ensure that the community are involved throughout and ultimately have the final say. Neighbourhood Planning is truly localism in action.

The basic conditions the plan must meet.

- 1 Evidence to support the policies in the plan
- 2 A consultation statement to show evidence of engagement with all stakeholders
- 3 The Plan must be in line with National Planning Policy
- 4 The Plan must be compliant with and complimentary to the Local Plan
- 5 The Plan must not breach Human Rights.

To avoid any misunderstanding and just in case you need to refer to this statement I can supply it in print.

Thank you"

Having heard the response, Councillor Darcel posed the following supplementary question: -

“Does Councillor Summers recall the e-mail I sent him after our meeting, in which I listed perhaps 70 or 80 e-mails and other paper documents in my paper trail which I believe shows irregular behaviour of the NP Group and the Landowner in putting the proposal forward as it is. The second point I wish to raise is that in recent flyer being circulated around the village, the NP Group have said that all past comments will be carried forward. From the information given by Councillor Summers this evening, I would suggest we are going back to regulation 14 and therefore any comments made prior to this new consultation should be disregarded? Can I please have an assurance on that?”

The Leader responded as follows: -

“Taking the last point first, there has never being a Regulation 14 at this point and with regard to e-mails being passed to me, yes they were, which I read, there was an accusation or statement of that ilk made to me, reference the Landowner and a statement that he had made reference the sites in the village, that e-mail was never produced.”

Councillor Trevor Young submitted the following question to the meeting: -

**2) Question to Cllr Jeff Summers, Leader of the Council**

“Re: Off Street Parking Enforcement

A recent BBC Freedom of Information request identified that in West Lindsey the success rate of appeals regarding off street parking enforcement notices was a massive 64%.

Whilst one could argue that this council takes a very lenient and fair approach to parking enforcement, a more worrying concern has to be if it is a performance issue of the current outsourced contractor.

The FOI request identified that the success rate of appeals in some other authorities across Lincolnshire was as high as 80%. The performance figures in West Lindsey suggest either it is a quality issue regarding operational delivery or an over aggressive approach regarding parking enforcement.

Could the Leader of The Council therefore please explain:

- How the current contractor is currently performance managed.
- The current agreed performance measure regarding appeals.
- The date when the current contract will be reviewed.
- Is there any member involvement regarding contract management.”

Councillor Mrs Sheila Bibb, as Chairman of the Prosperous Communities Committee, responded on behalf of the Leader as follows: -

“Firstly I would like to thank Councillor Young for his question. As his questions are very specific and relate to the management of car parking on West Lindsey controlled parking places I will deal with the specific issues raised:

***How the current contractor is currently performance managed?***

The contract is managed by the Council’s Property and Assets Team. This includes regular meetings between a member of that Team, representing the Council, and the Contractor. The contract is monitored through Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which is the contractor’s responsibility to supply to the council on a monthly basis.

***The current agreed performance measure regarding appeals?***

There is no set performance level for appeals or for the issue of parking fines as the Council is not seeking to measure performance by the amount of parking fines issued or its success rate on appeals. Each case is managed on its own merits and has regard to the circumstances of the case. However, and for the sake of consistency our civil parking enforcement officers are given no discretion when issuing penalty notices to vehicles parked in contravention of the rules for the car park. Discretion is applied when the notice is processed and this is where the particular circumstances of the case are taken into account. This might explain the appeals success rate that Councillor Young refers to.

***The date when the current contract will be reviewed?***

The current contract runs until February 2020 and will be reviewed before that date.

***Is there any member involvement regarding contract management?***

No. Officers are responsible for contract management.

Councillor Young thanked Councillor Mrs Bibb for the response.

**90 MOTIONS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO. 10**

Councillor Trevor Young submitted the following Motion: -

“Chairman

This Council notes that the provision of the Gainsborough Indoor Bowls Centre has benefited thousands of residents over the past 27 years.

This Council recognises that sport and leisure provide huge benefits towards good physical and mental health amongst our residents and supports better health and wellbeing especially for the elderly.

This Council agrees with medical research that availability to social activities help reduce social isolation and reduces pressures on important services such as the

NHS and Social Care.

This Council supports that access to sport and leisure should be for all age groups.

The Council recognises the huge amount of public support against the proposed closure of the Indoor Bowls Centre.

I therefore move that this Council resolves:

- 1) That this council temporary suspends the decision to close the Gainsborough Indoor Bowls Centre.
- 2) To ask the Lead Officers to carry out a further consultation process with all key stakeholders.
- 3) To request that officers look at a further options appraisal which includes retaining the Indoor Bowls Centre at the West Lindsey Leisure Centre.
- 4) To request that officers provide a further report to the relevant policy committee as soon as possible. “

Councillor Trevor Young”

The motion was duly seconded by Councillor David Cotton and debate ensued.

In reference to aspect 1) of the motion, a Councillor acknowledged the significant impact this would have on the agreed budget and therefore sought indication from Officers as to whether it would in fact be lawful to enact such.

The Leader of the Council addressed the meeting and made the following statement in response to the Motion:-

“Councillor Young thank you for motion. I have to say that I am fully in support of a number of points which you have raised

This Council does indeed recognise the benefits delivered by engaging in sports and leisure. As part of the proposals the leisure service will be greatly enhanced and in addition to the proposed changes at West Lindsey Leisure Centre, a new leisure facility will be provided in Market Rasen and an outreach service created to cover the whole District.

The new district wide outreach service will take activities out to communities, providing them with both exercise and social opportunities. Currently a large percentage of the West Lindsey population have no access to the leisure service.

Across the leisure service as a whole the new contract will provide enhanced opportunities across all ages and areas of the community. This will include having the necessary equipment to enhance use by children and young people, residents over 60 and also disabled residents.

I recognise that there is public concern about the proposed changes however the bowls hall is a vast space which is currently under-utilised and has been for a number of years. Furthermore the usage has continued to decrease over recent years.

This area will be transformed into a health and wellbeing hub which will not only provide traditional leisure and sporting opportunities, but will also provide specific health interventions including:

- Weight management
- Smoking cessation
- Diabetes control
- Illness and injury rehabilitation
- GP Referral scheme
- Cardia rehabilitation.

In summary, the new contract will radically transform the leisure service and ensure that it is sustainable over the fifteen years of the contract.

The current contract ends on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2018 and past that date no arrangements for the provision of Leisure Services will be in place and I do not believe that is an acceptable position for this council.

The contract has been awarded to SLM as a result of a robust and legally compliant procurement process and it satisfies the outcomes set by the Prosperous Communities Committee. This has taken two years of hard work for ourselves and the bidders.

Were the Council to suspend this decision this would present a number of risks

- Leisure provision could cease
- Potential legal action for damages from the contractor
- Reputational Risks
- Loss of income to the council.

To demonstrate openness and transparency to the process I have circulated to all Members of the Council a schedule of the process and a complete resume of the offer presently available to allow bowling to continue in our facility. This is on new mats, free of charge for one year beginning on 1 September open to all Bowling Club Members. I see this as a positive solution to increasing the bowling membership and securing the future of this beneficial and valued sporting activity. We have a duty of care to all our residents and I therefore cannot support your motion.”

Further debate ensued and a number of Members commented that they understood the direct and wider benefits of sport and participation and were whole heartedly supportive of this ethos and a number of the points which had been raised in the motion around access to leisure and sporting services. It was evident that there was much community passion around this issue, demonstrated by representations made earlier in the meeting.

However a number of Members also wished to reiterate that the Bowls Club was not being shut down or closed. However there had to be changes to ensure benefit for all. The Council had a duty to acknowledge that other sections of the community also needed to be considered, with some not currently having any access to leisure opportunities. The

Council was offering a considerable number of things as part of the offer. The social aspects of the sport did not need to change, the health aspects of the sport did not need to change and access to the leisure centre could continue. It was apparent that there was discontent over the perceived differences between the current game and the solution offered and Members had sought and received assurance that the Council could genuinely offer something extremely close to the game currently played. Members welcomed the previous commitment from leading Members to continue negotiations and again re-iterated that this should not be viewed as a shutting down of the bowls club. There were still options that could and were being explored that could see the bowls club continue albeit with some changes for example located within a different room within the building.

In response to the question posed at the opening of the debate, the Director of Resources addressed the meeting, advising that a suspension of the decision would leave a budget gap within the agreed 2018/19 budget. Proposals would need to be submitted to Full Council as to how this gap would be funded in the short term. Furthermore it was anticipated that a number of potential legal issues could arise in light of the contract award notice having been published. However the full implications, which could include financial costs, were currently unknown.

Whilst opposition Members welcomed the commitment to continue negotiations with the Bowls Club, concern was expressed that an opportunity was being missed. The Bowls club should have been viewed as an opportunity to complement and enhance the proposals and offer at the Leisure Centre, citing examples of historic buildings who had found ways to increase usage without causing damaged to key features.

It was again re-iterated that the bowls club was not closing, however changes were being proposed as a result of a new leisure contract, the Council was offering a lot in return and the proposals had been well thought out.

There was a call for a recorded vote.

Other Members concurred that in their view the exercising and socialising element of the game did not need to change. Furthermore it was understood that the proposal included the purchase of bespoke mats which would be comparable to the current rink size. The club would get this arrangement free for a year, which was worth circa £14,000 pa to them. There was a Short Mat Bowls Association, County Teams and leagues and some were of the view that the comments which had been made about the game recently were disrespectful to what was a recognised and regulated sport originally set up to ensure players of crown green bowls could “keep their hand in” over the winter months.

However the mats on offer would be comparable to the current rink size and Bowling Club members were encouraged to give the proposals a go. In closing comments a Member summarised the reasons why he personally had supported the leisure contract proposal originally; it came at a significant cost saving to the Council and Tax payers, and offered more services to more people across all age groups throughout the District. This remained unchanged.

Having been proposed and seconded earlier in the meeting, the motion was then put to a recorded vote, having had the earlier request for such also duly seconded.

Votes were cast as set out below:

**For:** - Cllrs Boles, Cotton, Darcel, Young

**Against:** - Cllrs, Allison, Bardsley, Bibb, Bierley, Bond, Brockway, Devine, England, Howitt-Cowan, Lawrence, G McNeill, J McNeill, Mewis, Oaks, Palmer, Parish, Rodgers, Smith, Strange, Summers, Waller, Welburn

**Abstain:** - Cllrs White

With the majority of Councillors voting against the motion, the motion was declared **LOST**.

Note: Councillor Ian Fleetwood left the meeting during consideration of the above item and prior to the vote being taken.

Councillor Jeff Summers had submitted the following motion to the meeting: -

“Chairman.

The junction of Thorndyke Way and Corringham Road (A631) is unsafe, there have been 7 serious accidents in the last few years. This junction is in the top 5 priority highway safety schemes, but Lincolnshire County Council are unable to confirm when and how they will rectify this.

Instead Lincolnshire County Council have raised objections in response to a planning application for the Northern Neighbourhood citing highway safety at this junction as an issue.

The creation of this new neighbourhood is an integral part of delivering the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan. The County Council cannot use existing highway safety concerns as the basis to objecting to planned growth as the junction is already dangerous and contributes significantly to accidents on these roads and should be made safer as a matter of urgency.

Furthermore WLDC are already funding a strategic traffic model to support this growth and to develop a business case to the Department of Transport to support its delivery.

Chairman

1. I propose that with the full support of this Council I write to Lincolnshire County Council and require them to agree a scheme of works, funding strategy, implementation plan and timetable to address the current highway safety issues at this junction as a matter urgency.
2. I propose that this Council works with our partners on the Central Lincolnshire Strategic Group to address the issues at this junction in the context of delivering the growth and the 5 year housing land supply across the area.

I so move

Councillor Jeff Summers”

The motion was duly seconded by the Deputy Leader who indicated he concurred entirely with the Motion’s content. Debate ensued and the Local Ward Member addressed the meeting, indicating his support for the motion but also to highlight the need for short term action to be undertaken as a matter of urgency. Both the white lines and road furniture were in need of attention. The local parish council were perturbed about both past, recent and continuing accidents and there was a view that this junction needed attention as a matter of urgency.

The longest serving Member of the Central Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee addressed the meeting to both support the motion and express his dissatisfaction at the actions taken by the Highways Department.

Since the inception of the Local Plan the planned Sustainable Urban Extensions (SUEs) in Gainsborough, Lincoln and Sleaford had been fully known and well known to the Committee, on which the County Council was an equal partner and at no time, to Members’ knowledge, had objections been raised to any or all of the SUEs in Gainsborough.

These extensions formed an integral part of the Local Plan and ensured the Authority achieved the requirement to have a five year land supply. Without such a land supply the Council could be open to development. The SUEs had always been critical to fulfilling the understanding of the Local Plan and therefore some Councillors were perturbed at the County Council’s decision to raise objections to the application on such grounds and the timing of such.

On being put to the vote, all Members present voted in support of the Motion.

The Motion was therefore declared **CARRIED** and the Leader and Officers granted permission to undertake the actions as set out in the motion.

The meeting concluded at 8.25 pm.

Chairman