

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee held in the The Council Chamber - The Guildhall on 16 June 2016 commencing at 6.30 pm.

Present: Councillor Jeff Summers (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs Anne Welburn (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Owen Bierley
Councillor Matthew Boles
Councillor Michael Devine
Councillor Ian Fleetwood
Councillor Steve England
Councillor John McNeill
Councillor Tom Regis
Councillor Reg Shore
Councillor Giles McNeill

In Attendance:
Ian Knowles Director of Resources and S151 Officer
Jeannette Anderson Team Manager Corporate Systems Development
Emma Redwood Team Manager People and Organisational Development
Mark Sturgess Chief Operating Officer
Penny Sharp Commercial Director
Julia Dennis Commercial Accountant
Dinah Lilley Governance and Civic Officer

Apologies: Councillor David Cotton
Councillor Adam Duguid

Membership: Councillor Giles McNeill substituted for Councillor Duguid

16 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PERIOD

There was no public participation

17 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 May 2016 were approved as a correct record.

18 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest

19 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE

On the item regarding debtors' letters the Director of Resources indicated that he would present a report on the process to the next meeting of the Committee.

20 HOME WORKING POLICY REVIEW

The Team Manager for People and Organisational Development summarised the report for the Committee, noting that it had been considered by the Joint Staff Consultative Committee and recommended for approval.

The council had had a Home Working Policy in place for a number of years, however the working environment and IT infrastructure has changed considerably to enable staff to work from other locations, including working at home.

The old policy had been reviewed and it was agreed that a thorough rewrite of the policy would be required to bring it up to date and to provide a clear and manageable procedure for the council.

It was noted that the policy referred to travel expenses and that the review of the Travel and Subsistence Policy had been deferred by the Joint Staff Consultative Committee, so it was questioned how the Homeworking Policy would be managed fairly without a current Travel Policy, however the Team Manager assured Members that the current existing policy would be used in the meantime.

It was moved and seconded that the recommendations be agreed, and on being voted upon it was:

RESOLVED that:

- a) the Homeworking Policy be approved and adopted for all employees of the council; and
- b) delegated authority be granted to the Director of Resources to make minor housekeeping amendments to the policy in future, in consultation with the Chairman of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee and Chairman of the Joint Staff Consultative Committee.

21 DBS POLICY

The Team Manager for People and Organisational Development informed Members that the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) was created with the merger of the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA). The ISA was created to prevent unsuitable people from working with children and adults.

Members queried whether applications could be processed online, and also the process for non-staff volunteers. It was verified that an online system was to be

explored in due course, and that volunteers would follow the same process as for employees.

The matter of costs were also discussed and it was affirmed that the Council funded checks for employees at least every three years.

It was moved and seconded that the policy be adopted as per the recommendations, and on being voted upon it was agreed:

RESOLVED that:

- a) the DBS policy be approved and be adopted for all employees of the council; and
- b) delegated authority be granted to the Director of Resources to make minor housekeeping amendments to the policy in future, in consultation with the Chairman of the Corporate Policy and Resources committee and Chairman of the Joint Staff Consultative Committee.

22 AMENDED PROGRESS AND DELIVERY REPORT FORMAT

The Director of Resources introduced the report which followed a request to the Challenge and Improvement Committee to devise a revised format for Progress and Delivery reporting. Initially the size was significantly reduced and reported by exception only.

The remit of the Working group was to review the measures reported in 2015/16 and determine their on-going appropriateness; to consider how these measures provided a performance framework for the organisation that allowed Members to monitor progress against the Corporate Plan, service delivery and project development; and to consider the reporting format for future reports

A sample of the revised report was appended to the Committee report.

The proposed revised format was set into five sections:-

Executive Summary: Provides the reader with an overview of the reports context

Programmes and Projects: Identification of Council programmes and projects that are not progressing as anticipated and identification of actions needed to improve.

Corporate Health measures: Key performance measures which gives the reader a high-level view of overall Council. Full performance is to be reported (red, amber and green) within this section.

Corporate Plan measures: Performance against performance measures aligned to the themes and priorities of the Corporate Plan. Full performance is to be reported (red, amber and green). Please note that these measures will be included in the P&D report on a six-monthly basis

Service measures: Performance of services areas on an exception basis; red or green measures

Assurances were given that regular monitoring took place on all work areas, even if reporting was on an annual basis, and any significant variances from targets would be picked up.

Members felt it would be useful for the table which gave target dates for improvement to include the names of responsible officers for accountability. Some felt that even though the information was useful, navigation was difficult, and the Director of Resources agreed that the inclusion of relevant links to aid navigation would be explored.

Councillor Giles McNeill proposed an additional recommendation that delegated authority be given to the Director of Resources to make housekeeping changes where necessary along with Committee Chairmen, this was seconded and voted upon.

RESOLVED that delegated authority be granted to the Director of Resources to make minor housekeeping amendments to the policy in future, in consultation with the Chairman of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee and the Chairman of the Prosperous Communities Committee.

Members commended the work undertaken by the officers concerned and the Members involved in the Challenge and Improvement Working Group.

The revised recommendations were then moved and seconded en bloc and it was agreed that:

RESOLVED that:

- a) the revised reporting format for 2016/17 as attached to the report be adopted; and
- b) delegated authority be granted to the Director of Resources to make minor housekeeping amendments to the policy in future, in consultation with the Chairman of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee and the Chairman of the Prosperous Communities Committee.

23 SYSTEMS IMPROVEMENTS IN LAND BASED SERVICES

The Chief Operating Officer set the context for the report, describing the services to be covered by the system - namely Planning; Building Control and Local Land Charges.

During a review of the Development Management and Local Land Charges services, a need was identified to improve the systems and processes in those services. To enable these improvements a new integrated IT system was proposed to allow a highly automated and efficient approach. The improvement and implementation plan would drive the change in the culture of how each service operated so that it could make the most of this investment. A rigorous assessment of available systems had been undertaken, and the improvements would remove the need for current double handing of data through different systems and would speed up the time taken for decisions. There would be a more efficient, effective and economic service.

The Corporate Systems Development Team Manager described the report as having a great deal of detail and welcomed questions from Members.

Members of the Committee sought further information on various aspects of the system. The programme would automate tasks that were currently undertaken manually, and would manage workloads and milestones on a daily basis.

The turnaround time for searches should reduce to 2-3 days, as would not dependent upon human knowledge. It was anticipated that income would be generated from Land Charges and Building Control, and in time, savings also achieved through reduced staff time and paper usage.

Two of the three services involved had been to the Governance and Audit Committee due to audit concerns, so automated integration of the services would improve performance. The system would be cloud based and be regularly updated, and it was expected that the global platform would have a life expectancy beyond 10 years. There were possibilities of other functions such as street naming/numbering being incorporated in due course, and the system was also used by some neighbouring authorities.

The report sought approval for the financial investment and for the award of the contract.

RESOLVED that:

- a) the draw down of the £200k capital investment to purchase a cloud-based integrated Planning, Building Control and Local Land Charges system be approved; and
- b) on the basis of a direct call off arrangement under the Crown Commercial Service G-Cloud 7 Framework Contract be awarded.

24 COMMITTEE WORK PLAN

RESOLVED that the Work Plan be noted.

25 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED that under Section 100 (A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

26 COMMERCIAL BUSINESS CASE (CP1 004)

The Commercial Director presented a report to Committee Members setting an outline business case for a commercial opportunity.

The challenging financial climate of recent years had resulted in the need to radically realign local public services and finances. Maximising the annual revenue income

was key to off-setting some of the reductions in central government funding which was anticipated both now and in the future, and would allow existing services to continue without external subsidy.

The proposed WLDC project had been under consideration for some time, and a substantial amount of exploratory work, officer and elected member site visits to similar facilities, and market identification had been carried out to date. An outline business case had been developed which suggested this was an opportunity which could prove to be financially beneficial to the council, as well as providing an additional facility and service for local people.

More detailed information on this proposal, background research and projected income could be found in the business case (set out in Appendix 2 of the report).

Financial implications were set out in detail in the report and appendices, and a degree of tolerance was requested, to allow for fluctuating market conditions, particularly the volatility of construction costs. The details were set out in paragraph 4.4 of the report.

The recommendations were moved and seconded, and whilst some Members had reservations regarding the fourth recommendation, on being voted upon it was:

RESOLVED that:

- a) a variance to the Capital Programme to budget for additional capital expenditure as set out in the report to be funded through prudential borrowing, be approved;
- b) the investment in the development of a local facility, to include site acquisition, securing planning consent, design and build of a fully functional establishment within the district and the method of financing, be approved;
- c) an open tender procurement process to secure a contractor(s) for the works with prior experience of developing such facilities, be approved; and
- d) a percentage of tolerance on the capital project cost (meaning the project could cost a limited amount more or less than the budgeted figure) be approved. Any variation outside these tolerances would require further consideration by Corporate Policy and Resources Committee.

The meeting concluded at 7.50 pm.

Chairman