

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Council held in the Council Chamber - The Guildhall, Marshall's Yard, Gainsborough, DN21 2NA on 14 November 2016 at 7.00 pm.

Present: Councillor Roger Patterson (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs Jessie Milne (Vice-Chairman)

| | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Councillor Gillian Bardsley | Councillor Sheila Bibb |
| Councillor Owen Bierley | Councillor Matthew Boles |
| Councillor Jackie Brockway | Councillor David Cotton |
| Councillor Stuart Curtis | Councillor Christopher Darcel |
| Councillor Michael Devine | Councillor Adam Duguid |
| Councillor Steve England | Councillor Ian Fleetwood |
| Councillor Angela Lawrence | Councillor Giles McNeill |
| Councillor John McNeill | Councillor Mrs Pat Mewis |
| Councillor Maureen Palmer | Councillor Malcolm Parish |
| Councillor Judy Rainsforth | Councillor Mrs Diana Rodgers |
| Councillor Lesley Rollings | Councillor Thomas Smith |
| Councillor Lewis Strange | Councillor Jeff Summers |
| Councillor Mrs Anne Welburn | Councillor Trevor Young |

In Attendance:

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Manjeet Gill | Chief Executive |
| Ian Knowles | Director of Resources and S151 Officer |
| Mark Sturgess | Chief Operating Officer |
| Penny Sharp | Commercial Director |
| Alan Robinson | SL - Democratic and Business Support |
| Katie Coughlan | Governance and Civic Officer |

Also Present: Rev Sue Deacon
9 members of the public

Apologies for Absence Councillor Reg Shore
Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan
Councillor David Bond
Councillor Hugo Marfleet
Councillor Angela White
Councillor Tom Regis
Councillor Stuart Kinch
Councillor Richard Oaks

59 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2016 were confirmed as a correct record.

60 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

61 MATTERS ARISING

It was noted that there were no matters arising from previous meetings.

62 ANNOUNCEMENTS

i) Chairman of the Council

The Chairman welcomed back his Chaplain, the Reverend Sue Deacon following her recent ill health. Best wishes and kind thoughts were also conveyed to Councillor Kinch and his family at what was a difficult time.

The Chairman informed the meeting that he and the Vice Chairman, Councillor Jessie Milne, had attended a number of events, a few worthy of particular note were: -

- The two day fund raising event held on 5/6 November and hosted by Planet Xtra in Gainsborough in aid of St Barnabas, which had seen the organiser surpass their target of £500 at the end of day one;
- The Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Long Service Awards held on Thursday 10 November;
- The service held at Lincoln Cathedral on Wednesday 9 December for the victims of asbestos, at the which the Service had been particularly beautiful; and
- The Remembrance Day Service held at Scampton which had involved children from local schools who had handmade hundreds of poppies which decorated the war graves, the entrance to the church and which were presented to each Guest.

ii) Leader of the Council

The Leader announced that he had recently attended a health and well-being open meeting. This was part of a strategy to create the strategic transformational plan for health and well-being in Lincolnshire. The meeting had been of a workshop nature at which a number of groups had discussed a range of ideas about how health provision could be delivered in a more joined up way, through the one public estate for example, creating multi-functional service centres, along the lines of a one stop shop. Such matters as systems, models, leadership, and accountability had been discussed together with a commitment to work with partners and deliver. Even the planning system had been discussed, with it being recognised that it was important to even consider such things as ensuring the right type and mix of housing was being built, to support independent living for the elderly. Work in this area would continue.

The Leader further announced that as a result of a question to a previous meeting of Full Council from Councillor Welburn, reference pavement parking, he had written to the Minister for the Department of Transport

The response received was shared with Members and stated: -

The Government recognises the importance of making the local environment convenient, safe and attractive to walk in, and of keeping pavements in good order. However, in some streets pavement parking may in practice be inevitable to maintain free passage of traffic. So it is important that local authorities are able to decide on local parking restrictions themselves and they do of course need to consider all road users when taking such decisions.

Local Authorities already have the power to introduce pavement parking restrictions where they consider it appropriate and the Department for Transport has taken steps to assist them in this. We have issued guidance to local authorities about using Traffic Regulations Orders (TROs) to ban pavement parking where appropriate. We have also removed the requirement for an individual sign authorisation for local authorities in England (outside London) in such cases, making it simpler and easier for them to ban pavement parking where they consider it appropriate.

Meanwhile, since Simon Hoare, MP, withdrew his private Members bill in 2015, which sought to ban pavement parking nationally, the DfT has convened a roundtable meeting in March 2016. The aim was to discuss a possible pavement parking ban in the rest of England (outside London).

We are now at the stage of considering how to address the general improvement of the TRO making process and will provide further information once this is available.

iii) Head of Paid Service

There had been a number of developments in the health arena, and the Chief Executive advised that the STPs (Sustainable Transfer Plans) were now gaining traction and would shortly be released for consultation. The Challenge and Improvement Committee had been requested to establish a Commission into Health Services. Whilst the Council did not have any statutory requirement to deliver health services, it had a role to play as an advocate for the community and to understand, shape and influence the future provision of health care across the District.

Furthermore the Council had recently recruited a new Health Co-ordinator.

The Chief Executive and Deputy Leader had visited the House of Lords for meeting with the University Vice-Chancellor (who held a seat in the House of Lords) who had a shared vision for the establishment of a Medical school in Lincolnshire. This had now moved to the next stage and further work would happen, Council was expected to be asked for letters of support for the University. This matter would also form part of the local MP briefings.

The Chief Executive advised that she had been invited by the LGA to join a group of fellow Chief Executives regarding the Brexit negotiations. Local Government was at the negotiating table with Government regarding Brexit implications. There was value in being able to understand the key areas and implications the referendum result would have and how these could be influenced. The Chief Executive gave her assurance that she would ensure the rural focus was not lost as could be the case if lobbying became city and urban focused. The Group had started reviewing legislation, such as procurement, trading standards, and waste legislation, in order to

understand the opportunities and manage any risks.

In conclusion the Chief Executive advised that earlier that day, the Authority had held a "Market Day" in connection with the Leisure contract and this had been well attended. This had afforded the Authority the opportunity to share with interested providers its vision and ambition.

Regarding the one public estate previously mentioned by the Leader, the Chief Executive was lead for this area on behalf of the Greater Lincolnshire Devolution Partnership and the two bids made had been shortlisted and submitted to the Cabinet Office.

63 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions from the public.

64 QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO. 9

A Question had been submitted under Procedure Rule No. 9 by Councillor Jessie Milne.

"If" we go over to a Leader and Cabinet, will the role of Chairman go unchanged and undiminished? Will the Chairman still be regarded as the "First Citizen" of West Lindsey and will the Chairman still be a focus of Civic Pride? Will the Chairman still wear the chain of office as a symbol of their status? And will the Council still stand as a mark of respect for the office of Chairman?"

The Leader of the Council responded.

"Thank you for your question Cllr Milne. You will be aware that a review of the Council's governance is underway and is being managed by the Governance and Audit Committee. There is no intention to change the role or the standing of the council Chairman and all of the potential arrangements recognise this role."

Having heard the response, Councillor Jessie Milne then asked the following supplementary question: -

"How do you explain the picture that appears in the current edition of the County News, with the Leader and the Chief Executive seated side by side and the First Citizen standing behind them, with the Chain of Office obscured by the Leaders head? Isn't this a clear demonstration of the path that this Council has taken, with the Leader and the Head of Paid Service working in partnership, with the symbol of local authority left in the background. In recent Council meetings, it has become difficult to distinguish between the political announcements of the Leader, and the Political announcements made by the Head of Paid Service. Could I ask for restoration of the democratic process in which the publicly elected members set the policies and monitor their implementation. Could I ask for a restoration of the norm in which elected membership is held responsible to the public and officers are held responsible to the elected membership. When I was first elected I was told that the public should see a clear distinction between the officers who are paid to deliver public services,

and the councillors who are elected to represent the public interest. Over the last six years I have seen a complete changeover of senior management and a steady erosion of the member / officer relationship, as a Ward Member I can tell you that we are described as an officer-led Council. That is unfair to Ward Members and it is unfair to the locally recruited officers who have, and are, giving a lifetime of public service. Chairman it is time for the Political Leadership of the Council to accept its responsibilities and it is time for the Professional Management Team to recognise those responsibilities.

As our Chairman knows, the Royal British Legion has a motto it is "Service before Self".

Yesterday was Remembrance Day, when we pay our respects to all the brave people who have given their lives for this Country, earlier on this year I was approached by Tony Worth, Her Majesty's former Lord Lieutenant of Lincolnshire to ask if we West Lindsey would be prepared to support the "Iconic Spire" which sits proudly on Canwick Hill, his request was for £200,000 for tables, chairs etc for the Restaurant which they are presently building. £200,000 is just £1,000 less than we gave our Chief Executive a short while ago.

For that every single airfield in West Lindsey would be displayed in that building for the next 100 plus years. 750,000 people visited Lincolnshire last year from all over the world just to visit the airfields where their family, relations etc were during the war. These numbers are growing year on year thanks to the Spire. Think of the business that would bring to West Lindsey, restaurants, shops, bed and breakfast establishments and the hotel. Market Rasen would also benefit as there are a number of airfields around that area.

This request was turned down, I think it should be re-visited as we seem to have plenty of money to play with at the moment, and let members of this Council make the decision.

The Leader of Council responded, thanking Councillor Milne for the points she had raised and undertook to further investigate the circumstances and provide her with a full response.

A question had been submitted under Procedure Rule No. 9 by Councillor Owen Bierley.

"Firstly may I offer my congratulations to you and the entire Leader and Chief Executive team for the truly exceptional work you have done so far in bringing forward the devolution proposals for Greater Lincolnshire? The starting point and the very short timescale you had available makes your achievement even more remarkable!

I refer to the six-week public consultation that was undertaken during the summer (noting that 9% of the responses received were from West Lindsey) and quote Cllr Ray Oxby, the Leader of North East Lincolnshire Council, who said 'The public share our view that this is too great an opportunity not to take'. How right he is! Indeed 59.3% of respondents supported the pursuit of these extra powers and funding, 73.1% said that the ten Councils should be looking to work together to prioritise and deliver economic growth, infrastructure and housing across the area and 77.2% stated that we should be pursuing further funding as a priority for Greater

Lincolnshire.

During October each of the ten partner authorities debated and voted on the same paper and set of resolutions regarding devolution. Again, this is surely unprecedented in our area? Members will, of course, be aware that eight of the ten Councils in Greater Lincolnshire supported the proposals, while in administrative Lincolnshire six out of the seven second tier Councils, including our own, supported them. I believe this clearly demonstrates committed support for the principle of devolution and provides ground for cautious optimism that an agreement may yet be achievable that will enable the project to be taken forward in a timely manner.

However, should it transpire that this is not possible, please can you give an assurance that West Lindsey District Council will, at the very least, take the opportunity to build on the discussions already had with our counterparts, especially those to the north, in order that we can work ever more collaboratively with them to the benefit of all our residents and businesses?"

The Leader of the Council responded.

"Thank you for this question Cllr Bierley. I agree that we have made remarkable progress as partners over the last 12 months. I can assure you that this Council will make every effort to maintain the spirit of collaboration with our new found friends that this work has engendered.

This type of collaboration is not new on this ever crowded planet which appears to shrink annually due to merged businesses and new structures becoming more attractive via the enormous strides forward with technology and communication.

You quite appropriately mentioned percentages of people who supported the desire to pursue extra powers and further funding for Greater Lincolnshire with improved partnership working and as an example we will be supporting the North Lincolnshire desire to extend the Lincolnshire AONB up to the River Humber.

Today the Devolution score is 8-2. Eight councils for, Two against. If this score was the FA Cup final, it would be regarded as a resounding win.

If the score was a committee vote at West Lindsey, you would say it had very strong support.

Therefore I say devolution and collaboration is very much alive.

Thank you for your question Councillor Bierley"

Councillor Young raised a point of information, seeking clarity as to whether the 10 authorities did in fact debate and vote on the same paper and set of resolutions regarding devolution. The Chief Executive undertook to provide clarification to Councillor Young outside of the meeting.

A question had been submitted under Procedure Rule No. 9 by Councillor Trevor Young.

“The proposed works on Beaumont Street Gainsborough to build a new Lidl Store is due to start early December. The works will include demolishing the large multi storey car park?

Clearly this will cause disruption and the loss of car parking provision is going to have a further negative impact on town centre businesses during the main Christmas shopping period.

Could the Chairman of Prosperous Communities Committee please inform Members what plans are in place to ensure the town has adequate car parking provision whilst the new store is being built?

Currently in Gainsborough the number of empty shops is at it's highest level ever. There is a risk of further shops closing if Christmas trading is affected?

The current WLDC car parking strategy is flawed and simply does not work, on a daily basis all the main car parks are full of permit holders.

As a Council we constantly discuss how the town centre needs to improve, it will not be achieved without adequate car parking to support it.

With the loss of the multi storey car park there is an urgent need to review the current situation?

I welcome your response?”

The Chairman of the Prosperous Communities Committee, Councillor Sheila Bibb, responded.

“Cllr. Young, thank you for raising this issue tonight. As you are aware, Gainsborough Growth is important to all of us and with the closure of the Beaumont Street carpark to allow for the construction of the new Lidl store it has been necessary to look further at the provision of parking within Gainsborough. Looking forward, Lidl have committed to providing free parking on their site at Beaumont Street for all town centre shoppers for up to two hours.

Until this provision is in place, particularly in view of the run up to Christmas and New Year, the following actions have been put in place:

- Staff will not park at key town centre sites other than Bridge Street, and this will be closely monitored
- We are also asking staff to lift share or use public transport where possible
- We have identified parking elsewhere, for example Trinity Arts Centre
- We have ceased issuing of any new permits and are working closely with Partner's such as Marshall's Yard
- Long term we are also negotiating with various other site owners to secure further sites closer to the Town Centre which can be used for parking.

As you will see from this response, provision is being made for the both the immediate and longer term parking needs and the situation will be kept under review.

As I stated at the beginning, the growth and improvement of Gainsborough are of great importance and we welcome all additional positive suggestions. Please feel free to pass these to Mark Sturgess, Chief Operating Officer."

A question had been submitted under Procedure Rule No. 9 by Councillor Lesley Rollings.

"The society we live in increasingly depends on high quality internet and mobile phone access to carry out basic tasks in our everyday life. For some time now, the residents of West Lindsey in villages and rural areas have suffered poor broadband and mobile phone provision. In some parts of the Scotter and Blyton ward, the broadband speed dwindles to nothing. In some parts it simply isn't available at all. In the centre of Scotter, a thriving village with numerous businesses, pubs, food outlets and a hotel, there is virtually no mobile phone coverage.

I would like to ask the Chairman of the Prosperous Communities committee firstly to give residents an accurate update on progress on improved broadband and mobile phone provision and secondly to ask whether she would be prepared to ask the District council to carry out an accurate, up to date audit of provision across the district. With accurate information, would it then be possible for the district council to hold telecommunications companies to account, demanding that they invest in high speed broadband across all our district? It is absolutely essential that information is retrieved from residents and that we do not rely on information from phone companies which often bears no resemblance to the reality that many people have to put up with. We want people to come to West Lindsey to live and work, yet we hear of sales of houses falling through due to poor broadband speeds and landlords unable to rent out properties due to a lack of broadband. Is it time for this council to take the fight for better services to another level? I think so."

The Chairman of the Prosperous Communities Committee, Councillor Sheila Bibb, responded.

"The current Broadband provision has been driven by the BDUK activity of which Phase 1 ended earlier this year. We also have a wifi provider active in our district which enable some areas to receive service where BT cannot provide.

There are however two supported schemes currently available to residents in West Lindsey:

- BT offer a Community Fibre Partnership grant which enables communities that fall into the 5% of the UK excluded from the national fibre broadband rollout plans to access upto £20,000 towards the cost of fibre infrastructure where it includes the school; and
- Quickline have subscribed to the better broadband subsidy scheme which means residents could be eligible for a free connection. To be eligible their current speed needs to be less than 2mbps.

The Prosperous Communities Committee is receiving an update on coverage and current position with BDUK and Onlincolnshire at its next meeting.

With regards to Mobile coverage, in 2013/14 the Challenge and Improvement Committee held a working group to look at what could be done to help improve the situation and at that time reliance was placed on a Government backed scheme called the Mobile Infrastructure Project (MIP). This project was wound up as scheduled earlier this calendar year however it was recognised by the then Digital Economy Minister - Ed Vaisey that it had not been a success.

It may be time for the Council to look again at this issue and I will ask Officers to report to

Prosperous Communities Committee. ”

Having heard the response, Councillor Lesley Rollings then asked the following supplementary question: -

I have been speaking at length with the County Council over this matter and there is definitely disagreement over the current position in what BDUK and the Government are and are not allowed to do. What is clear is we are in a contract with a company that we were advised by the County Council not to enter into. From my understanding as a District Council we sought clarification from the County as to whether what we were doing was legal and whilst it was not deemed illegal, we were advised to not continue, and I understand there is an e-mail stating such.

Councillor Giles McNeill, interjected using Council Procedure rule 12.5. He advised the Council did receive legal advice but not on the basis as outlined and as such that was an unfair untrue statement.

Councillor Mrs Rollings continued stating that what was clear was that the rest of Lincolnshire around 94-95% were now covered and had access to super speed broadband averaging around 24mbs. However this was not the case for West Lindsey and our current provider was not in a position to offer residents such a service. She considered it time they were challenged to offer a better service to the District residents. In her ward the provider was hardly known and advertisement had been poor. If a connection could be established it was simply left. She welcomed the commitment given by the Chairman of the Prosperous Communities Committee to review the project and hoped this would look at the contract, in order that the company could be held to account. What did the contract mandate them to do, what were their obligations? We were strongly advised at the time to enter into this arrangement. I want to know how we are now going to work with this company to get a better service for our residents as it is clear big improvements need to be made.

In response the Chairman of Prosperous Communities Committee advised that a full report would be submitted to the Prosperous Communities which would hopefully answer all of the questions Members had.

Councillor Mrs Brockway, indicated that she believed the position was well established, particularly regarding state Aid Rules. That the Council could not bind commercial companies and of developments with other companies showing interest in the District.

Councillor Mrs Brockway was thanked for her information but it was ruled that questions were not for debate.

65 MOTIONS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO. 10

No Motions had been submitted under Council Procedure Rule No. 10.

66 RISEHOLME NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Council gave consideration to a report which sought to “make” (adopt) the Riseholme Neighbourhood Plan.

Riseholme Parish Council, as the qualifying body successfully applied for the town to be designated as a Neighbourhood Area, under the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations (2012), which came into force in January 2015. Following the submission of the Riseholme Neighbourhood Plan to the Council, the plan was publicised and comments were invited from the public and stakeholders. The consultation period closed in August 2016.

West Lindsey District Council appointed an independent Examiner; Mr Andrew Ashcroft, to review whether the plan met the basic conditions required by legislation and whether the plan should proceed to referendum. This was agreed at the Council meeting of West Lindsey District Council on the 12th September 2016 and, in the outcome of a successful referendum result, it should be ‘made’ (adopted).

A referendum was held on 27th October 2016, 89% of those who voted were in favour of the plan. Paragraph 38A (4)(a) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 as amended requires that the Council must make the Neighbourhood Plan if more than half of those voting have voted in favour of the plan.

In accordance with the Regulations and the Council’s procedure the Riseholme Neighbourhood Development Plan is ‘made’ and planning applications in the area must be considered against the Riseholme Neighbourhood Development Plan, as well as existing planning policy, such as the West Lindsey Local Plan (2006) and its successors and the National Planning Policy Framework and Guidance

Representatives of the Riseholme Neighbourhood Plan group attended the meeting to present their Plan and made a short address to Council, thanking Officers, the Neighbourhood Champion, the Parish Council and all Members of the Group for assistance, in developing a successful plan.

In response the Chairman, Leader and, Local Ward Member congratulated the Group on their success and for their hard work.

RESOLVED: that the Riseholme Neighbourhood Plan be made in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012.

Note: Councillor Giles McNeill withdrew from the Chamber for consideration of the following item.

67 REVIEW OF POLLING PLACES

The Council was conducting an interim review of polling districts and polling places for Local Government elections. The review would have regard to the outcome of a review of the Lincolnshire County Council electoral arrangements undertaken by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England conducted an electoral review of

West Lindsey in 2016 regarding the number of Councillors and names, numbers and boundaries of divisions effective from May 2017. The decisions taken during the current review of polling districts and polling places would be incorporated in the register of electors published on 1 February 2016.

The process to be taken by the local authority in undertaking a review was set out in the report, and on completion of the review the authority must give reasons for its decisions in the review and publish such other information as was prescribed in the Act and regulations. Details of the Returning Officer's proposals regarding polling districts, polling places, electorates and postal voters were set out at Appendix 2 of the report.

Public notice of the interim review was given on 23 September 2016 and full details of the review were placed on the Council's website. The period for representations to be made on the Returning Officer's proposals was from 23 September 2016 to 14 October 2016. In addition further specific consultations were undertaken explaining the reason for the interim review and factors which could influence the Returning Officer's proposals regarding the location of polling districts/places, with Members, Town and Parish Councils and a number of political groups and the Disability Network.

Two responses were received to the Consultation and these were summarised in the schedule set out at Appendix 1 of the report. The Council was aware that in a vast, mainly rural area such as West Lindsey, there were many electors who had to travel some miles in order to vote at their allocated polling station. However, postal voting was available to all electors and was an easier and more convenient method of voting for many electors.

RESOLVED: that

- a) the Polling Districts and Polling Places be approved; and
- b) delegated powers be approved for the Returning Officer, following consultation with the Chairman and Leader of the Council, to approve changes to polling places occurring during an election period.

68 TRADING COMPANY APPOINTMENTS

At the Council meeting on 10 October 2016 Members approved the establishment of a Trading Company, the Governance documentation to support it, and nominated a number of officers to roles with the trading company.

Since the nominations to WLDC Trading Limited were agreed a further review of the required nominations and the West Lindsey staff available had taken place. The review took account of the fact that the Commercial Director would be leaving West Lindsey District Council on 31 December 2016.

It was recommended that the Council nominate the Chief Executive to be the sole director of WLDC Trading Ltd and its Sure Staff subsidiaries (Sure Staff Lincs Ltd and WLDC Staffing Services Ltd).

In addition the company required a Company Secretary who would be the chief administrative

officer of the company, responsible along with the director for certain tasks under the Companies Act. It was recommended that the Financial Services Manager be nominated to this role WLDC Trading Ltd and its Sure Staff subsidiaries (Sure Staff Lincs Ltd and WLDC Staffing Services Ltd).

The Vice-Chairman sought an update as to how the company was progressing. In response the Chief Executive advised that to date it was surpassing the targets that had been set. However the company was not simply about profit making and the social returns it was making was just as valuable. It was matching local labour with local jobs and providing employment opportunities. The Chief Executive undertook to make a presentation to the next meeting of Full Council on the benefits and opportunities of Trading Companies for Local Authorities.

Discussion ensued and some Members sought confirmation that no conflict of interest or difficulties would arise from there only being one Director. Assurance was offered that this was not the case and legal advice had been taken on the matter and could be shared with Members if necessary.

The Chief Executive reminded Members of the need to be proportionate, this was a small company and in its current state did not require additional Directors or a Board. The responsibilities of a Company Director, under Companies House law were outlined to Council. Members with experience of running companies, confirmed they shared this view. Should the company continue to grow then consideration would be given to appointing an Independent Director. However an independent director would require remuneration which would need to be funded from any profit the company made and this would need to be a consideration.

RESOLVED: that

- a) the nomination of the Chief Executive as Company Director of WLDC Trading Ltd and its Sure Staff subsidiaries (Sure Staff Lincs Ltd and WLDC Staffing Services Ltd) be approved;
- b) the nomination of the Financial Services Manager as Company secretary of WLDC Trading Ltd and its Sure Staff subsidiaries (Sure Staff Lincs Ltd and WLDC Staffing Services Ltd) be approved; and
- c) these roles be added to the responsibilities of the officers involved, in the Council's Constitution.

69 NATIONAL APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL AUDITOR

The report was introduced by the Chairman of the Governance and Audit Committee and set out the proposals for appointing the external auditor to the Council for the 2018/19 accounts and beyond, as the current arrangements only covered up to and including 2017/18 audits.

The auditors were currently working under a contract originally let by the Audit Commission and the contract was novated to Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) following the closure of the Audit Commission.

A sector-wide procurement conducted by PSAA would produce better outcomes and be less burdensome for the Council than any procurement undertaken locally.

Without the national appointment, the Council would need to establish a separate independent auditor panel, which could be difficult, costly and time-consuming; PSAA could ensure the appointed auditor met and maintained the required quality standards and could manage any potential conflicts of interest much more easily than the Council; supporting the sector-led body would help to ensure there was a vibrant public audit market for the benefit of the whole sector and the Council going forward into the medium and long term.

If the Council was to take advantage of the national scheme for appointing auditors to be operated by PSAA for the subsequent years, the invitation had to be accepted by early March 2017. PSAA had now formally invited the Council to 'opt in'. Details relating to PSAA's invitation were provided in an Appendix to the report.

RESOLVED: that the Council accepts Public Sector Audit Appointments' (PSAA) invitation to 'opt in' to the sector led option for the appointment of external auditors for five financial years commencing 1 April 2018.

70 MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Committee Meetings published since the Council meeting of 10 October 2016 be received.

71 CHAIRMAN'S CLOSING REMARKS

The Chairman wished the Commercial Director well in her new role and thanked her for all the work she had undertaken on behalf of the Authority.

The Chairman further announced that the annual council photograph would be taken prior to the next meeting of Full Council (23 January) at 6.30pm in the Aegir Meeting Room.

Finally as this was the last meeting of Full Council in 2016 all Members were wished a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

The meeting concluded at 8.12 pm.

Chairman