

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee held in the Virtual - MS Teams on 23 July 2020 commencing at 6.30 pm.

Present: Councillor Giles McNeill (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs Anne Welburn (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Owen Bierley
Councillor Matthew Boles
Councillor Stephen Bunney
Councillor Michael Devine
Councillor Ian Fleetwood
Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan
Councillor John McNeill
Councillor Mrs Mandy Snee
Councillor Jeff Summers
Councillor Robert Waller
Councillor Trevor Young

In Attendance:
Ian Knowles Chief Executive
Alan Robinson Director of Corporate Services and Monitoring Officer
Grant White Enterprising Communities Manager
Caroline Capon Corporate Finance Team Leader
Sue Leversedge Business Support Team Leader
Katie Storr Senior Democratic & Civic Officer
James Welbourn Democratic and Civic Officer

Apologies: Councillor David Cotton

Membership: No substitutes appointed for the meeting.

12 CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed all present to the second virtual meeting of the Corporate Policy and Resources Communities Committee and in doing so made reference to the recent recalculation of political balance and committee allocations. This had resulted in Councillor Summers re-joining the Committee. The Chairman welcomed Councillor Summers and looked forward to working with him on the Committee.

13 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PERIOD

There was no public participation.

14 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING/S

For Approval:-

- (a) Meeting of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee – 18 June 2020

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Prosperous Communities Committee held on 2 June 2020 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

For Noting:-

- (b) Meeting of the Joint Staff Consultative Committee – 2 July 2020

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Joint Staff Consultative Committee held on 2 July 2020 were received and **NOTED**.

15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

16 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE

The Chairman introduced the item and summarised its content to Members, noting those items which had been completed since the Committee last met. Making reference to the visit to the Gainsborough Leisure Centre, the Chairman apologised that he had been unable to attend, due to having been called to an urgent meeting of the Lincolnshire Leaders', following last week's announcements.

With no further comments raised, the item was **NOTED** by the Committee.

17 OFFICER CODE OF CONDUCT

The Committee gave consideration to a report which presented an updated Officer Code of Conduct for approval. The Policy had been considered by the Joint Staff Consultative Committee and had been recommended for adoption without concern.

The Monitoring Officer advised that the Policy had not been reviewed for around six years, whilst the majority of changes made had been housekeeping in nature, Section 22 regarding confidentiality had been rewritten by the Data Protection Officer to bring it in-line with most recent legislation changes and ensure GDPR compliance.

The updated Policy was welcomed.

RESOLVED that: -

- (a) the reviewed Officer Code of Conduct be approved and adopted for all

employees of the Authority.

- (b) the Chief Executive be granted delegated authority to make minor housekeeping amendments to the policy in future, in consultation with the Chairman of Corporate Policy and Resources Committee and Chairman of the Joint Staff Consultative Committee. .

18 STRESS MANAGEMENT POLICY

The Committee gave consideration to a report which presented an updated Stress Management Policy for approval. The Policy had been considered by the Joint Staff Consultative Committee and had been recommended for adoption without concern.

The Policy had been reviewed in line with the model Policy, considered best practice, now available from the Health and Safety Executive. Previous references to using Occupational Health as the “first point of contact” had been replaced, with the drive now being to use the Employee Assist Programme in the first instance and at the earliest opportunity.

Both the amendments to the Policy and the robust “best practice” approach, the Authority applied was welcomed.

The Chairman, did however, as an aside, request that the new branding was applied to all updated HR Policies before their publication, and distribution.

RESOLVED that: -

- (a) the reviewed Stress Management Policy be approved and adopted for all employees of the Authority.
- (b) the Chief Executive be granted delegated authority to make minor housekeeping amendments to the policy in future, in consultation with the Chairman of Corporate Policy and Resources Committee and Chairman of the Joint Staff Consultative Committee. .

19 CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (CRM)

Members gave consideration to a report which requested approval to spend further Capital Budget in support the delivery of the CRM system.

The report detailed the background to the project, the previous decisions made and the reasons for the additional spend.

The full financial implications were detailed in the report and summarised to Members where it was stressed that the project remained with the agreed total budget but with the costs now needing to be accurately reflected against that budget, having found a preferred solution and provider. It was also noted that due to the delay there would be a need to extend the arrangement with the current provider for an additional year, but again this had been accounted for.

In response to comments, Officers confirmed COVID-19 had hindered negotiations, but was not solely responsible for the delay. This had been a complex procurement with over 11 options considered to ensure the best value for money.

The rationale for not having included the development management system within the first core phase build was shared with Members.

Members were pleased that a supplier and preferred option had been identified.

RESOLVED that

- (a) capital expenditure of £52k to support the design and implementation of the Customer Relationship Management System be approved
- (b) £28k of the ICT Upgrade/Refresh Reserve be approved for use to fund the revenue costs of a 1 year extension to the Firmstep Achieve system licence, maintenance and support contract.

20 ANNUAL TREASURY REPORT 2019-20

Members gave consideration to a report which detailed the outturn position for Treasury activities and which highlighted compliance with the Council's policies previously approved by Members.

Section 3 of the report detailed the main prudential indicators. Members noted that at the end of March 2020 a Delegated Decision had been taken to increase Treasury Counterparty limits to allow for the Grant Funding received in relation to Covid-19, further details were contained at section 6.1 of the report.

Members were asked to recommend the Annual Treasury Management Report and actual prudential indicators 2019/20 to Full Council for Approval.

The data contained within the table at Section 4.1 of the report in respect of borrowing, having been questioned by a Member, was confirmed to be incorrect and should read "16.5m from PWB" and "3.5m" from other bodies.

Officers apologised for the oversight and undertook to amend this prior to the report's submission to Full Council.

The performance of the investment portfolio, detailed on page 70 of the report together with details of the most recent property investment, was referenced by the Chairman. It was drawn to Committee's attention that the financial position within the report was that at the end of March. Despite the implications of the Covid-19 Pandemic, the investments were still proving profitable, as opposed to a liability, and currently were still on track to perform close to their target of 6% for 20/21.

RESOLVED that the Annual Treasury Management Report and actual Prudential Indicators 2019/20 be **RECOMMENDED** to Full Council for approval.

21 BUDGET AND TREASURY MONITORING PERIOD 1 2020/21

Members gave consideration to a report which sets out the revenue, capital and treasury management activity from 1 April 2020 to 31st May 2020. This was the first financial monitoring report of 20/21.

In presenting the report, Officers highlighted a number of points to Members' attention. In relation to the outturn position for 'business as usual' revenue budgets (excluding the impact of Covid-19) the forecast outturn position was a contribution to reserves of £444,000 which was mainly due to the net treasury management activity savings of £313,000 and forecast salary savings of £158,000.

The Covid-19 implications at 2.2.7 of the report detailed the forecast financial implications at a net cost of £1.684m, offset by £1.085m in LA Covid-19 Support and high street recovery grant from the Government, leaving a forecast shortfall of £599,000.

However, since publication of the report, a 3rd tranche of support grant had been awarded to West Lindsey amounting to £163,000, reducing the forecast shortfall to £437,000.

This amended position would result in a net contribution to general fund balances of £7,000, bringing the general fund balance to £3.871m.

Officers advised both the financial implications of Covid-19 and the business as usual forecast outturn would continue to be closely monitored and updated over the coming months, before a revised budget and a mid year review of the Medium Term Financial Plan would be presented to the Committee in November.

In relation to the Capital position, the forecast capital outturn position was a variance of £14.698m and Members were asked to approve the capital amendments contained within the report detailed at sections 3.1.2 to 3.1.5. The amendments included slippage of £12.834m into 21/22 for four schemes, overspend of £120,000 on three schemes, and an underspend of £1.984m on one scheme.

The treasury management activities during the reporting period were contained within the report, with total investments at the end of the period being £13.49m, achieving an average interest rate of 1.173%.

Finally Members were asked to approve an amendment to the crematorium fees and charges detailed at section 2.3.3, namely to charge for an enhanced visual tribute service.

In the ensuing debate and in response to Members' questions Officers advised that the "court costs" referred to on page 86 of the reports pack was as a result of the enforcement of council tax and other debt collection being suspended, the result being a loss of income to the Council.

With regard to the overspend related to the Market Rasen Leisure Centre, project, (page 79 of the reports pack) Members questioned how it was the Council's responsibility to incur additional costs against already contracted projects, particularly in light of the reasoning

comments contained within the report.

In the absence of specific detail, the Chief Executive, indicated that in some cases it had been necessary, to ensure projects continued, to offer additional support in these extraordinary times, to some suppliers and contractors. Whilst he did not know if this was the reason, in this case, or whether in the fact the case was that the commentary included against the overspend was not specific enough, he undertook to respond to all Members of the Committee with the specific details, in writing.

RESOLVED that : -

- (a) the forecast out-turn position of a £444k net contribution to reserves as at 31st May 2020 (see Section 2) be accepted;
- (b) the use of Earmarked Reserves during the quarter approved by the Chief Finance Officer using Delegated powers (2.4.1) and the contribution to Earmarked Reserves (2.4.2) be accepted;
- (c) the amendment to the fees and charges schedule for the Crematorium (2.3.3), be approved to be effective immediately; and
- (d) the Capital Budget amendments as detailed in section 3.1.2 to 3.1.5 of the report be approved and the current projected Capital Outturn as detailed in 3.1.1 be accepted.

22 COMMITTEE WORK PLAN

The Committee workplan was **NOTED**.

23 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 item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

24 SAFER STREETS FUND - CAPITAL BUDGET

On 14th July 2020 Prosperous Communities Committee had approved the delivery of public space CCTV upgrades and expansion as part of a funding bid made by The Lincolnshire Office for Police and Crime Commissioner to the Safer Streets Fund.

Prosperous Communities Committee had further resolved to recommend to Corporate Policy & Resources Committee that a capital budget be approved for the delivery of this project subject to the Safer Streets Fund bid being successful.

Members therefore gave consideration to a report which sought approval for such a capital

budget to be established.

Members noted that the funding came with stringent conditions meaning the area specified within the report was one of only two areas within the whole of Lincolnshire eligible to apply. Details of the bid submitted and the additional resources this would bring to the area were shared in detail with the Committee.

The bid outcome was awaited and was expected by the end of month, delivery of the proposed scheme was dependent on a successful bid, following which the timescales for implementation were tight, with all monies needing to be spent before March 2021.

Debate ensued and whilst the Committee were supportive of the investment, some Members had concerns around adequate monitoring, citing examples, and reference complaints from Members of the Public when the cameras had not been of assistance.

In response Officers, outlined the monitoring arrangements in place and the flexibility within those arrangements and peaks and trough times. It was acknowledged that there was a perception that CCTV did not work and it was not always a deterrent. However, CCTV could and would never prevent every crime. It also needed to be acknowledged that detection was only part of the process when dealing with crime. Police presence at incidents nationally was on a priority basis. Once a crime was detected, even if that was respectively, the outcome was very much dependent on the Criminal Justice System as opposed to in the control of the Council. Unfortunately punishment did not always follow. It was also noted that CCTV also afforded benefits in respect of wider enforcement issues of which they had been a number of successes.

Assurance was offered that in terms of detection of the crime, the system performed well and the upgraded system would see this picture improve further. Details of the likely specification were shared with the Committee to demonstrate this point. Members also noted how any financial risk to the Council had been mitigated ensuring the project could be "overspent".

Members felt it imperative that there was better reporting of outcomes directly resulting from CCTV intervention or information in order to improve public confidence, similar comments had been made at the Prosperous Communities Committee, and therefore having consulted the proposer, the Chairman as the seconder raised the following additional recommendation for consideration, namely: -

"that Officers work with the Communications Team to undertake appropriate media activity with Local Press to report and promote successful outcomes from the use of CCTV across the District at Both Market Rasen and Gainsborough"

The original proposer indicated their agreement to this additional recommendation being put forward for consideration. Further debate ensued with a number of Members speaking supportively of the proposal, sharing their personal experiences of the system and agreeing that the upgrade would improve detection rates further.

Officers had also previously undertook to publish some case studies in a future edition of the Members Bulletin as requested by the Prosperous Communities Committee.

Following much debate it was **RESOLVED** that:-

- (a) the recommendation from Prosperous Communities Committee be accepted a capital budget for the upgrade of public space CCTV be approved subject to the Safer Streets Fund bid being successful; and
- (b) Officers work with the Communications Team to undertake appropriate media activity with Local Press to report and promote successful outcomes from the use of CCTV across the District at Both Market Rasen and Gainsborough

The meeting concluded at 19.38

Chairman