

Concurrent Meeting of the Prosperous Communities and Corporate Policy and Resources Committees- 14 June 2021

Subject to Call-in. Call-in will expire at 5pm on

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Concurrent Meeting of the Prosperous Communities and Corporate Policy and Resources Committees held in The Epic Centre - Lincolnshire Showground LN2 2NA on 14 June 2021 commencing at 6.30 pm.

Present: Councillor Mrs Anne Welburn (Chairman)*
Councillor Owen Bierley (Vice-Chairman)*

Councillor Matthew Boles
Councillor Stephen Bunney
Councillor David Cotton
Councillor Mrs Tracey Coulson
Councillor Michael Devine
Councillor Steve England
Councillor Ian Fleetwood
Councillor Giles McNeill
Councillor John McNeill
Councillor Mrs Jessie Milne
Councillor Mrs Judy Rainsforth
Councillor Jim Snee
Councillor Mrs Mandy Snee
Councillor Jeff Summers
Councillor Robert Waller
Councillor Trevor Young

* Member of both Committees

In Attendance:

Ian Knowles	Chief Executive
Sally Grindrod-Smith	Assistant Director of Planning and Regeneration
Tracey Bircumshaw	Assistant Director of Finance and Property Services and Section 151 Officer
Katie Storr	Democratic Services & Elections Team Manager (Interim)
Ele Snow	Democratic and Civic Officer

Also Present Councillor Lesley Rollings – Visiting Member

Apologies: Councillor Tom Regis

1 MEMBERS' DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor Trevor Young declared a personal interest in the report as the owner of a property on one of the streets named within the report.

2 PROCEDURE

The Procedure by which the Concurrent Meeting would be held was **NOTED**.

3 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.

4 WEST LINDSEY LEVELLING UP FUND BID

Members gave consideration to a report which set out a summary of the bid to the Levelling Up Fund (LUF), prepared by West Lindsey District Council (WLDC), which sought to secure investment in the regeneration of Gainsborough Town Centre. The report provided an overview of the financial model and sought approval for the use of Council resources to support the project.

WLDC had developed a range of investment propositions, based on a robust Theory of Change, designed to act as a further catalyst to the regeneration of Gainsborough Town Centre.

The investment propositions were set across five strategic themes:

1. A thriving Market Place
2. Heritage re-use and re-purpose
3. Placemaking and a green public realm
4. Transformed movement and connectivity
5. A place to live

In support of the published report, Members received a presentation from the Assistant Director of Planning and Regeneration and the Council's S151 Officer.

During the presentation, Members received information relating to: -

- A Re-cap of the Levelling Up Fund
- Progress to date and support from stakeholders
- Thriving Gainsborough 2024 – overview of the project
- Financial model
- Updates from 4th June to note
- Next steps

The West Lindsey Levelling Up Fund bid had been informed by 10 weeks of concentrated work to develop a high-quality submission.

The bid had been informed by West Lindsey's evidence base, Officer input, Member workshops, stakeholder discussions and quality assurance from the Council's consultant partners.

Members were advised the bid was being considered in closed session due to the inclusion of confidential financial data, which could impact on future tenders for commercial contracts, but Councillors were assured public appropriate communications were being prepared. If the bid was successful, it was a criterion of the fund, that it be published in full in due course.

Set within the context of the emerging Public Realm strategy Thriving Gainsborough 2024, the the bid if successful, would set out to deliver:-

- The construction of a 4-screen cinema, two retail and one restaurant unit in the town centre – a redeveloped Lindsey Centre
- A Redesigned use and streetscape of the Market Place with the aim of re-establishing the area as the town's thriving heart
- The extension of the Townscape Heritage Initiative, involving the refurbishment of heritage buildings and wider shop fronts
- The creation of a green public realm including a new pocket park along the riverside and undertaking improvements to the existing park –
- The implementation of our wayfinding strategy –
- The refurbishment of the bus station -
- Extending the live above the shop programme

The Section 151 Officer addressed the meeting and advised of the amended total cost of the overall bid. She placed on record her opinion of assurance that the funding strategy was robust and that the Council would support £2.962m of the project from identified funds. The breakdown and the allocation to each project was provided to Members

The Council would also support the project with land contributions, whilst retaining ownership. Again, sites and land valuations of each were shared with Members.

The financial model relied on a number of private sector contributions, their make-up and contributors were summarised to the Committee.

The cost of each project had been assessed. . All assumptions had been assured, tested and approved. They were considered prudent and were evidence based and, where appropriate, included contingencies. No financial provision had been included for what were deemed "unknowns", examples being contaminated land

Should the bid be successful Members were advised each project would be managed in accordance with the Council's adopted project, risk, procurement, contract and performance management procedures and reporting requirements.

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It was also noted the bid included costs for additional resources to support the project management, contract management, delivery and costs of such nature. It was anticipated some of the Projects would result in on-going revenue costs, with examples cited; however, these were unquantifiable at this stage.

The Assistant Director of Planning and Regeneration summarised to Members some key changes to the bid since the publication of the reports, these being, increasing the costs associated to monitoring and the removal of the walking and cycling interventions, following quality assurance work and further testing of the assumptions.

The reasoning and rationale for these amended proposals were shared with the Committee as was the impact on the total cost of the bid, and the impact on the benefit cost ratio.

Finally, the next steps were shared with the Committee as were details of the work that would continue to be undertaken, pending a Government Decision expected in November 2021.

Debate ensued and the Chairman of the Prosperous Communities congratulated Officers on the work undertaken to date. Whilst it was acknowledged it was an ambitious bid and one which Members were supportive of, Members posed a number of questions to Officers, particularly in respect of a plan (b), should the bid be unsuccessful. Information was sought as to which projects could be delivered without funding monies; clarity around the priority status given to the District and the implications of this were sought, and also whether there would be disruptions to other services in the town centre during any period of works.

In response, it was noted any Plan (b) would be subject to further discussions, action planning and prioritisation. The Council had £4.5 million unallocated in its Investment for Growth Budget, it may be desirable to consider the earmarking of further funds or borrowing to fund future projects but these matters would need further discussion once the outcome of the bid was known.

Officers were of a strong view that West Lindsey should have been a priority one status area, given the metric data. As such the bid highlighted the key metrics of the local area to demonstrate their comparability to areas designated priority one by Government metrics. Committee noted that no capacity funding had been made available from Government to support bid development from non-priority one areas.

Government guidance made it clear that in order to be successful, a bid from a non-priority one area needed to be of exceptional quality, meeting all of the key criteria including strategic fit, deliverability and value for money and this was the ethos in which the bid had been developed.

As with any re-development, all interventions would see a level of disruption, however assurance was offered that in the event of a successful bid each individual project and intervention would be subject to an implementation plan, including clear timescales, risks and mitigations.

In response to further questions, Officers highlighted the projects which delivered outcomes that aligned with the County Council's priorities. Demonstrating such buy-in from major stakeholders was a key component the bid needed to demonstrate.

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It was also confirmed that a further criterion was the ability to achieve some expenditure in 2021/2022, with all expenditure having to be completed by 31st March 2024. Whilst it was anticipated there would be a clawback clause, should monies not be spent by March 2024, this as yet was not determined.

Land valuations included were open book prices, and the potential for re-development had been a consideration in selecting proposed new green sites.

Members considered whilst the bid focussed on the settlement of Gainsborough, the opportunities it brought would have District wide benefit and it was important these wider benefits were highlighted too in any public communications.

Officers confirmed that “non material updates” as referenced in recommendation 5 of the report, excluded amending any financial aspect of the bid. It was also confirmed the costs detailed within this report in respect of the delivery of a cinema, differed from the original business case, Members had considered. The figures had been re-appraised, additional factors included, and a contingency allowance made. Those elements of the cinema project which were in place and agreed were outlined to Members.

Having been moved and seconded the Prosperous Communities Committee’s recommendations were put to the vote.

In accordance with the concurrent procedure following an alphabetical roll call, with a total of 12 votes cast in favour and with no votes against or abstentions it was

RESOLVED that:-

1. the ‘Thriving Gainsborough 2024’ propositions as set out within section 4 of the report, which consisted of aligned and coherent interventions relating to the regeneration of Gainsborough Town Centre, be approved, as WLDC’s Levelling Up Fund bid;
2. the overarching principles of the Public Realm Strategy as set out in section 5, be supported and the final Public Realm Strategy be submitted to the Committee for approval in due course;
3. the ‘Thriving Gainsborough 2024’ proposal, be **RECOMMENDED** to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee, for submission as WLDC’s bid to the Levelling Up Fund.

The recommendations for the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee having been moved, seconded were then put to the vote.

Again, in accordance with the concurrent procedure, following an alphabetical roll call, with a total of 13 votes cast in favour and with no votes against or abstentions it was

RESOLVED that:

1. the Financial Model for ‘Thriving Gainsborough 2024’ – WLDCS’s Levelling

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Up Fund bid, outlined at section 7, be approved.

2. the submission of the bid to the Levelling Up Fund be approved and delegated authority be granted to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to make any non-material updates to the bid, prior to the submission date of 18th June.

The meeting concluded at 7.34 pm.

Chairman