

## **WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL**

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee held in the Council Chamber - The Guildhall, Marshall's Yard, Gainsborough, DN21 2NA on 29 September 2022 commencing at 6.30 pm.

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

Councillor Owen Bierley  
Councillor Matthew Boles  
Councillor Stephen Bunney  
Councillor Michael Devine  
Councillor Ian Fleetwood  
Councillor John McNeill  
Councillor Roger Patterson  
Councillor Mrs Mandy Snee  
Councillor Trevor Young

**In Attendance:**  
Emma Foy Director of Corporate Services and Section 151  
Rachael Hughes Development Contributions Officer  
Grant White Enterprising Communities Manager  
Katie Storr Democratic Services & Elections Team Manager

**Apologies:** Councillor Liz Clews  
Councillor Robert Waller

**Membership:** Councillor Roger Patterson substituting for Councillor Robert Waller.  
Councillor Lesley Rollings had been appointed substitute for Councillor Liz Clews, but did not subsequently attend the meeting.

## **27 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PERIOD**

There was no public participation.

## **28 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING/S**

Members noted there were two sets of minutes for approval with each set taken in turn, it was

**RESOLVED** that: -

- (a) the Minutes of the Meeting of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee held on 28 July, 2022 be confirmed and signed as a correct record; and
- (b) the Minutes of the Concurrent Meeting of the Prosperous Communities and Corporate Policy & Resources Committees held on 7 July, 2022 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

## **29 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

## **30 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE**

In respect of the black action entitled “Uniform Approach to Review of Policies”, the Chairman of the Governance and Audit Committee provided Committee with a further update of work recently agreed through his briefings and which related to the action. It was intended to undertake work with Members regarding their needs in relation to the style of written reports presented to Committees.

With no further comments or questions and with no requirement for a vote, the Matters Arising were **DULY NOTED**.

## **31 PUBLIC SECTOR DECARBONISATION FUND (3B) - FUNDING BID FOR GUILDHALL IMPROVEMENTS**

Members gave consideration to a report which sought to inform Members of a high-level bid that was to be submitted, seeking funding from Round 3b of the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS). The report condensed the facts of the current PSDS bid application process, outlined the rationale and reasoning for pursuing the Bid and detailed the next steps.

The Authority had previously benefitted from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS), which funded low carbon heating projects in public sector buildings, with WLDC having received £68k in 2021 to fund solar PV and battery storage at the new depot.

In presenting the report, Members were advised Phase 3b of the Scheme had recently been announced and applications were invited from 1 October.

Having worked with Midlands Net Zero Hub to examine various options, a project had been

identified which would meet the criteria of the Scheme, namely to upgrade the current gas-powered boilers at the Guildhall with new air source heat pumps and the installation of additional Solar PV to generate electrical power and help reduce running costs. Allowing for suitable contingencies, the work had been estimated to cost within the region of £330k.

Officers highlighted to Members how the current round of PSDS differed from previous rounds, in that it required an element of match-funding from the Council. The criteria as to how the match-funding element was calculated was further explained within the report, but for this bid, Members noted the match-funding amount required was equal to the cost of replacing the current boiler with a 'like for like' system.

This work was currently estimated at £60k within the approved Medium Term Financial Plan for 2024/25 and Members were being requested to approve that this money be re-profiled and brought forward to 2022/23 support the Bid.

Current boilers at the Guildhall were coming towards the end of their recommended life and a 'like for like' fossil fuel replacement, as was currently scheduled for 2024/25, would not be in line with WLDC's Net Zero carbonisation ambitions. The climate risks and opportunities section of the report further highlighted the environmental benefits.

Officers stressed to the Committee the imperativeness of being ready with a Bid as soon as the application portal opened, as the monies would be awarded, subject to bids meeting the criteria, on a first come first served basis and was expected to be well over-subscribed.

Whilst the initial bid contained comprehensive technical detail, only a high-level bid was required at this stage, with a detailed investment grade proposal having to be worked up and formally assessed prior to the award of any grant funding (estimated to be in or around January 2023).

Members were offered reassurance that the whilst the Scheme required evidence of a commitment to match-fund from the Council, it did not require the Council to enter into an agreement to accept grant funding, even if the Bid was successful.

A final decision to accept the grant funding would be brought back to the Committee in due course, and would include a more detailed assessment of the technical capabilities of the system.

Discussion ensued and Members indicated their support for the proposals, particularly given their alignment to the Council's commitment to Net Zero carbonisation ambitions. Members considered it important to have such proposals "shelf-ready", given the often limited notification and over-subscription to such Schemes.

It was suggested the Council had a responsibility to look at all of its buildings across the whole of the District. Whilst acknowledging the two sites identified were likely the most important buildings to be considered first, it was suggested that the Council did own others which may fit criteria for future Bids. As such, an amendment to recommendation four was proposed, namely : -

"That Members acknowledge that Officers will continue to explore other funding sources to invest in **schemes** to improve the energy efficiency measures **for all**

**properties owned by West Lindsey District Council particularly those which would benefit most from decarbonisation like for example the Gainsborough Leisure Centre and the Trinity Arts Centre.”**

The amendment was duly seconded and on being put to the vote the amendment was **CARRIED.**

During further discussion, given the importance of climate change to both organisations and individuals and the new technologies available, it was suggested, if feasible and the system was installed, the Guildhall could be used as an exemplar of what others could potentially achieve.

Having been moved and seconded, with amended recommendation four included, it was

**RESOLVED** that: -

- (a) the content of the report be noted and the submission of a high-level bid for PSDS3b funding for decarbonisation of the Guildhall heating system be supported;
- (b) the reprofiling of the Capital Programme to bring forward the replacement boiler funding from 2024/25 to 2022/23 to provide the match-funding required should the Bid be successful, be approved;
- (c) Officers be supported in continuing to work with Midland Net Zero hub to develop a detailed business case, for consideration and final decision by this Committee, should the grant application be successful, noting notification was expected by the end of January 2023; and
- (d) Members acknowledged that Officers would continue to explore other funding sources to invest in schemes to improve the energy efficiency measures for all properties owned by West Lindsey District Council, particularly those which would benefit most from decarbonisation, like, for example the Gainsborough Leisure Centre and the Trinity Arts Centre.

## **32    LEVELLING UP PARKS FUND**

Members gave consideration to a report which sought approval to make a submission to the Levelling-Up Parks Fund to deliver new and improved green space in Gainsborough.

Members were aware, the District Council had been successfully awarded Levelling-Up Funding for project activity which was now taking place in Gainsborough. An additional top-up fund had been awarded to selected local authorities that met certain criteria, which included West Lindsey, the Fund was known as the Levelling-Up Parks Fund.

Members were advised the primary purpose of the Fund was to provide a one-off grant to local authorities to support them in creating a new or to significantly refurbish an existing urban park space.

Section two of the report detailed the “eligible places” criteria and outlined the measures, data, and indicators the Government had used to identify priority categories, these were detailed in Section 2.3 of the report and all were within Gainsborough.

As a result, the report proposed that the primary location to target the funding allocation should be the site known commonly as the Scouts Hill site.

In presenting the report, it was stressed that the funding was not intended to replicate the facilities previously on the Site, which were outlined to Members. It was fully acknowledged that the location had a number of challenges, in terms of the levels of anti-social behaviour, crime and one’s sense of safety and security. The Funding provided an opportunity to try and address some of the local issues and concerns and improve the feel and security of the site.

A total of £85k was available to spend prior to 5 April 2023, resulting in an extremely tight turnaround, with the bidding deadline being 3 October 2022. The Authority, by this date, was required to submit at least a high-level outline plan of how and where it intended to spend the grant allocation. As such, seeking Committee approval to submit a bid and increase the capital budget for delivery was time sensitive.

Officers advised how they were then committed to undertaking retrospective work around engagement, both with the community and with Elected Members, Colleagues and Partners to ensure that whatever actions the Council sought to undertake with the grant allocation, they would meet local needs and have longevity.

It was again stressed spend needed to be completed by the end of the financial year and as such Officers considered the proposal to be realistic.

Discussion ensued and a number of Members welcomed the opportunity to improve the site and create a much-needed local facility that people felt safe to use, indicating their support for the Bid to be submitted.

In responding to Members’ comments, Officers advised that the high-level business case had not yet been developed so could not be shared with Members, as a number of workshops which supported the bid submission had yet to be undertaken/ completed.

Assurance was offered that an element of the Bid would focus on improved security, examples being the inclusion of CCTV and designing out crime measures, engagement would be undertaken with Lincolnshire Police and their design officers to ensure all activities were subject to appropriate advice and guidance. Full environmental and equality impact assessments would form part of any final Bid.

In responding to a Member’s challenge regarding the lack of a “climate impact wheel” having been included in the report, the Director of Corporate Services indicated Officers had only recently received their training and guidance regarding this new requirement. The report had likely been prepared prior to such, but reassurance was offered, that the impact wheel would be included, as standard, as agreed, on reports going forward.

The Local Ward Member addressed the Committee and whilst welcoming the investment to the Town, did initially express reservations in respect of the proposal. The site access was

limited, personal safety was a massive concern, local families would not wish to use play facilities in the area, and any investment in play equipment would be lost to vandalism. He expressed extreme frustration at the timescales and the lack of opportunity to invite community feedback. The site needed to be brought back into use, and there was a strong belief that there would be local support for re-instating the site's footballing facilities. Such facilities were much needed in the Town and he considered, given the Sites' restrictions, this would be a much better use of the site.

He considered there to be a number of more appropriate pocket of lands within the Ward, naming several, where play facilities were needed, could be sited and would more likely be used.

The Chairman offered total reassurance that the funding Bid was not intended to establish play equipment. Officers outlined the definition of Parks under the Scheme, which had not been available when the report had been published. This was broad-ranging and could be community growing space, or just planted space, for example. Officers shared the Member's views on current site safety, both for users and for any investment, and as such the installation of play equipment would not be considered. It was hoped, however, some measures could be put in place which would at least start to make improvements to the site.

Having heard further explanation, the Ward Member fully supported the Bid, but did strongly encourage further consideration be given to re-establishing the land for football use. This suggestion was supported by a number of other Members who considered there was a real opportunity to work with partners such as the Football Foundation, to establish much needed football and changing facilities, many of which had been lost in recent years. Whilst welcoming improvements, local Members did not want to see future potential uses restricted and urged the Council to think bigger for the Site. The consultation and engagement going forward was much welcomed and considered vital.

There were still concerns regarding access, and appropriate vehicle use of the access route. Considerations would be given where they could and Members and Officers were encouraged to raise these concerns with Highways.

Some suggested given the issues raised in respect of the site, wilding areas, bulbing and possible labyrinths may be suitable and feasible options.

Having been proposed and seconded it was unanimously

**RESOLVED** that: -

- (a) the submission of a project proposal to the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC), in line with the details set out in section 3 of the report, be approved; and
- (b) the expenditure of the Levelling-Up Parks Fund and associated project resources, as set out in section 4 of the report, be approved.

Corporate Policy and Resources Committee- 29 September 2022  
Subject to Call-in. Call-in will expire at 5pm on Monday 10 October

### **33 COMMITTEE WORK PLAN**

The Chairman took the opportunity to remind Members that suggestions for inclusion could be made and would be considered.

With no comments, questions, or requirement for a vote, the Work Plan was **DULY NOTED**.

The meeting concluded at 7.12 pm.

Chairman