

## **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 7 June 2023 commencing at 6.30 pm.

**Present:** Councillor Trevor Young (Chairman)  
Councillor Mrs Lesley Rollings (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Owen Bierley  
Councillor Frazer Brown  
Councillor Stephen Bunney  
Councillor Ian Fleetwood  
Councillor Roger Patterson  
Councillor Tom Smith  
Councillor Mrs Mandy Snee  
Councillor Emma Bailey  
Councillor Baptiste Velan

**In Attendance:**  
Emma Foy Director of Corporate Services and Section 151  
Angela Matthews Benefits Manager  
Sarah Elvin Homes, Health & Wellbeing Team Manager  
Darren Mellors Performance & Programme Manager  
Claire Bailey Change, Projects and Performance Officer  
Peter Davy Financial Services Manager (Deputy Section 151 Officer)  
Sue Leversedge Business Support Team Leader  
Ele Snow Senior Democratic and Civic Officer

**Apologies:** Councillor Matthew Boles  
Councillor Paul Swift

**Membership:** Councillor Emma Bailey sat as substitute for Councillor Paul Swift  
Councillor Baptiste Velan sat as substitute for Councillor Matthew Boles

### **1 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PERIOD**

There was no public participation.

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

The Chairman explained there were two sets of minutes, one for approving and one for noting. Having been moved and seconded it was

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee held on 8 March, 2023 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

With no requirement for a vote, the minutes of the Joint Staff Consultative Committee held on 30 March 2023 were **NOTED**.

### **3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor O. Bierley declared a non-pecuniary interest in respect of the report relating to the Household Support Fund by virtue of being a trustee of Age UK. Whilst the organisation was not specifically mentioned in the report it did refer to the voluntary sector and charity partners.

### **4 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE**

The Senior Democratic and Civic Officer introduced the report and outlined that the schedule was a list of items that had been raised at previous meetings of the Committee and had associated actions required. The status of the actions and the black, green or amber status of each one was explained. It was highlighted that the report was for noting, unless Members had comments or questions regarding any idea on the schedule.

A Member of the Committee referred to the item relating to the lobbying of Lincolnshire County Council in respect of further funding from the better Care Fund. He explained it had been considered at a meeting of the housing, health and care delivery group. It was indicated that dates were to be diarised to take that further.

With no further comments or questions from Members, the Matters Arising Schedule was **DULY NOTED**.

### **5 HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND 4**

The Committee heard from the Benefits Manager regarding the latest allocation of the Household Support Fund. It was explained that The Household Support Fund (HSF) was first introduced in October 2021 and had been renewed every 6 months since then. West Lindsey had been successful in distributing £908k by way of over 6,500 awards of either a food parcel, a voucher for food or utilities, or a BACS payment into a resident's bank account.

Members heard that the Household Support Fund 4 (HSF4) was announced in November 2022 and the details of the fund were clarified in February 2023. The fund would run for the full financial year 2023-24 and Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) had been awarded £10.9m. The funding would be received from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) who issued guidance on how the money may be spent. LCC had agreed that each District would receive a percentage of the fund to distribute to its residents and it was estimated that West Lindsey would receive funding of approximately £160,000.

Using the learning from the previous three HSF distribution methods, it had been established that to reach as many residents as possible, the Council needed to involve partner organisations such as food banks and charitable organisations. Previous administration of HSF had proved both costly and time consuming, relying on a high-volume of administrative hours from existing officers, if each Local Authority chose to accept direct applications from residents wishing to apply for funding.

It was highlighted that the report under consideration recommended that, to reach as many residents as possible whilst keeping the administration costs of the Local Authority as small as possible, funding be distributed via food banks and voluntary organisations with at least one of the voluntary organisations administering an application-based process.

The Chairman thanked the Officer and expressed his support for the scheme, and invited comments from the Committee.

Councillor S. Bunney enquired as to how it was ensured those third party organisations were sustainable and effective, and also highlighted how important it was for members of the public to be aware of this available funding and how to access support. On this point, he proposed an additional recommendation specifically regarding the communication plan for the scheme. That being:

“That the Communications Team promote West Lindsey District Council’s involvement with the distribution of the Household Support Fund thru the open application process and via food banks and voluntary organisations; that we ensure the public are aware of how they can access the funds and what they are entitled to.”

In response to the comment regarding the use of third party organisations, the Benefits Manager confirmed that all partner agencies were well established and also needed to meet set criteria in order to receive such funding. It was also clarified that, in recognition of administration costs involved, funding did consist of a 10% allowance for administration.

There was further discussion amongst Members of the Committee praising the scheme and the work of the Officers involved in it. It was recognised that communication of the schemes available was key, and a Member of the committee duly seconded the proposed additional recommendation. On taking the vote, it was

**RESOLVED** that an additional recommendation be made as follows:

“That the Communications Team promote West Lindsey District Council’s involvement with the distribution of the Household Support Fund thru the open application process and via food banks and voluntary organisations; that we ensure the public are aware of how they can access the funds and what they are entitled to.”

There were further comments of support amongst Members. Confirmation was given that individual payments could be made to those people who may otherwise not benefit from the funds available, as had been actioned under the third allocation of funding.

Stating his thanks again, the Chairman read aloud the two original recommendations, stating they would be taken en bloc with the additional third recommendation. Having been moved and seconded, it was unanimously

**RESOLVED** that:

- a) the delivery process of the Lincolnshire District Councils' Household Support Fund 4, which runs to March 2024, be **approved** to be distributed to residents most in need as follows:
  - 40% via food banks and voluntary organisations (to include 10% administration costs)
  - 50% via an open application process that will be administered until March 2024 via a 3rd part charitable organisation (to include 15% administration costs)
  - 10% to be retained by WLDC for internal administration of the fund and contingencies.
- b) where there are minor amendments made to the scheme, unless these are considered 'significantly material', the Benefits Manager, in consultation with the Director of Change Management, ICT and Regulatory Services, be delegated to implement these changes after consultation with the Committee Chair; and
- c) the Communications Team promote West Lindsey District Council's involvement with the distribution of the Household Support Fund thru the open application process and via food banks and voluntary organisations; that we ensure the public are aware of how they can access the funds and what they are entitled to.

## **6 HOME ENERGY UPGRADE GRANT (HUG2)**

Members of the Committee heard from the Homes, Health & Wellbeing Team Manager regarding a report detailing the Home Energy Upgrade Grant, advising that the Committee was being requested to authorise the signing of the grant funding agreement which accepted the allocated £10.268m from Midlands Net Zero Hub to the Central and South Lincolnshire Consortium which included West Lindsey, City of Lincoln, North Kesteven and South Kesteven.

It was clarified that the recommendation had been slightly amended from the one published to read: Corporate Policy and Resources Committee agree to accept the award of funding for HUG2 from Midlands Net Zero Hub (MNZH) and authorise signing of the grant funding agreement by Section 151 Officer, for return to Midlands Net Zero Hub.

The paper set out some of the background to the Home Upgrade grants and the mechanism for delivery up to this point on previous schemes. It was explained Home Upgrades Grants provided energy efficiency upgrades and low carbon heating solutions to low-income households who were living in some of the worst quality, off-gas homes in the district. Eligible measures for installations under the Home Upgrade Grants included, wall, loft and underfloor insulation, low carbon heating technologies (excluding those that contained a fossil fuel component) and solar panels. Both homeowners and landlords were eligible to apply for grant assistance under this scheme, landlords were however required to make a contribution towards any installations.

As lead authority, West Lindsey had agreed to host an Officer post that would be able to assist officers to deal with the day to day administration of the energy efficiency work along with submitting monthly reports to the Midlands Net Zero Hub and be a point of contact for the consortium for any questions or queries. The post would be a two-year fixed contract and funded through the administration budget provided as part of the grant funding. The project would be delivered with a partner who be procured in the same way as previous grant funding schemes.

It was confirmed that once the grant funding agreement was signed and the delivery plan in place, Officers would provide a briefing note on the grants to Members to ensure all were aware of the available grants for residents in their constituencies.

The Chairman thanked the Officer for a clear and positive report. Members requested clarity as to what could be considered ‘extreme examples’ of properties needing assistance and it was confirmed that there were clear guidelines to be followed and criteria to be met, meaning some of the more ‘extreme examples’ may never come to pass as they would not meet either the guidelines or improvement criteria.

Further clarification was sought regarding additional input from landlords, whether that same expectation was on homeowners, to which it was confirmed to be landlords only, tenants and homeowners were not required to contribute. In response to a query regarding the suitability of low carbon options for older properties, it was confirmed that any works would be technically assessed and appraised by expert in the field before being recommended, ensuring any alterations would be the best solution for each property. In response to a query regarding high carbon fuel sources, the Officer undertook to clarify that information and share details with Committee Members.

Further discussion took place regarding the need to widen energy efficiency in new builds, as well as trying to ‘back-fill’ older properties. There was wide spread agreement and, in relation to the application process regarding any grant funding, it was suggested the Overview and Scrutiny Committee could be requested to have further input. This was suggested to be via an invite to the delivery partner.

Having been moved and seconded, the Chairman took the vote and it was unanimously

**RESOLVED** that Corporate Policy and Resources Committee agree to accept the award of funding for HUG2 from Midlands Net Zero Hub (MNZH) and authorise signing of the grant funding agreement by Section 151 Officer, for return to MNZH.

## **7 PROGRESS AND DELIVERY QUARTER FOUR REPORT AND SUMMARY OF YEAR END PERFORMANCE 2022/23**

The Committee heard from the Change, Projects and Performance Officer regarding the quarter four and year end performance reporting. It was explained that, as it had been presented to the Prosperous Communities Committee the previous week, and there were several Members who had already had the full introduction to the report, the presentation at this Committee would focus on the data rather than the background information.

Therefore, the Officer presented the report as follows.

**Overall Summary of Council Performance.** Over 84% of all measures were either exceeding or within agreed tolerance of their targets, showing a strong end to the year.

**Performance Improvement Plan.** It was explained that this highlighted the measures under target, with the plan adding further context and providing the extra level of assurance that Members had previously requested. This was then scrutinised alongside the P&D report by Management Team before being presented to the committees. This was introduced in October for Quarter two last year and had been well received.

There were eight measures which were included in the plan currently and these would remain going into 2023/24 with the exception of COF02 – average time taken to pay invoices. It was explained that this measure had been amended following approval at committee in February to reflect the contractual payment terms.

The Officer then presented the portfolio summaries.

The first portfolio was Change Management, ICT and Regulatory Services. Out of a possible 18 measures, 16 were above target within the portfolio. The measure below target related to Local Land Charges Market Share, which was included within the Performance Improvement Plan.

All measures within the Finance, Business and Property Services Portfolio were within target. The Homes and Communities Portfolio saw one measure reporting below target which related to the average days taken to complete a Disabled Facilities Grant. Extra information had been included for DFGs this quarter to round up following inclusion within the performance improvement plan. It was an opportunity highlight the positive work and the impact this had had. The graph within the report detailed the measure compared with the number of referrals received, with the table highlighting the increase in referrals over the past six years.

The Operational and Commercial Services portfolio saw five of its measures reporting above target, with the measures below target relating to average number of market stalls on both a Tuesday and a Saturday, and the recycling weights, all of which were included within the Performance Improvement Plan.

The Planning and Regeneration Portfolio saw all the measures continue to report above target.

On concluding the presentation of the quarterly report, Members were referred to Appendix A, the Year End report. It was explained this was presented annually, in the same format as the quarterly reports, but detailed performance cumulatively over the year rather than the quarter.

The Officer offered to meet with any Member on a 1-2-1 basis to go through any aspect of the report in further detail, and she highlighted that training was to be planned for all Councillors on performance management, with the plan to deliver this prior to the next P&D report coming to Committee. The Officer concluded her presentation and sought questions or comments.

The Chairman thanked the Officer for her presentation and sought confirmation that the details provided verbally at the Prosperous Communities Committee had been updated for the current version of the report, this was confirmed.

A Member of the Committee expressed his thanks and highlighted the reason for the Committee meeting on a Wednesday rather than a Thursday was due to the Council having been nominated for the LGC 'Council of the Year', with the winner to be announced the following evening, all being part of the demonstrable success of the Council. He further commended the work and success of the community grants match funding, noting that there was no way of capturing the invaluable asset volunteer time and input. He enquired as to whether there was a district wide launch of the grant funding scheme planned, this was confirmed to be the case.

There was wide spread support for the layout and presentation of the report, as well as praise for those involved in not only providing service improvements but also maintaining service performance. The specifics of setting the measure sets were discussed, with Officers confirming they were regularly reviewed, with some amended if necessary whilst others remained the same. It was explained that where there were service areas regularly underachieving, these were subject to the performance improvement plans as well as reviewing the measure sets in case the targets were unrealistic.

A Member of the Committee enquired as to whether there was scope for conducting polls of those attending the Trinity Arts Centre, for example to ascertain where they had come from and whether they planned further activities in Gainsborough, such as going out for a meal or similar. It was agreed that swift 'exit-poll' style questions could be used and the Director of Corporate Services undertook to raise this with the directorate.

With further thanks to all involved, and having been moved and seconded, it was unanimously

**RESOLVED** that

- a) the Committee had assessed the performance of the Council's services through agreed performance measures and had indicated areas where improvements should be made, having had regard to the remedial measures set out in the report; and
- b) the Progress and Delivery Performance Improvement Plan for Quarter Two (January-March) 2022/23 be approved.

## **8 ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REPORT 2022/23**

The Committee gave consideration to the Annual Treasury Management Report 2022/23, as presented by the Financial Services Manager. He explained that it provided the Committee with an update on progress against the treasury strategy which was approved by Council in March 2022 for the 2022/23 financial year.

The report was required to comply with the CIPFA code of practice on treasury management

and also to keep Members updated with the current situation. The update contained commentary on the Council's treasury position, and on the economy, by the Council's treasury advisors Link Asset Services.

The report demonstrated that interest rates had been rising and therefore the Council had benefited from increased interest rates on its investments, generating £544k during 2022/23. Through closely monitoring cashflow and the capital programme underspending in year, external borrowing had not been increased during the year.

It was reported that the Council's Capital financing requirement had reduced during 2022/23, mainly due to setting aside Minimum Revenue provision in the year which was in line with the treasury management strategy. The Treasury management indicators were detailed and confirmation was provided that there had been no breaches of the prudential indicators during 2022/23.

The final part of the report provided an economics update which had been supplied by the treasury advisors and was useful in understanding the national and international context in which the Council was operating when undertaking its treasury activities.

The Chairman and Members of the committee expressed their thanks to the Officer for his work and presentation. A Member of the Committee highlighted that the report demonstrated the long-term successful management of the Council's finances up to this point, and stated that wise investments had obviously tracked well over the years. He noted it would be important to maintain that stability moving forward.

On being moved, seconded and put to the vote, it was unanimously

**RESOLVED** that the Annual Treasury Management Report and actual Prudential Indicators 2022/23 be **recommended** to Full Council for approval.

## **9 BUDGET AND TREASURY MONITORING FINAL OUTTURN 2022/23**

The Committee heard from the Business Support Team Leader regarding the Budget and Treasury Monitoring Final Outturn 2022/23. She highlighted it was the final report for 2022/23, subject to the audit of the statement of accounts.

In summarising the report it was explained that, in relation to revenue budgets, the forecast outturn position was a net contribution to reserves of £564,000. Members were being asked to approve that the balance be transferred to a number of areas. This would mean the balance held to £4.153m, which was £1.653m above the minimum working balance of £2.5m previously agreed by Members. The outturn position was an increase in surplus of £445,000 from the forecast outturn reported at quarter three.

In addition to the allocation of the year end surplus, Members were being asked to approve £0.364m from the investment for growth reserve which were the revenue costs incurred during the year in relation to RAF Scampton. The authority would seek to recover costs up to a maximum value of £0.3m.

In relation to capital, schemes were reporting a £3.054m underspend against the revised

budget, of which £2.565m was requested for carry forward into 2023/24 and £0.022m was requested to be drawn back into 2022/23. The details of the amendments were included in the report at sections 3.1 and 3.3. There were three amendments to fees and charges also being requested.

Members expressed their thanks to the Officer for a clear and detailed report and presentation. A Member of the Committee enquired as to whether there was any income report provided for the crematorium and the depot, and also whether further financial details could be provided regarding the costings of work in relation to the site at the former RAF Scampton. It was confirmed these would be shared with Members, as would an efficiencies report regarding the depot. In relation to the Crematorium, it was highlighted that the business plan came through the Committee and provided the information requested.

The Chairman confirmed that the recommendations had been moved and seconded en bloc and, on taking the vote, it was unanimously

**RESOLVED** that:

### **REVENUE**

- a) the out-turn position of a £1.094m gross contribution to reserves against the revised budget for 2022/2023, be **accepted**, which includes £0.53m of approved revenue carry forwards into 2023/2024. **The remaining balance being a net underspend and contribution to reserves of £0.564m.**
- b) the balance of £0.564m be transferred as follows:
  - £0.364m to the General Fund Working Balance
  - £0.1m to the Communities at Risk Reserve
  - £0.1m to the Cultural Strategy Reserve
- c) the use of Earmarked Reserves - £0.364m (2.4.1) be **approved**.
- d) the use of Earmarked Reserves approved by the Chief Finance Officer using Delegated powers (Section 2.4.2) be **accepted**;
- e) the contributions to Earmarked Reserves (Section 2.4.3) be **accepted**;
- f) the amendments to the fees and charges schedules for 2023/2024 (2.3.2) be **approved**, and **recommend to Council** any new Fees and Charges be implemented.

### **CAPITAL 2022/2023**

- g) the final Capital Outturn position of £4.851m (Section 3) be **accepted**;
- h) the amendments to the Capital Schemes as detailed in 3.1 be **approved**

### **CAPITAL 2023/2024**

- i) the additions to the Capital Budget as detailed in 3.3 be **approved**

## **TREASURY**

- j) the report, the treasury activity and the prudential indicators (Section 4) be **accepted;**

## **10 COMMITTEE WORK PLAN**

The Senior Democratic and Civic Officer explained the purpose of the work plan, for those Members who may not have had experience of the report previously. It was explained that the document provided a summary of items due at upcoming meetings of the Committee, and, unless there were comments or questions, the item was for noting only. It was highlighted that, as the first meeting since the change of administration for the Council, the work plan was not as populated as it ordinarily would have been, however Members would start to see items of work being programmed in over the coming months.

With no comments or questions, the work plan was **DULY NOTED**.

The Chairman thanked all present for their time, the standard of Officer reports and noted the importance of the decisions made through the course of the meeting, the first of the new Civic Year. In repeating his thanks, the Chairman brought the meeting to a close.

The meeting concluded at 7.46 pm.

Chairman