

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 27 June 2024 commencing at 6.30 pm.

Present: Councillor Trevor Young (Chairman)
Councillor Paul Swift (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Owen Bierley
Councillor Matthew Boles
Councillor Frazer Brown
Councillor Stephen Bunney
Councillor Ian Fleetwood
Councillor Paul Key
Councillor Roger Patterson
Councillor Mrs Mandy Snee
Councillor Adam Duguid
Councillor Karen Carless

In Attendance:
Ian Knowles Chief Executive
Emma Foy Director of Corporate Services and Section 151
Peter Davy Financial Services Manager (Deputy Section 151 Officer)
Alison McCulloch Revenues Manager
Darren Mellors Performance & Programme Manager
Claire Bailey Change, Projects and Performance Officer
Maisie McInnes Democratic and Civic Officer

Apologies: Councillor Mrs Lesley Rollings
Councillor Tom Smith

Membership: Councillor Karen Carless was appointed substitute for
Councillor Lesley Rollings
Councillor Adam Duguid was appointed substitute for
Councillor Tom Smith

12 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PERIOD

There was no public participation.

13 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee held on 23 May 2024 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Mandy Snee declared a non-pecuniary interest in the Budget and Treasury Monitoring Final Outturn 2023/2024 report due to her employment with Acis Housing.

15 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE

With no comments or questions, the Matters Arising Schedule, setting out the position of previously agreed actions as at 10 June 2024, was **NOTED**.

16 WLDC PRODUCTIVITY PLAN 2024

The Chief Executive presented the West Lindsey District Council Productivity Plan 2024 and explained the report was a new requirement for local government authorities from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLHUC) in exchange for financial support amounting to 4.7% of core spending. There was no template or formal criteria for the report, other than 35 questions as guidance and four themes relating to transformation, use of technology, plans to reduce wasteful spend and the barriers preventing progress. West Lindsey had produced answers in a narrative response to these in the report and referenced the Council's policy documents such as the Corporate Strategy, Executive Business Plan, Medium-Term Financial Plan and Budget and Treasury Monitoring. Officers had identified several barriers to service delivery and productivity which included the Internal Drainage Board (IDB) and lack of multi-year financial settlements. In terms of use of technology and transformation, it was acknowledged that there had been a review of service areas and major IT systems had been implemented, an Enterprise Resource Platform (ERP) and Customer Relationship Management system (CRM).

Members were requested to approve the report to be submitted by the 19 July 2024 deadline to DLHUC for review in accordance with government guidance. The Chief Executive explained that there was a potential risk in a Best Value inspection to local authorities who did not comply with submitting a Productivity Plan by the deadline.

Members commended the concise and detailed report which demonstrated the capability of the Council and the Council's current position.

The Chief Executive voiced his thanks to Ellen King for producing the comprehensive report.

Having been proposed, seconded and voted upon, it was

RESOLVED that

- a) the requirement of all Councils to submit a Productivity Plan to the

Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) by 19 July 2024 be noted; and

- b) noting that the Productivity Plan had been produced in accordance with the guidance issued by the Department, the Productivity Plan included within the report be approved to be submitted to DLUHC for review.

17 APPOINTMENT OF DIRECTOR TO WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL TRADING COMPANIES

Members gave consideration to a report presented by the Section 151 Officer seek approval to appoint the Director of Planning, Regeneration and Communities as an additional company director of West Lindsey District Council Trading Ltd, Surestaff Lincs Limited and West Lindsey District Council Staffing Services Ltd. At present there was only one director in place for these companies, with the Financial Services Manager (Deputy S151) in post as the Company Secretary. The appointment was proposed to increase additional resilience and provide additional resourcing where reports and financial returns were needed urgently.

Members strongly felt that this was the best course of action to have a reserve in place.

Having been proposed, seconded and voted upon, it was unanimously

RESOLVED that the appointment of the Director of Planning, Regeneration and Communities as an additional company director of WLDC Trading LTD, Surestaff Lincs Limited and WLDC Staffing Services LTD be approved.

18 BUDGET AND TREASURY MONITORING FINAL OUTTURN 2023/2024

The Committee received the Budget and Treasury Monitoring Final Outturn 2023/24 report from the Business Support Team Leader. Members heard that in terms of revenue budget, there was a net contribution of £115,000 put into reserves and Members were requested to approve £15,000 to be carried forward to support Council events, including the Lincolnshire Show, and approve a transfer of £100,000 to the budget stability reserve. In comparison to previous year's net underspend, £784,000 was reported in 2021/22 and £564,000 in 2022/23.

The 2023/24 outturn demonstrated an increase in contribution to reserves of £36,000 from the last quarter, but there were significant movements in this calculation which included:

- An increase in net interest receivable of £300,000
- Windfall grant income received in the final quarter of £174,000
- The balance of a corporate contingency budget was £85,000,

However, these gains had been offset by the reversal of a debtor accrual to correct the balance sheet which had reduced the contribution to reserves by £262,000, and from Planning Application income as a number of large applications had moved into 2024/25 which had reduced income received in year by £267,000.

In terms of the capital budget for 2023/24, there was a final outturn of £5.303m against a revised budget of £11.609m which had resulted in a variance of £6.306m. The majority of the variance was to be moved into 2023/24, a total of £6.319m and details of amendments to the 2023/24 capital programme were contained in the report at section three. There were also proposed amendments to the 2024/25 capital programme in section three in relation to Grange Farm Section 106 funding and the successful grant application for solar panels at West Lindsey Leisure Centre.

Members praised the excellent report by the Business Support Team Leader and asked questions surrounding safeguarding in housing and resources to deliver projects. It was responded that people living in temporary accommodation were being properly supported and safeguarded by the Council, and the report detailed the cost of this to protect residents. There was sufficient resourcing in place to deliver the capital programme, however there was a delay to some of the projects and these were being carried forward to 2024/25.

Members requested details on Levelling Up funding and asked if there were any monies underspent on projects that could be brought back to a future meeting. The Section 151 Officer agreed to bring back an update report to Members at their September meeting.

Having been moved and seconded it was

RESOLVED that

Revenue

- a) the out-turn position of a £0.928m gross contribution to reserves against the revised budget for 2023/2024, which included £0.813m of approved revenue carry forwards into 2024/2025, be accepted. **The remaining balance being a net underspend and contribution to reserves of £0.115m;** and
- b) the balance of £0.115m be approved to be transferred as follows:
 - £0.015m carried forward into 2024/2025 for Council Events
 - £0.1m to the Budget Stability Reserve; and
- c) the use of Earmarked Reserves of £0.218m, as detailed in Section 2.4.1 of the report, be approved; and
- d) the use of Earmarked Reserves approved by the Chief Finance Officer using Delegated powers (2023/2024 Section 2.4.2 2024/2025 Section 2.5) be accepted; and
- e) the contributions to Earmarked Reserves approved by the Chief Finance Officer using Delegated powers (Section 2.4.3) be accepted; and
- f) the amendments to the fees and charges schedules for 2024/2025 (2.3.2) be approved.

Capital

- g) The final Capital Outturn position of £5.303m (Section 3) be accepted; and
- h) the amendments to the Capital Schemes 2023/2024 as detailed in 3.2.1 to 3.2.4, and the amendments to the 2024/2025 Capital Schemes as detailed in 3.2.5 and 3.2.6 including the amendment of grant funded solar panels at West Lindsey Leisure Centre, be approved.

Treasury

- i) The report, the treasury activity, and the prudential indicators (Section 4) be accepted.

19 ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REPORT 2023/24

Members heard from the Financial Services Manager (Deputy 151 Officer) that the Council had complied with legislative and regulatory requirements for treasury management as set out in the CIPFA code of practice, and there were no breaches of the prudential indicators to report. Inflation and interest rates had been historically high over the period, and the Council had managed to overachieve on the budget. External borrowing had not increased as much as anticipated, and as a result there was an underspend on external debt of £202,000. As detailed in section four of the report, borrowing was refinanced in the short term given the economic climate. The Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) had reduced in 2024/24 as the Council set aside minimum revenue provision in the year. The final section of the report detailed the investment strategy and the national and international financial context.

Members considered the report and asked questions surrounding income from non-treasury investments and the letting of commercial property. The Deputy 151 Officer responded that the non-treasury income was contained in the report and detailed the property portfolio at 7.12% or £1.59m and he confirmed that all commercial assets currently had tenants.

Having been moved and seconded it was

RESOLVED that the Annual Treasury Management Report and actual Prudential Indicators 2023/24 be **recommended** to Full Council for approval.

20 PROGRESS AND DELIVERY QUARTER FOUR REPORT AND SUMMARY OF YEAR END PERFORMANCE 2023/24

The Chairman introduced the report and gave context to Members that the report had been approved by the Prosperous Communities Committee on 4 June 2024.

The Committee heard from the Performance and Programme Manager that the report summarised the progress and delivery data across the Council for quarter four of 2023/2024. The measures and targets for 2024/25 were approved by the Committee in January 2024. There was an overall summary of performance on page 121 of the report which detailed that 83% of all measures were reported as exceeding or at the agreed tolerance. There was a

slight reduction from 85% reported in the previous quarter. Performance Improvement Plans were contained in the report and reported to the Prosperous Communities Committee, as well as the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee, and an additional report had been brought to the Management Team meeting to approve measures. The recycling rate had been added back into the report and demonstrated seasonal fluctuations with the collection of garden waste.

In terms of markets, the antiques market had been introduced in quarter four and had since withdrawn from the Saturday markets. It was anticipated that the position in the next quarter would reflect this change. The table on page 151 provided a breakdown of the number of stalls and trading performance, and targets had been set for 2024/25 with seasonal markets in place. A request for benchmarking information relating to land charges in markets had been submitted to local authorities. More information would be brought to the Committee in the quarter two report for 2024/2025.

The Council tax collection rate measure was also highlighted on page 127 and there was a significant pressure on the budget with the collection of council tax. The report detailed actions in this area, such as signposting residents to money advice services, citizens advice and step change, and offering instalment plans to support residents over a longer financial period. The single person discount had been reviewed and additional revenue had been generated in this area.

Members raised concerns regarding the recycling rates and reporting of leisure centre dissatisfaction rates, and felt complaints were not being recorded in this area and suggested that this be reviewed. The Director of Corporate Services explained a report would be going to the Prosperous Communities Committee and agreed to take forward the issue regarding complaints. The Performance and Programme Manager explained a piece of work was being produced on recycling and would be reported back to Members.

Members asked for assurance regarding staff absence and asked if there were any gaps in resourcing. The Chief Executive assured Members that this was being managed and there were no significant vacancies.

The Chairman thanked officers for the thorough report and amount of work that went into producing the detailed report.

Members praised the 83% performance rate and felt officers were working extremely hard to deliver quality services across the district.

Having been moved and seconded it was

RESOLVED that

- a) the performance of the Council's services through agreed performance measures had been assessed, and areas where improvements should be made, having regard to the remedial measures set out in the report, had been indicated; and
- b) the Progress and Delivery Performance Improvement Plan for Quarter Four (January-March) 2023/24 be approved; and

c) the Progress and Delivery Year End 2023/24 Report be approved.

21 COMMITTEE WORK PLAN

With no comments or questions, the Committee Work Plan was **DULY NOTED**.

The meeting concluded at 7.23 pm.

Chairman