

## 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 18 July 2024 commencing at 6.30 pm.

- Present:**
- Councillor Paul Swift (Vice-Chairman in the Chair)
  - Councillor Stephen Bunney (Vice-Chairman)
  
  - Councillor Owen Bierley
  - Councillor Matthew Boles
  - Councillor Frazer Brown
  - Councillor Ian Fleetwood
  - Councillor Tom Smith
  - Councillor Mrs Mandy Snee
  - Councillor John Barrett
  - Councillor Karen Carless
  - Councillor Jim Snee
- In Attendance:**
- Emma Foy Director of Corporate Services and Section 151
  - Lyn Marlow Customer Strategy and Services Manager
  - Kate Umpleby Customer Services Advisor
  - Daniel Reason Senior Enabling Technology Officer
  - Steve Leary Policy and Strategy Officer - Climate and Sustainable Environment
  
  - Darren Mellors Performance & Programme Manager
  - Robert Gilliot Operational Services Manager
  - Sue Leversedge Business Support Team Leader
  - Luke Matthews Building Maintenance Technician
  - Ele Snow Senior Democratic and Civic Officer
- Apologies:**
- Councillor Trevor Young
  - Councillor Mrs Lesley Rollings
  - Councillor Paul Key
  - Councillor Roger Patterson
- Membership:**
- Councillor J. Snee was appointed substitute for Councillor T. Young
  - Councillor K. Carless was appointed substitute for Councillor L. Rollings
  - Councillor J. Barrett was appointed substitute for Councillor R. Patterson

## **22 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN FOR THE MEETING**

Councillor P. Swift, Vice-Chairman in the Chair, gave apologies for the Chairman, Councillor T. Young, Vice-Chairman Councillor L. Rollings, and sought agreement from the Committee to appoint a Vice-Chairman for this meeting of the Committee. He duly nominated Councillor S. Bunney. This nomination was seconded, and, with no other nominations on the table, the Chairman took the vote. It was unanimously

**RESOLVED** that Councillor S. Bunney be appointed as Vice-Chairman for this meeting of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee.

## **23 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PERIOD**

There was no public participation.

## **24 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee held on 27 June 2024 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

## **25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

## **26 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE**

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

## **27 UNACCEPTABLE CUSTOMER ACTION POLICY AND GUIDANCE**

The Committee gave consideration to a report presented by the Customer Strategy and Services Manager, seeking to update the current Difficult, Dangerous and Complex Customer Policy (2019), replacing it with the Managing Unacceptable Customer Actions Policy. This was to reflect the need for updated processes, changes to how the Council worked and full consideration of the human rights and Equality Act 2010.

It was explained that the previous policy was last updated in 2019, and to enable the development of this replacement policy there had been extensively consultation with front-line teams and the Joint Staff Consultative Committee. It was acknowledged that from time to time there would be customers who had a variety of challenges in their lives, and this could make those customers difficult to deal with when they were accessing services. Those challenges ranged from contact such as long, complex, or regular emails, letters, telephone calls or visits to reception, as well as challenging social media posts. Often there would be intimidating language, threats to officers, other customers, and threats made by customers about self-harm or worse.

It was explained that in November 2023, the Institute of Customer Services (ICS) reported that service organisations were still reporting incidents of violent attacks through to virtual abuse, with 60% of staff reporting such abuse, even though 12 months ago the law changed and attacks on service sector staff, physical or verbal, became classed as aggravated assault. Additionally, the Local Government Chronical reported that a study by the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) revealed that four out of five councils had experienced intimidation and harassment towards members, officers or other staff from the public. It was therefore necessary to have a policy in place to be able to deal with such issues, which affected all Council staff, and the Committee was requested to approve the adoption of the policy as presented to them.

Members were wholly appreciative of the work undertaken by Council Officers and the risks they faced particularly when working in public-facing roles. The updated policy was welcomed, alongside the changed title to it, and Members offered their support where needed, for example by having contact with individuals if it may assist.

In response to a query regarding the three month review period, the Committee heard this was as recommended by the Local Government Ombudsman and was standard practice. A Member of the Committee enquired as to the phrasing of 'do not respond in kind' and it was clarified that this meant Officers should not respond to a customer in the same manner as they were presenting, For example, do not raise voices in response to a raised voice, do not use intimidating language in response to intimidating language. It was further explained that staff underwent rigorous training on de-escalation techniques, as well as front-office staff receiving security accredited training.

Members reiterated their thanks, not only to the Officers who had worked on the refresh of the policy, but also to all those who would be affected by such incidents.

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

**RESOLVED** that

- a) the Managing Unacceptable Customer Actions Policy and appendices within the report be approved for formal adoption and to provide the right guidance to employees and customers regarding this matter; and
- b) any future minor housekeeping amendments be delegated to the Director of Commercial and Operational Services in consultation with the Chairmen of the Joint Staff Consultative and Corporate Policy and Resources Committees.

## **28 STREET NAMING AND NUMBERING POLICY**

The Committee gave consideration to a report presented by the Corporate Systems Development Manager, who explained that the Street Naming and Numbering procedure was reviewed in 2023, with the updated procedure having been agreed by the Committee at its meeting on 19 December 2023. At that time, it was also agreed that a full policy would be drawn up and brought for consideration by the Committee in 2024. It was explained that the report fulfilled the recommendations agreed on in December 2023 and presented a new policy for the Council's Street Naming and Numbering function for adoption. Once adopted,

this policy would replace the previous procedure document.

Members heard that the Street Naming and Numbering process was carried out along with Local Land and Property Gazetteer management. The Council had recently been awarded the Platinum Award for address and street data, which was given to authorities that had maintained Gold status across all criteria of the annual improvement schedule for 10 out of the 12 months of the year to the end of March 2024. This prestigious award highlighted the commitment to maintaining the highest level of data quality throughout the year. It was highlighted that the Council had not fallen below Gold Standard in the last eight years.

The Chairman thanked the Corporate Systems Development Manager for the report and concise presentation, and extended his thanks to those working on the policy behind the scenes. He also reminded Members that the Committee had given consideration to much of the content at their meeting in December.

Members were fully supportive of the policy, and reiterated their thanks for the amendments which had been carried forward from the December debate, such as the removal of the time limit for honouring a person with a street name. A Member of the Committee requested that the information regarding the awards won by the Council be shared in the Parish Newsletter, as many parishes would not be aware of that information.

In response to a question regarding the use of apostrophes in street names, it was confirmed that the databases did not allow for the inclusion of apostrophes, however, the Officer would check details for the creation of street signs and update Members outside of the meeting.

With repeated thanks to Officers, and having been moved and seconded, the Chairman took the vote and it was unanimously

**RESOLVED** that

- a) the Street Naming and Numbering Policy, as attached to the report at Appendix 2, be adopted; and
- b) any procedural updates to the Policy be carried out under delegation to the Director of ICT, Change and Regulatory Services, in conjunction with the Chair of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee. In the event of more substantive policy changes, it be recommended that the Policy be brought back to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee for decision.

## **29 FLEET VEHICLE DECARBONISATION STRATEGY**

The Committee heard from the Policy and Strategy Officer regarding the requested adoption of the West Lindsey District Council Fleet Decarbonisation Strategy, and the associated decision-making framework within the strategy. It was explained this was the first such strategy for the Council which provided a roadmap and decision-making pathway for transitioning to zero emission vehicles by 2035. Members heard that through its Carbon Management Plan, the Council had made significant strides in recent years, reducing carbon emissions by 32% since 2008. However, at 34%, fuel consumption remained the biggest

contributor to the Council's current carbon footprint with significant changes required to reduce this going forward.

It was highlighted that the approach outlined in the report had been developed to support delivery of the Council's strategic environmental aim of becoming carbon net zero by 2050, as described in the Environment and Sustainability Strategy. Adopting this Strategy would enable the Council to make informed, evidence-based decisions to decarbonise the fleet. The timescales for implementing the decision-making framework would be driven by the already established fleet replacement schedule and in line with budget cycles.

The Chairman thanked the Policy and Strategy Officer and expressed his support for the strategy. Members of the Committee noted their pleasure at the decision making matrix, understanding there were numerous considerations to take into account when considering fleet replacement options. A Member of the Committee highlighted the particular challenges of being a rural district, meaning the journeys undertaken by fleet vehicles were naturally longer and more spread out than in urban areas. Members also acknowledged the importance of monitoring emerging technologies, as current electric options may not provide the best value for money and efficiency as required by the Council.

Having been moved and seconded, on putting it to the vote, it was unanimously

**RESOLVED** that

- a) the Fleet Decarbonisation Strategy and Decision-Making Framework, as attached at Appendices 1 and 2 of the report, be adopted; and
- b) authority be delegated to the Head of Policy and Strategy in consultation with the Chairman of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee to make minor editorial modifications to the strategy, including the decision-making framework, where updates to data or legislation occur, that did not fundamentally change to the core objectives of the strategy.

### **30 FOOD WASTE COLLECTIONS**

The Committee gave consideration to a report presented by the Change, Programme and Performance Manager regarding the introduction of food waste collections, It was explained that at their meeting on 9 July 2024, the Prosperous Communities Committee had approved the commencement of a district wide Food Waste Collection scheme as mandated by the Environment Act 2021. The Act meant that the Council must implement a separate weekly food waste collection scheme by 1 April 2025 for commercial properties and by 1 April 2026 for domestic properties. To help with associated costs, the government had provided £897K to buy vehicles and caddies in advance of starting the service. The funding had been provided in advance to assist the supply of delivering the vehicles and caddies that were needed, and to help Councils obtain value for money by going through proper procurement processes.

It was highlighted that it was within the Committee's remit to authorise the expenditure of the grant funding that had been received, with that being the approval sought within the report.

Members of the Committee enquired as to whether food waste could be combined with other

collections and bins, such as the garden waste, thereby negating the need for additional caddies and collections. It was explained that the collections were mandated to be weekly, meaning they could not be combined with existing fortnightly collections, nor were there the facilities to manage to disposal of combined waste matter. It was highlighted that the Council was the collecting authority, however Lincolnshire County Council were the disposal authority, meaning West Lindsey District Council was required to collect waste in a way that could then be disposed of by the County Council.

In response to a query regarding the option of running a trial collection period, it was explained that the funding from the government was for the mandatory roll out only, therefore any trial period would have a financial impact on the Council. In relation to the disposal aspect, it was requested whether a visit could be arranged for Members to attend the processing site at Hemswell Cliff in order to understand not only the process but also the correlation with collection options. A Member of the Committee noted that for there to be maximum public understanding of the new collections there would need to be significant communications from the Council in as many ways as possible, for example including information with the annual collection schedules which were delivered to every household.

It was enquired as to whether the government funding would prove to be sufficient or whether the Council may face budgetary pressures in the future. It was confirmed that it was anticipated that support provided may only meet 80% of funding requirements, meaning there would likely be a gap in the budget.

In acknowledging that this was a mandatory service, the recommendation contained within the report was duly proposed, seconded, and voted upon, and it was unanimously

**RESOLVED** that £897,060 of capital grant funding be allocated to the 2024-25 Capital Programme to purchase vehicles, caddies, and bins, to deliver the district wide Food Waste Collection scheme.

### **31 BUDGET AND TREASURY MONITORING QTR. 1 2024/2025**

The Committee heard from the Business Support Team Leader who presented the first budget and treasury monitoring report of 2024/25, based on the forecast outturn at the end of May. She acknowledged that whilst it was early in the financial year, the report did highlight known pressures and savings and potential budget risks at this stage.

In relation to **revenue** budgets, there was a forecast net underspend, of £524,000. The significant variance within that related to employee costs. Salary budgets for 2024/25 included an estimated 3.5% increase. However, pay award negotiations were ongoing, and pending the outcome of those negotiations, Officers were forecasting the outturn at the current pay scales. If the latest employer offer was to be accepted, this would reduce the overall forecast outturn to a £12,000 net underspend, this would be virtually a breakeven position. The cost of fuel was currently forecast to be £53,000 below budget based on estimated fuel prices and consumption, but this was volatile and dependent on fuel prices during the year, which could be difficult to predict. The commercial waste service was reporting a net pressure of £63,000. This was reflective of the Business Plan approved by the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee in March 2024, which included an estimated £73,000 net pressure in 2024/25. The approved Business Plan would be reflected in the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) from 2025/26.

***In relation to the capital programme, Members heard there was a net underspend against budget of £4.975m, this variance included:***

- ***an underspend reported against the capital enhancements to council properties scheme of £40,000 – this was earmarked for repairs to a property but this work had now been completed by the tenant.***
- ***Disabled Facilities Grant scheme budget was to be increased by £65,000 to reflect additional grant and landlord contributions received.***
- ***Trinity Arts Centre improvements budget of £5m was proposed to be removed from the capital programme due to uncertainty around funding of the scheme. If resources were identified to progress the works in the future a report would be brought before committee to reinstate a budget into the capital programme.***
- ***There were then movements between LUF schemes which did not impact on the overall budget position.***

Members were asked to approve these amendments to the capital schemes as detailed in the report at section three.

In response to questions from the Committee, it was explained that the budget movements regarding works at the Trinity Arts Centre were a housekeeping amendment, based on a previous grant application that had not been successful. As part of the Cultural Strategy having been approved, further work would be undertaken to investigate funding options, meaning work at the Trinity Arts Centre would still be prioritised, but the budgets needed to reflect current positions rather than historic information. It was also noted that the business plan was due to be presented to the Leisure Culture Events and Tourism working group, prior to proceeding for approval by the Committee. It was confirmed that the working group was not a decision-making group, and final comments and approval would require committee debate and agreement.

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

**RESOLVED** that

#### **REVENUE**

- a) the forecast out-turn position of a £0.524m net contribution to reserves as of 31st May 2024 (see Section 2) relating to revenue activity, be accepted; and
- b) the use of Earmarked Reserves approved by the Chief Finance Officer using Delegated powers (2.4.1), be accepted; and
- c) the contributions to Earmarked Reserves approved by the Chief Finance Officer using Delegated powers (Section 2.4.2), be accepted.

#### **CAPITAL**

- d) the current projected Capital Outturn position of £31.998m (Section 3), be accepted; and

- e) the amendments to the Capital Schemes as detailed in 3.2 be approved.

### **TREASURY**

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

## **32 COMMITTEE WORK PLAN**

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

## **33 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 items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 3 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

**Note:** The meeting entered closed session at 7.29pm

## **34 DRIVERS PAY SUPPLEMENT**

The Section 151 Officer introduced a report seeking to update Members on the market supplement paid to HGV drivers within Operational Services and provide recommendations to address the position for the next three years.

Members of the Committee expressed their thanks to, and support of, the Operational Services workers and having discussed the options presented, the recommendations contained within the report were proposed and seconded.

On taking the vote, it was unanimously

**RESOLVED** that

- a) Option 2 be approved, that being, to continue with the HGV drivers supplement, also to uplift Supervisor pay in line with the recommendation in the report; and
- b) the use of General Fund Balance of £24k in 2024/2025 be approved; and
- c) the total cost over the years 2025/2026 to 2027/2028 of £141.8k be built into the 2025/2026 Medium Term Financial Plan.

## **35 TRINITY ARTS BOUNDARY WALL REMEDIAL OPTIONS REPORT**

The committee gave consideration to a report presented by the Section 151 Officer, providing all repair options which had been explored by Officers, and their feasibility to Members in identifying the final recommendation in the report in regards the Trinity Arts Centre northern boundary wall.



Members expressed their appreciation for the amended recommendation, and reiterated several points that had previously been discussed, such as the context of the work involved as well as estimated costs.

It was confirmed that the tendering process would be open for all, with relevant requirements confirmed through that process. It was agreed that costings needed to be understood.

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

**RESOLVED** that

- a) Officers commence the procurement for the repair northern boundary wall at the Trinity Arts Centre as per the granted Planning and Listed Building Consent number 145568; and
- b) Officers bring back a report to September Corporate Policy and Resources Committee to approve the funding and increase the capital programme.

The meeting concluded at 7.46 pm.

Chairman