

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of Council held in the Council Chamber at the Guildhall, Gainsborough, on Wednesday, 25 May 2016, at 7.00 pm.

Present: Councillor Roger Patterson (Chairman)
Councillor Jessie Milne (Vice Chairman)

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| Councillor Gillian Bardsley | Councillor Giles McNeill |
| Councillor Sheila Bibb | Councillor John McNeill |
| Councillor Owen Bierley | Councillor Pat Mewis |
| Councillor Matthew Boles | Councillor Richard Oaks |
| Councillor Stuart Curtis | Councillor Judy Rainsforth |
| Councillor Chris Darcel | Councillor Di Rodgers |
| Councillor Michael Devine | Councillor Reg Shore |
| Councillor Adam Duguid | Councillor Thomas Smith |
| Councillor Steve England | Councillor Lewis Strange |
| Councillor Ian Fleetwood | Councillor Jeff Summers |
| Councillor Paul Howitt - Cowan | Councillor Anne Welburn |
| Councillor Angela Lawrence | Councillor Trevor Young |
| Councillor Stuart Kinch | |

Also Present: three members of the public

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| In Attendance: | Manjeet Gill | Chief Executive |
| | Mark Sturgess | Chief Operating Officer |
| | Ian Knowles | Director of Resources |
| | Penny Sharp | Commercial Director |
| | Alan Robinson | Strategic Lead for Democratic and Business Support and Monitoring Officer |
| | Dinah Lilley | Governance and Civic Officer |

Also in Attendance: Rev Sue Deacon

19 CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed Members to the extraordinary meeting of the Council and began by sharing an announcement regarding the work of the Boundary Commission.

“As I am sure you are aware the Boundary Commission is reviewing the boundaries for divisions within Lincolnshire County Council. As a consultee West Lindsey were invited to comment on proposals. In January Council agreed a response to the consultation which was sent to the Boundary Commission by the Director of Resources. The response includes an

alternative approach which was felt to meet the Governance requirements for West Lindsey better.

I am pleased to say that our alternative proposals have been accepted by the Boundary commission. This is a great result demonstrating Democracy in action. I would like to thank the Governance and Audit and in particular their chair Cllr McNeil as well as the leader of the opposition Cllr Shore for their hard work on this.

I understand that the next step is for the Council to communicate our agreement with the new proposals and I am sure that Mrs Gill and her team will ensure that this happens within the timescales.”

20 APOLOGIES

Councillor David Bond
Councillor Alexander Bridgwood
Councillor Jackie Brockway
Councillor David Cotton
Councillor Hugo Marfleet
Councillor Malcolm Parish
Councillor Tom Regis
Councillor Lesley Rollings
Councillor Angela White

21 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Ian Fleetwood declared that he was a Lincolnshire County Councillor, and that LCC had agreed the report the previous week.

22 GREATER LINCOLNSHIRE DEVOLUTION PROPOSAL (PAPER A)

The Leader of the Council introduced the report, reminding Members of the process to date. Council had received the Greater Lincolnshire Devolution Deal Interim Governance Proposal and the then latest version of the deal document at its meeting on 16 November 2015. Council approved that the Greater Lincolnshire devolution expression of interest, submitted to Government on 4 September 2015, should be developed into a fit for purpose devolution deal document via continued formal engagement with Government and that authority was delegated to the Leader and Chief Executive to continue devolution discussions and negotiations with Government.

These discussions and extensive work culminated in the Devolution Agreement being signed by the ten Greater Lincolnshire Council Leaders and Government Ministers. This was formally announced by the Chancellor in the Budget on 16 March.

There were clear statutory processes that needed to be followed in accordance with the Cities and Local Devolution Act 2016 to establish a mayoral combined authority and devolving appropriate powers from central government for May 2017. The Greater Lincolnshire deal was one of the first to be progressed under this legislation.

The constituent councils needed to undertake a governance review, publish a scheme as to how a mayoral combined authority would work, undertake a statutory public consultation on the scheme and provide a summary of the consultation responses to the Secretary of State. The primary purpose of a governance review was to set out the rationale for creating a Greater Lincolnshire geographic/economic footprint and to propose options for governance. The governance review and the consultation on the draft scheme would enable the Secretary of State to decide whether the statutory tests on improving the exercise of functions were met and whether it was appropriate to make the order (if parliament approved) establishing the Mayoral Combined Authority. Before making such an order, consent needed to be sought from the constituent councils.

The report set out the terms of the governance review and the scheme on which consultation would take place. Each council was to receive the attachments for consideration by its Full Council and a report inviting the same recommendations at their next scheduled meeting.

The Leader clarified that the report was about gaining approval for public consultation. The ten constituent authorities would work together achieving what National Government could not, in terms of community relationships. Devolution was seen in the same way as Neighbourhood Plans by taking local control and funding from Government. It was vital to appoint a mayor as the offer would not be worth taking without. The ten leaders had met with Greg Clarke, but once a mayor was in place that person would speak on behalf of all the authorities. Whilst there would be a cost this was anticipated to equate to a minimal precept per household.

Benefits would be physical and social as well as financial, and the bid would grow and multiply, with further proposals in the next submission. Each authority would have one vote on an equal basis, and each Council would continue as before with its current responsibilities. The combined authority would only have responsibility for a set agenda or on issues which affected the whole of Lincolnshire which all members felt relevant.

The Leader of the Opposition echoed the statements of the Leader and stated that it was important to have a vision and move forwards. Lincolnshire was a large area but with a low population so had limited strength against other parts of the country, however now was the chance to take control. Health and the road network could be issues covered in the future.

Lengthy debate ensued with varying views being expressed and clarification sought on a number of points.

Some Members were not in favour of the position of elected mayor, as this had previously been rejected by West Lindsey, however this post was to be a spokesperson for the combined authority, not about the governance of the District

Council. It was felt that the benefits of the deal were being blurred by the resistance to the post of mayor and Members should let MPs know their feelings about the imposition of the post.

Questions were raised about the level of consultation and the influence that this would have. The Chief Executive confirmed that a communications plan was being developed and whilst no dates had yet been set it was proposed to hold workshops for Members in order for them to be fully informed to cascade information to the electorate. It was important for the public to receive information regardless of their Ward Member's views.

It was noted that the current system of government had been in existence for a great many years and it was important to move forwards and achieve the best deal possible for Lincolnshire. Devolution was evolution.

The distribution of resources would be fair and equitable, and directed to where most benefit would be achieved, by a collective decision, with one vote each per constituent authority.

The recommendations in the report were moved and seconded en bloc, and in accordance with the Constitution Part V, page 11, paragraph 14.4, two Members of the Council called for a recorded vote to be taken.

For: Councillors Bardsley, Bibb, Bierley, Boles, Curtis, Devine, Duguid, England, Lawrence, Mewis, Oaks, Patterson, Shore, Strange, Summers, and Welburn.

Against: Councillors Darcel, Howitt-Cowan, Kinch, J McNeill, Milne, Rainsforth, Rodgers, Smith and Young

Abstained: Councillors Fleetwood and G McNeill

A total of 16 votes for, nine against and two abstentions.

RESOLVED that:

- a) the progress to date of the Devolution programme be noted;
- b) the recommendations set out below, be agreed:
 - i. the signing of the Greater Lincolnshire Devolution Agreement by the Leader and delegation of further authority to the Leader and Chief Executive to engage in negotiations with Government regarding the potential devolution of further powers, responsibilities and resources be endorsed;
 - ii. the contents of the Greater Lincolnshire Governance Review, as attached to the report be noted;
 - iii. on the basis of the Governance Review, the council concludes that the establishment of a Mayoral Combined Authority for the Greater Lincolnshire area would be likely to improve the exercise of statutory functions in relation to the area;
 - iv. accordingly, the council supports the preparation and publication of a Scheme for the establishment of a Mayoral

- Combined Authority for the Greater Lincolnshire area under section 109 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009;
- v. the publication of the draft Scheme for a Greater Lincolnshire Mayoral Combined Authority as attached to the report for consultation purposes, subject to such final revisions as may be approved by the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, prior to commencement of the consultation exercise be supported;
 - vi. the outcome of the consultation exercise be reported to the next meeting of the council;
 - vii. council meets by 20 October 2016 to consider giving consent to an Order establishing a Mayoral Combined Authority for Greater Lincolnshire;
 - viii. insofar as any of the matters referred to in the report concern the discharge of non-executive functions, authority be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, to take all necessary steps and actions to progress the recommendations detailed in the report; and
 - ix. further reports be presented to Council as appropriate as the Devolution process develops.

The meeting concluded at 8.40 pm.

Chairman