

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee held in the Council Chamber - The Guildhall on 13 February 2020 commencing at 6.30 pm.

Present: Councillor Giles McNeill (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs Anne Welburn (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Owen Bierley
Councillor Matthew Boles
Councillor Stephen Bunney
Councillor David Cotton
Councillor Michael Devine
Councillor Ian Fleetwood
Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan
Councillor John McNeill
Councillor Mrs Jessie Milne
Councillor Mrs Judy Rainsforth
Councillor Trevor Young

In Attendance:

Ian Knowles	Chief Executive
Alan Robinson	Monitoring Officer
Ady Selby	Assistant Director Operations
Steve Anderson	Data Protection Officer
Ellen King	Senior Performance Officer
James Welbourn	Democratic and Civic Officer

Apologies: Councillor Mrs Mandy Snee
Councillor Robert Waller

Membership: Councillor Mrs Mandy Snee was substituted by Cllr Mrs Judy Rainsforth
Councillor Robert Waller was substituted by Councillor Jessie Milne

76 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PERIOD

There was no public participation.

77 MINUTES FOR APPROVAL

The minutes of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on 9 January were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

78 MINUTES FOR NOTING

The minutes of the Joint Staff Consultative Committee held on 16 January were noted.

79 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor David Cotton declared an interest in item 86 as the crematorium was included and this would impact on Cllr Cotton's job with the Church; however this was a personal interest as he wasn't benefitting in his capacity as a Councillor.

80 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE

The matters arising schedule was noted.

81 COMPASSIONATE LEAVE POLICY

Members considered a report formalising the policy for Compassionate Leave.

This report had been considered previously by the Joint Staff Consultative Committee. The approach was to regularise this policy rather than entirely relying on managerial discretion; however retaining some discretion would be key as staff members had a range of different relationships with family that could qualify for compassionate leave.

Unanimously **RESOLVED** to approve the Compassionate Leave Policy to adopt it for all employees of the Council.

Delegated authority to be granted to the Chief Executive to make minor housekeeping amendments to the policy in future, in consultation with the Chairman of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee and the Chairman of the Joint Staff Consultative Committee.

82 REVIEW AND RATIONALISE INFORMATION SECURITY POLICIES

Members considered a report proposing to introduce a new Acceptable Use Policy that merged and rationalised policy content from five existing policy documents into a single document to provide guidance to users in easy to read plain English format.

West Lindsey District Council (WLDC) had a large policy set to comply with different legislation and codes of connection. These policies were due for review, so the opportunity was being taken to slim the portfolio down. This report had been taken to the Joint Staff Consultative Committee and had been recommended to this Committee.

One error had been identified in the printed reports pack at Appendix 2 – the third paragraph, if approved, would read:

“Where possible, private calls should be made outside standard hours of service provision, i.e. before 9am, after 5pm, or during an employee's lunch break”.

After a comment regarding Members paying close attention to the use and misuse of Council equipment, the report was moved and seconded.

Unanimously **RESOLVED** to:

- (1) Approve and formally adopt the Acceptable Use Policy;
- (2) Approve the withdrawal of the following policy documents:
 - Email Acceptable Use Policy;
 - Internet Acceptable Use Policy;
 - Computer, Telephone and Desk-use Policy;
 - Public Service Network Acceptable Use Policy;
 - Northgate Acceptable Use Policy.
- (3) Agree that any future housekeeping tasks can be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chairmen of the Joint Staff Consultative Committee (JSCC) and Corporate Policy and Resources Committee (CPR).

83 SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY REVIEW

Members considered the Social Media Policy Review.

Like the previous two reports, this had been to the Joint Staff Consultative Committee and had been approved.

This policy was eight years old and had been due for review; many things in social media had changed greatly over this eight year period.

Members were pleased to see that relevant areas of the report had been highlighted, and also asked about the issue of misuse of social media within WLDC. There had been no incidences of this yet, however it remained a possibility and staff needed to recognise the differential between home and work life.

Unanimously **RESOLVED** to approve the Social Media Policy and adopt it for all employees of the Council.

Delegated authority be granted to the Chief Executive to make minor housekeeping amendments to the policy in future, in consultation with the Chairman of Corporate Policy and Resources Committee and the Chairman of the Joint Staff Consultative Committee.

84 PROGRESS AND DELIVERY REPORT - PERIOD 3 2019/20

Members considered the Progress and Delivery report for Period 3 from October to December 2019/20.

87.6% of key performance indicators were meeting or exceeding their targets set, an improvement of 10.1% on the same period last year.

Members provided comment on the report and asked questions of officers; the information provided is highlighted below:

- The plan was to provide Members with an update on West Lindsey Leisure Centre at every quarter, and then bi-annually from the start of the 2020-21 municipal year until there was satisfaction that the problems there were under control;
- The cost of street cleansing per household was one of the lowest of all local authorities;
- Residents' groups were always encouraged to engage with the Street Cleansing team at WLDC and register their litter picks;
- Financial targets were always set to match the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP). When these targets were set for the next financial year there were discussions with managers about the national financial picture;
- When the targets had been set for building control and planning the future of the housing market had been uncertain. The reduced levels of income forecasted were reflective of a problem in the marketplace;
- It was good to see positive statistics from Trinity Arts Centre. It would be key that the proposed new cinema did not impact on the Trinity Arts Centre.

Unanimously **RESOLVED** to note the report.

85 NOMINATE DIRECTOR FOR MARKET STREET RENEWAL

Members considered a report on the nomination of a new officer to replace Eve Fawcett-Moralee as Director of the Joint Venture Company, Market Street Renewal Ltd.

One Member expressed concern that there was not enough information in the report on the reasons why the officer recommended for the role was suitable; however the Chief Executive assured Members that the nominee was more than qualified for the role, and would receive the relevant training.

Unanimously **RESOLVED** to nominate Sally Grindrod-Smith, Assistant Director of Planning and Regeneration as Director of Market Street Renewal Limited.

86 BUDGET AND TREASURY MONITORING PERIOD 3 2019/20

Members considered the Budget and Treasury Monitoring review for Period 3 of 2019/20, which set out the revenue, capital and treasury management activity from 1 April 2019 to 31 December 2019.

The Business Support Team leader read out the highlights from the report:

Note: Councillor David Cotton briefly left the Chamber.

- There was a forecast net contribution of revenue to reserves of £914,000. £469,000 of this was interest payable on borrowing which was moved to the Valuation Volatility Risk Reserve at the year end;

- The significant variances in the remaining £445,000 were:
 - £159,000 income from investment properties;
 - £102,000 income from green waste services;
 - £24,000 trade waste income;
 - £324,000 underspend on salaries.
- These variances had been offset by pressures on the budget, namely £73,000 pressure on rental income, and a £48,000 pressure on Planning services;

Note: Councillor David Cotton returned to the Chamber.

- Planning was a demand led service, so the Commercial Contingency Budget would be used to aid the £60,000 pressure on Planning fee income;
- There was an estimated £40,000 contribution towards bad debt provision;
- In terms of treasury management, an average return of 1.743% had been achieved for the quarter; total investments for the end of the period were £11.53 million;
- The forecast outturn for capital expenditure was £20.263 million. There was a proposed net budget reduction of £62,000, and new budget requests of £76,000 (which included £50,000 for flood recovery support and £26,000 to replace the civic car). The majority of the purchase price for the civic car would be offset by the sale of the existing vehicle, valued at £22,000, leaving a balance of £4,000;
- Members were being asked to forward fund the Corringham Road scheme to the sum of £500,000;
- The Heritage Action Zone bid within the Capital Monitoring table in the report had been unsuccessful.

Following this introduction, Members asked questions of officers and provided comment on the report. Further information was gathered and this included a small pressure on car parking income because of the timing of the closure of the Roseway car park. Also mentioned were items on the Crematorium and aged debt; these issues would be addressed through matters arising at the next committee.

Unanimously **RESOLVED** to:

- (1) Accept the forecast outturn position of a £914,000 net contribution to reserves as at 31 December 2019;
- (2) Accept the use of Earmarked Reserves during the quarter approved by the Chief Finance Officer using delegated powers;
- (3) Approve the amendment to the fees and charges schedule for the Crematorium;

(4) Approve the Capital Budget amendments within the report and accept the current forecast outturn position;

(5) Accept the Treasury Management and Prudential Indicators to 31 December 2019.

87 CORPORATE POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE DRAFT BUDGET 2020/21 & ESTIMATES TO 2024/25

Members considered the Corporate Policy and Resources draft budget for 2020/21 and estimates to 2024/25. Also included were details of the recommendations from Prosperous Communities Committee.

The Business Support Team Leader gave Committee the highlights from the report:

- The net movement from 2019/20 base budget figures was a decrease of £770,000; however, this included approved use of the reserves for earmarked projects of £40,000, and the transfer of £541,400 of pension deficit to the Prosperous Communities Committee. This had previously been a line in the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee budget, but from 2020/21 it would be allocated across all services based on staffing levels.

The overall pension deficit had increased by £77,000 following the actuarial review, but there had been a reduction in the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee budget;

- Excluding the above figures, there had been a £345,400 decrease from the 2019/20 base budgets, made up of increased income and approved pressures. The significant movements were:
 - An increase of property investment income of £524,700 due to acquisition of £21.7 million of investment properties and higher than anticipated rental yields;
 - There had been a reduction in 'other' property rental income of £120,000;
 - An increase of £36,000 for the income management system and other software licences and renewals;
 - Ongoing software costs, as identified in the IT 15 year plan had resulted in an increased budget of £32,600;
 - Approved changes to the establishment at WLDC had resulted in a net decrease of £141,000.
- Prosperous Communities Committee budget had decreased £124,000 from the 2019/20 base figure. The significant movements here were:
 - An increased of £60,000 in green waste income based on the income from the first two years of charging;
 - Leisure contract management income had increased by £125,800;
 - The Crematorium was estimated to generate an income of £115,800 in the first full year of operation; however the costs related to the financing of the build fell outside the scope of this committee. The impact of the Crematorium on the budgets of both the Corporate Policy and Resources and Prosperous Communities Committees was expected to be £0;
 - Trade waste income had increased by £22,500 for 2020/21 to reflect a two

- year contract secured during 2019/20;
- The budget for grounds maintenance had been increased by £54,400 due to the current contract being extended by one year to January 2021. This extension would allow WLDC to carry out an options appraisal;
- A contract for town centre markets had been extended for 2 years at a cost of £38,000 per year;
- Approved changes to the establishment had led to a net increase in budgets of £90,000.

Following questions to officers from Members, further information was provided:

- The 35% increase for the cost of gas usage was recommended by WLDC's gas providers due to this rise being forecasted;
- Pensions contributions recommendations were based on the pensions actuary report, which was fully checked and audited against market conditions;
- Waste services costing £15 per head was cheaper than some peer Councils within Lincolnshire;
- This budget had within it the policies and principles previously agreed to fund future environmental plans to 'green' WLDC.

Unanimously **RESOLVED** to:

- (1) Accept the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee budget 2020/21 and recommend to Council for inclusion in the overall Council budget 2020/21 with any minor changes delegated to the Chief Finance Officer;
- (2) Accept the Prosperous Communities Committee Budget 2020/21 and recommend to Council for inclusion in the overall Council budget for 2020/21;
- (3) Recommend to Council the 2021/22 – 2024/25 estimates for both Corporate Policy and Resources and Prosperous Communities Committees for inclusion in the Medium Term Financial Plan 2020/21 – 2024/25.
- (4) Note the Progress and Delivery measures to be applied during 2020/21, as reported at Appendix H.

88 EXECUTIVE BUSINESS PLAN, MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY AND PLAN 2020/21 - 2024-25

Members considered the Draft Executive Business Plan and Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2020/21 – 2024/25, which included actions to be undertaken to deliver the Corporate Plan over the next 3 years.

The MTFP aimed to set a robust overall framework for the Authority's spending plans over

the next 5 years in supporting the delivery of the Corporate Plan.

The Chief Executive gave an introduction to the report, and highlighted to Members some of the current assumptions of the financial strategy. The first of these assumptions was a 2% rise in Council Tax, with the government allowing a 3% headroom. The second assumption was a 2% pay increase for staff; however this offer had been rejected by the unions. Negotiations would be monitored.

Members then asked questions of officers. Further information was provided as detailed below:

- Neighbourhood Plans were not included in this paper as they were part of the Council's 'business as usual' work. Where there was support to revise Neighbourhood Plans in line with the local plan then parishes would be involved;
- The interest payable on net revenue expenditure was towards the higher end of the risk scale, without being substantially high;
- The Chief Executive and the Leader had had a meeting with Sir Edward Leigh MP; a letter would be written to him to request a visit from the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government regarding funding.

The Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) had written to government on behalf of Greater Lincolnshire;

- The possibility of aggregating towns together to attract more government funding was discussed; however this would not be possible as the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government would not accept this approach;
- The Corringham Road scheme was being forward funded by WLDC to allow development to start; Lincolnshire County Council were to input into this fund in due course;
- There was a challenge with the smaller towns in the District as it would be difficult for them to attract government funding, hence why Gainsborough would likely attract more money as it was the largest town by population in West Lindsey.

Unanimously **RESOLVED** to:

- (1) Recommend to Council the approval of the Draft Executive Business Plan and Medium Term Financial Plan 2020/21 to 2024/25;
- (2) Approve the use of and contributions to Reserves;
- (3) Accept the statement of the Chief Finance Officer on the Robustness of Estimates and Adequacy of Reserves;
- (4) Consider and recommend to Council the Revenue Budget 2020/21;
- (5) Consider and recommend to Council the Capital Investment

Programme 2020/21 to 2024/25;

- (6) Delegate any housekeeping changes to the Draft Executive Business Plan and the Draft Medium Term Financial Plan to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chairman of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee prior to the final consideration by Council on 2 March 2020.

89 COMMITTEE WORK PLAN

The Chairman informed Committee that there had been no update on RAF Scampton.

The workplan was noted.

90 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 paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

91 EXECUTIVE BUSINESS PLAN - EXEMPT APPENDICES

The exempt appendix was noted.

The meeting concluded at 7.57 pm.

Chairman