

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee held in the Virtual - MS Teams on 11 February 2021 commencing at 6.30 pm.

Present: Councillor Mrs Anne Welburn (Chairman)

Councillor Owen Bierley
Councillor Matthew Boles
Councillor Stephen Bunney
Councillor Michael Devine
Councillor Ian Fleetwood
Councillor Giles McNeill
Councillor John McNeill
Councillor Mrs Mandy Snee
Councillor Jeff Summers (from item 76)
Councillor Robert Waller
Councillor Trevor Young

In Attendance:

Alan Robinson	Director of Corporate Services and Monitoring Officer
Tracey Bircumshaw	Assistant Director of Finance and Property Services and Section 151 Officer
Ady Selby	Assistant Director of Commercial and Operational Services
Ellen King	Senior Performance Officer
Steve Leary	Commercial Waste Manager
Sue Leversedge	Business Support Team Leader
Cara Markham	Commercial Development Manager
Katie Storr	Senior Democratic & Civic Officer
James Welbourn	Democratic and Civic Officer

Apologies: Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan
Councillor David Cotton

70 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PERIOD

There was no public participation.

71 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2021 were approved as a correct record.

72 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interests.

73 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE

It was confirmed to members that the matter on Disabled Facility Grants (DFGs) had been discussed with the Overview and Scrutiny Chairman.

The matters arising were then duly noted.

74 PROGRESS AND DELIVERY MEASURES AND TARGETS 2021/22 - CHANGE AND REGULATORY SERVICES

Members considered a report on the Council's proposed 2021/22 Progress and Delivery measures and corresponding targets for Change Management and Regulatory Services.

The following information was highlighted by the Change and Performance Officer:

- Measures and targets for other areas of the Authority were covered in the January meeting of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee;
- The only changes proposed as part of this report were to Land Charges, specifically:
 - Time taken to process a search (average number of days);
 - Percentage of searches processed within target time (10 days);
 - Market Share.
- Some searches can be complex and would impact on the average number of days taken to process a search, therefore a new measure on 'percentage of searches' was proposed so that Members could see the share of searches that were meeting the 10 day turnaround target.

The next 12 months would be used to baseline performance;

- The target for market share was recommended to be changed. Under the current definition Environmental Information Regulation (EIR) searches were included within the market share, however only Councils could fulfil this function so it could not form part of the market base. It was proposed that only paid-for searches form part of a market base.

This target had been benchmarked with other local authorities.

The recommendations were moved, seconded, and following a vote it was **RESOLVED** to approve the proposed set of 2021/2022 Progress and Delivery measures and targets for the Change Management and Regulatory Services portfolio.

75 COMMITTEE TIMETABLE 2021-2022

Members were requested to consider approving the committee timetable for 2021-2022, and were asked to note the indicative dates for 2022-2025.

The timetable remained the same as the one approved under the urgent delegated decision making process on 23 April 2020, with the following exceptions:

- Full Council, originally scheduled for 5 July was proposed to move to 28 June;
- The new date for Annual Council was proposed as being 17 May, due to a scheduled by-election taking place on 6 May;
- As Annual Council was due to move, this impacted on the Overview and Scrutiny meeting due to be held on 17 May. Therefore it was proposed to remove that meeting and re-insert it on April 26;
- To avoid the half-term holidays, the Prosperous Communities Committee due to be held in October was proposed to move to November 2.

An amendment to printed recommendation 1 was moved and seconded, this amendment read:

“Members are asked to approve the timetable for 2021/2022 civic year and note the indicative committee dates for the years 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25, subject to the inclusion of an extra meeting for Governance and Audit Committee in 2021/2022 and future years.

The date and time of this extra meeting in 2021/2022 is to be determined by the Head of Paid Service in consultation with the Chairman of the Governance and Audit Committee.”

This amended recommendation was put to the vote, and was agreed. It therefore became the substantive recommendation 1.

The new recommendation, and the existing recommendation 2 were then moved and seconded, and following a vote it was **RESOLVED** to:

- (1) Approve the timetable for 2021/2022 civic year and note the indicative committee dates for the years 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25, subject to the inclusion of an extra meeting for Governance and Audit Committee in 2021/2022 and future years.

The date and time of this extra meeting in 2021/2022 is to be determined by the Head of Paid Service in consultation with the Chairman of the Governance and Audit Committee.

- (2) Agree the attached indicative committee dates on a yearly basis, and each subsequent report will note any changes proposed.

76 BUDGET AND TREASURY MONITORING PERIOD 3 202/21

Members considered a report setting out the revenue, capital and treasury management activity from 1 April 2020 to 31 December 2020.

Note: Councillor Jeff Summers joined the meeting at the start of this item.

The following points were highlighted by the Business Support Team Leader:

- The revised Budget report on November 5 2020 approved a net movement to general

Fund Balances of £783,000;

- Forecast movements against the revised budget are:
 - Business as usual revenue forecast outturn surplus of £223,000;
 - Pressure above Covid-19 Local Authority Support Grants of £384,000 – this was a reduction of £64,000 against the pressure forecast for the revised budget;
 - ‘Carry forwards’ approved during the year of £53,000, alongside those pending officer approval of £40,000;
 - The remaining net surplus of £380,000 was proposed to be transferred to the General Fund Balance, in addition to the £783,000 movement approved for the Revised Budget 2020/2021 resulting in a total of £1,163,000. This would result in a forecast Fund balance as at 31 March of £5,148,000.
- In terms of Capital, there was anticipated slippage of £4,375,000, comprised of £4,344,000 being re-phased at the financial year end, and £31,000 of projected underspends on the vehicle replacement programme, the telephony scheme and capital enhancements to Council owned assets;
- Total investments at the end of Quarter 3 stood at £20,931,000.

Following questions and comments from members, further information was provided:

- The Match Funding Grant pot was currently in a healthy position. In accordance with financial regulations Members needed to have sight of grant funding bids of over £50,000, hence why the grant application to FCC was part of this report’s recommendations;
- Bad debt provision had been increased by around £60,000 to make allowance for Covid-19;
- The CCLA property fund investments were achieving 3.46%. This was a long term investment of £3m and It was anticipated that cash flows would be robust in terms of balances. Whilst money market funds can go into negative interest rates, currently these stood at 0%.

The report was moved, seconded, and it was unanimously **RESOLVED** to:

- (a) Accept the forecast out-turn position of a £223,000 net contribution to reserves as at 31 December 2020 (see section 2 of the report) relating to ‘business as usual’ activity;
- (b) Accept the use of Earmarked Reserves during the quarter approved by the Chief Finance Officer using delegated powers (2.4.1 of the report) and the contribution to Earmarked Reserves (2.4.2 of the report);
- (c) Approve the grant application for the FCC Communities Foundation’s Community Action Fund of up to £100,000, and to approve the allocation of up to £11,000 from the Match Funding Grant, in addition to the National Leisure Recovery Fund Bid for £209,000. Details of this are in the report at 2.5.3;

- (d) Accept the current projected Capital Outturn as detailed in 3.1.2 of the report;
- (e) Accept the report, the treasury activity and changes to the prudential indicators.

77 CORPORATE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE DRAFT BUDGET 2021/22 AND ESTIMATES TO 2025/26

Members considered details related to the overall draft revenue budget for Corporate Policy and Resources and those recommended by Prosperous Communities Committee for the period 2021/2022.

The key highlights were as follows:

- The budgets for consideration excluded central support and capital charges;
- The net movement from the base budget was an increase of £743,000;
- The Corporate Management finance costs of Covid-19 were offset by grant income budgets;
- A vacancy factor of 2% of total establishment salary budgets had been built into base budgets. The 2% vacancy factor of £184,400 was held within Corporate Management finance;
- Investment property rental income had been reduced by £203,000. No further acquisitions were expected;
- The 2021/2022 base budget for Prosperous Communities Committee showed a budget increase of £114,600. The major variances to the 2020/2021 base budget were detailed in the report, but included green waste charging and the re-profiting of planning fee income.

Following this introduction, Members asked questions of officers. Further information was provided:

- The reintroduction of Town centre market rents decision to be considered by Prosperous Communities Committee had been deferred and could not be reintroduced until June at the earliest. The £6,000 financial pressure of this could be offset by Covid-19 grants;
- Where town centre markets were referred to in the report, it specifically meant Gainsborough Market.

Members then discussed an additional recommendation to the printed set. This additional recommendation was moved and seconded, and following a vote it was **RESOLVED** to add this recommendation for consideration under a final vote.

Following this vote, the 5 recommendations were moved and seconded, and following a vote it was **RESOLVED** to:

- (a) Accept the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee budget 2021/22 and **recommend to Council** for inclusion in the overall Council budget 2021/22.
- (b) Accept the Prosperous Communities Committee Budget 2021/22 and **recommend to Council** for inclusion in the overall Council budget for 2021/22.

- (c) Approve any minor changes be delegated to the Chief Finance Officer in consultation with the Chairman of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee.
- (d) **Recommend to Council** the 2022/23 to 2025/26 estimates for both this Committee and those of Prosperous Communities Committee for inclusion in the Medium Term Financial Plan 2021/22 to 2025/26.
- (e) Recommend that a future strategic forum or workshop, in advance of setting the budget, take place, for members to discuss and debate the contents of any future budget.

78 EXECUTIVE BUSINESS PLAN AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2021/22 - 2025/26 AND 2021/22 BUDGET

Members considered the Executive Business Plan and Medium Term Financial Plan for 2021/2022-2025/2026 including the 2021/2022 budget.

The report proposed a balanced Budget for 2021/2022 and a Budget requirement of £13,270,500. The one year Local Government financial settlement had provided additional resources to those previously forecast.

The General Fund working balance, forecast in excess of the £2.5 million minimum balance along with the gain on the financial settlement provided the opportunity to create new earmarked reserves, in addition to setting aside resources through the Local Government review.

The proposed 2021/2022 Budget assumptions included a Council Tax increase of £5 which was the maximum allowed within the Government's referendum limits; for future years a 0.75% increase in the tax base and a 3% increase in Council Tax had been applied.

No pay award had been included for the 2021/2022 Budget, however 2% had been applied for future years.

The Treasury Management Strategy had been scrutinised by the Governance and Audit Committee and would be presented to Full Council for approval.

Members were informed that the Environment and Sustainability Strategy was under review and an action plan was anticipated. It was hoped this plan would be able to attract grant funding.

Note: Following it being moved, seconded, and voted upon members agreed to go into private session at 1941 to consider exempt financial information.

Committee came back into open session at 1944.

The recommendations were moved, seconded, and following a vote it was unanimously **RESOLVED** to:

- (a) **Recommend to Council** the approval of the DRAFT: Executive Business Plan and

Medium Term Financial Plan 2021/22 to 2025/26.

- (b) **Recommend to Council** the Revenue Budget 2021/22.
- (c) Approve the creation of new Earmarked Reserves, the use of and contributions to existing Earmarked Reserves.
- (d) Accept the Statement of the Chief Finance Officer on the Robustness of Estimates and Adequacy of Reserves.
- (e) **Recommend to Council** the Capital Investment Programme 2021/22 to 2025/26.
- (f) Delegate any housekeeping changes to the Draft Executive Business Plan and the Draft Medium Term Financial Plan to the Assistant Director of Finance, Business Support and Property Services (S151 Officer) in consultation with the Chairman of this Committee prior to the final consideration by Council on 1 March 2021.

79 COMMITTEE WORK PLAN

The workplan was noted.

80 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 item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

81 2021/22 BUSINESS PLANS FOR COMMERCIAL WASTE AND LEA FIELDS CREMATORIUM

Members considered a proposal for business activity in the 2021/2022 financial year for Commercial Waste and Lea Fields Crematorium.

The Assistant Director for Operational and Commercial Services introduced the report, and highlighted the following points related to the Crematorium:

- The aim was to have the same look and feel to all business plans;
- The Crematorium had had a positive start, and had come to the aid of Boston Crematorium when it was needed;
- There was a landscaping plan in place for the Crematorium;
- Much business intelligence had been gained with a range of services available. However, with their being no full understanding of the post-Covid world there may be a period of uncertainty.

Members then asked questions related to the Crematorium; further information was provided:

- Everybody who visited the site was impressed by the peace and views. The main challenge has been the amount of people currently able to attend funerals;
- There were three staff at the Crematorium, but some of the newer staff had gained professional qualifications;
- It was felt that Crematoria who offered direct cremations only were not equal competitors;
- Committee placed on record their congratulations to the Crematorium team for winning their award;
- Issues with original landscaping had been put right by contractors.

Committee then moved onto the business Plan for Commercial Waste, and it was outlined to them by the Assistant Director for Operational and Commercial Services. Staff were thanked for their flexibility during the times of Covid.

The recommendation was then moved, seconded, and it was **RESOLVED** to:

- (1) Approve the 2021/2022 Commercial Waste Business Plan;
- (2) Approve the 2021/2022 Lea Fields Crematorium Business Plan.

82 SURESTAFF BUSINESS PLAN 2021/22

Members considered a proposal on business activity in the 2021/2022 financial year for Surestaff and West Lindsey Staffing Services.

The Shareholder Representative praised the staff involved with the Business Plan as well as thanking them for their work on Surestaff. The plan for the ensuing year was outlined to Members.

The paper was moved, seconded and it was **RESOLVED** to approve the 2021/2022 Surestaff Business Plan.

83 EXECUTIVE BUSINESS PLAN AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2021/22 - 2025/26 AND 2021/22 BUDGET - EXEMPT APPENDIX

This item had previously been approved in public session.

The meeting concluded at 8.21 pm.

Corporate Policy and Resources Committee- 11 February 2021
Subject to Call-in. Call-in will expire at 5pm on 16th March 2021

Chairman