

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee held in the Council Chamber - The Guildhall on 23 September 2021 commencing at 6.30 pm.

Present: Councillor Mrs Anne Welburn (Chairman)
Councillor Jeff Summers (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Owen Bierley
Councillor Stephen Bunney
Councillor Michael Devine
Councillor Ian Fleetwood
Councillor John McNeill
Councillor Trevor Young
Councillor Roger Patterson
Councillor Mrs Lesley Rollings

In Attendance:

Tracey Bircumshaw	Assistant Director of Finance and Property Services and Section 151 Officer
Sally Grindrod-Smith	Assistant Director of Planning and Regeneration
Ady Selby	Assistant Director of Commercial and Operational Services
Diane Krochmal	Assistant Director Homes and Communities
Emma Redwood	Assistant Director People and Democratic Services
Wendy Osgodby	Senior Growth Strategy & Projects Officer
Sarah Elvin	Housing Communities Project Officer
Katie Storr	Democratic Services & Elections Team Manager (Interim)
Ele Snow	Democratic and Civic Officer

Apologies: Councillor Matthew Boles
Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan
Councillor Giles McNeill
Councillor Mrs Mandy Snee

Membership: Councillor R. Patterson sat as substitute for Councillor G. McNeill
Councillor L. Rollings sat as substitute for Councillor M. Snee

22 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PERIOD

There was no public participation.

23 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING/S

The minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee held on 22

July 2021 were approved as a correct record.

24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

25 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE

The matters arising schedule, setting out the position of previously agreed actions, as at 15 September 2021 was **NOTED**.

26 S106 CAPITAL PROGRAMME

The Committee gave consideration to a report from the Homes, Health and Wellbeing Team Manager seeking approval for the capital budgets for four projects to be funded from S106 affordable housing contributions held by the council. The process of securing S106 contributions was explained, as was the process for establishing infrastructure needs within the Local Plan. It was explained that the Council was receiving an increasing amount of S106 commuted sums in lieu of on-site delivery of affordable housing, which was reflective of the challenging and changing environment in relation to affordable housing delivery generally.

It had been recognised that a more structured approach to the use of this money needed to be established to ensure transparency and provide a clear process for all registered affordable housing providers to access funding. Work had been undertaken to establish a procedure, which included an application form and grant funding agreement (GFA). This allowed a full and robust assessment of the proposal, ensuring that the proposal accorded with the requirements of the S106 in which the funding was secured from, alongside establishing why the funding was necessary, that the proposal met West Lindsey's Corporate Priorities and most importantly how the proposal would meet the evidenced housing needs of West Lindsey. This process also incorporated the financial due diligence necessary for the application to progress and gave key detail about the project seeking funding.

Members heard that the Council held £3,905,123.87 of S106 contributions, of which £3,771,594.73 was required to be spent on the delivery of affordable housing, £2,500.00 for Public Open Space and £131,029.14 held for health on behalf of NHS. Affordable housing off site contributions received through S106 agreements were to be allocated and spent by the council to deliver affordable housing across the district.

The proposal for consideration by the Committee requested a Capital Budget and approval to spend for the Affordable Housing Programme of new schemes totalling £268,250, and approval to spend existing budgets within the Capital Programme of £1,600,000 for the schemes set out in the report.

The Committee thanked the Homes, Health and Wellbeing Team Manager for the detail contained within her report and recognised the changing nature of the work involved.

Members enquired as to whether the council had any influence on where the NHS allocated money could be spent in the district and it was explained that the council held the money for the NHS but had no input on how it was spent.

There was discussion amongst Committee Members regarding the importance of involving Ward Members in conversations as to where or how S106 money may be spent in their wards. There was widespread agreement that, whilst there may be limitations on how the money could be spent, should Members have any suggestions, it would be worthwhile to speak with Officers to ascertain whether they were possible. Likewise, it was recognised that it was essential that Officers liaised with Ward Members where there were suggested projects in their wards.

The Chairman thanked the Homes, Health and Wellbeing Team Manager once again, and, having been proposed and seconded, took the vote. It was unanimously

RESOLVED that

- a) new capital budgets and expenditure of £268,250 (£42,000 P3, Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme (RSAP) and £226,250 Ongo, Stow Park Road Marton), funded from S106 contributions, be approved; and
- b) expenditure of £1,600,000 and amendments to the existing capital schemes be approved; those being: £100,000 LEAP, Supported accommodation project; amendment from 10 properties to be purchased to 7 and £1,500,000 Lace Housing; extra Care Housing was being delivered by Lace at Linelands Nettleham, to be amended to Prebend Lane, Welton,.

27 MARKET STREET RENEWAL LTD

Members heard from the Assistant Director People and Democratic Services (interim) with a report detailing the current position of Market Street Renewal Ltd and seeking to agree an extension to the shareholder agreement.

It was explained that Market Street Renewal Ltd was established in 2017 with a WLDC shareholder loan of £250,000 followed by a further advance in 2018 of £125,000. Dransfield Properties Ltd made equal shareholder loans. The shareholder agreement would have been in place for 5 years in March 2022. Three retail units and four residential units on Market Street in Gainsborough made up the property portfolio of Market Street Renewal Ltd. The properties were now let and the company received a regular income from the investment.

Since the inception of the shareholder agreement a total of £24,500 had been paid back to each shareholder plus interest. Due to market conditions the three retail and four residential properties were subject to an overall downward valuation of £135,333 in 2020, making the original business plan aspiration of sale within the first five years unviable. The report set out the cash flow assumptions and business plan forecast for the period to September 2026.

Based on the appraisal of the current position and forecast income, Market Street Renewal Ltd were seeking approval from the shareholders to extend the existing shareholder agreement for a further five years to March 2027.

Members acknowledged the volatility in the property market and the impact of outside events. Having been moved and seconded, it was

RESOLVED that

- a) the updated business plan for Market Street Renewal Limited be noted; and
- b) a 5-year extension to the terms of the shareholder agreement with effect from 22nd March 2022, be approved.

28 EMERGENCY PLANNING AND BUSINESS CONTINUITY POLICY

The Committee gave consideration to a report presented by the Assistant Director of Commercial and Operational Services, to update Members on Emergency and Business Continuity Plans and to propose annual training in Emergency Planning for Members. It was explained that the aim of Emergency Planning and Business Continuity arrangements was to ensure that the council's response to an emergency, major incident or disruption was co-ordinated, focused and effective, minimising the impact on employees, Elected Members, customers, partners, service providers, assets and reputation. The WLDC Emergency Plan had been developed to ensure that the Council was able to respond to both internal business continuity challenges as well as to external emergencies requiring a multi-agency response under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. It would be applicable to external and internal emergencies or disruptive events.

Members heard that Officers were involved in table-top exercises to test resilience as well as using a multi-agency approach to ensure plans and contingency measures were robust. Those Committee Members who had attended the earlier session on Emergency Planning expressed their thanks for the session and recommended to others as a worthwhile session. It was suggested that, whilst being agreed at the Committee, it could be referred to the Member Development Group for inclusion in their schedules.

There was discussion regarding events in the district that had required the implementation of the Emergency and Business Continuity Plan, specifically local instances of severe flooding, and it was recognised that cross-agency working was essential to manage a swift response. The Assistant Director of Commercial and Operational Services highlighted the mutual aid agreement that further supported cross-agency working.

With no further discussion, and having been moved and seconded, it was unanimously

RESOLVED that

- a) the Emergency and Business Continuity Plan be accepted; and
- b) the annual Member training programme for Emergency Planning be approved.

29 CULTURAL STRATEGY

The Committee heard from the Assistant Director of Planning and Regeneration regarding the development of a Cultural Strategy for West Lindsey. She explained that it was considered by the Prosperous Communities Committee on 14 September where five themes of work to develop West Lindsey's cultural offer, positioning and activity were agreed. The work streams were:

- Events
- Strategic Relationships
- National Portfolio Organisation Status
- Investment in the Trinity Arts Centre
- Role of Culture in Placemaking

Members were now being asked to give approval to spend against the allocation of £250,000 agreed in previous committees. There were three key areas of spend identified. Firstly in the creation of a band 8 fixed term resource for 24 months. The budget also made provision for IT equipment. This new role would lead the marketing and co-ordination of events across the district, developing a central 'tool' for residents and businesses to advertise and seek information about events and cultural activities.

The second area of spend suggested was around the council seeking to secure National Portfolio Organisation Status. In order to be able to tap into long term sustainable funding for culture, an organisation must be an NOP. External support was needed to understand the challenges faced to achieve this and what it might mean for the district.

It was also explained that National Lottery Heritage had a funding programme for the redevelopment and regeneration of Heritage assets, with funds of up to £5million being awarded to successful bidders. It was proposed that up to £62,000 was used to develop a bid for capital investment, activities and events, with support being sought from the Committee for the bid for funds to be submitted once the work had been undertaken. It was stated that this was a rolling programme with the funder taking applications and reviewing them once per quarter.

There was widespread support amongst Members for the development of the Cultural Strategy, although there were concerns expressed that sports development was not included, despite both sports and the arts having gone into decline. This was acknowledged to be a nationwide concern.

In response to a question as to how 'culture' was to be defined, Members were directed to section 2.4 of the associated report where the following paragraph from the Local Government Association was quoted:

“Culture is who we are. It is our heritage and future. It is how we live our lives and express our identities. It is art, music, film fashion, design, even gaming. But it is much more; it is what defines us and how we are changing’.”

Following further discussion regarding leisure provision across the district, with Members being assured there was work underway outside of the Cultural Strategy which would seek to address those concerns, the Chairman called the vote, the paper having been moved and

seconded in earlier discussions. It was

RESOLVED that

- a) approval be given to spend, from the Cultural Strategy Reserve, £85,000 for new fixed term officer capacity and £25,000 to develop our approach to securing National Portfolio Organisation status; and
- b) approval be given to spend £62,000 of the Cultural Strategy Reserve to be used to develop a bid for capital investment, activities and events at the Trinity Arts Centre; and
- c) the submission of a bid for up to £5m of funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund be supported.

30 MARKET RASEN HISTORIC BUILDING GRANT SCHEME

The Committee gave consideration to a report from the Senior Growth Strategy and Projects Officer seeking approval for the Market Rasen Historic Building Grant scheme and agreement to proceed to delivery. Through the course of a presentation, Members were advised that TDR Heritage Limited had been appointed to the project, having extensive experience and having delivered similar projects across the country including the successful bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund for Gainsborough's Townscape Heritage Scheme. A steering group had been set up created from a selected group of experts, specialists within heritage led schemes, along with representatives from the Town and District Councils.

It was explained that a condition survey had been completed by TDR Heritage Ltd for all 69 properties in Market Rasen town centre to provide baseline data in preparation for extending the scheme and potential funding opportunities. The survey was carried out in line with Historic England guidance and for each building, there was a detailed report which included a description of the building, its historic value, summary of condition and a summary of the work required. Owing to the estimated cost of all identified work to be completed, a priority zone had been established, within which nine buildings had been identified as high priority. The level of grant funding available would be 80% for repair and 90% for reinstatement, with the remaining funding to be met by the building owners. Grants would be awarded on a first come first served basis. It was anticipated that the successful roll-out of the first phase of the scheme would also lead to future funding opportunities.

There was widespread support for the proposal, with Members echoing the comments made at the Prosperous Communities Committee. In response to a question regarding the 80/20 grant fund split, it was explained that there had not yet been direct conversations with property owners and, should there be need to amend the figures, that could be reviewed.

With Members again expressing their support for the project and their hope that it be successful, the paper was moved, seconded and with a unanimous vote it was

RESOLVED that

- a) £200k be approved to spend on the Market Rasen Historic Building Grant

scheme, and in doing so, the principles of this previous funding allocation, as set out in the report of 19 July 2018 to the Corporate Policy & Resources Committee, be rescinded; and

- b) a further £10,000 to be drawn down from General Fund Balances for technical support be approved.

31 COMMITTEE WORK PLAN

The Committee gave consideration to the work plan for upcoming meetings. The Committee heard from the Assistant Director for Planning and Regeneration that there was an urgent item to be added to the agenda for the November meeting, regarding the protocols surrounding Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs). Councillors had been provided with details of proposals to date however the report would further explain the process of dealing with NSIPs and the role of the Council throughout.

Members discussed elements of, not only the proposals, but also the involvement of the Council, and it was agreed that there were numerous questions that would need to be answered. The Assistant Director for Planning and Regeneration assured Members that there would be open communication and the proposed report in November would aim to address some of those concerns.

With no further comments, the work plan was **DULY NOTED**.

Note: Councillor L. Rollings left the Chamber at 8.07pm and returned at 8.09pm.

32 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 involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

Note: The meeting adjourned at 8.11pm for a comfort break and reconvened at 8.18pm

33 5-7 MARKET PLACE GAINSBOROUGH

Members gave consideration to a report seeking additional capital funding for the refurbishment of 5 – 7 Market Place, Gainsborough. The Assistant Director, Finance, Business Support and Property Services, and Section 151 Officer, detailed the difficulties faced with regard to building supplies as well as the need for the project to be delivered as per original scheme, meaning costs were above expectations and figures were still to be finalised. In view of this, she requested that Members consider the need for a contingency budget in order to avoid a funding gap for the project.

There was considerable disquiet amongst some Members of the Committee regarding the cost of works and questioning the original decision to purchase the building in 2013. It was highlighted that the original decision from eight years previous was not suitable for discussion at this meeting. There was significant discussion regarding the ongoing costs of the project.

A Member of the Committee expressed his support for the regeneration work and, whilst acknowledging the increased costs, highlighted it was in part due to national issues following the pandemic. In addition, it was a listed building and as such, required careful renovation. He moved the recommendation of the report and proposed an additional recommendation, to approve a 10% contingency budget to mitigate unknown increases.

Further discussion ensued, with Members of the Committee commenting on the detail of the original purchase of the building and whether there were viable alternatives to current proposals. During the course of the debate, the existing and proposed additional recommendation were seconded.

As discussions became increasingly heated, with a Member of the Committee declining to remain quiet when requested to do so, the Chairman stood in place, indicating the room must be silent. As Members of the Committee continued to speak, the Monitoring Officer was requested to read aloud the relevant Standing Orders from the Constitution. The following Standing Orders were read to the Committee:

Part V Rules of Procedure:

- 18.2 When the Chairman stands during a debate, any Member speaking at the time must stop. The meeting must be silent.
- 18.3 If a Member persistently disregards the ruling of the Chairman by behaving improperly or offensively or deliberately obstructs business, the Chairman may move that the Member be not heard further. If seconded, the motion will be voted on without discussion.
- 18.4 If the Member continues to behave improperly after such a motion is carried, the Chairman may move that either the member leaves the meeting or that the meeting is adjourned for a specific period. If seconded, the motion will be voted on without discussion.

Having brought the meeting to order, the Chairman proceeded to take the vote for the proposed additional recommendation, namely, to approve a 10% contingency budget to mitigate unknown increases.

A request for a recorded vote was made and duly seconded by a further Member.

On being put to the vote, votes were cast in the following manner:

For: Councillors Bierley, Devine, Fleetwood, J McNeill, Patterson, Summers and Welburn (7)

Against: Councillors Rollings and Young (2)

Abstentions: Councillor Bunney (1)

With a total of 7 votes in favour, 2 votes against and 1 abstention, it was **RESOLVED** that the additional recommendation be **ACCEPTED**.

The Chairman then called the vote on the recommendations. A request for a recorded vote was made and duly seconded.

On being put to the vote, votes were cast in the following manner:

For: Councillors Bierley, Devine, Fleetwood, J McNeill, Patterson, Summers and Welburn (7)

Against: Councillors Rollings and Young (2)

Abstentions: Councillor Bunney (1)

With a total of 7 votes in favour, 2 votes against and 1 abstention, it was

RESOLVED that

- a) the increase of the capital budget of £538,500 up to £595,000 to convert the current building at 5-7 Market Place, Gainsborough into three flats and a ground floor commercial unit be agreed; this scheme is to be funded from the Capital Receipts net of any grant awards received; and
- b) a 10% contingency budget to mitigate unknown increases be approved

34 OPERATIONAL SERVICES HGV DRIVER SHORTAGE

The Committee heard from the Assistant Director Commercial and Operations with a report to update Members on the potential impact on front line services of the current national shortage of HGV Drivers and to propose a pay increase to bring drivers' pay in line with neighbouring authorities. He brought attention to the financial details in the report and noted that, contrary to the information detailed there, the total costs to the council would be less than indicated in the report.

Members wished to express their thanks to all waste services operatives for their hard work throughout the pandemic and for continuing to provide a full service through difficult circumstances. The importance of retaining drivers was recognised, as well as the potential impact of losing qualified drivers to the private sector. Whilst the benefits of working for a Local Authority were considerable, such as hours of working, paid leave and pension contributions, there was disparity of salary levels even in comparison to other councils in the county.

Members were supportive of the options for offering apprenticeships, recognising that not only was it important to train the next generation of drivers but also ensure progression opportunities throughout the service.

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

RESOLVED that

- a) Option 3 of the report, to increase drivers pay by the proposed amount, offer a £500 loyalty bonus for all current HGV drivers and a £500 training and recruitment incentive, be approved; and
- b) the use of the General Fund Balance to fund the Market Factor Enhancements for Refuse Drivers be approved; and
- c) officers be commissioned to investigate the possibility of employing driver apprentices, working up to a qualification to include a HGV licence.

The meeting concluded at 9.08 pm.

Chairman