

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee held in the Council Chamber - The Guildhall on 16 June 2022 commencing at 6.30 pm.

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

Councillor Matthew Boles
Councillor Stephen Bunney
Councillor Liz Clews
Councillor Michael Devine
Councillor Ian Fleetwood
Councillor John McNeill
Councillor Tom Regis
Councillor Mrs Mandy Snee
Councillor Robert Waller
Councillor Trevor Young
Councillor Roger Patterson

In Attendance:

Ian Knowles	Chief Executive
Emma Foy	Director of Corporate Services and Section 151
Sue Leversedge	Business Support Team Leader
Darren Mellors	Performance & Programme Manager
Claire Bailey	Assistant Planning Services Team Manager
Grant White	Enterprising Communities Manager
Amy Potts	Senior Project Support Officer
Ele Snow	Senior Democratic and Civic Officer

Apologies: Councillor Owen Bierley
Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan

Membership: Councillor Roger Patterson sat as substitute for Councillor Owen Bierley

1 WELCOME FROM THE CHAIRMAN

On opening the meeting the Chairman welcomed all present and extended a warm welcome to Emma Foy, Director of Corporate Services and S151 Officer, who had recently joined the council.

The Chairman explained to the Committee that request had been made to vary the agenda so that, on entering closed session, agenda item 8b, CCTV Service, be heard first, transposing that with agenda item 8a, Levelling Up Fund Resources.

This suggestion was formally proposed and seconded, and, on taking the vote it was

RESOLVED that the agenda be varied, with agenda item 8b to be heard prior to agenda item 8a.

2 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PERIOD

There was no public participation.

3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING/S

The minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee held on 14 April 2022 were **APPROVED** and signed as a correct record.

The minutes of the Joint Staff Consultative Committee held on 24 March 2022 were **NOTED**.

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor M. Snee declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to the report regarding Levelling Up Fund Resources, stating that as a close family member was involved in the Levelling Up workstream, she would not participate in the discussion and would retire from the Chamber.

5 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE

With no comments or questions from Members, the Matters Arising Schedule was **DULY NOTED**.

6 ASBESTOS MANAGEMENT POLICY

The Committee gave consideration to a report presented by the Director of Corporate Services explaining that the Asbestos Management Policy and subsequent supporting guidance set out the Council's procedures to ensure that the Authority actively managed the property estate, and committed to compliance with all relevant Health and Safety legislation regarding the management of asbestos containing materials (ACM's). Members heard that the policy, its procedures and approaches, was produced to ensure that the risk from known or suspected ACMs within Council premises or controlled buildings was adequately managed, as far as was reasonably practicable, in order that no one would come to any harm from the exposure to Asbestos Fibres.

The supporting guidance detailed the responsibilities of the Council, its employees, contractors and regular building users with regards to the legal duty to manage ACMs under Regulation 4 of the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012. Additionally, the description, identification and responsibilities of the "Duty holders" were presented along with the four essential steps of compliance, the legislative framework and the emergency procedure to be

taken should suspected ACMs be disturbed. It was noted that the guidance concluded with advice on Asbestos training, training regimes, guidance for the procurement of contractors and links to further external resource data/information. Members were also informed that an additional statement had been included in light of the Council's Environmental and Sustainability Strategy, recognising the strategy within the Asbestos Management Policy and the commitment to carbon net zero.

In response to a question regarding the responsibilities of Members in relation to the policy, it was explained that whilst Elected Councillors were not duty holders, there was a level of corporate responsibility whereby Members should bring any issues regarding asbestos that they were aware of to the attention of Officers, in order that concerns could be addressed.

Having been moved and seconded it was unanimously

RESOLVED that:

- a) the Asbestos Management Policy be approved; and
- b) minor housekeeping amendments to the policy be delegated to the Director of Corporate Services in consultation with the Chairman of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee.

7 APPOINTMENT OF SHAREHOLDER REPRESENTATIVE

The Director of Corporate Services introduced the second report of the evening, seeking to nominate the Shareholder Representative for the Council's company interests and to nominate the Company Secretary of the Council's commercial trading companies. It was explained that the Council had the legal power to establish and operate trading companies, which could be wholly owned by West Lindsey District Council in order to enable the Council to take advantage of the powers to trade for profit introduced under the Local Government Act 2003, where opportunities to do so came about, and it was appropriate to use the company as a vehicle for the trading activity proposed.

It was explained that, in addition, under the "general power of competence" introduced by Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011, local authorities now had a general power that enabled them to do anything that a private individual was entitled to do, subject to certain statutory limitations. It was noted that actions taken for a commercial purpose, even under the Localism Act 2011, must be undertaken through a company. Under the Companies Act 2006 there was no legal requirement to have a Company Secretary, however, the Council saw this as a role which would promote and ensure good governance and financial management.

Following the resignation of Tracey Bircumshaw, Company Secretary, it was recommended that Peter Davy was nominated as Company Secretary upon his commencement on 1 August 2022. Additionally, the Director of Corporate Services was nominated as the appointed Shareholder Representative.

With the Committee expressing understanding of these arrangements, and having been moved and seconded, it was unanimously

RESOLVED that

- a) the appointment of the Director of Corporate Services (S151) as the Shareholder Representative, for WLDC Trading Ltd and associated companies and to include Market Street Renewal Ltd, be approved; and
- b) the appointment of Peter Davy (Financial Services Manager (Deputy S151)) as Company Secretary for WLDC Trading Ltd, WLDC Staffing Services Ltd, and Surestaff (Lincs) Ltd from 1 August 2022, be approved.

8 ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REPORT 2021/22

Members gave consideration to the Annual Treasury Management report, providing details of Annual Treasury Management activities and prudential indicators for 2021-22 in accordance with the Local Government Act 2003. It was explained this would be reported to Full Council for approval.

Note: Councillor R. Patterson arrived at 6.44pm.

There was significant concern expressed by Members regarding the current national financial situation, with interest rates rising and likely to continue to do so. Members were offered assurance that such increases in interest rates were monitored closely, with relevant action taken as necessary, with advice sought from independent treasury advisors.

Members of the Committee emphasised the need for financial stability for the Council given the national picture, with further assurance being provided regarding, for example, the Council's borrowing strategy.

On being proposed and seconded, the Chairman called the vote and it was unanimously

RESOLVED that the Annual Treasury Management Report and actual Prudential Indicators 2021/22 be proposed to Full Council for approval.

9 BUDGET AND TREASURY MONITORING FINAL OUTTURN 2021/2022

The Committee heard from the Business Support Team Leader with a report detailing the Budget and Treasury Monitoring Final Outturn 2021/2022. It was explained that this was the final outturn report following the closure of accounts, subject to the audit of the statement of accounts. In relation to revenue activity, the final position was a net contribution to reserves of £1.612m. £0.828m of which were approved carry forwards into 2022/23. This left a surplus balance of £0.784m. This was an increase in surplus of £0.597m from the position reported to the Committee in April as the quarter four forecast outturn. Details of the movement were listed at section 2.2 of the report, however Members heard that the two significant items which made up this movement were:

1. New burdens grants of £0.327m, paid to the Council to support the administration of covid support payments – in the main, services had been able to contain the delivery of grants within existing budget provision and it was therefore possible to include this

in the overall surplus position at year end.

2. there had been a reduction in bad debt provision for Housing Benefits of £0.21m. The Housing Benefits team had worked hard to actively reduce outstanding debt, and had reduced the balance by just under £0.5m during 21/22. Combined with the work they had also undertaken to reduce the instances of new overpayment cases, the level of provision required had significantly reduced, resulting in a positive impact on the revenue accounts.

It was explained that Members were asked to approve that £0.25m of the year end surplus be carried forward into 22/23 to support service resourcing. Due to the current high inflation rates, there was a risk of an increased pay award for 22/23 above the budgeted 2%. The proposed carry forward would provide for a 4% pay award. The remaining balance of £0.534m was to be transferred to the general fund working balance – increasing the balance to £5.4m, which was £2.9m above the minimum working balance of £2.5m.

In relation to the financial impact of Covid-19, there was a balance of £0.691m in the covid support reserve, £0.232m had been committed in future years, leaving an unallocated balance of £0.459m.

In the fees and charges section of the report at 2.4, Members were asked to approve an amendment to the fees and charges schedule for DBS checks included on the schedule for licensing. The fee was set by the Disclosure and Barring service and the Council was notified of the amendment in April. The amendment was a reduction from £44 to £38.

With regard to capital schemes, the final outturn position was £7.812m against a revised budget of £10.326m - £2.838m had been requested as carry forwards into 22/23, and £0.324m being the net overspend on scheme budgets. The main variation from the position reported to Members at quarter four was the carry forward of £0.337m for the cinema land where only the land deposit had been paid in 21/22. Work was ongoing to finalise the acquisition of the site and completion was expected during quarter two.

Members were informed that there had been an increase in spend due to the payment to HMRC of irrecoverable VAT of £0.742m. An appeal against this decision was ongoing on the basis that the breach was an exceptional event, this was a known risk but was considered unlikely. A meeting with HMRC was pending and Members would be kept informed of the outcome.

As detailed within the report at 3.1.4, Members were asked to approve amendments to the following capital schemes:

- 1) Thriving Gainsborough grant for cinema development - £0.013m be transferred to revenue for consultants and legal fees, and
- 2) The Sun Inn capital grant budget of £0.033m to be reinstated, funded from reserves. This reflected the latest variation of the agreement, allowing for claims to be submitted up to August 2022.

Finally, it was explained that section 4 of the report referred to items where there was a statutory requirement to publish. Section 137 expenditure and the Building Control account were finalised and published on the website after this report was released to the Committee and final versions, as well as the weblink, had been circulated to Members.

The Chairman thanked the Business Support Team Leader and invited comments from the Committee.

With regard to raising interest rates and rates of inflation, the impact on families and those already struggling financially, and in consideration of the general reserves fund standing at over the recommended minimum amount, a Member of the Committee proposed an amendment to recommendation C of the report to read:

‘Members ask that the remaining balance of £0.534million be transferred to an earmarked reserve to be used to support social hardship in the district of West Lindsey, by supplementing the household support fund currently being formulated by Lincolnshire County Council’.

The Chairman acknowledged the concerns nationwide regarding the cost of living and the strain of financial hardship for those impacted, however it was noted that the suggestion would be better discussed as a part of the upcoming Budget Consultation workshops. It was noted that the suggestion be shared with the Director of Corporate Services for further consideration.

In response to a question regarding the costs of fuel for the Council, it was explained that fuel costs were reported separately, with it being a £16,000 pressure across the Council. Members heard this would be reported on in the July report.

There was discussion regarding the recovery of housing benefit overpayments, whether there was a balance point at which it no longer became value for money to continue attempting to recover the debt, this was confirmed to be the case. There was further comment on the use of general reserves and balance transfer decisions, it was reiterated that the upcoming Budget Consultation workshops would be the most suitable forum for such suggestions to be put forward.

Members of the Committee sought clarification on the details of the shopping trolley scheme, with it being highlighted that whilst the Council could charge for the recovery of abandoned shopping trollies, it was not possible to enforce supermarkets to prevent them being abandoned in the first place. The purpose of the continued covid fund was also explained, with some areas of work still experiencing a noticeable impact post-covid and therefore using funds to assist currently.

The recommendations within the report were moved and seconded and, in taking the vote, it was

RESOLVED that:

- a) the out-turn position of £1.612m gross contribution to reserves against the revised budget for 2021/2022, which included £0.828m of approved revenue carry forwards into 2022/2023, be approved. The remaining balance being a contribution to reserves of £0.784m;
- b) £0.25m be carried forward into 2022/2023 to support service resourcing;

- c) the remaining balance of £0.534m be transferred to the General Fund Working Balance;
- d) the use of Earmarked Reserves approved by the Chief Finance Officer using Delegated powers (Section 2.3.1), be accepted;
- e) the contributions to Earmarked Reserves (Section 2.3.2), be accepted;
- f) the amendment to the fees and charges schedules (2.4) be approved, to be effective immediately;
- g) the final capital outturn position of £7.812m (Section 3); be accepted;
- h) the amendments to capital schemes detailed at 3.1.4 be approved; and
- i) the final treasury management indicators (Section 5) be accepted.

10 PROGRESS & DELIVERY QUARTER FOUR

The Change, Project and Performance Officer presented the Progress and Delivery report for quarter four (January – March) and year-end 2021/22. It was explained that, as this was an exceptions report, the Officer would run through each portfolio highlighting the measures that had performed above or below target for two consecutive periods. It was noted that there was a correction to be made within the quarter 4 report in terms of the percentages, explaining that 45% of measures had exceeded their targets, 32% were within tolerance and 23% were performing below the agreed target. In addition, 71% of measures had exceeded their targets for two quarters or more while the remaining 29% had been below target for two quarters or more. Overall performance had improved on the last quarter with 77% of measures within tolerance or above compared with 65% in quarter three. In addition, measures exceeding target had also improved with 71% of measures exceeding target compared with 59% in quarter three.

Corporate Health

Members heard that all measures regarding % of calls answered in 21 seconds were either above target or within tolerance, meaning corporate health reported a good overall performance. The measure CH12 had been removed within the 22/23 measure set as it had not presented an accurate representation of the call handling within the council.

Finance and Property

The rental portfolio voids reported at above target for at least two previous quarters, with voids at 3%. There were no measures reporting below target within the finance and property portfolio.

Homes and Communities

There were 3 performance measures which had performed above target for at least two consecutive quarters, these being long term empty properties as a % of all housing stock; number of households which had been housed from the housing register (removed 22/23) and homeless prevention (amended 22/23 to homeless approaches with positive outcomes). Four measures had performed under target for at least the previous two consecutive

periods, these measures related to home choices and homes, health and wellbeing. For home choices the measures below tolerance for two consecutive periods were regarding the number of nights spent in B&B accommodation and Homeless prevention cases as a % of total approaches. In terms of the number of nights spent in B&B accommodation, whilst this had increased from the last quarter it had decreased from quarter 4 20/21 which was at 512 nights and all contracted temporary accommodation had remained full during quarter 4. Delays with moving on, due to issues outside of the Council's control, had contributed to the increase. In addition the protect and vaccinate programme, which required additional temporary accommodation, also contributed.

For homes health and wellbeing, the measures below tolerance related to the average number of days from DFG referral to completion and long-term empty properties brought back into use. Starting with the average number of days from DFG referral to completion this was to be amended in 22/23 measure set in order for performance to be measured from the receipt of a completed application from Lincolnshire County Council to completion of works. This was the period of time for which the Council had direct responsibility for DFGs. A new measure was to be included in 22/23 to report on the "percentage of referrals completed within 120 days (not including complex cases)" so that the timeframe could also be reported without the complex cases to provide further context in the report. In 22/23 the empty property levels would continue to be monitored however the measure to monitor long term empty properties brought back into use would be removed as there was no resource or officer proactively dedicated to this area of work.

Operational and Commercial Services

There were 5 measures which performed better than the agreed targets for at least two consecutive quarters with positive progress to be reported in the recovery of the Trinity Arts Centre and exceeding the service level agreements to collect missed bins and recover fly tipping. The Leisure Centre continued to report above target in terms of customer satisfaction.

Measures below target, with the exception of the missed black and blue bin collections, were still ongoing in their covid recovery however in terms of leisure centre usage and outreach work, this continued to move closer to the targets. An additional measure to include the number of outreach sessions would be included to add further context to the existing measure of outreach users.

The average number of stalls at the Tuesday and Saturday markets fell short of their target, work was ongoing with Marshall's Yard to support the market, following successful events held in quarter four. The addition of a further measure to report on the average number of market traders for both markets over the reporting period would provide additional context during 2022/23 reporting.

Members were provided with a brief update from the Commercial Development Manager in relation to leisure provision. It was explained that the Commercial Development Manager was preparing an action plan that would identify and address the short and long term challenges with the leisure and sport provision in West Lindsey. Everyone Active had been given clear instructions to improve the cleanliness and maintenance of the West Lindsey Leisure Centre and significant improvements had been made over the last 2 months. The P&D measures would continue to be reviewed and clarity sought on the data provided, as well as driving community outreach through Everyone Active, Trinity Foundation, Active

Lincs and other partners.

People and Democratic Services

Two measures had performed above target for two consecutive periods, both related to FOIs with turnaround remaining above target and maintaining zero challenges to FOI's. There were no measures under target in this portfolio.

Planning and Regeneration

Development Management performance remained high with 3 measures maintaining performance above target for 2 or more consecutive periods, the team continued to ensure applications determined in time remained above target for both major and non major applications. There were no measures under target for two of more consecutive period in this portfolio.

Change Management and Regulatory Services

Members heard that 11 measures performed above their targets for two consecutive periods with only one performing below target. Continued high performance was reported in all areas with a special mention to the LLPG standard which was awarded the platinum award following the service maintaining gold standard for the whole year. This was awarded to ten local authorities in the East Midlands including West Lindsey.

The number of community safety cases remained below target; this measure related to cases closed during the reporting period as a result of compliance with warning, Fixed Penalty Notice or formal action. If cases were not reaching a point of action then there were fewer to close, and this measure would be amended in 22/23 to report % of community cases closed following compliance. This would provide more accurate reporting and the number could also be included in the narrative of the report going forward.

The Committee heard that the end of the year was a good opportunity to reflect on all the good performance which 2021/22 had reported, with a lot of positives to take away, not only on the continued recovery of commercial activities but performance as a whole. Corporate Health represented a positive picture of the Council with all but the one measure in tolerance or above target. Commercial activities that remained below target showed growth on the previous year, which is what would be hoped to see. Homes and communities continued their work to prevent homelessness before it reached a relief stage and there were a number of services reporting all measures above target such as Finance, Property, Democratic and Development Management. Finally, Regulatory and Change Management reported a large number of measures above target, and improvements on the Food Standard Agency inspections and community safety case closures from the previous year.

On discussing the contents as presented, a Member of the Committee raised serious concerns that there appeared to be certain aspects of performance that had remained 'in the red' for several years, with no sign of improvement, It was questioned whether this was due to the service areas being out of the control of the Council or there being problems that could not be resolved. It was acknowledged that there were service areas with longer-term difficulties than others, however it was intended that, with a new system in place, there would be increased Officer time to dedicate to lower performing areas. Additionally, where the T24 programme had been implemented in service areas that were known to have poor performance, those services had been turned around in very short time spans. The intention was to roll the T24 programme out across other service areas to improve those long-

standing 'red areas'.

Further to an enquiry regarding bringing empty properties back into use, it was confirmed this would be clarified and shared with Members, likewise the income streams reported on for the Trinity Arts Centre would be clarified and shared with Members.

Members questioned the statistics regarding use of the leisure centres, with it being agreed that further detail could be included in the narrative of the report. Additionally, there was praise for the Communications Team and their work over the Jubilee Weekend, as well as recognition for the Planning and Regeneration Team for the excellent work and minimal number of appeals lost.

Note: Councillor T. Regis left the chamber at 7.39pm, returning at 7.41pm

The Chairman thanked the Officer for her time and presentation of the report, and, with no further comments or questions, having been moved and seconded it was

RESOLVED that the performance of the Council's services through agreed performance measures had been assessed, and areas where improvements should be made, having regard to the remedial measures set out in the report, had been indicated.

11 COMMITTEE WORK PLAN

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

12 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 paragraphs 3 and 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

Note: The meeting entered closed session at 7.45pm.
Councillor M. Devine left the Chamber and returned at 7.47pm

13 CCTV SERVICE

The Committee gave consideration to a report presented by the Head of Paid Service in relation to providing 24/7 monitoring within the CCTV service. It was explained that the 24/7 monitoring would be a part of a package of measures, working with local businesses and police, aiming for the prevention of crime.

Members were, on the whole, supportive of the proposals, detailing specific issues they have experienced in their wards. There were questions raised as to how effective CCTV was, both in the prevention of crime and in identifying perpetrators, in answer to which examples of recent cases were provided.

A Member of the Committee noted his objections to the proposals, stating he felt it too costly with insufficient evidence of success in the aims of prevention. Suggestions were made regarding working with other agencies in order to prevent young people becoming involved in antisocial and criminal behaviour, to which it was confirmed there was such work undertaken across the district.

There was discussion regarding recruitment to the role of CCTV Operator, with Members noting the current national circumstances, whereby there were more jobs available than applicants. This was recognised however it was hoped that recruitment would be underway as a priority, should funding be agreed.

With regard to how CCTV could be used in alternative situations, it was requested that consideration be given to the use of CCTV in the prevention of fly-tipping, and identification of those responsible. It was noted that this would be raised with Enforcement Officers in conjunction with the CCTV Service.

On being moved and seconded, the Chairman took the vote and it was

RESOLVED that up to £80,000 be approved to deliver 24/7 monitoring within the CCTV Service for a 12 month pilot.

Note: Councillor J. McNeill requested that his vote against the proposal be recorded.

Note: Councillor M. Snee left the meeting at 8.30pm

14 LEVELLING UP FUND RESOURCES

The Levelling Up Fund Programme Manager presented a report to the Committee regarding the progress and spend achieved in 2021/22 and seeking approval for the next tranche of expenditure on the programme.

Members were satisfied with the progress to date and were provided assurance that as each element of the project progressed and detailed designs and work programmes were confirmed, updates would be brought back to Members; specifically, where there were identified ongoing revenue implications and where input into final design approval was required.

With unanimous support, and having been moved and seconded, it was

RESOLVED that:

- a) approval be given to spend the remaining £8.299m of the Thriving Gainsborough Levelling Up Programme, capital budget as per the Bid submission; and
- b) Appendix 1 of the report be approved as the revised budget profile for the programme; and

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- c) a future report be presented to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee, detailing the business case and options for Public Realm interventions (Market, Park and Pocket Park) for approval.

With no further business, the Chairman thanked all present for their time and contributions and brought the meeting to a close.

The meeting concluded at 8.33 pm.

Chairman