

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee held in the Council Chamber - The Guildhall, Marshall's Yard, Gainsborough, DN21 2NA on 7 September 2023 commencing at 6.30 pm.

Present: Councillor Trevor Young (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs Lesley Rollings (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Owen Bierley
Councillor Matthew Boles
Councillor Frazer Brown
Councillor Stephen Bunney
Councillor Ian Fleetwood
Councillor Roger Patterson
Councillor Tom Smith
Councillor Mrs Mandy Snee
Councillor Paul Swift

In Attendance:
Emma Foy Director of Corporate Services and Section 151
Sally Grindrod-Smith Director Planning, Regeneration & Communities
Amy Potts Programme Manager
Katie Storr Democratic and Elections Team Manager

Also Present: Councillor Paul Key

Apologies: None Received

Membership: No substitutes

22 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PERIOD

There was no public participation.

23 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING/S

The Chairman explained there were two sets of minutes, one for approving and one for noting. Having been moved and seconded it was

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee held on 20 July, 2023 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

With no requirement for a vote, the minutes of the Joint Staff Consultative Committee held on 6 July 2023 were **NOTED**.

24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest at this point in the meeting.

25 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE

The Democratic Services Team Manager introduced the report and advised that a number of the issues would be addressed through the Members Bulletin. It was noted that the information regarding the leisure centres would be presented at the next meeting. An update regarding the depot would also be made available before the next meeting.

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

26 RECOMMENDATION FROM THE JOINT STAFF CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE - AMENDMENTS TO JSCC TERMS OF REFERENCE

The report of the Monitoring Officer, seeking approval of amendments to the Rules of Procedure and Terms of Reference for the Joint Staff Consultative Committee (JSCC) was considered.

The recommendation was outlined and it was explained the change related to an increase in the staff representation on JSCC, to not more than four employee representatives and six reserve employee representatives, to be made up of equal representation of union appointed and staff elected employee representatives.

Members expressed their support and highlighted the tremendous work the JSCC undertook on behalf of the council. It was noted that the proposal should address issues around meetings not being quorate. The importance of staff representation and hearing the views of employees was emphasised.

The recommendation was proposed and seconded and on being put to the vote was carried.

RESOLVED that

following recommendation from JSCC, (section 1.2 paragraph (b) of the Constitution, Rules of Procedure and Terms of Reference) staff representation on the Joint Staff Consultative Committee be amended as follows:

“(b) not more than four employee representatives and six reserve employee representatives (to be made up of equal representation of union appointed and staff elected employee representatives where possible; should an equal balance not be possible, vacancies may be filled by staff members whether union or non-union).

**27 RECOMMENDATION FROM THE JOINT STAFF CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE -
REVIEW OF THE DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE**

Consideration was given to the report of the Director of Corporate Services which requested approval of the revised Disciplinary Procedure and agreement of the changes.

Members noted that the matter had been reviewed and considered by JSCC and their recommendations were in the report. Councillors indicated their support for the changes.

The recommendations were proposed and seconded and on being put to the vote were carried.

RESOLVED that: -

- (a) the recommendation from the Joint Staff Consultative Committee be approved and the policy be adopted; and
- (b) delegated authority be granted to Director of Corporate Services, in consultation with the Chairs of Joint Staff Consultative Committee and Corporate Policy and Resources Committee, to make any future minor housekeeping amendments to the Policy.

**28 RECOMMENDATION FROM THE JOINT STAFF CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE -
REVIEW LONE WORKING POLICY**

The report of the Director of Corporate Services, seeking approval of the Lone Working Policy was received having been recommended from the Joint Staff Consultative Committee.

It was noted that the proposed changes were largely technical and were outlined in Appendix 2 to the report. Members were advised that the Council was looking at a lone working app for those staff that may wish to use it.

A councillor indicated that the Policy was very important in helping lone workers deal with difficult situations. It was noted that the council had previously signed up as an Authority to the Local Government Association's Debate not Hate campaign.

A Member suggested the need for ongoing training for staff and members was essential and that members could be kept up to date through the bulletin. Referring to Appendix E of the report which directly offered guidance to Members, it was requested that this be circulated separately and be brought to the attention of all Members. The need to support lone workers was considered paramount.

The recommendations were proposed and seconded and on being put to the vote were carried.

RESOLVED that: -

- (a) the recommendation from the Joint Staff Consultative Committee be

supported and the policy be approved for immediate adoption; and

- (b) delegated authority be granted to the Director of Corporate Services, in consultation with the Chairs of Joint Staff Consultative Committee and Corporate Policy and Resources Committee, to make any future minor housekeeping amendments to the Policy.

29 RECOMMENDATION FROM JOINT STAFF CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE - RETIREMENT POLICY

Consideration was given to the report of the Director of Corporate Services seeking approval of the Retirement Policy and Procedure following recommendation by the Joint Staff Consultative Committee.

Members expressed support for the proposed changes and the need to recognise the work of staff and for them to feel valued. A councillor emphasised the importance of still supporting staff after retirement as it could be quite a challenging experience.

The recommendations were proposed and seconded and on being put to the vote it was **RESOLVED** that: -

- (a) the recommendation from the Joint Staff Consultative Committee be accepted and the Policy be approved for immediate adoption; and
- (b) delegated authority be granted to Director of Corporate Services, in consultation with the Chairs of Joint Staff Consultative Committee and Corporate Policy and Resources Committee, to make any future minor housekeeping amendments to the Policy.

30 COMMITTEE WORK PLAN

Members were advised that consideration was being given to holding an additional meeting on 12 October 2023.

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

31 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.

32 CINEMA AND LEISURE SCHEME FUNDING UPDATE

Members considered a report which provided an update on the tendered costs of the

proposed cinema and leisure scheme as part of 'Thriving Gainsborough 2024' and which, as a result, recommended approval of a revised funding schedule as a result of inflation and other cost pressures.

In presenting the report, the Director of Regeneration, Planning and Communities outlined the background and decisions made to date, the original budget afforded and the now tendered development costs. Rational was afforded as to why costs had an increased and this was a situation being experienced nationally. It was also confirmed that despite these national increases to costs, the Government had indicated no additional funding would be provided and local authorities must deliver their schemes within the original funding budget.

Cost reductions were being explored, including value engineering options, but the Scheme would not be delivered within the original budget, unless the monies afforded to other interventions were revisited.

Officers advised how these additional budget requirements could be met and which of the other interventions would need to be streamlined as a result; namely a reduction of funding to support the heritage interventions of the Levelling Up Programme and the resurfacing and redevelopment works planned for the Bus Station.

It was important to note the Council's development partner had also agreed to increase their contribution to the Scheme, showing a real developer confidence in the proposal.

Debate ensued, and whilst the Council would want to see all the interventions delivered, there was a general acceptance, that this Scheme needed to be delivered, acting as a flagship project. With demolition having occurred, leaving the site undeveloped would not be an acceptable position.

Members took a great a level of confidence from the Councils development partner having increased their contribution to the Scheme, in light of rising costs.

In respect of the value engineering works being undertaken, in response to members concerns that the quality of the build should not be impacted, the Director outlined the types of things which were being investigated, none of these related to the build quality, nor where climate change solutions being compromised on.

There were discussions around the Councils wider role to deliver social return, create jobs, increase visitor spend and experience and this Project was one that would deliver those wider returns not necessarily financial ones.

The impact of the revision to the revised Public Realm works where highlighted, with Members noting these interventions would be the subject of further Committee decision, and at the request of Members, the impact on outcomes to be delivered in respect of the THI work were shared. An economic assessment in respect of the latter had been undertaken, and Officers indicated they could share this with Members.

Members again welcomed the commitment shown by the development partner and requested that a full communications Plan be undertaken as there were doubts circulating around the Town about the Project.

Assurance was given that full communications were planned, but owing to the legalities, this decision had needed to be taken in the first intake.

Having being proposed and seconded it was

RESOLVED that: -

- (a) the revised funding schedule set out at table 1 of the report be approved; and
- (b) the capital programme, approved by Full Council on 6 March 2023 be updated to reflect the revised funding and expenditure schedules at tables 1 and 2 of the report.

33 MARKET STREET RENEWAL - SHARE PURCHASE AGREEMENT

Members received a report from the Director of Corporate Services which sought decision from Members as to whether the Council should enter into a share purchase agreement or whether the Council should issue notice of intention to wind up the company, in respect of Market Street Renewal.

In presenting the report the Director highlighted to Members the background to the decision, the economic climate both when the Joint Venture was established and now, the binary nature of the decision to be made and the strategic alignment and options analysis.

Whilst each option was discussed, Members were in agreement that the Council's long-term investment in the area, and demonstrating investor confidence was of paramount importance and as such Option 1 was duly moved and seconded.

Noting the binary decision options were being driven by content of the Deadlock Provision and Exit Clauses within the Agreement, Members sought indication as to whether such provisions and clauses would be managed / drafted differently if the Council was to enter a similar arrangement in the future.

In responding, Officers advised that the nature of the agreement was typical for its time, but some details would be different if the Council entered a further share agreement in the future. Ultimately there was a general agreement that it had delivered its objectives, in regenerating a gate way, and Option 1 would ensure the Council could continue that commitment.

Noting issues in the national news, Officers further confirmed that full surveys and evaluations had been undertaken. Both the construction integrity and valuations given were considered sound.

On that basis it was **RESOLVED** that Option 1 be approved namely that:-

- (a) the Section 151 Officer, following consultation with then Chair of Corporate Policy and Resources Committee, be authorised to enter into a share purchase agreement for the remaining 50% share of the company at a cost of £310,000 plus professional fees to be funded from the Growth reserve;

and

- (b) a business plan be brought to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee no later than December 2023 setting out the financial forecasts and any revised operational and governance arrangements required, for approval, where necessary.

34 RAF SCAMPTON- MECHANISM FOR FUNDING DISTRIBUTION

Consideration was given to the report of the Director of Corporate Services requesting authorisation for a mechanism for the distribution of Home Office funding pertaining to asylum accommodation at RAF Scampton.

It was stressed to Members that the Authority continued to not support the views of the Home Office, however the Government continued to proceed with their plans. Should residents be moved on site, there would be a financial pressure on the three local authorities and as such this was a procedural financial matter, to meet the financial regulation requirements, and allowed the Council to receive and distribute funding received from the Government should that be the case.

Members were advised of the payment arrangements, these being in arrears, there were a commitment from the Home Office to review funding in six months and Partner Councils would be mandated to be transparent and could only use any funding received via West Lindsey for new services. Any underspent money would remain solely West Lindsey's and would not be required to be returned to Government.

Concerns were raised that age assessments costs could rise and Members were advised that should that be the case this would need to be addressed at the review period.

Members questioned and received responses to what some of the costs directly related to in the table at 2.2.

Members contemplated the impact a high turnover on site could have on the appropriateness of the funding being offered, given the funding was on a per bed basis, as opposed to a per person basis.

There ensued a debate around the community's frustrations, parity at access to services, and the frustrations at the Government's persistence in insisting the site was appropriate

Members wished to place on record their acknowledgement and thanks to their partners in the support they had shown over this matter.

It was unanimously **RESOLVED** that:-

- (a) the progress made in the Judicial Review proceedings against the Home Office decision to deliver asylum seeker accommodation at RAF Scampton be noted;
- (b) the Section 151 officer be authorised to increase the 2022-23 revenue

budget to incorporate Home Office funding received for the utilisation of Scampton. (The Budget will be held by the Director of Resources under the Corporate Policy and Resources budget area);

- (c) delegated authority be granted to the Section 151 Officer to implement a funding agreement with the City of Lincoln Council and Lincolnshire County Council to provide a mechanism for the distribution of Home Office funding according to the principles provided in Paragraph 2.3 and 2.4 of the report; and
- (d) the Section 151 Officer be requested to report progress on Home Office expenditure received and expenditure committed to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee on 9th November 2023.

Note: During consideration of the above item of business, Councillors Young, Boles, Bunney, Fleetwood and Smith declared a non-pecuniary interest in that they were all serving Members of Lincolnshire County Council.

The meeting concluded at 8.02 pm.

Chairman