

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Chief Officer Employment Committee held in the Trent Meeting Room, The Guildhall, Marshall's Yard, Gainsborough, DN21 2NA on 14 April 2025 commencing at 5.00 pm.

Present: Councillor Moira Westley (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs Mandy Snee (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Owen Bierley
Councillor Mrs Jackie Brockway
Councillor Jeanette McGhee
Councillor Trevor Young
Councillor Ian Fleetwood
Councillor Stephen Bunney

Also Present: Councillor Trevor Bridgwood (Visiting Member)

In Attendance:
Ian Knowles Chief Executive
Lisa Langdon Assistant Director People and Democratic (Monitoring Officer)
Lynne Thomsett People Services Manager
Katie Storr Democratic Services & Elections Team Manager
Ele Snow Senior Democratic and Civic Officer

Apologies: Councillor Peter Morris
Councillor Mrs Lesley Rollings

Membership: Councillor Ian Fleetwood was appointed substitute for Councillor Peter Morris
Councillor Stephen Bunney was appointed substitute for Councillor Lesley Rollings

39 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Chief Officer Employment Committee held on 9 April 2025 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

40 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

41 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 paragraphs 1 and 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

Note: The meeting entered closed session at 5.07pm

42 INTRODUCTIONS AND QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION

Members of the Committee were introduced to Mr Bill Cullen, Chief Executive for Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council, and round table introductions were undertaken.

Mr Cullen provided the Committee with details of his involvement with local authorities over the years, explaining he had held his current role since 2017. He summarised projects he had been involved with in the past, as well as his recent experiences with local government reorganisation (LGR).

Members were keen to understand Mr Cullen's approach to the scenarios under consideration regarding Lincolnshire LGR, as well as the potential for cross-border arrangements. The rurality of West Lindsey was highlighted, with Members expressing a concern that areas of the district would be disadvantaged by LGR. Mr Cullen recognised the challenges involved, as well as the timing of LGR falling so quickly after the inauguration of the Greater Lincolnshire Mayoral Combined County Authority. Alongside the concerns regarding residents in the district, there was also recognition of the potential impact on council employees.

With regard to Mr Cullen's leadership style and self-management strategies, Members heard that his primary focus was to understand the council and its employees, and being able to consider improvements by working with staff and Management Team. He explained that maintaining the balance between work and life was key, and it was intended for elements of his existing workload to be delegated to colleagues in order for him to undertake the interim role with West Lindsey District Council. It was intended for there to be a clear allocation of days for Mr Cullen to be at either council in order for stability to be maintained, whilst acknowledging there would be some flexibility where needed.

There was further discussion regarding the impact of LGR, with concern expressed that the small councils were at risk of being overlooked by the larger authorities. Mr Cullen understood the concerns being raised, and provided examples of cross-party and cross-organisational arrangements which he had been involved with. He highlighted his expectation for the Chief Executive of a council to be a key contact dealing with LGR, and he was aware of, and prepared for, what that would entail within Lincolnshire.

Members were appreciative of Mr Cullen's candid responses and open dialogue, and thanked him for his time.

Note: The meeting adjourned at 5.47pm for a short break, to reconvene at 6.15pm

43 RECRUITMENT OF AN INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE / HEAD OF PAID SERVICE

Note: The meeting reconvened at 6.15pm. Councillor I. Fleetwood left the meeting at this time.

The Committee gave consideration to a report presented by the People Services Manager, seeking direction in relation to arrangements to share the statutory role of Head of Paid Service (including Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer), noting that any appointment of the Head of Paid Service would require a recommendation from the Committee to Full Council. It was explained that there were three options detailed within the report, including the next steps, and potential risks or benefits, for each option.

Members summarised the discussions held with Mr Cullen, as detailed previously in these minutes. Each of the three options was considered, with Members raising concerns regarding the impact of seeking alternative interim arrangements. There was agreement across the board regarding the experience and knowledge that Mr Cullen would be able to bring to the Council, even on a temporary basis through the Section 113 agreement.

Members enquired as to the specifics of the Section 113 agreement, with the Monitoring Officer explaining that it would not be agreed without the approval of the section 151 Officer, Chief Executive, and following consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of this Committee.

Members expressed their contentment and support for progressing with that option. Having been proposed and seconded, the Chairman took the vote. It was unanimously

RESOLVED that the Chief Officer Employment Committee **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that Bill Cullen be appointed as interim Head of Paid Service commencing 1 July 2025, pursuant to a Section 113 Local Government Act Agreement, to be agreed by the Monitoring Officer, Section 151 Officer and Chief Executive, following consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Committee.

The meeting concluded at 6.40 pm.

Chairman