

## **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 9 November 2017 commencing at 6.30 pm.

**Present:** Councillor Jeff Summers (Chairman)  
Councillor Owen Bierley (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Mrs Sheila Bibb  
Councillor Matthew Boles  
Councillor David Cotton  
Councillor Michael Devine  
Councillor Ian Fleetwood  
Councillor Giles McNeill  
Councillor John McNeill  
Councillor Tom Regis  
Councillor Trevor Young

**In Attendance:**  
Ian Knowles Director of Resources and S151 Officer  
Eve Fawcett-Moralee Director of Economic & Commercial Growth  
Tracey Bircumshaw Financial Services Manager  
Andy Gray Housing and Communities Team Manager  
Alison McCulloch Revenues Team Manager  
James Welbourn Democratic and Civic Officer

**Apologies:** Councillor Steve England  
Councillor Stuart Kinch

**Membership:** Councillor Giles McNeill substituted for Councillor Steve England.

### **52 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PERIOD**

There was no public participation.

### **53 FOR APPROVAL**

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 September were agreed as a correct record.

### **54 FOR NOTING**

The minutes of the Joint Staff Consultative Committee on 5 October were noted.

## **55 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Owen Bierley declared an interest in item 60 as a trustee of Keelby Sports Association, and the Keelby Village Hall Committee.

## **56 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE**

Members gave consideration to the Matters Arising Schedule which set out the current position of all previously agreed actions as at 9 November 2017.

**RESOLVED** that progress on the Matters Arising Schedule, as set out in the report be received and noted.

## **57 MARKET RASEN CAR PARK REVIEW**

Members considered a report on the review of the impact of car parking charges in Market Rasen, in terms of ease of car parking and town centre viability over the last 8 months.

The Economic Growth and Commercial Director highlighted that there had been a perception locally in Market Rasen that car parking charges had been detrimental to the town centre, but that the evidence had been inconclusive on this point.

The following points were raised following discussion with members:

- Having two hours free parking should encourage people to visit Market Rasen during the day;
- The loss of revenue was £11,000;
- The statutory consultation on Gainsborough was completing week beginning 13 November;
- When the car parks in Market Rasen are used a ticket will still be required, displayed in the car windscreen.

### **RESOLVED to:**

- (1) To agree to amend the car parking charging regime as follows:**
  - a. Cessation of the free after 3pm, in favour of the introduction of a free two hours, at any time;**
  - b. Maintain car parking charges between the hours of 8am and 6pm Monday to Saturday, and;**
  - c. Continuation of the no charge policy for Blue Badge holders;**
- (2) To agree that the loss of revenue arising from the above is regarded as 'match funding' to support the evolving regeneration plans for the town over a 12 month period;**
- (3) To agree that this amendment to the car parking charging regime is**

**reviewed in 12 months and options to secure cost recovery are developed and consulted on in October 2018, for implementation in April 2019.**

## **58 BODY WORN CAMERAS - POLICY**

Consideration was given to a report on a policy for Body Worn Cameras; these cameras are to be utilised by officers in set circumstances to carry out specific duties, as well as aiming for increased effectiveness when dealing with enforcement matters.

There had been some internal consultation with staff members who are the potential users of the equipment. There had also been consultation with the Joint Staff Consultative Committee.

The feedback from staff had been positive. The ability to defuse situations by having the recording function was seen as key.

Following comments and questions from members, the following points were provided:

- Officers will need to notify individuals that they are recording;
- The Policy attached to the agenda reports pack had been through the Unions, as well as the staff consultation;
- Any officer that has enforcement powers will have the ability use a camera. If there are specific areas of concern outside of enforcement where evidence collection is required then they can be looked at on a case by case basis; fly tipping could be one such example;
- The use of the devices in public was in line with CCTV usage, and the recording of audio was a valid capability;
- It was believed that you could delete footage from the body worn camera, and that a record of this deletion would be kept. The units have playback displayed on their front so that the individuals being questioned can see what was being recorded;
- If a site being investigated has a range of issues, there may be a requirement to send multiple officers. One officer can record the information gathered, rather than having two officers both wearing the equipment;
- The 'Lone Working Procedure' was there to protect staff; the camera was not a replacement for a person;
- The Policy attached to the reports pack had been developed around data protection; this was in line with the overall deployment for CCTV.

**RESOLVED** to approve the policy as shown in Appendix 1 of the agenda reports pack.

## **59 NON-DOMESTIC RATE (NNDR) - WLDC DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF SCHEME**

Consideration was given to a report on the Council's policy on Non-Domestic Rate (NNDR) (Business Rates) Discretionary Rate Relief. The report also set out the details of the proposed guidelines for determining applications for reductions in business rates in individual cases.

The Revenue Manager informed Members that this scheme replaced the current discretionary rate relief policy, and included Village Halls.

Following questions and comments from Members, further points were highlighted:

- The application form was an improvement on what was in place before;
- Should somebody make an appeal, then an appeals board would be convened by the Strategic lead for Democratic Services;
- Charitable shops were included in this rate relief. Members raised concerns that some charitable shops stock new goods and would compete with retail stores. However, the Revenue Manager informed the Committee that the majority of charitable shops don't qualify under this scheme as there were regulations applicable to them;
- The financial figures in the report (40% cost to the West Lindsey District Council (WLDC) Collection Fund, 10% cost to Lincolnshire County Council, 50% cost to Central Government) were based on 50% retention of the business rates. If 100% retention was gained, then the additional 50% would be shared. The main benefit of 100% retention of business rates was the retention by WLDC of 100% of any growth;

**Note:** Councillor Owen Bierley declared a non-pecuniary interest as a trustee of Age UK Lindsey.

### **RESOLVED to:**

- (1) Approve the Discretionary Rate Relief Policy;**
- (2) Approve that individual applications for Discretionary Rate Relief are determined by the Director of Resources/Section 151 Officer under delegated powers;**
- (3) Approve that, in the event of an appeal, it be heard by the Appeals Board. The governance arrangements of the Appeals Board are to be referred to the Governance and Audit Committee for consideration as part of the Constitution Review;**
- (4) Approve that minor amendments to the application form are determined by the Director of Resources/Section 151 Officer under delegated powers.**

## **60 NON-DOMESTIC RATE (NDR) - GOVERNMENT NEW DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF SCHEME**

Consideration was given to a report by the Revenues Manager on the Council's position with regard to the new Government Discretionary Business Rate Relief Scheme for the financial year 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018.

The Government announced that all local authorities would get a portion of £300 million towards helping support businesses in their area over the next four years.

The scheme was designed with Customer First principles in mind and in line with the Corporate Plan principles of 'People First' and 'Open for Business'. The options suggested have been taken into account alongside two other schemes that have already been implemented – these were:

- 1) Public houses – up to £1000 relief;
- 2) Cap the rise for small business to a maximum of £600 per annum.

### **RESOLVED to:**

**(1) Agree option 1 (in part 3 of the report) as the preference for the new Discretionary Rate Relief Scheme for West Lindsey District Council for 2017/18;**

**(2) Delegate any decisions to award additional relief to the Director of Resources, in the event of any surplus during the year 2017/18.**

## **61 PROGRESS AND DELIVERY (PERFORMANCE) PERIOD 2 - 2017/18**

Consideration was given to a report on Progress and Delivery, for Period 2 in 2017/18.

The report was about the services the council has delivered in order to meet the objectives it has set itself in the corporate plan.

The Director of Resources highlighted the following positives from the report:

- Local land charges are down an average of 5.8 days;
- Trinity Arts Centre has had audience figures exceeding the average;

Areas of risk are:

- Enforcement – additional resources have been put into this department;
- Gainsborough Market is still not performing as it should be;
- Home Choices; demand has led to the use of Bed and Breakfasts;
- There was a low spend against community grants. There had been a recent meeting

targeting this situation;

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

- High standards should be maintained across the Council. Reviews should be undertaken where there are dips in performance;
- There was a low assurance for the audit of Progress and Delivery, in part because there were levels of monitoring and reporting, but no managing;
- Some Members took the opportunity to visit the CCTV room at West Lindsey District Council (WLDC);
- Weed spraying was the responsibility of Lincolnshire County Council; WLDC does undertake some spraying under contract. There were some places in the district where visibility on the road was impaired by the weeds;
- Any contracts for weed spraying offered by WLDC would need to be income generating;
- Coordination with Lincolnshire County Council would be helpful on issues such as weed spraying and road cleansing;

**Note:** The Chairman asked for an update on projects which, due to the commercial sensitivity, was answered in private session with the agreement of the Committee.

**RESOLVED** to accept the report, with the above comments.

## **62 BUDGET AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT MONITORING - PERIOD 2 2017/18 INCLUDING TREASURY MID-YEAR REPORT**

Consideration was given to a report on Budget and Treasury Management Monitoring for Period 2 2017/18, including the Treasury Mid-Year report. The report set out the revenue, capital and treasury management activity from 1 April 2017 to 30 September 2017.

**Note:** The Deputy Section 151 Officer informed Members that recommendation 'b' in the report was to be struck from the list of recommendations, and that a full review paper on earmarked reserves was to go to Prosperous Communities.

The highlights from this report were as follows:

### **Revenue Forecasting**

- Currently forecasting an outturn position of £34,000. There were volatility reserves available should WLDC be in the unfortunate position of being in deficit at the year-end;
- Progress against the commercial plan target of £1 million - £384,000 of ongoing savings have already been generated against this target;

### **Fees and Charges**

- The consortia bid for WLDC's Wellbeing service was led by East Lindsey District Council. Prosperous Communities have supported the bid proposals;

### **Capital Programme**

- There were a number of updates in terms of recommendations of increasing budgets on access to transport, the delivery of the wider heritage scheme and a transfer of £30,000 to the Shop Front Improvement Scheme, and an additional £58,000 for the Gainsborough Growth Programme that will be funded from S106 monies;
- The carryover of £13.380 million was mostly related to larger projects taking place over a number of years;

### **Treasury Management**

- Current investments totalled £22.8 million. More than the benchmarked average was achieved in terms of investment interest (at 1.17%). Treasury prudential indicators were complied with;

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

- The direction of travel indicated the movement from the last quarter. The example of salary savings was used – the direction of travel in this case was downward because there were less savings than had been reported previously;
- The costs of the by-elections in Scotter and Blyton and Sudbrooke have been provided by the Elections Team at £8,000 per election;

**Note:** Councillor Giles McNeill declared an interest at this point as a party agent.

#### **RESOLVED to:**

- (a) Accept the forecast out-turn position of a £34k net contribution to reserves as at 30 September 2017 (Paragraph 1.1 of the report);**
- (b) Note the use of Earmarked Reserves during the quarter approved by the Director of Resources using delegated powers (Paragraph 1.5.1 of the report);**
- (c) Accept the recommendation of the Prosperous Communities Committee in participating in the Lincolnshire consortia bid for the Wellbeing Services contract (Paragraph 1.11 of the report);**
- (d) Approve the Capital budget carry forwards of £13,380k (Paragraph 2.2 of the report);**
- (e) Approve additional expenditure of £58k for land acquisition as part of the Gainsborough Growth Programme – funding will be from Section**

**106 (Paragraph 2.2.5 of the report);**

- (f) Approve a £40k capital budget for expending on grants to be issued above £10k for capital investment as part of the Access to Transport project, previously approved. This is being funded from the Connectivity Reserve (Paragraph 2.2.6 of the report);**
- (g) Approve the transfer of £30k from the yet to be developed Wider Heritage Scheme to the Shop Front Improvement Scheme, thereby increasing the budget to £80k, in addition to agreeing expenditure (Paragraph 2.2.7 of the report);**
- (h) Approve the Revised Capital Budget of £13,253k (Paragraph 2.1 of the report);**
- (i) Accept the Commercial Income position;**
- (j) Accept the Treasury position to 30 September 2017.**

**63 MID YEAR MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN (MTFP) UPDATE**

Consideration was given to an update on the Mid-year Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).

The following points were highlighted:

- Those projects that WLDC considered as risks were identified in the report. There was a target of £2 million of savings set to ensure a balanced and sustainable budget;
- There were a number of proposals within the report that would inform the MTFP for 2018/19, one of which was the proposal to create a £200k commercial contingency budget, which would act as a buffer should some projects not generate their anticipated income;
- There was a funding gap position of £159k for 2018/19. It was anticipated that this funding gap would be met from a number of sources including business plan savings, increased tax base on Council Tax, and non-domestic rates;
- New income was being generated from trade waste commercialisation;
- Planning fee income has been variable. Now the Local Plan has been improved this was likely to decrease in the near future. However, the Government were expected to propose a 20% increase in planning fee charges in the Autumn Statement. This was expected to be a benefit to WLDC, although wasn't included in the MTFP;
- The assumption of green waste charging for April 2018 was still included in the MTFP figures within the report. This was still subject to consultation;



- The underlying principle of Council tax rising by £4.95 was not changed in the MTFP;
- WLDC have committed to be part of the 100% Business Rates Retention pilot under the Greater Lincolnshire bid, which was expected to provide £500k of additional income;
- Borrowing for investment in commercial opportunities was expected to continue;
- Pay award assumption was currently 1%;
- The Budget Consultation events have been successful, and the outcomes were being drafted;

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

- Congratulations went to WLDC about the additional income gathered;
- WLDC was not making offshore investments with its available resources;
- Promoting the awareness of the Rural Services Network was welcome.

**RESOLVED to:**

- (1) Accept the current MTFP position and latest funding gap projection;**
- (2) Approve the inclusion of a £200k Commercial Contingency Budget within the MTFP 2018/19;**
- (3) Approve the proposals in relation to Earmarked Reserves, including the creation of a Valuation Volatility Reserve of £250k;**
- (4) Approve the integration of the Commercial Strategy and Action Plan into the Executive Business Plan and to monitor as individual budgets within Performance Reporting;**
- (5) Approve the underlying principles and assumptions to be contained within the MTFP 2018/19.**

**64 PROPOSED FEES AND CHARGES 2018/19**

**Note:** Councillor David Cotton declared an interest in the paper on Fees and Charges as Springthorpe and its burial ground was within his ecclesiastical parish. He took no part in proceedings.

Consideration was given to an annual report proposing revised fees and charges to take effect from 1 April 2018.

**RESOLVED to:**

- (1) Recommend to Council for approval the proposed Fees and Charges**

**as detailed in Appendices 1-5 of the agenda pack;**

- (2) Recommend to Council for approval the proposed Fees and Charges as recommended by Prosperous Communities Committee and detailed at Appendices 6-17;**
- (3) Approve the introduction of a fee for the inclusion of a self-build and custom building housing register at £50.**

## **65 COMMITTEE WORK PLAN**

Members noted that there looked to be a heavy schedule for December's Committee, but were reassured by comments from the Director of Resources that the papers were not all necessarily of a lengthy nature.

The Workplan was noted.

## **66 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.

The Proper Officer determined that paragraph 3 should apply. The view on the public interest test was that while he was mindful of the need to ensure the transparency and accountability of public authority for decisions taken by them in relation to the spending of public money. Disclosure of the information would give an unfair advantage to tenderers for commercial contracts.

This information is not affected by any other statutory provision which requires the information to be publicly registered.

On that basis it was felt that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

## **67 PROPOSED FEES AND CHARGES - EXEMPT APPENDIX**

Members considered an exempt appendix related to the Fees and Charges report.

**RESOLVED** to note the appendix.

## **68 PROGRESS AND DELIVERY PERIOD 2 - EXEMPT INFORMATION**

Members received an update on projects that were commercially sensitive.

Corporate Policy and Resources Committee- 9 November 2017  
Subject to Call-in. Call-in will expire at 5pm on 22 November 2017

The meeting concluded at 8.24 pm.

Chairman