

Minutes of a Meeting of the Executive Board held in The Hub, Mareham Road, Horncastle, Lincolnshire LN9 6PH on Wednesday, 8th May, 2024 at 6.00 pm.

PRESENT

Councillors Tom Ashton, Sarah Devereux, Martin Foster, Richard Fry, William Gray and Adam Grist.

Councillor Ros Jackson attended the Meeting remotely as an Observer.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Robert Barlow	- Joint Chief Executive
Christine Marshall	- Deputy Chief Executive (Corporate Development) and S151 Officer, remotely.
Andy Fisher	- Joint Deputy Chief Executive – Delivery and Assistant Director - General Fund Assets.
James Gilbert	- Assistant Director - Corporate
Matthew Hogan	- Assistant Director, Strategic Growth and Development
Phil Perry	- Assistant Director - Leisure and Culture
Lydia Rusling	- Assistant Director - Economic Growth
Emily Spicer	- Assistant Director, Wellbeing and Community Leadership
Scott Higgins	- Leisure Service Officer
Ann Good	- Democratic Services Manager
Elaine Speed	- Senior Democratic Services Officer and Civic Officer

81. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN:

It was Proposed and Seconded that Councillor William Gray be Elected as Chairman for this meeting only.

RESOLVED

That Councillor William Gray be Elected as Chairman for this meeting only.

COUNCILLOR GRAY IN THE CHAIR

82. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Leyland, Kirk and Marsh.

83. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS (IF ANY):

Councillor Grist declared a non-prejudicial interest as the Chairman of Louth Cricket Club playing at the London Road ground and as a Director of the newly formed London Road Sports Partnership.

84. MINUTES:

The Open and Confidential Minutes of the Meeting held on 20th March 2024 were confirmed as a correct record.

85. ACTION SHEETS:

The Actions from the meeting held on 20th March 2024 were confirmed as complete.

86. INVESTMENT TO SUPPORT VILLAGES, PARISHES AND MARKET TOWNS ACROSS EAST LINDSEY:

A report was presented to enable consideration of a package of initiatives to strengthen financial support for villages, parishes and market towns across East Lindsey.

During his introduction, the Portfolio Holder for Market Towns and the Rural Economy advised this was a good news report. Members noted the UK Shared Prosperity Fund had commenced in 2023 and a strand of this had been aimed at parish councils, village halls and community projects, which was the Lincolnshire Community Foundation Grassroots Scheme which had to date invested almost £750,000. Some of those supported schemes were listed at paragraph 1.4 of the report.

It was noted the funding stream was time limited to March 2025, and funding after this was unclear. The success of this scheme had meant that demand would soon outstrip the supply of funding available, with only £228,000 remaining to distribute. It was therefore likely that the scheme would close before the end of the UKSPF Programme (March 2025) without additional support.

The proposal was to build on the success of the scheme to avoid an abrupt end to funding and the knock effects through investment from the Corporate Priority Reserve, bringing together a Community Loan facility with the UKSPF/RPF Programme.

An immediate additional investment of £870,000 would enable the expansion of the current investment in communities through the UKSPF programme, coupled with additional support through a loan facility. These Funds would be invested in accordance with the principles of the Council's existing UKSPF Investment Plan (as well as the emerging SELCP Growth and Prosperity Plan) and in so doing, would count as 'Leveraged Additional Investment' to the UKSPF Programme. Resource would also be allocated to extend the contract management arrangements for Communities and Place projects and the LCF Contract (for an additional nine months beyond the current UKSPF Programme). This would have the benefit of giving communities additional time to deliver, certainty for the contract delivery team and supporting a greater number of projects across a wider range of geographies within East Lindsey District.

The financial implications of this resourcing strategy, assuming a non-continuation of UKSPF fund post March 2025, were set out at paragraph 2.3 of the report.

Should the UK share prosperity funding be extended or the situation changed, the resourcing implications of this approach would be reviewed further, likely resulting in an even greater allocation of funds to parishes and market towns.

During discussion Members were fully supportive of the proposals and recognised the difficulties that some Town and Parish Councils faced in accessing funding. Thanks were extended to officers for their work on this project.

The recommendations were duly Proposed and Seconded for approval.

RESOLVED

- 1) That £620,000 be allocated from the Corporate Priority Reserve to support the expansion of (and administration of) the successful LCF GrassROOTs scheme, alongside increased investment in Communities and Place projects (parish, village hall and market town development projects);
- 2) That authority be delegated to the s151 in conjunction with the Assistant Director for Strategic Growth and Development to agree the final split of resources required as an addition to the budget in respect of revenue and capital;
- 3) That a further capital sum of £250,000 be allocated to be added to the Capital programme as a Community Loan Facility financed from the Corporate Priorities Reserve and note that the administration of this will be undertaken as part of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural Prosperity Fund Programmes.

Reasons:

Considerations and conclusions for this investment are made within the text of this report, including the options appraisal below.

Other options:

Option 1 - Proceed as per the recommendation of this Report

Under this option there will be the creation of a loan fund, coupled with an expansion of the successful LCF GRASSroots grant funding scheme, leading to an increased number of Communities and Place projects delivered locally, resulting in greater investment in rural communities, augmented pride in place and longer term, sustainable support to community buildings. The risks associated with the upcoming end of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund Programme shall also be partially ameliorated.

This will support the realisation of the benefits as set out within the report below.

Option 2 – Do nothing

Under this option, the recommendations are not taken forward, with the opportunity to expand the level of support offered to parish, village hall and community projects not realised and the wider benefits of the report detailed below will also not be realised.

87. LONDON ROAD SPORTS PAVILION:

N.B. Councillor Grist left the meeting for this item.

The Assistant Director, Leisure and Culture outlined the background to the report. Members noted that the London Road Sports Partnership was formed by three stakeholders, supported by the Lincolnshire Football Association and the Football Foundation through the Home Advantage scheme. The Partnership had entered a tenancy at will to be replaced by a lease once finalised with the Football Foundation. Executive Board approved the site's transfer through a long lease, with a Service Level Agreement being prepared to supplement lease terms. The Partnership faced sustainability risks without initial financial support from the Council, needing to generate income to cover costs and establish reserves. Unlike Magna Vitae, the Partnership would have a full repairing lease, resulting in further savings for the Council on repairs and maintenance costs. This report presented covered the financial support needed to initially sustain the site during Years 1-5.

The report recommended that the Executive Board agreed in principle to the provision of grant funding of the new London Road Sports Partnership over 5 years, as detailed in section 2.9 of the report, noting that this would equate to a grant to the Partnership of up to £95k in year 1, reducing by at least 25% per annum over years 2-5. The ambition was to taper the grant to zero, working as appropriate with the Sports Partnership to support their journey to sustainability. Discussions as appropriate regarding progress towards this ultimate ambition would take place over the described five-year period. The agreement to be subject to the outcome of the ongoing legal and financial due diligence.

During discussion Members supported the proposals and the recommendations were duly Proposed and Seconded for approval.

RESOLVED

That agreement be given in principle to provide grant funding to the new London Road Sports Partnership, subject to the outcome of ongoing legal and financial due diligence.

Reasons:

Failure to agree to this support would mean that the London Road Sports Partnership would not be able to financial manage the site and the site would close.

Other options:
None.

88. SOUTH & EAST LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL PARTNERSHIP GROWTH AND PROSPERITY PLAN:

N.B. Councillor Adam Grist re-joined the meeting at 6.17pm.

N.B. Councillor Ashton left the meeting at 6.17pm.

A report was presented to enable consideration of the Growth and Prosperity Plan for the South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership.

During his introduction, the Portfolio Holder for Market Towns and the Rural Economy referred to the Growth and Prosperity Plan as a document that reflected the visions and priorities of the partnership going forward, able to respond to issues and challenges in each locality. Reference was also made to the advantage of a unifying document that captured the key priorities around economic growth and themes of focus to underpin the approach to funding and investment and application of resources in the future.

The Plan had been considered at all Member Briefings and had been refined based on feedback received from members, the evidence base and consultation with stakeholders.

Further consultation had taken place with the Portfolio Holders for Coastal Economy and Market Towns and Rural Economy and the Leader of the Council. This had instigated a programme of work that would support the Growth and Prosperity Plan, developing governance and delivery for East Lindsey.

The Portfolio Holder advised of a minor amendment to recommendations 1 & 2 as follows:

- '1. The Executive Board supports the Growth and Prosperity Plan at Appendix A, and adopts the Plan subject to any final consultation feedback as agreed with the relevant portfolio holders.*
- 2. The Executive Board agrees to the Growth and Prosperity Plan becoming a line of inquiry in the Partnership's Annual Scrutiny, complementing the sub-regional strategy process.'*

The recommendations were duly Proposed and Seconded for approval.

Following which it was

RESOLVED

1. That the Growth and Prosperity Plan at Appendix A be supported and adopted, subject to any final consultation feedback as agreed with the relevant portfolio holders;
2. That the Growth and Prosperity Plan be agreed as a line of inquiry in the Partnership's Annual Scrutiny, complementing the sub-regional strategy process;
3. That the development of a Locality Plan and investment into Market Towns, Parish's and Villages be supported specifically for East Lindsey District Council.

Reasons:

The Growth and Prosperity Plan will reflect the vision and priorities of the 24/25 – 28/29 Sub-Regional Strategy and align strategic priorities across the Councils to further support the benefits of collaborative working. A single Growth and Prosperity Plan for the Partnership will demonstrate to external partners our alignment and collective focus on a prosperous, productive and creative economy. This will be particularly helpful when engaging with partners and businesses, Government and funders, and leveraging further investment into the sub-region.

Other options:

No nothing. It has already been agreed by Councillors, through the priorities of the sub-regional strategy, that a Growth and Prosperity Plan should be developed. Therefore, this option is not recommended.

89. PRODUCTIVITY PLAN:

A report was presented to enable consideration of the Productivity Plan 2024/2025.

Members were advised when the Local Government Finance Settlement was published in late 2023, there was a requirement placed on Councils to publish a Productivity Plan. This report brought forward the proposed approach by a succinct plan in line with the Government request, to be submitted prior to the summer parliamentary recess. Appendix A set out the plan to be published on the Councils website which was a consistent with that of Boston and South Holland District Council.

The recommendations were duly Proposed and Seconded for approval.

RESOLVED

That the Productivity Plan at Appendix A, underpinned by the items listed at 2.4 in the report, be approved, and delegated authority be granted to the Assistant Director – Corporate to update the Plan from time to time in consultation with the Leader of the Council.

Reasons:

To deliver on the Government's requirement and demonstrate the Council's commitment to collaborative working to deliver efficiency and improved outcomes for communities.

Other options:

Do nothing – not an option due to the Government's requirement to publish a Productivity Plan.

90. PARTNERSHIP ENGAGEMENT PLEDGE:

A report was presented to enable consideration of the Partnership's Engagement Pledge. The Pledge set out the Partnership's key principles when engaging and consulting with the sub-region's residents, businesses and stakeholders.

Members noted the Engagement Pledge at Appendix A followed South Holland District Council's (SHDC) Peer Review in July 2023, where a recommendation was to strengthen how the voice of residents and communities inform future service delivery. Despite this recommendation being specific to SHDC it was recommended that the Partnership adopted this Pledge as part of its corporate approach to engagement.

The recommendation was duly Proposed and Seconded for approval.

RESOLVED

That the Engagement Pledge at Appendix A be approved.

Reasons:

To ensure the Partnership has a clear and consistent approach in all engagement activities.

Other options:

Do nothing – do not adopt the Engagement Pledge. This option is not recommended – it's good practice to have broad principles of engagement and consultation adopted across the Partnership.

91. UNREASONABLE BEHAVIOUR POLICY:

A report was presented to enable consideration of a draft updated Unreasonable Behaviour Policy for the Council and to seek approval by Executive Board. The policy gave the Council a framework to implement and take appropriate action against incidences of unreasonable behaviour and unreasonably persistent complainants and was being aligned across the Partnership Members.

Following which, the recommendation was duly Proposed and Seconded for adoption.

RESOLVED

That the draft Unreasonable Behaviour Policy at Appendix A be approved.

Reasons:

To ensure the council has suitable procedures in place for dealing with unreasonable and abusive behaviours and unreasonably persistent complainants.

Other options:

Keep current policy – not recommended.

92. DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

The date of the next Meeting of Executive Board would be confirmed at the Council AGM on 22 May 2024.

N.B. James Gilbert, Phil Perry and Scott Higgins left the meeting at 6.40pm.

93. EXEMPT INFORMATION:

RESOLVED

That under Section 100(a)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item on the grounds that, if they were present, there could be disclosed to them exempt information as defined in paragraph(s) 1, 2 & 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act (as amended).

94. COMMERCIAL PROPERTY PORTFOLIO – 009:

An Exempt report was presented regarding a Commercial Property Portfolio.

RESOLVED

That the recommendations contained in the exempt report be approved.

Reason:

As contained in the exempt report.

Alternative options considered:

As contained in the exempt report.

The meeting closed at 6.50 pm.