

Minutes of a Meeting of the Executive Board held in The Hub, Mareham Road, Horncastle, Lincolnshire LN9 6PH on Monday, 16th December, 2024 at 6.00 pm.

PRESENT

Councillor Craig Leyland (Chairman)

Councillors Graham Marsh, Tom Ashton, Martin Foster, Adam Grist and Thomas Kemp.

Councillor Ros Jackson attended the Meeting as an Observer (Virtual).

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Robert Barlow	- Joint Chief Executive
Christine Marshall	- Deputy Chief Executive (Corporate Development) and S151 Officer
Pranali Parikh	- Director - Economic Development
James Gilbert	- Assistant Director - Corporate
Lydia Rusling	- Assistant Director - Economic Growth
Phil Perry	- Assistant Director - Leisure and Culture
Sharon Hammond	- Head of Revenue and Benefits, PSPS Limited
Ann Good	- Democratic Services Manager
Elaine Speed	- Senior Democratic Services Officer and Civic Officer

43. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Sarah Devereux, William Gray and Steve Kirk.

44. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS (IF ANY):

Members were invited to disclose any interests.

Councillor Tom Ashton asked it be noted that he was a Lincolnshire County Councillor and would not take part in Item 11 'Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2025/26'.

45. MINUTES:

The Open and Exempt Minutes of the Meeting held on 6th November 2024 were confirmed as a correct record.

46. ACTIONS:

There were no Actions from the meeting held on 6th November 2024.

47. SKEGNESS NORTH PARADE BOWLING GREENS:

A report was presented to agree to lease the North Parade Bowling Greens to North Parade Bowling Greens Association.

During his introduction of the report, the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Leisure & Culture and Carbon Reduction highlighted that in November 2016 as part of the Transformation Programme, the use of the eight bowling greens in Skegness were reviewed. The greens on South Parade were now maintained as amenity grass, and the three remaining greens to the north of the foreshore had been maintained to tournament standard by the Neighbourhoods Service. The Council continued to receive representation from the English Bowls Federation about the standard of this area, with the threat of moving the national championships to Great Yarmouth if facilities did not improve.

It was further highlighted that Bowls usage in Skegness had declined in recent years and the costs to the Council for the maintenance of the greens at circa £48,000 per annum was no longer feasible. Following the consideration to reduce the maintenance levels on the green which would mean the greens were below tournament standards, a new group (North Parade Bowling Greens Association) approached the Council with a view to managing the greens in the future and increase participation. Full details were set out in Sections 1, 2 and 3 of the report, pages 14 to 16 of the Agenda refer.

The Leader of the Council acknowledged that a lot of work and meetings had been undertaken with the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Leisure & Culture and Carbon Reduction, officers, Skegness Town Councillors and the community groups involved and recognised the importance of this locally to Skegness and those involved in the bowls tournaments.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning commented that it was good to see local individuals coming together who also had the capacity to make this happen without the difficulties that may have presented should the district council be required to do so. He added that he appreciated the huge amount of work the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Leisure & Culture and Carbon Reduction and officers had put in to make this happen and hoped that it was a success.

RESOLVED

1. That the lease of the asset to North Parade Bowling Green Association at a peppercorn rent and authorisation to the Deputy Chief Executive – Programme Delivery and Assistant Director - General Fund Assets to enter in an appropriate lease that suitably and sufficiently protects the Council's position be agreed.
2. That the £100,000 grant funding provided to North Parade Bowling Green Association on a decreasing term over 5 years be agreed.

Reason

The demand for bowls in Skegness has declined however the English Bowls Federation along with the North Parade Bowling Greens Association have a business plan in place to help support bowls growth and promote future usage.

Other Option

Option considered to revert the greens to amenity grass.

N.B. Phil Perry, Assistant Director for Leisure and Culture left the Meeting at 6.11pm.

48. EAST LINDSEY INVESTMENT FUND: £1M ALLOCATION TO THE GRASSROOTS GRANT SCHEME:

A report was presented to consider approval for the East Lindsey Investment Fund budget allocation of £1m to support community development across the East Lindsey district through the GRASSroots scheme, in partnership with the Lincolnshire Community Foundation.

During his introduction of the report, the Portfolio Holder for Market Towns and Rural Economy highlighted that the £10m East Lindsey Investment Fund had been established to support the priorities of making East Lindsey's places welcoming, supporting events and attracting visitors, community development, and supporting business growth. The programme was focussed on delivery and was committed to an inclusive and collaborative approach to benefit the whole district and work in partnership with communities, town and parish councils and local businesses.

To support the priority theme of community development, a budget allocation of £1m would bolster the grant funds available to communities across the East Lindsey district by extending the current GRASSroots programme.

Lincolnshire Community Foundation had administered the successful GRASSroots scheme since its inception through UK Shared Prosperity Funding and a further allocation of funds would provide continued investment into rural communities.

The Portfolio Holder for Market Towns and Rural Economy added that to date 63 grants had been awarded resulting in 16 community facilities being either created or renovated, with a further 25 in progress and the outcomes were now being seen in the communities. A vast array of groups had submitted bids for the funding and he hoped that many hamlets and villages in rural areas continued to benefit from the scheme.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning stated that he was very happy to support the scheme which empowered smaller communities to apply for investment for the betterment of their rural areas.

The Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Leisure & Culture and Carbon Reduction added that it was a great opportunity and was very supportive of the scheme as it was helping communities of every size and showed good leadership on the Council's behalf.

In conclusion, the Leader of the Council stated that the outcomes to date were impressive and this would continue to be built on, benefitting the smallest communities.

RESOLVED

- 1) That £1m from the East Lindsey Investment Fund be allocated to support the expansion of (and administration of) the successful LCF GRASSroots scheme.
- 2) That the s151 in conjunction with the Assistant Director Strategic Growth and Development be delegated authority to agree the final split of resources required as an addition to the budget in respect of revenue and capital.
- 3) That it be noted that the administration of this will be undertaken by the team currently delivering the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural Prosperity Fund Programmes.

Reason

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 an expansion of the successful LCF GRASSroots grant funding scheme, leading to an increased number of projects delivered locally, resulting in greater investment in rural communities and longer term, sustainable support to communities.

Option 2 – Do nothing.

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

49. QUARTER 2 24/25 PERFORMANCE AND RISK REPORT:

A report was presented to bring together information relating to the Council's performance and risk monitoring at the end of Quarter 2 2024/25 (as at 30 September 2024).

During his introduction of the report the Leader of the Council highlighted that it was timely for the relevant Portfolio Holders to keep an eye on their various areas of work and responsibilities.

RESOLVED

That the performance and risk information contained within the report and appendices be noted.

Reason

To monitor delivery of performance and governance objectives and to support future planning and decision making within the Council.

Other Option

Alternative reporting arrangements.

N.B. James Gilbert – Assistant Director (Corporate) left the Meeting at 6.20pm.

50. 2024/2025 QUARTER TWO FINANCE UPDATE:

A report was presented to summarise the current financial position for the Council at the end of the second quarter of 2024/25 forecasting to the year end.

During his introduction of the report the Portfolio Holder for Finance referred Members to Appendix A which provided information on the full year forecasted financial performance at 30 September 2024 for the following areas:

- The General Fund Revenue Budget,
- The General Fund Reserves Position,
- The Capital Programme for 2024/25, and
- The Treasury Management Performance for the year.

Full details were contained in Sections 1 and 2 of the report, pages 1 to 2 of the Supplementary Agenda refer.

The Leader of the Council stated that he was assured of the careful management of the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Section 151 Officer and was confident that the Council was in a good place and that the challenges the Council faced was well managed and understood.

RESOLVED

- 1) That the general fund forecast for the full year forecast outturn position for 2024/25 being an underspend of £822k as detailed in Table 1 of Appendix A to the report be noted.

- 2) That the amendment of the Capital Programme for 2024/25 by £263k as shown in Appendix A - Table 4b to the report be approved.
- 3) That a commitment from the Carbon Reduction Reserve of £102k in advance of awaited funding announcements to support this area of work be approved.

Reason

To ensure the Council's forecast financial position for 2024/25 is considered and related decisions approved. It is important that the Executive are aware of the financial position of the General Fund to ensure that they can make informed decisions that are affordable and financially sustainable for the Council.

Other Option

To not approve the financial movements outlined.

51. 2023/24 OUTTURN REPORT & 2022/23 ABBREVIATED OUTTURN INCLUDING AUDIT UPDATE:

A report was presented to summarise the 2023/24 outturn position and the summary outturn position for 2022/23 and provided an update on the overall financial reporting and audit position.

During his introduction of the report the Portfolio Holder for Finance referred to the recommendations as set out in the report.

The Leader of the Council acknowledged that there had been a huge amount of work and effort in getting the financial details in line to where it should be and was appreciative of that and was pleased with the Council's financial position.

RESOLVED

- 1) That the General Fund outturn position for 2023/24 being an underspend of £914k as detailed in Table 1 of Appendix A to the report be noted and it be recommended to Full Council to consider the transfer of the surplus to the Investment Volatility Reserve.
- 2) That the reserves transactions and balances as set out in Appendix A (Table 3 for 23/24) to the report be recommended to Full Council to consider approval.
- 3) That the Capital Programme for 2024/25 as set out in Appendix A – Table 4c to the report be recommended to Full Council to consider approval of amendments.

- 4) That the outturn for 2022/23, reserve balances, including the final year-end adjustments, and that due to delay with the closure for 2022/23 all revenue, treasury and capital year-end adjustments have been dealt with through the year as part of the Quarterly Monitoring, reporting to Audit and Governance for Treasury matters and as part of the 2024/25 budget setting process be noted.
- 5) That the 2022/23 and 2023/24 year end audits will be impacted upon, due to the “Backstop” dates implemented following the implementation of new regulations be noted.
- 6) That the capital financing adjustments in Appendix B - Table 2, reserve transactions and balances for 2022/23 as set out in Appendix B – Table 3 to the report be recommended to Full Council to consider approval.

Reason

To ensure the Council’s outturn financial position for 2023/23 and 2023/24 is considered and related decisions approved. It is important that the Executive Board are aware of the financial position of the General Fund to ensure that they can make informed decisions that are affordable and financially sustainable for the Council.

Other Option

To not approve the revised capital programme, reserve adjustments and financing movements outlined.

52. LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2025/26:

A report was presented that sought an Executive Board decision on the final proposals for the 2025/26 Council Tax Support scheme, having regard to the fundamental review carried out this year, and the feedback obtained through the consultation process to be presented to Council for approval on 5 March 2024.

The full background to the Council Tax Support Scheme was set out at Section 1 of the report with the 2025/26 Scheme Modification Proposals set out at Section 2, pages 146 to 148 of the Agenda refers.

During his introduction, the Portfolio Holder for Finance referred to the consultation that had taken place and advised that a total of 143 responses had been received. Whilst this was an increase on the 103 responses received the previous year, it had to be recognised this was still a low response rate and the results could not be relied upon as being wholly representative or statistically significant. However, Members were advised that they must take the consultation responses into account when making their decision.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance referred to the feedback from the public consultation as summarised at Section 3.4 of the report, page 149 of the Agenda refers.

During discussion, the Leader of the Council stated that the scheme had been deeply discussed and issues considered carefully by Portfolio Holders in briefing meetings having all issues put before them. Members were then referred to the recommendations as set out in the report.

The Leader of the Council stated that his preference was for Recommendation 1 (i) - for Executive Board to approve revising its scheme with any or all of the options a to f, rather than Recommendation 1 (ii) for the Council to retain its current Council Tax Support Scheme, updated in line with DWP uprating for 2025/26, and to further approve Recommendations Nos 2 to 5. The Portfolio Holder for Finance added that he was happy to support this.

The Portfolio Holder for Operational Services referred to the table which summarised feedback from the public consultation, page 149 of the Agenda refers. In relation to 43.2% agreeing with 'Increase the maximum CTS to 85% for households with children' the Portfolio Holder for Operational Services queried whether a breakdown could be provided for that demographic. In response, the Head of Revenue and Benefits advised that unfortunately the survey did not capture this information.

The Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Leisure & Culture and Carbon Reduction stated that he fully supported the proposed recommendations as most households were stretched and challenged financially when they had children and this was when they would benefit the most.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2025/26 Scheme be revised to include the following modifications:
 - a. Increase the maximum CTS for households with children to 85%.
 - b. Remove the earnings disregard to Universal Credit claims.
 - c. Introduce a standard £10 rate for non-dependent deductions.
 - d. Introduce a minimum award of £1 per week.
 - e. Increase the threshold for changes in Universal Credit to £30 per week, with discretion for flexibility.
 - f. Uprate in line with DWP uprating amounts for 2025/26.
2. That the decision be recommended to Full Council for approval.
3. That for the 2025/26 final scheme policy, approval be delegated to the Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, including administrative and minor changes.

4. That an Exceptional Hardship Fund to operate alongside the Council Tax Support scheme be introduced.
5. That decision on the fund budget and scheme detail for an Exceptional Hardship Fund be delegated to the Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance.

Reasons

Full Council must make any revision to its scheme, or any replacement, and agree its final scheme no later than 11 March 2025 in respect of the 2025/26 financial year.

Executive Board decision on its recommendation to Full Council for the 2025/26 scheme will reflect on the data and information provided through the fundamental review, and the results of consultation on its proposed modification options.

Other Options

The do-nothing option would see the current scheme retained. This has been rejected as this would not be consistent with Executive Board's earlier decision for fundamental review.

However, after considering the consultation responses, Executive Board could choose to retain the current scheme if it can justify its decision.

N.B. Councillor Tom Ashton, Portfolio Holder for Planning abstained from the vote.

N.B. Sharon Hammond, Head of Revenues and Benefits, PSPS Limited left the Meeting at 6.38pm.

53. CUSTOMER FEEDBACK POLICY:

A report was presented to introduce a draft updated Customer Feedback Policy for the Council.

During his introduction of the report, the Leader of the Council highlighted that there was a clear need to manage feedback and complaints received by the Council and to support staff to deal with them appropriately. This Policy was designed to achieve that aim, whilst ensuring that customers were dealt with fairly, consistently, and proportionately.

The draft document had been fully reviewed, updated, and aligned across the Partnership. Reviewing the policy ensured any updates were captured in the new aligned policy, as well as ensuring the policy was still fit for purpose and complied with the LGSCO's Complaint Handling Code which was launched in 2024.

Further to a query from the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Leisure & Culture and Carbon Reduction, the Chief Executive confirmed that the 5 days response time related to the initial acknowledgement of the complaint.

RESOLVED

- That the draft Customer Feedback Policy at Appendix 1 to the report be approved.
- That the Monitoring Officer be authorised to make amendments to the Policy to ensure it remains up to date and to reflect Complaint Handling Code guidance and recommendations issued by the Ombudsman.

Reason

To ensure the Council has suitable procedures in place for responding to and dealing with feedback and complaints received.

Other Option

Keep current Policy – not recommended.

54. STREET NAMING AND NUMBERING POLICY:

A report was presented to consider approval for the adoption of a Partnership Street Naming and Numbering (SNN) Policy for South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership.

During his introduction, the Portfolio Holder for Planning highlighted that the Council had a duty to ensure that all roads in the district were named and all properties numbered or named. It was important to have a SNN Policy in place to ensure the SNN function was effective and efficient.

The Partnership policy sought to align and harmonise current best practice and procedures across the three Councils of East Lindsey, South Holland and Boston.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning asked that his profound thanks be passed on to the Group Manager, Building Control for her assistance during the process of putting the policy together. He further added that primarily it was about empowering communities to have a proactive role in naming streets within their own boundaries which gave them a sense of place and ownership. Furthermore, it provided local input and knowledge to assist with street name and numbering and highlighted Paragraph 6.4 as a fundamental step towards this, page 194 of the Agenda refers.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning further referred Members to Paragraph 8.1 'Procedure for Renumbering existing properties/buildings or re-naming a street, page 197 of the Agenda refers and wholeheartedly supported this, in

particular highlighting that it was necessary for consent to be sought from two thirds in number of the ratepayers in the street.

In response, the Leader of the Council acknowledged the comments made and furthermore the length of time it had taken and work involved for the report to come forward.

RESOLVED

- That the adoption of the South and East Lincolnshire Councils Street Naming and Numbering Policy be approved by East Lindsey District Council.
- That the Group Manager Building Control and the Assistant Director Regulatory be delegated authority to make such amendments to this policy as may from time to time be required in order to (i) reference any links or amended links to other documents as may be required; and (ii) reflect any issues over which the Council has no discretion including, but not limited to, references to any legislative changes and amended guidance. Any material amendments to the policy would be subject to the usual approval process in line with the Constitution.

Reason

To align and harmonise current best practice and procedures across the three Councils.

Other Option

Do nothing – this wouldn't harmonise SNN across the partnership.

55. DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting of Executive Board was noted as Wednesday 22 January 2025.

The Leader of the Council advised Members that Lydia Rusling, Assistant Director – Economic Growth was leaving the Council. On behalf of Executive Board, he wished her the very best in her new employment and offered his appreciation for all of the hard work undertaken.

The meeting closed at 6.45 pm.