

Minutes of a meeting of the **CABINET** held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Priory Road, Spalding, on Tuesday, 19 July 2022 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT

G A Porter (Leader)

P E Coupland (Deputy
Leader)
C N Worth (Deputy
Leader)

A Casson
R Grocock

C J Lawton
E J Sneath

Cabinet Support Members: A C Beal

The Chief Executive, the Deputy Chief Executive (Communities), the Deputy Chief Executive (Corporate Development) and S151 Officer, the Deputy Chief Executive (Growth), the Deputy Chief Executive (Programme and Delivery), the Assistant Director (Regulatory), the Assistant Director (Finance), the Assistant Director - Strategic Growth and Development, the Head of Public Protection, the Head of Delivery, the Democratic Services Manager and the Democratic Services Team Leader.

Apologies for absence were received from or on behalf of Councillors J R Astill, R Gambba-Jones, G J Taylor, N H Pepper, J L Reynolds, A M Newton, A R Woolf and T A Carter, together with the Assistant Director (Wellbeing and Community).

In Attendance: Councillor B Alcock (Chairman, Performance Monitoring Panel).

9. MINUTES

It was stated that the recommendations detailed within the minutes pertaining to the Final Report of the South Holland Centre Task Group did not accurately reflect the decision made. It was suggested that slight amendments to the recommendations be made, to read as follows (changes in bold):

- That the recommendations (1 to 6) as set out in section 7 of the Task Group's Final Report are approved **for consideration by a Cabinet Task Group**; and
- That a Cabinet Task Group be set up and led by the Portfolio Holder for Communities and Facilities to ensure a realistic timetable was drawn up to implement all the Task Group's recommendations, **where agreed**.
- The Chairman of the Task Group commented that he did not

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recall the words as detailed above. He also commented that it was disappointing that, despite attempting to convene a meeting of the Task Group in order to obtain an update from the Portfolio Holder on progress, to date, this had not yet taken place.

- The Leader responded that the intention was not to alter the Task Group's recommendations, rather to ensure that the recommendations, most of which the Cabinet agreed with, could be worked up into a programme to be undertaken in a suitable timeframe. Although it was important to ensure that actions were undertaken swiftly, it was also important that they were also undertaken correctly.
- The Portfolio Holder for Assets and Planning commented that, with regard to a first meeting of the Task Group, a date for this would be confirmed in the next week.

DECISION:

That, subject to the changes to the recommendations pertaining to the Final Report of the South Holland Centre Task Group, as detailed above, the minutes of the meeting held on 7 June 2022 be agreed and signed by the Leader.

10. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

The Leader of the Council declared an interest in relation to agenda items 14 and 17, as they related to the purchase of new properties, and he had the potential to know the parties involved. He would take no part in the discussion and would leave the meeting for consideration of these items.

11. QUESTIONS RAISED BY THE PUBLIC UNDER THE COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION (STANDING ORDERS).

There were none.

12. TO CONSIDER ANY MATTERS WHICH HAVE BEEN SUBJECT TO CALL-IN.

There were none.

13. TO CONSIDER MATTERS ARISING FROM THE POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING PANELS

There were none.

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14. UK SHARED PROSPERITY UPDATE (UKSPF) INVESTMENT PLAN

Consideration was given to the report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Growth) which provided an update on UKSPF and Investment Plan.

Members requested that, although much of the consultation feedback had suggested ideas for Spalding, that it should be ensured that any funding should be spread across the whole of South Holland and not purely Spalding. Parishes should also be encouraged to submit ideas.

It was stated that many of the suggested projects were capital, and not revenue, and this split was not made clear during the presentations. It was disappointing that many of these would not qualify for the 80%. It was important therefore to come up with some more revenue schemes. The Portfolio Holder for People, Place and Economy commented that it had always been primarily a revenue scheme, which was to be welcomed.

DECISION:

- 1) To approve the draft UK Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan; and
- 2) To delegate to the Deputy Chief Executive (Growth), in consultation with the Portfolio Holder People, Places and Economy, to make any amendments required prior to submission of the Investment Plan to the Department of Levelling Up, Communities and Housing.

(Other options considered:

- *To do nothing would mean that the Investment Plan would not be submitted, and the Council would lose the opportunity to receive £2.7 million of funding for the Council.*

Reasons for decision:

- *To enable the submission of the Investment Plan within the timescales, 1 August at the latest, to enable the Council to receive the allocation of £2.7 million for the benefit of the communities of the South Holland district).*

15. DEBT MANAGEMENT POLICY

Consideration was given to the report of the Assistant Director – Finance, which requested approval of the Debt Management Policy.

DECISION:

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- 1) That the continuation of the refreshed Debt Management Policy be approved; and
- 2) That delegated authority be given to the Section 151 Officer, in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercialisation and Partnerships, to undertake future review and changes to the Debt Management Policy.

(Other options considered:

- *Do nothing – this option was rejected as it is timely for the policy to be formally reviewed and its continuation re-approved.*

Reasons for decision:

- *The continuation of the Debt Management Policy will ensure that South Holland District Council demonstrates a clear and transparent position in respect of its approach to the management of debt; and*
- *Delegation for reviewing and updating the policy will enable a responsive and efficient approach to policy maintenance).*

16. APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL AUDITORS

Consideration was given to the report of the Assistant Director – Finance, which detailed the approach proposed for Internal Audit Services at South Holland District Council from 1 October 2022.

DECISION:

That the appointment of Assurance Lincolnshire as the Council's Internal auditors, with effect from 1 October 2022, be approved.

(Other options considered:

- *Continue contract with Eastern Internal Audit Services – this is not possible as formal notice has been served on the Council by the consortium.*
- *Undertake a market procurement process – this is a viable proposal but there are costs and officer time that would be incurred and no evidence that the market will respond positively. The proposal set out in the report enables a cost efficient and seamless transfer to a local authority hosted service that has a track record of providing a quality service to a range of other local authority customers, including Boston Borough Council and East Lindsey District Council.*

Reasons for decision:

- *To build resilience into the internal audit service and allow a greater consistency in approach across the Partnership in order to ensure ongoing conformity with the professional standards).*

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17. Q4 PERFORMANCE REPORT 2021/2022

Consideration was given to the report of the Assistant Director – Corporate, which provided an update on how the Council was performing for the period 1 January 2022 to 31 March 2022.

Attention was drawn to the following areas that were not performing well – Customer Contact remained an area with performance below target but the service was seeing improvement, and officers were putting in a lot of effort to improve the situation; Housing Voids turnaround was falling behind for a number of reasons. All the underperforming areas would be monitored with a view to raising performance

The following points were raised:

- It was stated that the statistics presented within the report covered the period 1 January 2022 to 31 March 2022 and therefore did not provide information on the current situation. It was requested that a quicker turnaround of performance data for consideration be provided in the future.
- Members commented that performance relating to customer calls had been underperforming for some time – whilst appreciating that there had been some extenuating circumstances, and that some efforts were being made to turn this around, it would be helpful to have more detailed information on what was being done to improve the situation.
- The Leader questioned whether an interim report could be provided to the next meeting of the Cabinet, for all those areas that were currently underperforming, detailing their past position, what the current position was and where they expected to be in relation to performance in the future. Some commentary should also be provided on any issues there had been. He also stated that Portfolio Holders for the underperforming areas should monitor and be responsible for performance.
- The Chairman of the Performance Monitoring Panel commented that the Panel had also debated the information within the Performance report at its last meeting and had requested that explanations to poor performance needed to come forward, in addition to advising Portfolio Holders of the Panel's concerns, and an expectation that they be held ultimately responsible for poor performance in their areas, and that they could be requested to attend future Panel meetings to explain issues.

DECISION:

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That the contents of the report be noted.

(Other options considered:

- *Do nothing*

Reasons for decision:

- *To ensure Council performance is properly scrutinised).*

18. DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOUTH AND EAST LINCOLNSHIRE HEALTHY LIVING BOARD TO SUPPORT THE CO-ORDINATION OF THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING, LEISURE AND CULTURE OFFER IN THE SUB-REGION

Consideration was given to the report of the Deputy Chief Executive – Communities for Boston Borough Council, East Lindsey District Council and South Holland District Council, which sought approval to the terms by which the South and East Lincolnshire Healthy Living Board was established, and to provide delegated authority for the Deputy Chief Executive (Communities) to finalise with the Executive Leads for Health and Well Being, Leisure and Culture through the newly established 'Healthy Living Board' a

- Healthy Living Action Plan for the Sub-Region;
- Programme for the Sub-Region's Leisure and Culture Officer.

The Portfolio Holder for People, Places and Economy commented that the formation of the board would be very helpful in making progress on some long-standing issues within the area.

The Portfolio Holder for Assets and Planning raised the issue of the loss of the GP service at the Johnson Community Hospital – he had been advised by the County Council that this situation would only be for the short-term and that a GP service would soon return. It was important that members were kept advised of the situation as the loss of this service would only put more pressure on the remaining GP surgeries in the district.

DECISION:

- 1) That the detailed proposals provided within the report, supporting the establishment/intended role of the South and East Lincolnshire Healthy Living Board (Healthy Lives Priority Partnership) and the accompanying terms of reference, be agreed;
- 2) That delegated authority be given to the Deputy Chief Executive (Communities) to finalise with the Executive Leads

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for Health and Well Being and Leisure and Culture through the 'Healthy Living Board' a:-

- Programme for the development of a Healthy Living Action Plan for the sub-region; and
- Programme for the Sub-Regions Leisure and Culture Offer.

(Other options considered:

- *To continue with current arrangements – this option has been discounted.*
- *Whilst there are strong relationships between officers of the South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership and Strategic Partners that would be invited to join the Board, it is necessary to create a more formalised environment (on agreed terms) where Partners can contribute to strategies and action plans to improve outcomes for the strategic priorities relating to health and well-being in the sub-region.*

Reasons for decision:

- *The South and East Lincolnshire Healthy Living Board would create a more formalised arrangement for discussion between Strategic Partners across the sub-region. Whilst in many cases the conversations that would take place at the Board are taking place at present between Members, Partnership Officers and Partners informally, the establishment of the Board under the terms set out in the report would formalise that arrangement, provide a focus for resources and partnership effort within the sub-region and within the Partnership's governance structure).*

19. INSTALLATION OF THREE NEW CHANGING PLACES TOILETS

Consideration was given to the report of the Deputy Chief Executive – Delivery, which requested approval of an addition to the Capital Programme to Fund the installation of three new changing places toilets.

An update on progress was provided – the Ayscoughfee toilets were now complete; the toilets in the SheepMarket were in the planning stages; and work had just started on the toilets in Holbeach Town Centre.

In response to a comment that there were no net costs for installation, and how much would running costs be, it was confirmed that these toilets would be included within the usual toilet maintenance programme.

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Members questioned whether there had been any provision included to limit the effects of vandalism. It was stated that this was always a difficult problem to deal with however, the toilets would be separately accessible to people that needed to use them -they would be accessed by either a specific key (similar to that used to access disabled toilets), and consideration was being given to providing access via a QR code which could be obtained from the Council.

DECISION:

- 1) That the Government Grant of £150,000 to support the installation of three new changing places toilets be accepted; and
- 2) An addition of £150,000 to the Capital Programme, funded from the Government Grant, be approved.

(Other options considered:

- *The councils could decide not to accept all or part of the grant and not provide these enhanced facilities. This would though prevent the Council from improving the quality of lives for all of its residents and up to 1 million people in the country who rely on such facilities in order to enjoy the same opportunities as everyone else.*

Reasons for decision:

- *Changing Places toilets are larger and more accessible for people who cannot use standard accessible toilets, with equipment such as hoists, curtains, adult sized changing benches, and space for carers. Increasing the provision of these toilets is part of a £30m national government disability strategy to allow more physically impaired individuals to undertake more recreational activities with dignity, confidence, and freedom).*

20. TREE AND HEDGEROW STRATEGY

Consideration was given to the report of the Climate Change and Environment Manager which requested adoption of a Tree and Hedgerow Strategy for the South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership, setting out the ambition and high-level commitments of the three Councils.

The following points were raised:

- It was important to secure existing trees and hedgerows and to maintain the natural environment.
- It was important to ensure that the right tree was planted in the right place.

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- The health and wellbeing benefits were important.
- The Leader commented that members should note what trees and hedgerows were in their wards so that this information could assist in planning the way forward
- It was important to ensure that conditions were placed on new properties so that trees/plants could not be removed unnecessarily.
- It was sometimes necessary to remove a tree however, re-planting should then be undertaken elsewhere.

DECISION:

That the adoption of the Tree and Hedgerow Strategy be approved.

(Other options considered:

- *To not take forward a Tree and Hedgerow Strategy and continue to develop projects, policies and procedures in a piecemeal fashion across the sub-region.*

Reasons for decision:

- *To ensure a consistent approach to tree management and planting across the sub-region).*

21. ACQUISITION OF 18 RENTED S106 AFFORDABLE HOMES IN HOLBEACH FROM A DEVELOPER

Consideration was given to the report of the Assistant Director – Strategic Growth and Development, which set out details of the potential for the authority to acquire 18 s106 affordable homes on a development site in the district.

Members requested that the planning application number relating to the acquisition be provided and it was agreed that this would be circulated.

Members advised that there was no requirement for discussion of the information within the exempt appendix, and there was therefore no need for the meeting to go into private session.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

- 1) To approve the business case, and the acquisition of 18 affordable homes within Holbeach, for the HRA; and
- 2) To delegate to the Deputy Chief Executive (Corporate Development) and S151, to agree the contractual matters (including the terms and conditions which may represent a minor variation to the scheme approved in the business case) such as signing the contract/transfer document and other

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incidental actions that may be required, and approving the associated due diligence and valuation required to purchase the properties, and to identify this scheme as a named scheme in the capital programme, in accordance with the approved budget.

(Other options considered:

- *Do nothing - In this event the authority would not proceed to purchase the properties. As a consequence, the expected benefits set out in section 5 of the report, would not be realised. Officers would seek to identify alternative, appropriate schemes for consideration by the Executive or Council.*

Reasons for decision:

- *To enable new affordable homes to be delivered which meet identified housing need in the district.*
- *To provide a return on investment as set out in the financial evaluation provided at Appendix A.*
- *To replace homes sold to tenants via Right To Buy.)*

(The Leader left the meeting at the start of consideration of this item and returned following discussion of it).

22. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE LEADER DECIDES ARE URGENT.

There were none.

23. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

DECISION:

Under section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public were excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 4 of part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

24. ENVIRONMENTAL CRIME ENFORCEMENT

Consideration was given to the report of the Assistant Director – Regulatory, which requested that recommendations in respect of changes to the establishment as a result of the proposed environmental crime enforcement contract be considered.

DECISION:

That the recommendations, as detailed in the exempt report be

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agreed.

(The meeting ended at 10.55 am)

(End of minutes)

Any RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL detailed above will be submitted for consideration to the meeting of the full Council on 27 July 2022.