

Lancashire County Council

Executive Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, 7th October, 2014 at 2.00 pm in Cabinet Room 'C' - The Duke of Lancaster Room, County Hall, Preston

Present:

County Councillor Bill Winlow (Chair)

County Councillors

A Barnes	P Hayhurst
D Clifford	S Holgate
B Dawson	J Oakes
G Driver	D O'Toole
G Gooch	N Penney
M Green	D T Smith

County Councillors David Smith and Graham Gooch replaced County Councillors Albert Atkinson and Susie Charles respectively for this meeting.

1. Apologies

None.

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-pecuniary Interests

There were no interests declared.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 9 September 2014

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 September 2014 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. Reports for decision by Cabinet

The committee considered the following reports to be presented for decision by Cabinet on 9 October 2014.

a. Proposed New Employee Structure for Lancashire

The Committee was presented with a report setting out the proposed new employee structure for Lancashire County Council. The Committee was advised

that the structure itself and the principles behind the restructure had been subject to extensive consultation with staff, including through staff conferences. It was reported that, whilst there was clearly a financial imperative to reduce the size of the council, the approach taken to this challenge was to use the opportunity to rebuild and reshape the whole organisation. It was reported that there would be a two stage process of implementation, starting with staff at Grade 11 and above by April 2015, followed by all other staff by April 2016. It was confirmed that, to support staff, an Employee Support function would be established, also to be recruited in the first phase.

It was emphasised again that, whilst there would be job losses, all efforts were being made to avoid these being compulsory, and at present around 600 staff had taken Voluntary Redundancy (VR).

In response to queries raised by members of the committee, it was confirmed that arrangements were in place to ensure that, where staff had requested VR but were deemed to be in key posts, VR was not granted, but that training and development opportunities were in place to try to facilitate VRs wherever possible and ensure there was appropriate knowledge and expertise still in the council.

In relation to the overall position, it was reported that the Grade 11 and above structure presented would represent a saving of £11.4m, and that the proposed management structure would therefore be reduced by a proportionately greater amount than the grade 10 and below structure.

Resolved: That the recommendations in the report to the cabinet be noted and that no additional comments or suggested alternative recommendations be made.

b. Approval of the County Council's Procurement Strategy

The Committee received a report on a procurement strategy for Lancashire County Council, following on from previous reports to Cabinet, and having been the subject of an in depth consultation process.

It was reported that over 50 responses had been received from partners, and that they were overwhelmingly positive. Feedback from the consultation generally requested that the County Council provide further explanation on its expectations and objectives, and this was now featured in the strategy to be presented to Cabinet for approval.

It was made clear that the strategy now needed to become reality, and a Procurement Board had been established to oversee this. It was also reported that an Improvement Plan had been developed, and progress would be reported to the Cabinet Committee on Performance Improvement.

It was confirmed that opportunities to work with other public sector partners on joint procurement activity were actively sought, but that there had so far been no examples of this happening with districts.

Resolved: - That the recommendations in the report to the cabinet be noted and that no additional comments or suggested alternative recommendations be made.

c. **Approval to Adopt the West Lancashire Highways and Transport Masterplan**

The committee considered a report on the West Lancashire Highways and Transport Masterplan, part of the series of Masterplans covering the whole County. It was reported that the document had been out for consultation, and a large number of responses had been received, which were reflected in the final document. It was highlighted that, through the process of developing the Masterplan, links with other authorities, notably Sefton, on highways and transport issues, had significantly improved.

In presenting the report, a number of issues were highlighted, notably the Burscough Curves, the impact of electrification of the rail lines in the area, the Ormskirk By-pass, cycle routes in Ormskirk and across the borough, the Green Lane Link, and the opportunities for a railway station in Skelmersdale.

It was recognised that the Ormskirk Bypass in particular remained a controversial issue, with strong views being expressed both in favour and against the proposal. It was intended that a package of alternative measures be implemented to address the problems of traffic in some parts of the town. There was significant support from the committee for the various measures to enhance rail services in the area.

Resolved: - That the recommendations in the report to the cabinet be noted and that no additional comments or suggested alternative recommendations be made.

5. Forthcoming Individual Cabinet Member Key Decisions

The committee considered the following key decisions due to be taken by individual Cabinet Members.

a. **Proposal to Close Deepdale Junior School Expand Deepdale Infant School by Extending the Age Range**

The committee was presented with proposals to formally close Deepdale Junior School, with effect from 31 December 2014, and to expand Deepdale Infant School by extending the age range from 3 – 7 years to 3 – 11 years to become a primary school. The

proposal had been subject to consultation, and no objections had been received. The move was supported by both governing bodies.

Resolved: That the recommendations in the report to the cabinet member be noted and that no additional comments or suggested alternative recommendations be made

b. Provision of Additional Secondary School Places in Chorley

A report was presented setting out information on projected future pupil numbers in Chorley District secondary schools and the actions taken to secure additional places in order to meet future demand. The report set out proposals to expand one school with effect from 2015 and sought permission to enter into further negotiations with the remaining secondary schools to provide future additional places.

Resolved: That the recommendations in the report to the cabinet member be noted and that no additional comments or suggested alternative recommendations be made

c. M65 Motorway - Replacement of Crash Barriers

The Committee was presented with a report outlining proposals for the replacement of the M65 crash barriers, at a cost of £4.3m. It was reported that the current Capital Programme includes the provision of £2.64m for this scheme, and that approval was therefore required for the additional cost.

It was explained that the barriers were required to be to the standard specification used on motorways, and that there were therefore limited options available. It was confirmed that the scheme would also require removal of the current street lighting from the central reservation as part of the works, and accident data was included in the report in relation to this.

Resolved: That the recommendation in the report to the cabinet member be noted and that no additional comments or suggested alternative recommendations be made

6. Urgent Business

There was no urgent business.

7. Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the committee would be held at 2pm on Tuesday 4 November 2014.

8. Exclusion of the Press and Public

Resolved: - That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that there would be a likely disclosure

of exempt information as defined in the appropriate paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972 and that in all circumstances of the case the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

9. Project Management Services for Kitchen and Dining Room Refurbishments

The Committee considered a report on the procurement exercise to identify providers of project management services for kitchen and dining room refurbishments.

Resolved: That the recommendation in the report to the cabinet member be noted and that no additional comments or suggested alternative recommendations be made

I Young
County Secretary and Solicitor

County Hall
Preston