

Present: Councillor Ric Metcalfe (*in the Chair*),
Councillor Donald Nannestad, Councillor Rosanne Kirk,
Councillor Neil Murray, Councillor Fay Smith and
Councillor Peter West

Apologies for Absence: None.

100. Confirmation of Minutes - 30 November 2015

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 30 November 2015 be confirmed.

101. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

102. Living Wage Increase November 2015

Purpose of Report

To recommend how the living wage increase announced on 2 November 2015 could be implemented.

Decision

That the revised living wage be implemented with effect from 1 January 2016.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None.

Reason for Decision

The Council became an accredited member of the Living Wage Foundation in October 2013. Since accreditation the Council had implemented annual living wage increases as an uplift in salary for the affected staff. On 2 November 2015 it had been announced that the living wage would rise from £7.85 to £8.25.

The Council was committed to maintaining its Living Wage accreditation and in order to do so, the Council had 6 months to implement the living wage increase. Noting the endorsement of the City of Lincoln Council and Employee Joint Consultative Committee, and in order to maintain the accreditation and ensure employees were being paid appropriately it was agreed that the revised living wage would be implemented from 1 January 2016 onwards. Members noted that the Council's Pay Policy Statement would need amending accordingly.

103. New Build Programme

Purpose of Report

Further to the report to the Executive on 16 June 2014 on the resources and strategic options for the house building programme, to present a proposal and

obtain approval for the fourth development phase of the new council house building programme to provide 16 new council homes for rent.

Decision

1. That the next phase of new build development on land at Blankney Crescent to provide 16 new houses be approved.
2. That the development scheme be added to the Housing Investment Programme in 2015/16 and 2016/17 and included on the list of schemes monitored by the Strategic Plan Implementation Team.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None.

Reason for Decision

On 16 June 2014 the Executive approved a strategy to accelerate the Council's house-building programme. In accordance with that strategy the Executive had been presented with proposals to continue to the next phase of the house-building programme through the development of Housing Revenue Account land on Blankney Crescent by providing 16 houses for rent. The site was considered to be particularly appropriate as it could be developed without the Council incurring any land acquisition costs.

The properties would be built to achieve a fabric which was compliant with the Sustainable Homes Code Level 3, thereby providing properties that were economical to heat and be in line with reducing fuel poverty. The proposals were approved in accordance with the Council's strategic priority to increase the supply of affordable housing.

104. Bereavement Services Business Case

Purpose of Report

To request Executive approval regarding the recommendations contained in the Bereavement Services business case and as outlined in the executive summary of the provided report.

Decision

1. That the recommendations contained in the Bereavement Services business case be approved.
2. That capital and revenue improvements to the crematorium costing £157,420 be approved and funded from the Invest to Save Reserve, subject to completion of the appropriate project management requirements.
3. That the staffing changes highlighted in paragraph 2.2 of the provided report and paragraph 4.0 of the business case be approved.

4. That the income generation scheme detailed in paragraph 8.1.2 of the business case be approved, subject to Council approval of the specific fees and charges.
5. That the medium and longer term recommendations of the business case be approved.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None.

Reason for Decision

The Bereavement Services team was based at the Council's crematorium on Washingborough Road. As a consequence of its proximity, location and quality of service, the crematorium provided a service for 80% of all deaths in the city, represented by 1,750 cremation services per annum. The crematorium generated annual revenues in excess of £1m and was running at 78% of its potential full capacity.

Members agreed that the reputation of the crematorium was of paramount importance, as a result of the serious consequences if mistakes were made in its operation. In addition, it was forecast that the central Lincolnshire area would experience significant housing growth and so it was necessary to ensure the crematorium was fit for purpose and could compete in an increasingly competitive market. As such, a number of changes proposed to the service had been considered by the Policy Scrutiny Committee and recommended to the Executive for approval

The proposed improvements were outlined in the business case and had an initial total cost of £157,420 and an ongoing revenue cost of £7,850 per annum. This cost would be met through the invest to save budget.

The staffing at the crematorium was agreed to be changed in line with the recommendations of the business case. This would entail the creation of a senior cremator operator post, an increase in the hours of the typist clerk and the removal of a vacant post. These changes were agreed in order to ensure suitable staffing was in place to support the efficient operation of the service. Members noted the concern expressed by trade unions regarding the principle of weekend working, but were content that this would be appropriately managed by the responsible staff.

In order to defray the significant revenue and capital investment made by Council, the income generation schemes outlined in the business case were to be implemented at the earliest opportunity. These would include new tariffs for witnessed burial charges, direct cremations and the use of a new Wesley system, while further income could be generated through the proposed extension to the opening times and through future consideration of bereavement services tariffs. The Executive further considered the other proposals made for investments in the medium-to-long term and gave support in principle to the development of relevant schemes.

105. Exclusion of the Press and Public

RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business because it was likely that if members of the public were present there would be a disclosure to them of 'exempt information' as defined by Section 100I and Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

HR and Workbased Learning Review. This item was considered in private as it was likely to disclose exempt information, as defined in Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. No representations had been received in relation to the proposal to consider this item in private.

106. HR and Workbased Learning Review

Purpose of Report

To report the findings from the HR and Workbased Learning review and to gain the approval of the proposed restructure by the Executive.

Decision

That the proposed restructure be approved.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None.

Reason for Decision

A review had been undertaken of the Council's Human Resources and Workbased Learning teams, as a result of vacancies within the relevant teams and the opportunity for improved working and savings. The review had made a number of recommendations, including that the teams be combined under one service manager. The proposals also included a career-graded HR Officer and an HR Team Leader role. This, in addition to the career-graded post, would also provide a clear career path for team members.

It was further noted that the proposals would increase capacity to deliver the Council's Organisation Development Strategy, provide a clear career path in a service area into which it had been historically difficult to recruit, mitigate against uncertainty surrounding funding of the Council's apprenticeship scheme, and provide the potential to expand the apprenticeship scheme to benefit the wider organisation. Noting the support of the City of Lincoln Council and Employee Joint Consultative Committee, members resolved to support the proposed scheme in order to deliver the benefits discussed above.