

Minutes of a meeting of the ESPO Management Committee held at County Hall, Glenfield on Wednesday, 16 September 2020.

PRESENT

Cllr. M. Howell (in the Chair)

Cambridgeshire County Council

Cllr. I Bates

Peterborough City Council

Cllr. J. Holdich OBE

Cllr D. Seaton

Leicestershire County Council

Dr. R. K. A. Feltham CC

Mr. R. Shepherd CC

Lincolnshire County Council

Cllr A. Hagues

Cllr. S. Rawlins

Warwickshire County Council

Cllr. P. S. Birdi

Cllr. P. Butlin

Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr. S. Clancy and Cllr. M. Smith-Clare from Norfolk County Council.

In attendance

ESPO

Kristian Smith - Director

Richard Benner – Assistant Director

Maurice Campbell – Assistant Director

David Godsell – Assistant Director

Matt Selwyn Smith – Assistant Director

Leicestershire County Council

Lauren Haslam – Director of Law and Governance on behalf of Consortium Secretary

Declan Keegan – Assistant Director Strategic Finance and Property on behalf of Consortium Treasurer

Mo Seedat – Head of Democratic Services

Matt Davis – Audit Manager

Cat Tuohy – Democratic Services Officer

15. Minutes.  
The notes of the meeting held on 24 June 2020 were taken as read.
16. Urgent Items.  
There were no urgent items for consideration.
17. Declarations of interests.

The Chairman invited members who wished to do so to declare any interest in respect of items on the agenda for the meeting.

Mr R. Shepherd CC and Dr K. Feltham CC declared a personal interest as members of Leicestershire County Council in relation to the authorities ownership of Leaders for Agenda Item '9' (minute 25 refers).

18. Draft Annual Governance Statement 2019/20.

The Committee considered a report by the Director of ESPO on the Draft Annual Governance Statement. A copy of the report marked '4' is filed with these minutes.

Members thanked the Director for the comprehensive draft Annual Governance Statement.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the draft Governance Statement was consistent with Members perspective on internal control within ESPO.
- b) Noted that final approval would be sought when the Statement of Accounts were presented at a future Management Committee meeting;
- c) That the agreed Governance Statement be circulated to the Chief Executives of each of the Constituent Authorities.

19. Director's Progress update.

The Committee considered a report of the Director which provided an update of the actions and progress made since the last ESPO Management Committee held on 24 June 2020. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 5', is filed with these minutes

The Director informed the Committee due to uncertainty arising from COVID-19, a revised financial forecast would be submitted to the November meeting.

As a result of COVID-19 ESPO had 543 item lines unavailable, compared to the usual 200. The additional items unavailable were mostly Personal Protective Equipment and cleaning supplies that were in high demand.

ESPO were aware of the risks to its trading environment with COVID-19 and the United Kingdom's exit from the European Union and the situation was monitored on a ongoing basis as per the risk register.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted and supported.

20. Dates of Future Meetings.

It was noted that future meetings of the Committee would be held at 10.30am on the following dates:-

Wednesday 25 November 2020

Wednesday 17 March 2021  
Wednesday 23 June 2021  
Wednesday 15 September 2021  
Wednesday 24 November 2021

21. Exclusion of the Press and Public.

RESOVLED:

It was agreed that under Section 100(A) (iv) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that it will involve the likely disclosure of exempt information during consideration of the following items of business as defined in paragraphs 3 and 10 of Schedule 12A of the Act; and, in all circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

22. Change to the Order of Business.

The Chairman sought and obtained the consent of the Committee to vary the order of business from that set out on the agenda for the meeting.

23. Director's Supplementary Report.

The Committee considered an exempt report of the Director which set out further supplementary information regarding the Director's Progress Update. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 8', is filed with these minutes. The report was not for publication by virtue of Paragraphs 3 and 10 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 (A) of the Local Government Act 1972.

The Director set out plans for future development, further updates would be brought to the Committee as plans advanced and opportunities arose. The Committee thanked the Director for the detailed report and were pleased that ESPO's trading position had remained strong in this difficult period in part due the diversification of the business.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

24. Website Demonstration.

The Committee received a report from the Director on the new ESPO. A copy of the report marked Agenda Item '10' is filed with these minutes. The report and presentation were not for publication by virtue of Paragraphs 3 and 10 of Part 1 of Schedule 12(A) of the Local Government Act 1972.

The Committee was joined by Claire Edwards, Head of Digital Implementation at ESPO and Tom Williams from Maginus who presented video demonstrations of the new website.

The website had been built to industry standards and through Maginus would be supported by security experts and periodic scans to keep the website updated to keep ahead of any malicious hackers.

Members were pleased to note that a detailed communications programme was being developed to keep customers informed of the changes and that plans were also being built into ESPO's 40 year anniversary plans to take place in 2021.

ESPO was ultimately driven by customer demand and need. However, it was hoped the new website would enable customers to see the benefits both in terms of the savings that could be realised through digitalisation as well as environmental benefits.

Members thanks officers for the presentations and were pleased that once the website was live it would enable future developments that could be pursued to keep the system up to date and provide the best possible service to the customer.

RESOLVED:

That the presentations be noted and a further update be provided to a future meeting.

25. ESPO Warehouse Business Case.

The Director set out the detailed Business Case and the background and the links to the Longer-Term Financial Strategy. A copy of the report marked Agenda Item '11' is filed with these minutes. The report and presentation were not for publication by virtue of Paragraphs 3 and 10 of Part 1 of Schedule 12(A) of the Local Government Act 1972

The Director set out the need for a Warehouse Business Case which he believed presented a good investment with few financial downsides. As part of the presentation the Director set out the detailed financial planning and assumptions that lay behind the case that had been supported by a sensitivity analysis and external consultants.

Members noted that Leicestershire County Council had also provided a detailed financial assurance report and had set out recommendations to the Business Case to which ESPO had responded and acted on where necessary, such as an additional contingency fee to deal with any unexpected costs and uncertainty surrounding COVID-19.

*[At this point in the meeting Mr R. Shepherd CC and Dr. K. Feltham CC who had declared a personal interest leading to bias left the meeting to allow discussion on the proposed site for the Warehouse.]*

The Director referred the addendum to the Business Case that set out the preferred site for the Warehouse. Having considered all reasonable options Leaders Farm, the site owned by Leicestershire County Council, was considered preferable to other sites in large part to the fact that it would be exempt from stamp duty payment. The site also lay within the 'golden triangle' located close to the motorway and within reasonable proximity to Grove Park.

Members thanked the Director for the comprehensive report on this matter.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the need for a new warehouse as outlined in the Business Case be supported

- b) That 'Leaders Farm in Leicestershire be approved as the preferred site for investment.

CHAIRMAN

16 September 2020