

Minutes of a Meeting of the Council held in the Council Chamber, Tedder Hall, Manby Park, Louth on Wednesday, 4th March, 2020 at 2.00 pm.

PRESENT

Councillor David Andrews (Chairman)
Councillor Sarah Devereux (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors Terry Aldridge, Tom Ashton, Richard Avison, Stan Avison, Adrian Benjamin, Wendy Bowkett, Billy Brookes, Danny Brookes, Jimmy Brookes, Trevor Burnham, Sandra Campbell-Wardman, Richard Cunnington, Mark Dannatt, Colin Davie, Sid Dennis, Carleen Dickinson, Dick Edginton, Martin Foster, Richard Fry, William Gray, Chris Green, Will Grover, Alex Hall, David Hall, Sandra Harrison, Paul Hibbert-Greaves, George Horton, Tony Howard, Rosalind Jackson, Neil Jones, Thomas Kemp, Andrew Leonard, Craig Leyland, Daniel McNally, Jill Makinson-Sanders, David Mangion, Graham Marsh, Helen Matthews, Edward Mossop, Sarah Parkin, Julie Platt, Phyll Smith, Jim Swanson and Mel Turton-Leivers.

75. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Graham Cullen, Stephen Eyre, Adam Grist, Steve Kirk, Terry Knowles, Steve McMillan, Fiona Martin, Clare Newman and Paul Rickett.

76. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS (IF ANY):

At this point in the Meeting Members were invited to declare any relevant interests, no such interests were disclosed.

77. MINUTES:

The Open and Exempt Minutes of the Meeting held on 4th December 2019 were confirmed and signed as correct records.

78. ACTION SHEETS:

The Actions of the Meeting held on Wednesday 4th December 2019 were noted as complete.

79. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CHAIRMAN:

The Chairman extended a warm welcome to those in attendance. Members received an update on the engagements that the Chairman had attended since the last Council Meeting. The Chairman advised that his Chaplain, Reverend Cilla Smith was in hospital recuperating from surgery and sent his best wishes along with those of the Council to Reverend Cilla for her recovery.

80. REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD:

The Chairman of Executive Board presented his report further to which questions were raised on the following points:

- Housing Register - Only 550 applicants were enabled to bid for homes out of the current 1500 currently on the list of applicants, an assurance was sought that this would improve in the future;
- Ageing Population - Our increasing ageing population and longer life expectancy was something that the Council must keep in mind;
- Refuse collections - A slight drop in waste per head was good news, but did the Council have a plan for further reductions;
- Climate Change - Would the newly appointed Climate Change Manager look at the districts carbon footprint as part of the remit of the post;
- Corona Virus - Was the public health authority receiving the proper lead from government and the appropriate stewardship to deal with the situation;
- The Cultural Strategy Funding update - This was welcome and it was noted that economic growth was very much the driver, but in terms of wellbeing, cultural experience was of benefit to many and should be an additional focus;
- The need to focus on young people;
- The Connected Coast Boards - Would the members of the Place Reference Groups names be made available?

In response, the Chairman of Executive Board responded as follows:

Housing Register - This was a valid point and the Council would look to improve the numbers enabled to bid;

Climate Change - The Carbon Trust was undertaking the work on the carbon footprint on behalf of the District Council; this would inform the work of the Climate Change Manager;

The Cultural Strategy - The Strategy would raise economic activity and the Council would ensure that the therapeutic cultural element would be included;

The Council was aware of the skills agenda and the need to retain young people;

The Place Reference Group - Councillor Leyland agreed to take up the query on the names of those on the Group.

81. QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC:

The Member of the Public was not in attendance, therefore in line with Council Procedure Rule 10.9 a written response was provided. A copy of the question is attached at **Appendix A** to these Minutes.

82. REPORTS FROM SCRUTINY AND POLICY PANELS:

The Chairman of the 'East Lindsey's Approach to the Rough Sleeping Initiative' Scrutiny Panel, Councillor Jackson, presented the Panel's final report for consideration.

The review was commissioned by the Overview Committee as part of its oversight of the Council's Rough Sleeping Initiative and had considered the Council's commitment to support vulnerable people and reduce the number of people sleeping rough in the district.

During her introduction Councillor Jackson expressed her thanks to who had participated in the review. Councillor Jackson referred to much good practice, but acknowledged that evidence demonstrated an increasing number of people were faced with rough sleeping, which required a concentrated effort to ensure the situation remained in control.

Councillor Jackson made particular reference to Recommendation 8; Lobbying of Government for funding as crucial and Recommendation 3; Assessment Hub, which required a large investment but had the potential to save money. Following which, Councillor Jackson recommended the report to Council and welcomed any questions.

During discussion the Portfolio Holder for Communities expressed her thanks for the report and acknowledged the work undertaken by officers. It was highlighted that Government money had been used wisely and a Rough Sleeping Hub had already been considered to eliminate the use of bed and breakfast accommodation. It was hoped that others would follow the good practice already established.

N.B. Councillor Aldridge left the meeting at 2.30 pm.

The Chairman of the Executive Board advised that this presented specific issues on the coast and in market towns. Councillor Leyland also wished to acknowledge the work undertaken by the officers involved and expressed his thanks for the report and also to the Portfolio Holder for Communities.

Following which questions were raised as follows:

- Were there any mental health trained professionals within the team and would recommendations be guided by a protocol;
- The need for a definition of homelessness as a lack of clarity could lead to prejudice and enforcement issues;

- The cost of rental accommodation and private landlords who did not accept those in receipt of benefits;
- A lack of evidence from volunteer groups and that evidence gathering undertaken by two Members of the Panel had not been included;
- A member paid tribute to the Chair and Panel in producing a solid piece of work that he considered was supported by appropriate referencing and evidence;
- Councillor Parkin as Vice Chair of Overview Committee congratulated the Chair and Panel on a good report. Councillor Parkin highlighted the budget now included provision for individual spot funding, which due to the complexity behind homelessness was most important. It was highlighted that in terms of evidence from service providers, it was important to be clear on the pathways available and to that end it was suggested that Councillor training or shadowing would be useful.

In response, Councillor Jackson expressed her thanks for all comments. In respect of the query on mental health expertise, it was highlighted that there was some expertise within the team, but the advice was not to recruit specifically in terms of mental health. Councillor Jackson welcomed the initiative of a Mental Health Hub.

In addition, Councillor Jackson recognised the comments made by the Chairman of the Executive Board regarding an expectation that funding would continue, but may be administered in different ways going forward, and hoped that the Council would lobby for the continuation of funding.

With regard to comments on the need for a definition for homelessness, Councillor Jackson acknowledged that there were some points outside of the scope that were valid. Furthermore, Councillor Jackson wished to acknowledge the assistance of the volunteer groups involved, however whilst evidence was always useful, the report deadline meant that there did need to be a closing point for submissions.

Councillor Jackson expressed her thanks to the Overview Committee for quality checking the report; the points made had been considered and incorporated where possible. Finally, Councillor Jackson agreed it was important for Councillors to understand the referral process and hoped that this would be a topic for a future Reserved Member Day.

RESOLVED

That the final report of the East Lindsey's Approach to the Rough Sleeping Initiative Scrutiny Panel be noted and forwarded to the appropriate Portfolio Holder to consider the recommendations.

83. SUSPENSION OF COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES:

RESOLVED

That Council Procedure Rules be suspended for the following item to allow the mover of the Budget Report and Group Leaders(s) or representative of, in response thereto to speak for no longer than 15 minutes on one occasion.

84. ANNUAL BUDGET REPORT, MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY, FINANCIAL STRATEGIES & COUNCIL TAX:

The Portfolio Holder for Finance presented the Annual Budget, Medium Term Financial Strategy, Financial Strategies and Council Tax Report. The report had been presented to and reviewed by Executive Board on 19th February 2020, Executive Board Minute No.74 refers.

A recorded vote was required for this item, in line with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014. (Council Procedure Rule 5.2 (b)).

In introducing the report the Portfolio Holder for Finance made reference to:

- Income 2020/21 had been anticipated to be the first year of a new central Government financial settlement and the Council had braced itself for a significant reduction, however due to Brexit uncertainties and Government focus on other priorities, this had not happened;
- Instead a "single year" largely neutral settlement had been confirmed, so income remained largely unchanged;
- The annual critical budget challenge had taken place during September, October and November to enable Service Managers the freedom to table budgets, targets and expected risks;
- Whilst the Council had a further year to build on existing plans to increase its income and to move towards financial sustainability, there was a word of caution, as during 2021/22 the loss of Government Grants would potentially lead to a deficit;
- It was highlighted that the Council must, in order to provide an appropriate level of budgetary resilience, continue to pursue the projects and activities identified in its Financial Sustainability Strategy and Capital Programme guided by the emerging Corporate Strategy, in order to insulate itself and to generate an improved level of financial resilience. It was for this reason that it was proposed to increase Council Tax by £4.95 per year, which for Band D homes was equivalent to 9.5p per week;
- However, it remained a fact that in 2021/22 the Council would be facing a year of significant financial uncertainty. It was highlighted that

this was due to the expectation that Government initiatives such as the business rates reset, new Business Rate system, the Fairer Funding Review and Comprehensive Spending Review 2020 would all affect negatively;

- The potentially negative effect of BREXIT had been considered, the budget estimate assumed a neutral impact, however fortunately there were mechanisms in place to ensure that the Council could respond to any negative outcomes. The Government was continuing to provide specific BREXIT related financial support for Councils to the tune of £58m nationally which was welcome;

- Reference was made to the foresight applied in augmenting the Council reserves, particularly the Business Rate Volatility Reserve which provided a valuable level of financial strength for the Council and an extended period of time to generate income streams needed to pursue financial sustainability. It was for this reason it was proposed that a predicted in year surplus of £600k for 2020/21 should not be automatically assigned to reserves, but should be rather assigned for use by appropriate Portfolio Holders to support our Corporate Strategy by:

- The creation of a Market Towns investment fund
- To focus on targeted deprivation intervention projects and
- Provide support for Council's carbon reduction ambitions

The Portfolio Holder concluded that he was particularly happy to note that this budget estimate emphasised that the Council's performance was excellent and its financial position was strong.

Following which it was Proposed and Seconded

'That Council:

1. *Approves the East Lindsey District Council budget for 2020/21 the five year Medium Term Financial Strategy and the associated financial strategies (2020/21 to 2024/25) (Appendix 1);*

2. *Agrees the formal Council Tax resolutions detailed at Appendix B1 (Parishes , the County and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Lincolnshire are also dealt with as a part of this resolution), that there is a 3.49% increase in East Lindsey's Council Tax, the Band D Council Tax being £146.79;*

3. *Approves the creation of an Investments Volatility Reserve and the transfer of £1m into the new reserve from the Council's General Fund with immediate effect.'*

An Amendment was proposed and seconded by the Labour Group which had been circulated in advance of the meeting to Members as follows:

Labour Budget Amendment 2020/21

Rough Sleeping Initiative:

The Rough Sleeping Initiative team carries out life-changing work for some of our most vulnerable residents, and we want to see this work protected. However, much of the funding for this depends on a grant from central government that must be bid for. Therefore we propose creating a reserve against the risk that this money is withdrawn in future years, so that continuity of service can be maintained as long as it is needed.

Pride in place:

In order to boost the appearance of our towns, and thereby make them more appealing to residents and also encourage tourism, there will be a one-off increase in the budget for repairs and replacements to deal with such things as rusting bins.

Food hygiene service officer:

The food hygiene service has been a cause of concern in 2019/20. In order to better protect the public from risks associated with an outbreak associated with food hygiene problems we propose adding another officer to ELDC's team.

Electric Vehicles:

Electric vehicles contribute to our carbon reduction targets. However, they are more expensive to buy than petrol or diesel models. We propose to create a fund to supplement the difference in cost between buying a petrol or diesel vehicle and buying an electric one, so that any department that needs to replace a vehicle can make use of this fund to upgrade to a more environmentally friendly model.

Electric vehicles were, however, cheaper to maintain and fuel. The Medium Term Financial Plan assumed that fuel cost rises would be met by service efficiencies. However, this had proven difficult to achieve, and the rise in 2019/20 was 5%. We are proposing this so that long-term savings in fuel and maintenance can be made as soon as possible. Investing now in electric vehicles is intended to create a long-term saving for the authority.

Savings:

This budget balances due to savings from the Carbon Reduction Reserve and the Business Rates Volatility Reserve (BRVR).

The Carbon Reduction Reserve is at £106,000, and the Conservative budget does not propose to add to this or use it. We propose to use £70,000, leaving £36,000 in this reserve for other projects.

Our plans will take £339,015 from the BRVR over 4 years. This reserve is projected to remain at healthy levels, and with our proposed spending it should not dip below £5.077 million in the next four years.

Our budget proposals will therefore have no impact on the level of council tax.

2020/21:

Spending

- Food hygiene officer;
- Rough Sleeping Initiative reserve – one off;
- Carbon reduction reserve Electric Vehicles supplement;
- £50k towards repairs and replacements in Technical Services and Repairs – one off.

Food hygiene officer	£ 44.660
Rough Sleeping Initiative reserve	£100.000
Electric Vehicles Fund	£ 70.000
Repairs and replacements	£ 50.000
Impact on savings income	£ 2.779
Total	£267,439

Saving Plans:

Carbon Reduction Reserve	£70,000
Business Rates Volatility Reserve	£197,439
Total	£267,439

2021/22

Spending

- Food hygiene officer.

Food hygiene officer	£45,553
Impact on savings income	£ 592
Total	£46,145

Saving Plans:

Business Rates Volatility Reserve	£46,145
Total	£46,145

2022/23

Spending

Food Hygiene	£46,464
Impact on savings income	£ 720
Total	£47,184

Saving Plans

Business Rates Volatility Reserve	£47,184
Total	£47,184

2023/24

Spending

Food Hygiene	£47,394
Impact on savings income	£ 853
Total	£48,247

Saving Plans

Business Rates Volatility Reserve	£48,247
Total	£48,247

Total cost over 4 years	£409,015
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Assumptions:

Pay costs increase 2020/21 - 2%

2021/22 - 2%

2022/23 - 2%

2023/24 - 2%

Return on cash investments 2020/21 – 1.05%

2020/21 – 1.05%

2021/22 – 1.30%

2022/23 – 1.55%

2023/24 – 1.80%

On speaking on the Amendment, Councillor Jackson as proposer made specific reference to the following points:

Food Safety – Members were advised that the Food Standards Agency estimated that 2.4m cases per year out of a possible 18m cases were related to food borne illnesses, with potentially fatal consequences. It was highlighted that the district had approximately 2000 registered food businesses spread out over a wide geographical area; therefore inspection presented a huge challenge. Furthermore, the percentage of low rated food premises requiring improvement to a level 3 or higher on their next inspection was shown as red in the latest performance papers provided to Overview Committee and had been rated so since 2018/19. Consequently, the amendment proposed that an additional member of staff should be recruited to this team.

Electric Vehicles - Recent flooding had brought home that climate change had a direct effect on residents. Electric Vehicles were highlighted as being an invest to save opportunity. It was argued that the Council should lead on this initiative make it easier for others to invest in charging points.

Rough Sleeper Initiative - It was highlighted that the most consistent message throughout the rough sleeping scrutiny had been the need for continued funding. The creation of a reserve (to be used if government funding ceased abruptly) would protect the districts most vulnerable residents and provide a second line of defence, only to be utilised if required.

Pride of place - It was proposed that a one off payment should be included to improve the state of our towns, in Louth for instance the Bus Station required work following a spate of vandalism and was one such example.

With regard to provision for these proposals, it was highlighted that funding was available from this year's windfall amount within the budget. Furthermore, whilst the need for the Business Rates Volatility Reserve was acknowledged, it was stressed that some of the Reserve could be spent for the benefit of and the protection of residents.

In seconding the Amendment, the Leader of the Labour Group highlighted the importance of pride in our places for residents and also for the reputation of the District Council.

During discussion on the Amendment, the Portfolio Holder for Planning acknowledged the proposal as a function of the opposition and made the following points:

- The overall content presented a wish list rather than an amended budget;
- If additional officers were needed, this would be dealt with via the usual procedures;
- The Council was looking to move its HQ to Horncastle in the near future; therefore it was impractical, given the current fleet of pool cars of less than 4 years old to consider the points made on electric vehicles at this point.

For these reasons, Councillor Ashton could not support the proposed Amendment.

In response to the Amendment, the Portfolio Holder for Finance provided the following response:

With reference to the proposed reserve for the rough sleeping initiative, practically, it was unnecessary to set aside reserves for projects currently funded, it would be budgeted for if required in the future.

With regard to Pride of Place, the Council had a project for bin replacement and a Market Towns Investment Fund had been announced, to support our towns.

In terms of the food hygiene officer post, an advert was already in place. However, the Portfolio Holder stressed that one of the problems faced in

respect of food hygiene was the lack of longevity of food businesses, although the number of officers did not impact on this particular variable nor reflect on their hygiene score.

In respect of the acquisition of Electric vehicles, practically speaking there were no electric vehicles available that met the specific needs given the distances travelled. The Council was working with the Carbon Trust and this would be considered in the future. The Portfolio Holder added that his door was always open to discuss suggestions, but commented that this offer was not always taken up.

The Vice Chair of Overview Committee advised that she was currently chairing a Scrutiny Panel on Economic Development, part of the scrutiny scope was the promotion of certain areas, for example Louth as a food town. Councillor Parkin stressed that the district was a safe place to visit and highlighted the need to keep operational challenges that were being addressed in perspective.

The Chairman of Executive Board thanked all for their comments and fully supported the responses by the Portfolio Holder for Finance.

During further debate questions were put regarding:

- Staffing of the food safety team, a Member sought assurance that this was adequate and asked if this was the cause of the red performance indicators;
- Whether Finance Officers had been consulted on the Labour Amendment as it had been suggested in earlier debate that the amendment was not balanced;
- A Member considered that Rough Sleeper projects should continue to be centrally funded;

N.B. Councillor Leonard asked that it be noted that he was the owner of a local restaurant and echoed the earlier positive comments on the work of the Environmental Health Team, however wished to highlight that inspections included a wide range of points including record keeping and building structures etc.

- Councillor Davie wished to put on record that the Council was doing everything it could to ensure the safety of people eating in the district. Furthermore, work was required to fully utilise the benefits of electric vehicles in the east of the district so to ensure investment was purposeful.

In response to the points made on the Amendment, the Leader of the Labour Group considered that a small number of electric vehicles were possible without major changes to capacity.

Councillor Jackson as proposer of the amendment stated that:

- Electric vehicles were very much a moving feast in terms of their cost, and queried why the Council would delay given the current climate emergency as this was something that the Council should lead on;
- In respect of comments on Rough Sleeping provision, it was important and prudent to plan ahead;
- With regard to an additional Food Hygiene Officer, Councillor Jackson acknowledged that the Food Hygiene Team did an excellent job, but had a massive challenge in terms of coverage, shown in the KPIs which were no reflection on the competency of the team.

On putting the Amendment to the Vote it was declared lost.

Debate returned to the original Motion.

The Leader of the East Lindsey Independent Group (ELIG) commented that this was another balanced budget with some unexpected money to spare. It was highlighted that the ELIG supported the Budget proposal and had not therefore presented an amendment.

The benefits of including back benchers through Overview Committee via a budget consultation process were highlighted and it was hoped that in future years this would enable greater engagement in the process.

Councillor Swanson on behalf of the New East Lindsey Independent Group added his congratulations to officers involved for this balanced budget, and highlighted that whilst central government placed the council in this position, there was no alternative but to support the increase in Council Tax.

Councillor Swanson commended the Portfolio Holder for Finance on his aspirations for operating in a more commercial and business like way to influence capital receipts, but also commented that he could see no sense in increasing car parking charges to swell income from empty car parks. Finally, Councillor Swanson considered that whilst the budget consultation comments were interesting, the Council's claim to be listening may not be entirely justified with reference to the Horncastle Hub.

Further comments were received as follows:

- The rise in Council Tax was relatively modest compared to others, particularly as 60% of its funding went towards the Internal Drainage Boards. It was highlighted that a Lincolnshire proposal to lobby government to remove the IDB from the precept was being considered which did not detract from the excellent work of the Drainage Boards;

- The Council was supporting projects and delivering investment to the coast and inland through its efficient financial management;
- A Member referenced the move to Horncastle in terms of the anticipated disposals of Tedder Hall and Skegness Town Hall. It was stressed that the purchase of the Horncastle site must demonstrate good value for money and it was highlighted that when the Council had considered the disposal of Horncastle Town Hall the Executive Board had resolved to require Ward Members to be involved in such circumstances and a consultation plan to be drafted, which he had seen no evidence of.

The Chairman of Executive Board acknowledged that this had been an interesting debate that illustrated the Council's broad strategic view. In respect of the comments on the Horncastle Hub, it was highlighted that the previous Executive Board had different issues to consider and it was confirmed that Councillors had been consulted on the move to Horncastle. Furthermore, it was highlighted that there were occasions when debate was restricted to private session, as Louth Town Council had done in considering the purchase of their new building.

A point of order was raised and it was highlighted that the debate referred to at Louth Town Council was properly restricted on commercial sensitivity grounds.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance thanked all for their comments and reiterated his willingness to discuss budget proposals. Councillor Fry paid tribute to his team of officers, including Adrian Sibley as S151 Officer.

With regard to comments on consultation on the Horncastle Hub and notification of, it was highlighted that Councillors had been emailed identifying the cost neutral nature of the acquisition of the site, which was as a minimum 14 acres with some exciting potential uses for the site.

Following which, in line with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014. (Council Procedure Rule 5.2 (b)), a recorded vote was taken as follows:

For the proposal:

Councillors David Andrews, Tom Ashton, Richard Avison, Stan Avison, Adrian Benjamin, Wendy Bowkett, Billy Brookes, Danny Brookes, Jimmy Brookes, Trevor Burnham, Sandra Campbell-Wardman, Richard Cunnington, Mark Dannatt, Colin Davie, Sid Dennis, Sarah Devereux, Carleen Dickinson, Dick Edginton, Martin Foster, Richard Fry, William Gray, Chris Green, Will Grover, Alex Hall, Sandra Harrison, Paul Hibbert-Greaves, George Horton, Neil Jones, Thomas Kemp, Andrew Leonard, Craig Leyland, Jill Makinson-Sanders, David Mangion, Graham Marsh, Helen Matthews, Daniel McNally, Edward Mossop, Julie Platt, Jim Swanson and Mel Turton-Leivers.

Against the Proposal:

Councillors David Hall, Tony Howard, Ros Jackson, Sarah Parkin and Phyll Smith.

Abstentions:

None

Vote:

40 For

5 Against

Following which it was

RESOLVED

1. That the East Lindsey District Council budget for 2020/21, the five year Medium Term Financial Strategy and the associated financial strategies (2020/21 to 2024/25) (Appendix 1) be approved;

2. That the formal Council Tax resolutions detailed at Appendix B1 (Parishes , the County and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Lincolnshire are also dealt with as a part of this resolution), be agreed including a 3.49% increase in East Lindsey's Council Tax, the Band D Council Tax being £146.79;

3. That the creation of an Investments Volatility Reserve and the transfer of £1m into the new reserve from the Council's General Fund be approved with immediate effect.

N.B. Councillors Danny Brookes and Billy Brookes left the meeting at 4.05pm.

85. LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2020-2021:

The Portfolio Holder for Finance presented a report that enabled consideration of the Council's Local Council Tax Support Scheme. The Local Government Finance Act 2012 set out the process by which Councils must approve a Local Council Tax Support scheme. Regulations included protection of pensioners but allowed Councils to make changes in the way that support was calculated for working age claimants.

Following which it was Proposed and Seconded

'1. *That Council approves, the Executive Board recommendations:-*

a) Uprating and harmonisation of the scheme as appropriate to the DWP welfare reforms in Housing Benefit and the prescribed scheme for pensioners for 2020/21 and future years, and

b) Introduce a link to the award of Universal Credit, removing the need for customers to make a separate application for Council Tax Support, and

c) *Introduce a £15 weekly (£65 monthly) tolerance rule for Universal Credit customer change in earnings.*

2. *That Council delegate: -*

a) *Approval for the 2020/21 final scheme policy to the Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, and*

Approval for administrative and minor changes for future year schemes to the Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance'

During his introduction, the Portfolio Holder for Finance made reference to paragraphs 2.4 and 2.5 of the report presented that referenced the core principles of East Lindsey's local Council Tax Scheme as:

- Protection for: - People over pension age (as prescribed by Government), All War Disablement Pensioners, War Widow and War Widowers;
- People with children, disabilities or caring responsibilities would be supported:- Retention of the core features and continued application of the wide range of provision in the previous Council Tax Benefit (CTB) scheme that recognised the additional needs of the disabled, those with children and those with caring responsibilities;
- Incentives to work would be supported: - Reference was made to the retention of provision within the previous Council Tax Benefit scheme, thereby maintaining the rate at which support was withdrawn as income increases.

The Portfolio Holder made further reference to paragraph 4.4 of the report presented that recommended that for future years, scheme charges that were minor or administrative were delegated to the Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance. It was noted that changes that were fundamental and could change the core principles and characteristics of the scheme, would be considered by Executive Board and be subject to consultation as part of the scheme decision making process.

Further reference was made to:

- Linking Council Tax support with universal credit would make it simpler and more timely for customers to access CTS, preventing delay and potential loss in support (under scheme rules, if an application was made late it could only be backdated for one month);
- Introducing a tolerance rule for the revision of earnings at £15 per week (£65.00 per month) would ensure smoothing of customers fluctuating UC awards, and not disadvantage those customers

receiving greater or occasional beneficial change. Officers would have discretion to update subject to individual circumstances;

Following which, the Portfolio Holder invited any questions:

- A Member queried if the £15.00 tolerance rule would impact on the amount of Council Tax benefit they received;
- A further question was asked in respect of care leavers, it was highlighted that the County Council was considering changing the threshold to age 25 and was the District Council likely to follow suit?

In response, the Portfolio Holder for Finance advised that changes up to £15.00 per week whether positive or negative would not impact on how Council Tax benefit was applied.

With regard to the scheme for care leavers, the Portfolio Holder advised that he would be minded to recommend to Council at the appropriate time.

RESOLVED

1. That the following Executive Board recommendations be approved:-
 - a) Uprating and harmonisation of the scheme as appropriate to the DWP welfare reforms in Housing Benefit and the prescribed scheme for pensioners for 2020/21 and future years, and
 - b) Introduce a link to the award of Universal Credit, removing the need for customers to make a separate application for Council Tax Support, and
 - c) Introduce a £15 weekly (£65 monthly) tolerance rule for Universal Credit customer change in earnings.
2. That Council delegate: -
 - a) Approval for the 2020/21 final scheme policy to the Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, and

Approval for administrative and minor changes for future year schemes to the Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance.

86. CORPORATE STRATEGY:

A report was presented that enabled consideration of the Council's Corporate Strategy as detailed at Appendix 1 to the report presented. It had been agreed that the Council should produce a new Corporate Strategy in order to set the future overarching priorities for the organisation, in this case, for up to 10 years. It was noted that input from Councillor Workshops and consultation had been fed into the proposed strategic aims.

During his introduction, the Chairman of Executive Board expressed his thanks to residents for taking part in consultation. In total 88 public responses had been received, some presenting conflicting views, these had been analysed and would be provided online. Workshops for staff, Councillors and Town and Parish Councillors had taken place. Comments had been considered in forming the Corporate Strategy.

Following which it was Proposed and Seconded

'That the proposed Corporate Strategy as attached at Appendix 1 to the report presented be approved'

During discussion a Member voiced her concerns that it had been necessary to send out an amended Corporate Strategy document following the initial publication and stated that the document should have been quality checked before publishing. Furthermore, it was highlighted that the amended document still contained a typographical error.

With regard to the content, further concerns were raised as follows:

- The document had not referenced the importance of agriculture to the area or its influence in shaping the district;
- The nationally important nature sites referenced within the Strategy required more explanation;
- In respect of residents thriving, it was suggested that coastal apprenticeships for example, Mablethorpe may decline when the Council moved to Horncastle;

The Leader of the Labour Group raised a point of information; he advised that currently Mablethorpe was the nearest opportunity for apprenticeships for some but not the only opportunity.

The Chairman of Executive Board apologised that the document had required amendment, but was clear that the correct version had been provided immediately once the errors had been noted. Councillor engagement in the Strategy was welcome but the Chairman of Executive Board was equally happy to discuss any further ambitions for the Council after the meeting.

Following which it was

RESOLVED

That the proposed Corporate Strategy (attached at Appendix 1 to the report presented be approved.

87. UPDATES TO THE COUNCIL CONSTITUTION:

A report was presented that enabled consideration of amendments to the Council's Constitution. The recommendation sought Member support to amend the Council's Constitution, to:

- Provide delegated authority to the Service Manager - Public Protection to immediately suspend or revoke a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle driver's licence where it was considered necessary and appropriate in the interests of public safety. The suspension or revocation process to be in line with the Rapid Response (Fast Track) Procedure set out at Appendix 2 to the Report; and;
- To amend the Scheme of Delegation and the Financial Procedure Rules so as to remove the inconsistencies' in respect of write off limits afforded to the Council's Section 151 Officer, and to bring them all into line with the write off limit contained within the Table at Page 214 at Part 4 - Article 31 (Financial Procedure Rules) of the Council's Constitution.

Members noted that it was important that the Constitution was regarded as a dynamic document which maintained its currency by incorporating changes to reflect constantly changing circumstances, and amendments to remedy inconsistencies. The suggested changes required approval by Council.

Following which it was Proposed and Seconded

'That the amendments to the Constitution outlined at Appendix 1 (a) & (b) to this report presented be approved by Council'.

RESOLVED

That the amendment to the Council Constitution outlined at Appendix 1 (a) & (b) to the report presented be approved by Council.

88. REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL:

A report was presented that enabled consideration of recommendations from the East Lindsey Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) in respect of the East Lindsey District Council Members' Allowances Scheme (01 April 2020 to 31 March 2024). The final report of the Panel and its recommendations were attached at Appendix 1 to the report presented, pages 235 to 258 of the Agenda refer.

Members noted that this was a process the Council followed every four years to set the allowances for Councillors. All Councillors had been invited to contribute and a number had done so. The Chairman of Executive Board in introducing the report proposed that the recommendations were accepted, but voiced some concerns that a number of valid proposals from Members to the IRP had not been included.

Following which, it was Proposed and Seconded

1. *That the Council consider whether to accept the following features into its Members' Allowance Scheme (1 April 2020 – 31 March 2024) as recommended by the Independent Remuneration Panel:*
 - I. *That the Basic Allowance be increased by £50 per annum;*
 - II. *That the Special Responsibility Allowances for the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Planning Committee be adjusted to reflect those paid to Chairmen and Vice Chairmen of the Council, Overview Committee and Audit and Governance Committee;*
 - III. *That the Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowances continue to be index linked to the Local Government Pay Award as agreed by the National Joint Committee for Local Government Services;*
 - IV. *That the Dependants' Carers' Allowance continues to be paid up to and index linked to the National Living Wage;*
 - V. *That mileage rates continue to be index linked to the HMRC approved mileage rates and that subsistence rates continue to be index linked to the ELDC officer subsistence rates;*
 - VI. *That the criteria for mileage claims be clarified within the Scheme to reflect that the maximum claim be from the Member's home address to the place of the approved duty and that mileage ordinarily incurred (e.g. commuting mileage) be deducted from any claims.*
2. *That the Council approves its Members' Allowances Scheme (1 April 2020 – 31 March 2024) whilst having regard to the recommendations made to it by the Independent Remuneration Panel'.*

During discussion a Member stated that the special responsibility allowances cost between £80k - £90k per annum and specifically referred to the allowances paid to and the responsibilities of the Vice Chairman of the Committees. It was highlighted that the report had referenced a lack of evidence to the Panel on the role of Vice Chairman and the Member queried the responsibilities of this role.

Further to which an Amendment was proposed as follows:

'That this Council takes up the offer of the Independent Remuneration Panel to look at the remuneration of specifically the Special Responsibility Allowance payable to Vice Chairmen in more depth and provide a further report back to the Council.'

It was highlighted that the Amendment was based on concerns regarding value for money and a lack of evidence provided to the Panel as to whether the role of a Vice Chairman was over and above that of other committee members.

The Amendment was duly seconded.

The Leader of the Labour Group in speaking on the Amendment acknowledged the importance of the IRP in setting allowances and considered that the role of a Chair or Vice Chair was dependent on the arena they were working in, whilst acknowledging the Scheme of Member Allowances banded together all of the posts, therefore supporting that the IRP reconsidered this particular issue.

During debate on the Amendment, the Portfolio Holder for Planning advised that he shared the concerns expressed by the Chairman of Executive Board.

However, he did not advocate singling out the allowances paid to Vice Chairman and considered that the Amendment was not the best way to improve the recommendations at this stage. It was stressed that the role of a Vice Chairman was to stand in as Chairman at any time and to attend Agenda setting and pre-Meetings as required, which he considered did involve a greater responsibility than that of other committee members.

The Chairman of Executive Board did not support the Amendment, he advised that whilst understanding the rationale behind the proposal, in his experience there were particular responsibilities attached to the role of Vice Chairman. Members with specific issues were invited to contact the Chairman of Executive Board so consideration could be given to the possible re-engagement of the IRP.

A further point was made that this amendment resulted from a lack of data to the Panel and that the anecdotal evidence mentioned during debate indicated that the Panel would benefit from this evidence.

Following which, upon being put to the vote the Amendment was declared lost.

Debate returned to the original proposal.

A Member queried if the IRP fully understood the roles and responsibilities of Chairman and Vice Chairman as he considered that the role of the Chairman of the Licensing Committee was extensive and devalued compared with the role of the Chairman of Planning Committee.

Following which a second Amended was Proposed and Seconded:

'That this Council takes up the offer of the Independent Remuneration Panel to look at the remuneration of specifically the Special Responsibility

Allowance payable to the Chairman of Licensing Committee in more depth and provide a further report back to the Council.'

The Chairman of Executive Board repeated that he was willing to provide an assurance to invite the IRP back to provide a further report to enable all concerns to be raised collectively within the year.

A Member supported this proposal but asked for clarification as to whether any subsequent recommendations would be based on a one or four year term and asked for further clarification in terms of mileage paid, which she considered should specify was only payable from a home base within the district.

A further Member asked if the recommendations were approved today, whether this would prevent any further recommendations being put forward.

Further to which the Chairman of Executive Board advised that he was willing to change his original recommendation as follows:

- '1) *That the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel be declined;*
- 2) *That the Independent Remuneration Panel be invited to provide a further report to Council within one year based on feedback provided by the Leader of the Council.'*

The Mover of the second Amendment withdrew his proposal.

The Chief Executive advised if Members were minded to support this amended proposal that it should be made clear that the current Scheme of Members Allowances should be retained in the interim to enable payments to continue.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning as seconder of the original proposition supported this change.

The amended Proposal when put to the vote was carried.

Following which it was

RESOLVED

- 1) That the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel that sought to make changes to the current scheme be declined;
- 2) That the current Members Allowance Scheme, which includes:
 - That the Basic Allowance continues to be increased by £50 per annum.

- That the Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowances continue to be index linked to the Local Government Pay Award as agreed by the National Joint Committee for Local Government Services.
- That the Dependants' Carers' Allowance continues to be paid up to and index linked to the National Living Wage.
- That the mileage rates continue to be index linked to the HMRC approved mileage rates and that subsistence rates continue to be index linked to the ELDC officer subsistence rates.

be retained for the year 2020/2021.

- 3) That feedback be communicated to the Independent Remuneration Panel by the Leader of the Council and the Panel be invited to reconsider within a year to provide a further report to Council.

Upon being voted upon as the substantive Motion, it was declared carried.

89. DELEGATED AUTHORITY FOR HORNCastle TOWN COUNCIL TO MAKE PLANNING DECISIONS:

A report was presented that enabled consideration of the continuation of the present arrangement to grant delegated power to Horncastle Town Council to make some planning decisions.

This arrangement was initially approved by Council on the 18th July 2018, Council Minute No. 29 refers, with the recommendation that a report be brought back to Council within 18 months of that date to provide an appraisal and update on the matter.

During his introduction the Portfolio Holder for Planning advised he hoped that this was something that other Town and Parish Council's in adopting a Neighbourhood Plan would subscribe to in the future. This particular trial had been a success and was described as an example to others.

Following which, it was Proposed and Seconded

'That delegated power to Horncastle Town Council to make planning decisions in accordance with the proposed Memorandum of Understanding and Schedules approved on 18 July 2018 be approved.'

RESOLVED

That delegated power to Horncastle Town Council to make planning decisions in accordance with the proposed Memorandum of Understanding and Schedules approved on 18 July 2018 be approved.

90. CHIEF EXECUTIVE ACTION:

The Chief Executive advised that due to recent resignations Horsington Parish Council was inquorate and as such unable to convene a formal meeting or to take decisions.

Under Section 91 of the Local Government Act 1972 the District Council could appoint a temporary Parish Councillor, enabling the Parish Council to become quorate and thereby enact its business. This appointment was for a maximum period of six months or until the Parish Council became quorate through election, whichever was the sooner.

The District Council had previously confirmed delegated powers to the Chief Executive to make temporary appointment(s) as required and report such action to the Council for information.

On 27 January 2020 an Order was made to temporarily appoint Councillor William Gray to Horsington Parish Council. Two copies of the Order were sent to the Secretary of State as required under legislation.

Subsequent to the Chief Executive's authorising action sufficient valid nominations were received through the election process to fill the vacancies on Horsington Parish Council.

RESOLVED

That the Chief Executive's Authorising Action be noted.

91. DRAFT MINUTES OF THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE:

The draft Minutes of the Audit and Governance Meeting held on 22 January 2020 were provided for noting.

A Member highlighted an error at Minute No. 53 - Q3 Treasury Management Update, the last bullet point on page 282 of the Agenda refers.

That 'Lancashire County Council' be amended to read 'East Lindsey District Council'.

In addition, an apology was noted from Councillor Hibbert-Greaves for the above meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the Draft Minutes of the Audit and Governance Meeting of 22 January 2020 be noted.

92. MOTIONS ON NOTICE:

Motion 1:

This Council resolves:

To encourage organisers of all public firework displays within the local authority boundaries to be advertised in advance of the event, allowing residents to take precautions for their animals and vulnerable people.

To actively promote a public awareness campaign about the impact of fireworks on animal welfare and vulnerable people – including the precautions that can be taken to mitigate risks.

To encourage local suppliers of fireworks to stock 'quieter' fireworks for public display.

To deter the use of sky candle devices that can set fires causing considerable damage and cost to members of the public and the farming community, the debris from such devices when returning to earth can be ingested by farm and wild animals alike causing untold suffering and death.

Councillor Marsh advised of an Amendment from the Labour Group, which he was happy to include as follows:

'To instruct Officers to develop and publish a Code of Conduct to govern displays held on ELDC property.'

The amended Motion was duly Proposed and Seconded.

Councillor Marsh in proposing the Motion advised that this had been recommended by many organisations, including the Royal Society for the Protection for Animals (RSPCA) and the National Farmers Union (NFU).

The Leader of the Labour Group expressed his thanks to Councillor Marsh for accepting the Labour amendment.

Further to which comments were invited:

- A Member referred to fireworks outside of bonfire night celebrations, which it was highlighted were popular at weddings and other celebrations, it was stressed that the neighbourly action in such circumstances would be to make the immediate neighbours aware;
- A Member supported the Motion but stressed that the RSPC Motion went further as it requested Government to restrict the use of fireworks to 90 decibels and asked why this had not been included in this Motion;
- A Member raised a point of order, stating that he had been advised by an officer that commercial ventures were not permitted on East Lindsey District Council land and queried why the amendment was

necessary in this case. Furthermore the Member asked for clarification on how any procedures would be advertised;

The Monitoring Officer advised that he believed the amendment was to ensure that if the Council was to allow displays, it must ensure processes were in place to govern the procedure but would be happy to discuss further outside of the meeting.

- A Member supported the Motion as amended as he considered it struck the right balance, but stressed the danger of sky candles;

The Chairman of Executive Board advised on the point of order that this would be considered by scrutiny and residents would be consulted.

Councillor Matthews in seconding the Motion advised that whilst legislation was changing, the Council could have some control in its own area.

In thanking all for their comments and support, Councillor Marsh advised that quieter fireworks was a government initiative but that the Council could encourage their use. In respect of commercial displays, non-profit making displays were permitted, for example on the Mablethorpe seafront.

RESOLVED

That the Motion be supported.

Motion 2

A number of Lincolnshire councils have adopted the IHRA definition of Antisemitism....it is appropriate that his council now does the same. We should not tolerate hate based on religious belief.

Whilst there have been instances of hatred appallingly directed at several religions, worryingly there is an upward national trend in anti-Semitic hatred that must not be tolerated.

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief recently released a report which agreed that the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism can offer valuable guidance for identifying antisemitism in its various forms.

The IHRA definition is as follows:

“Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities”.

This definition is encouraged in its use in “education, awareness-raising and for monitoring and responding to manifestations of antisemitism”. I therefore move that this Council formally adopts the IHRA definition of antisemitism, sending a clear message to communities in the district of East Lindsey that we will not and do not tolerate religious hatred, and reflecting this by including this definition in the Council’s Equality and Diversity Policy.

In Proposing the Motion, the Chairman of Executive Board advised that the Motion would be seconded by Councillor Tony Howard.

Councillor Howard expressed his thanks for allowing him to second this Motion which made clear the support of the Labour Group.

A Member supported the Motion and reminded of racial hatred against other religions, including Muslims.

This point was accepted by the Proposer and Seconder. Following which it was

RESOLVED

That the Motion be supported.

93. QUESTIONS:

Question 1.	Councillor Jackson
Subject	Error on a Planning Application Condition – Louth Football Ground
Response by	Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs
Supplementary	With regard to the stadium do you have a timetable for this?
Response	I am unable to provide a specific timescale but we have been in consultation with the Football Association and it is our ambition to make provision where we can.

N.B. Councillor Horton asked that it be noted that he was a former Chairman of Louth United and a previous owner.

Question 2.	Councillor Mangion
Subject	Men’s Shed Initiative Funding
Response by	Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs
Supplementary	None

Question 3.	Councillor Mangion
Subject	March 2020 Budget Surplus
Response by	Portfolio Holder for Market Towns and Rural Economy
Supplementary	Has a mechanism for Councillors to put in requests for specific projects been finalised?

Question 4.	Councillor Mossop
Subject	Lincolnshire County Council's Website
Response by	Portfolio Holder for Market Towns and Rural Economy
Supplementary	Councillor Grist alluded to County Councillors in his answer and I wonder if they would have a look at the Lincolnshire County Council website and see if they agree that the coast and countryside sections could be improved for the benefit of residents.

Question 5.	Councillor Makinson-Sanders
Subject	Creation of a Volunteers' Charter
Response by	Portfolio Holder for Operational Services
Supplementary	None

Question 6.	Councillor Horton
Subject	Financial cost to support Magna Vitae Leisure Trust
Response by	Portfolio Holder for Partnerships
Supplementary	I wonder what business would maintain, own and replace assets with no return, as you say an independent organisation but how can that be when we are funding them?
Response	When MV was set up it was agreed that the Council would retain the assets, we have a responsibility to maintain in law, we then make a reduction to the amount we provide them annually to provide the services we ask them to provide.

Question 7.	Councillor Horton
Subject	Number of incoming calls to housing services
Response by	Portfolio Holder for Communities
Supplementary	It is quite alarming that we have 1.5 more incoming telephone calls than the previous year with no more staff, are there any plans to review this?
Response	This is due to increased responsibilities through the Homeless Reduction Act and the transition of housing register to ELDC, we are managing this and things are beginning to ease, staffing is under review.

Question 8.	Councillor Horton
Subject	Notice of motion
Response by	Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs
Supplementary	None

Question 9.	Councillor Horton
Subject	Anti Social behaviour at Louth Bus Station Toilets
Response by	Portfolio Holder for Operational Services
Supplementary	None

Question 10.	Councillor Horton
Subject	Provision of replacement equipment on markets
Response by	Portfolio Holder for Market Towns and Rural Economy
Supplementary	None

Question 11.	Councillor Leonard
Subject	Interest from partner organisations for office space at the Horncastle site.
Response by	Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs
Supplementary	You stated 80 staff in your response, given that I'm led to believe that PSPS have not committed their allegiance to the site yet, how is it all going to work.
Response	This is part of ongoing negotiations, if PSPS do not commit we will have extra capacity.

A full copy of the questions and answers is attached at **Appendix B** to these minutes.

94. DISPENSATION REQUEST:

This item had been withdrawn from the Agenda.

95. DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

The programmed date for the next Meeting of the Council was noted as Wednesday 13th May 2020.

The meeting closed at 5.25 pm.

Questions to Council under Rule 11 of the Constitution – Council 040320

1 Question from Mr Anthony Turner to Councillors Fry and Foster, Portfolio Holders for Finance and Operational Services Respectively.

My wife and I are keen to keep fit and healthy as we get older.

There is a need to encourage many residents in Skegness and the surrounding areas to improve their fitness and to engage in more exercise.

My wife is a member of the gym at Richmond Caravan Park - it is much cheaper than the council one, but we cannot afford two memberships.

I take my dog for a walk every day - we live in Wainfleet St Mary and there really is no place to have a good walk and to let a dog run off its lead without getting covered in mud, so we go to the beach at Skegness.

We realised that I spend more money paying for daily parking at the Princes car park than she does on a month's gym subscription!

During the winter months this car park is hardly used and those people who do use it do so to take a walk on the beach, not to set up deckchairs in the sun.

It would be good to remove the car park charge (perhaps limiting the parking to a couple of hours to prevent cars being left there) for this car park during the off peak season, or to have a very much reduced cost for an off-season East Lindsey resident's pass - the cost covering the admin.

It is time we, as a society, encouraged rather than discouraged people taking exercise - especially in those places where there are large numbers of older people who will become very expensive to help if they are less mobile in their old age.

A further help would be very much cheaper entry to the council run fitness facilities for those on pensions or receiving disability benefits, it is impossible to afford the current fees when on benefits.

Yours sincerely,

Anthony Turner

A *The matter of fees and charges for East Lindsey District Council car parks were reviewed as part of a much larger review of off street parking provision in East Lindsey in 2017.*

Following extensive consultation with Town and Parish Councils, user groups, public workshops and other consultation, East Lindsey District Council members approved a number of changes to the ways car parks were operated and a number of variations to car park fees and charges which included the implementation of an "out of season" all day parking charge to be placed on all foreshore car parks which includes Princess Parade car park.

As part of this review it was however decided to allow two hour free parking in the councils Scarborough Avenue car park. In addition a significant number of the on street parking restrictions are changed out of season to allow for periods of free parking.

The council also has a number of parking permits available for residents and visitors which significantly reduce the cost of car parking for regular car park users. Full details can be found on the councils parking web pages.

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Questions to Council under Rule 11 of the Constitution – Council 040320

1 Councillor Jackson to Councillor Leyland, Leader of the Council

The critical error on planning condition 3 of application number N/105/2475/13 has resulted in Louth losing a much-needed opportunity for a replacement football stadium for the site at Park Avenue Football Ground, which is to be redeveloped. As this was a district council error, how will the council now ensure the people of Louth regain football facilities to the standard and capacity of stadium, described as a “step 4” facility, that were available until 2016?

A

The Louth Football Ground was a private facility which was sold by its owner to help meet the districts need for housing. The Council is working with Magna Vitae, Sport England and the Football Foundation to formulate proposals for a new football ground. The Council will continue to work with partners to help deliver this facility.

2 Councillor Mangion to Councillor Leyland, Leader of the Council

It is wonderful to see the success of the Mablethorpe and Louth shed initiatives.

Can other market towns expect the same level of generosity from the district and county councils? If not, why not?

A

The projects you refer to are locally driven.

The council employs a funding officer who can provide help and advice to local organisations on how to access funding for community based projects, and he is currently actively supporting groups in many places across East Lindsey, including in Mablethorpe as referred to in your question.

He has recently met with the Chair of a similar (Men’s Shed) group in Spilsby, and has arranged to see another Spilsby community group in early March.

3 Councillor Mangion to Councillor Grist, Portfolio Holder for Market Towns and the Rural Economy

It is gratifying that ELDC has projected a surplus in the March 2020 budget. I understand that some of the surplus will be directed toward supporting market towns and areas of deprivation. What guarantees if any, are proposed so that all market towns receive an equitable allocation of these resources?

A

As part of the budget setting process, we have allocated one off amounts of £200k to support Market Towns and £100k to support Deprivation. This represents a solid commitment towards tackling these key priorities of the Council. At this stage, we have only set aside the funding whilst specific schemes are being identified. I would therefore welcome any schemes or suggestions that the Councillor or any other Councillor may have so that we can utilise the funding most effectively to make a real and positive difference to our residents.

Questions to Council under Rule 11 of the Constitution – Council 040320

4 Councillor Mossop to Councillor Grist, Portfolio Holder for Market Towns and the Rural Economy

The new Lincolnshire County Council website whilst digitally compliant has a number of shortcomings. These are particularly evident in the Coast and Countryside section where walking, cycling and horse-riding activities can be viewed. In order to find your selected walk, there is now an A to Z key at the start of your search and you have to know the name of the parish at the starting point of the walk or a nearby post code. In short, this makes the site extremely difficult to navigate for visitors to our District.

A quick look at the site this week shows little progress in adding to the sparse content on walks and there still are no cycling nor horse-riding routes for the whole of the County.

Will this Council be making representations to Lincolnshire County Council to suggest improvements and work together with colleagues at County to add content so that popular walks such as the “Round Louth Walk” and “On Foot from Fotherby” and cycle routes such as “Legbourne to Belleau and back” will again be easily available for visitors and residents to download? It is surely in all our interests whether it be a County or a District responsibility to promote our beautiful countryside in the best possible way.

A

I am happy to look into this matter further. However, this question raises a matter about the way in which Lincolnshire County Council discharges one of its functions and it would be opportune to ask the County Councillors in the room to feed this message back to LCC.

5 Councillor Makinson-Sanders to Councillor Foster, Portfolio Holder for Operational Services

Our district is blessed with numerous volunteers who very soon will be stepping in to cut grass, trim verges and remove vegetation and weeds following reductions in local government services. How are they legally to dispose of the residues without incurring the wrath of the Enforcement enforcers? Is it time for East Lindsey to create a Volunteers’ Charter to safeguard and support our loyal volunteers? What is the way forward?

A

Anyone who would like to volunteer on ELDC assets as you describe should contact the Neighbourhoods Service in the first instance to ensure that they are supported and the task is risk assessed. This will also ensure arrangements are in place for any waste generated from the activity to be disposed of appropriately.

In terms of wider volunteering across the whole district, a Volunteers’ Charter is one approach, although in the first instance Members may want to identify what is currently in place through the main voluntary and community sector bodies.

Questions to Council under Rule 11 of the Constitution – Council 040320

6 Councillor Horton to Councillor Marsh, Portfolio Holder for Partnerships

In 2014 it was agreed by council to form a Leisure Trust called Magna Vitae. This was to enable a Trust to apply for grants that the authority was not able to apply for. We were led to believe the Trust would eventually become a stand-alone organisation to relieve our ratepayers of this financial burden. Yet here five or six years later our ratepayers are still heavily subsidising MV - for example we recently paid approx. £300k for a new fire curtain at Skegness Theatre and we pay for replacement gym equipment and so it goes on. How much are still subsidising this group by and how much longer will the district's ratepayers going to have to dig deep in their pockets to support them?

A

The savings identified in the report to Council in 2014, setting out the alternative arrangements for delivery of our Cultural and Leisure, have been achieved.

The Council chose to maintain ownership and control of the assets. However, some asset replacements have been on an invest-to-save basis, with an associated reduction in the contract fee e.g. gym equipment.

The Trust is an independent organisation.

7 Councillor Horton to Councillor Bowkett, Portfolio Holder for Communities

What was the total number of numbers of telephone calls from October 2018 to 31st January 2020 coming in to us for housing services, both through the switchboard and through direct lines?

A

The comparator figures we have are 1 October 2019 – 20 January 2020 during which there were 5326 calls; the same period last year was 2080.

8 Councillor Horton to Councillor Leyland, Leader of the Council

What is the justification for our constitution requiring 14 working days notice for a motion to be put to council when for instance West Lindsey, City of Lincoln and North Kesteven require only seven. Why does it take twice as long for us to deal with such matters?

A

Councillor Horton, thank you for your question. The question relates to a Council rather than an Executive Function and is therefore a question for Council to determine and as such, the current time frame was set by this Council following a revision of the Council Constitution in May 2017. Having said that this is perhaps something we can ask the Monitoring Officer, along with the Council's Constitution Panel, to consider.

Questions to Council under Rule 11 of the Constitution – Council 040320

9 Councillor Horton to Councillor Foster, Portfolio Holder for Operational Services

I have been most alarmed in the last few days to hear of the situation at Louth Bus Station? Whilst I understand the toilets have been “privatised”, my concern is that youths are going into the toilets, rolling down the shutters and not allowing people to use the toilets, doing heavens knows what behind the closed doors and doubtless not respecting our property. How is this council dealing with anti-social behaviour in our toilets, why isn't cctv picking this up and who is paying for the criminal damage?

A

The anti-social behaviour being experienced at the bus station has not only been limited to the public toilets. The contractor managing the toilets is now installing CCTV to deter this kind of behaviour. If you would like any further information regarding this, please contact the Neighbourhoods Service Manager, Danny Wilson.

10. Councillor Horton to Councillor Grist, Portfolio Holder for Market Towns and the Rural Economy

I am told over recent weeks our markets and the traders have been experiencing a multitude of problems. Whilst we cannot stop high winds we have had breakdowns of equipment which we can help. What is this council doing to support stall holders who as a result are not able to trade and are suffering loss of income?

A

I do not accept that there has been a ‘multitude of problems’.

There has been an issue recently with the reliability of the market vehicle - a replacement has been ordered and will be delivered in the next few months.

Louth and Spilsby markets were not affected by the market vehicle breaking down, and therefore traders were not impacted. Stalls at Horncastle market were unable to be erected, and consequently traders either self-erected or sold from their vehicle. There was no rent charged on these occasions.

11. Councillor Leonard to Councillor Leyland, Leader of the Council

As Council Leader you were quoted in the Louth Leader as saying Horncastle “provides the space we need to create a modern and more efficient office base for the council and a range of partners with opportunities for future expansion as needed”. How many partner organisations will be under that roof and within those groups what is the total number of their expected staff to be on site.

A

The Council has received positive interest from four public sector organisations in co-locating at the Horncastle site. Those being:-

- **Lincolnshire County Council**

Questions to Council under Rule 11 of the Constitution – Council 040320

- **Lincolnshire NHS Trust**
- **Lincolnshire Police**
- **Environment Agency**

All those organisations are still working through the detail of how many staff would be located at the Horncastle site. Indicative numbers received to date are for circa 80 staff with a mixture of fixed desk requirements and more ad-hoc touch down and hot desk space.

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