

Minutes of a Meeting of the Council held in the Hub, Mareham Road, Horncastle, Lincolnshire LN9 6PH on Wednesday, 17th July, 2024 at 6.30 pm.

PRESENT

Councillor Edward Mossop (Chairman)
Councillor Terry Taylor (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors Claire Arnold, Tom Ashton, Richard Avison, Wendy Bowkett, Stef Bristow, Billy Brookes, Danny Brookes, Jimmy Brookes, Sandra Campbell-Wardman, Mark Dannatt, Colin Davie, Roger Dawson, Carleen Dickinson, Dick Edginton, Stephen Evans, Stephen Eyre, Martin Foster, Richard Fry, William Gray, Adam Grist, Will Grover, Alex Hall, Travis Hesketh, Darren Hobson, George Horton, Neil Jones, Sam Kemp, Thomas Kemp, Steve Kirk, James Knowles, Andrew Leonard, Craig Leyland, Steve McMillan, Carl Macey, Jill Makinson-Sanders, Graham Marsh, Fiona Martin, M.B.E., Paul Rickett, Daniel Simpson, Robert Watson and Ruchira Yarsley.

The Chairman led a minute's silence in respect of Councillor Sid Dennis who had sadly passed away that morning. Members shared their fond memories of a dear friend and colleague who would be sadly missed and offered their sincere condolences to his family.

23. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Terry Aldridge, Graham Cullen, Richard Cunnington, Sarah Devereux, David Hall, Ros Jackson, Terry Knowles, Stephen Lyons, Daniel McNally, Kate Marnoch and Ellie Marsh.

24. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS (IF ANY):

At this point in the Meeting, Members were invited to declare any relevant interests.

- Councillor Claire Arnold asked it be noted that in respect of Item No. 11, she sat on the Theddlethorpe GDF Community Partnership in her role on Mablethorpe and Sutton on Sea Town Council;
- Councillor Stef Bristow asked it be noted that in respect of Item No. 11 she was the clerk for Theddlethorpe Parish Council;
- Councillor Craig Leyland asked it be noted that in respect of Item No. 11, he sat on the Theddlethorpe GDF Community Partnership representing East Lindsey District Council.

25. MINUTES:

The Open and Exempt Minutes of the Council's Annual General Meeting held on 22 May 2024 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

26. ACTION SHEETS:

The Actions were noted as complete.

27. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CHAIRMAN:

There were no communications from the Chairman.

28. QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC:

Two questions had been received as below, following which a written response had been provided to each in line with Council Procedure Rule 10.9.

Question 1	Paul Fisher
Subject	Size of GDF top site at Theddlethorpe
Response by	Councillor Leyland, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs
Supplementary	The gas terminal is approximately 68 acres. They are proposing a further 190 acres of farmland and wildlife habitat plus high security fencing right up against the First King's Nature Reserve. How do you justify that?
Response	The citing process is not complete and the information that's been given might be correct, but there's all sorts of regulatory authorities that this has to go through, including planning and the Environment Agency. Therefore, there is a long way to go before that site is actually defined.

Question 2	Katherine Barker
Subject	Community vote on hosting a GDF
Response by	Councillor Leyland, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs
Supplementary	ELDC councillors have around a month to canvass before a vote and we've just had a general election whereby we had six weeks to research manifestos and parties. South Holderness, its councillors and their people had about six weeks before they made a decision about whether a GDF was appropriate for their community. So why will you not let people who have been informed in my community vote now?
Response	Thank you, I think the comments in my

	<p>statement might meet the answers to some of the questions that you have raised. This is a process that is not ELDC's. This is inherited from government policy that we have to follow and adhere to and there are terminologies and time scales that are beyond our control. We do have one way that we can move this forward and again my statement after this following the Leader's report will clarify that.</p>
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A full copy of the questions is attached at **Appendix 1** to these Minutes.

29. REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD:

The Leader of the Council presented Members with his report, pages 31 to 34 of the Agenda refer.

Following which, the Leader read out an addition to his report as follows: ‘

Community Partnership work relating to the proposal to site a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) on the Lincolnshire coast.

‘In 2021, ELDC was invited by Radio Active Waste Management (now Nuclear Waste Services) to join a Working Group to explore whether the former Gas Terminal at Theddlethorpe would be a suitable location for a GDF. Lincolnshire County Council had already accepted the same invitation.

Constitutionally, this was a decision for the Executive to make. Recognising the potential and wide-ranging impact of such a proposal, the Overview Committee was asked to consider the invitation as part of a pre-Decision scrutiny. The outcome of which was fed back to the Executive Board that being, we should engage in the process. That meeting took place on the 19th October 2021. This was a public meeting and the minutes are available online.

We entered the process in good faith believing it was better to be involved and influencing a potential major infrastructure development that could have far ranging impacts, both positive and negative, for our residents and communities.

This whole process is regulated and managed according to government policy. Recognising that the timescales for a Test of Public Support (ToPS) were overly lengthy both Cllr Hill and myself as leaders of the Relevant Principal Local Authorities directed that the ToPS should happen by 2027.

While the search area has been named, for a ToPS to happen the Potential Host Community (PHC) needs to be identified. That will only happen once the full impact of all the infrastructure associated with a potential GDF is established and further geological investigation is undertaken. The PHC

could take in more wards of the district if infrastructure requirements extend beyond the wards already affected.

It is for the Community Partnership to establish the boundaries of the PHC. Only then can a ToPS take place. The Community Partnership determine the methodology of the ToPS.

For the whole process to be halted the policy allows for a Right of Withdrawal. It would need both Principal Authorities on the Community Partnership to invoke the Right of Withdrawal. No single principle local authority would be able to invoke the Right of Withdrawal. ELDC cannot act alone in this.

The only way that ELDC can act unilaterally, is by leaving the Community Partnership entirely so that we are no longer involved in the process. LCC would still be able to represent the communities and we would be blind to the activities and actions of the Community Partnership.

That would be concerning as at this point in time, the consultation and engagement process has not been effective or informative in the way we had anticipated or hoped for.

I would go further - all that the Community Partnership and NWS have achieved so far is to unnecessarily antagonise our residents and communities.

Indeed, NWS and the Community Partnership recognise the engagement process has been clumsy, interrupted and not helpful. This needs to be remedied in short time. There is information that needs to be gathered and shared effectively. As a Council, we cannot ignore the potential benefits that the GDF could bring. It would be negligent of us not to consider the benefits and make those known so that residents can make an informed decision.

With this in mind, and after listening to community voices through the recent election campaign and our own councillor voices, at parish, district and county level, I will recommend to the Executive that we push NWS and the Community Partnership to effectively engage with the communities affected. We should give that process no more than 1 year and if at that point in time the Potential Host Community has not been defined we should consider withdrawing from the process unilaterally. That recommendation being part of an Overview Pre-Decision scrutiny process.

I am obviously aware of the motion to council. We would need to amend the motion to take account of the current government policy'.

N.B. Councillor Will Grover joined the Meeting at 6.53pm.

Following which, questions and comments were put forward as follows:

Towns Fund Projects

Councillor Claire Arnold highlighted her disappointment that the Mellors Group had withdrawn its match funding contribution and input in terms of the Culture House and surrounding public realm area at the Embassy Theatre. It was queried whether lessons had been learned from this to ensure that the Council was in a good place both now and moving forward on a long-term plan to ensure the Council was protected under ambitious projects that were being taken forward.

In response, the Leader of the Council stated that the Council had to engage and operate with other businesses and organisations and that there would always be a risk when working with the private sector. He continued that the Mellors Group was still committed to the development of the pier, however it had to prioritise its funding for other elements and parts of their business which was beyond the Council's control. The Leader continued that the whole purpose of the towns fund engagement and connected coast was to achieve match funding and engagement with businesses and that would continue into the future.

Councillor Danny Brookes thanked the Leader for his report and queried whether the Council had a contingency plan should the Arts Council not increase the funding.

In response, the Leader of the Council stated that extra towns fund money, plus money from the Council had been made available to fill the gap, however he was hopeful that the Arts Council would be committed to the monies being delivered. Officers had provided the Arts Council with more information as requested by them and the Council was determined that the project would go ahead as it would be very meaningful and beneficial to Skegness.

Household Support Fund

Councillor Arnold asked that her thanks be noted and passed to all teams involved that ensured the residents within the communities were assisted and hoped that work continued to support the food banks for vulnerable people.

Councillor Jill Makinson-Sanders commented that she was sad to read that the final local allocation of Household Support Funding had been distributed as it had been so helpful and useful to many people.

Wragby ChEF (Children Eat Free) was highlighted as an initiative supported by the Council where free lunches were provided to all school aged children in the Wragby area. This scheme now operated successfully in Horncastle and five further towns (Alford, Burgh le Marsh, Louth and two in Mablethorpe) would be joining the scheme this year.

In response, the Leader of the Council thanked Members for their comments relating to the Household Support Fund and hoped that the new government would continue to provide the funding.

Digital Inclusion

Members highlighted their support for the project and the Leader of the Council recognised the scheme was much appreciated across the communities.

Theddlethorpe GDF Community Partnership

Councillor Stef Bristow highlighted her disappointment that since its inception in June 2020, the Community Partnership had not facilitated discussion or ensured that the community had the relevant information provided to them and furthermore did not consider that an additional 12 months would make a difference. This was supported by Councillor Danny Brookes.

In response, the Leader of the Council stated that he wanted to be positively involved in the Community Partnership and it was important to understand the benefits and potential challenges of that. It was highlighted that information from the Community Partnership needed to be clear and concise, and at this point it was not and that was the reason for his statement.

Councillor George Horton highlighted the Community Partnership Community Vision Section and the ten key areas it would like to focus on for visioning and queried why tourism, as one of the district's biggest industries was not included.

In response, the Leader of the Council acknowledged the points raised, however considered that once a meaningful consultation and delivery of positive engagement had taken place, that would identify there was a need to the process.

Councillor Ru Yarsley agreed that little had been discussed about tourism and queried whether a study had been undertaken on how tourism would be impacted by a GDF, both now and in the future.

In response, the Leader of the Council stated that officers provided input into the process and had made the Community Partnership and NWS very aware of the importance of both the Council's tourism industry and also the important agricultural industry. This would hopefully be part of the feedback that the Council got back about the value that was protected by flood defence and the need for flood defence protection for both industries.

Councillor Travis Hesketh commented that he had been involved with the nuclear waste disposal facility for some time and considered the whole project to be a mess. For a £50b project it had no scope of work, no definition, no quality plan, no deliverables, no milestones, no timelines and no achievements, only vague intellectual aspirations.

In response, the Leader of the Council acknowledged the points raised on the GDF by Councillor Hesketh over a period of time and that they had been

consistent. The Leader continued that he was always willing to engage with him in a very positive sense about the discussions to be had about Nuclear Waste Services and was happy to continue these and understand his communities' views.

Michelle Hillard

Members were saddened to hear of the loss of Michelle and acknowledged her brave fight during her illness. It was recognised that Michelle worked diligently in her role and also with the fundraising she had undertaken. Condolences were passed to her family, friends and colleagues.

30. ANNUAL OVERVIEW REPORT TO COUNCIL:

Councillor Fiona Martin, Chairman of Overview Committee presented the Annual Overview Committee Report to Council for noting, pages 35 to 44 of the Agenda refer.

During her introduction, Councillor Martin asked that her thanks be passed to all members of the Overview Committee and all Members who had engaged with the scrutiny process over the last 12 months and stated that it was refreshing to see lots of new Councillors getting involved in the process which brought fresh ideas forward.

Thanks were also passed to the Vice Chairman, the Outside Body Appointee to the Health Scrutiny Committee and the Scrutiny and Policy Officer for their support.

N.B. Councillor Paul Rickett left the Meeting at 7.12pm and re-joined the Meeting at 7.15pm.

Councillor Martin referred to the Joint Scrutiny Programme across the Partnership and highlighted that the work undertaken was progressing very well and was pleased to see that some excellent topic suggestions had been put forward from the Executive Board.

In response, the Leader of the Council acknowledged the work of the Overview Committee and the importance attached to this that fed into the executive work, particularly feedback from scrutiny panels.

The Chairman endorsed the comments and stated that it was pleasing to see more Councillors had been engaged in the scrutiny process. He further highlighted that he had been involved in the joint scrutiny process during his time on Overview Committee and hoped that this work continued as it was necessary looking forwards with the Partnership in the future by getting to understand how each council operated differently across different parts of Lincolnshire.

Councillor George Horton offered his appreciation to the Overview Committee and acknowledged the hard work by Members involved in the scrutiny panels.

Following which, clarification was sought on how recommendations were followed up once agreed.

In response, Councillor Martin stated that all scrutiny reports were presented to Council, and once agreed by the relevant Portfolio Holder were added to the Committee's Recommendation Tracker which was reviewed at each Overview Committee Meeting. This was a robust process and was pleased to report that the percentage of scrutiny panel recommendations that were accepted had risen from 80% to 90% in 2023/24.

No further comments or questions were received.

RESOLVED

That the Annual Overview Report to Council be noted.

31. APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODY:

The Chief Executive presented Members with a report to appoint a Member to an Outside Body which was within the remit of the Council for the municipal year 2024/25, pages 45 to 50 of the Agenda refer.

The appointment to Age UK Lindsey was deferred at the Council's Annual General Meeting on 22 May 2024 pending further information relating to the advisory capacity, Minute No. 14 refers.

Members were invited to put forward their nominations.

It was Proposed by Councillor Claire Arnold and Seconded by Councillor Roger Dawson that Councillor Kate Marnoch be appointed to the Age UK Lindsey Outside Body.

Councillor Arnold confirmed that Councillor Marnoch was happy for her name to be put forward as a nominee in her absence.

Upon being put to the vote, the proposal was carried.

RESOLVED:

Councillor Kate Marnoch be appointed to the Age UK Lindsey Outside Body.

32. MOTIONS ON NOTICE:

The following Motion was received in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12:

Proposed nuclear waste site at Theddlethorpe

With reference to the proposed nuclear waste site at Theddlethorpe, we request that the executive of this council responds to both proven,

overwhelming democratic public opinion, and motions passed recently by the district's town and parish councils and declares support for both our residents and visitors to this district by calling for an immediate test of public support to take place within 12 months or withdrawal of this council from the geological disposal facility process.

Proposer: Robert Watson
Secunder: Travis Hesketh

In his introduction, Councillor Watson highlighted that further to discussions with fellow Members, the common thread was to represent and do the best for communities and residents in the wards of Theddlethorpe, Withern and Mablethorpe. Councillor Watson stressed that the Motion was not about the merits of a geological disposal facility for nuclear waste but how residents felt threatened by the proposal. He referred to a local council in Holderness who had rejected a proposal for a nuclear waste site by withdrawing from the siting process after less than one month and queried why ELDC did not support its residents in the same way.

It was further highlighted that since the general election, the national perspective had changed on projects such as nuclear waste sites and pylons with the intention to bring in sweeping planning reforms that could fast track such projects.

Councillor Watson added that it was the view of the majority of residents in Theddlethorpe for the uncertainty to stop and for a referendum to be held in the next 12 months and asked that this community be given the democratic voice it was asking for, or to support them by withdrawing from the Community Partnership.

Councillor Watson strongly urged all Members to support the Motion.

Upon being put to the debate, Councillor Stef Bristow supported the Motion and considered that a change in national government meant that a test of public support or withdrawal needed to happen as soon as possible.

In response, the Leader of the Council stated that he fully understood the sentiment and rationale for the Motion and the role of Councillors representing their communities. However, he stressed that the Council had a role to understand all of the issues that it faced, including deprivation, flood defence issues, the longevity of the economy and the ability to educate its residents so that it had a viable and thriving economy.

The Leader of the Council acknowledged that the Community Partnership and Nuclear Waste Services had not progressed the engagement as quickly and effectively as it should have done. It was highlighted that the engagement process was initially going to be over a 10 to 15-year period, however further to engagement with Lincolnshire County Council it had been determined that it would be better to hold this by the end of 2027. Since that time, due to a change in government the plans could change and technically a test of public

support could not be initiated as following government guidance this could only happen after the host community site had been established.

The Leader of the Council stated that it was proposed to make a recommendation to Executive Board that after a 12-month period of engagement from NWS and the Community Partnership, that it would come to a conclusion after 12 months following pre-decision scrutiny by the Council.

He further stressed that it was necessary for information to be gathered and understood in determining what the potential benefits were so that residents could take an informed decision. Members noted that the Leader had discussed with the local MP who advised that a letter had been sent to residents with regards to a referendum being held within 12 months. It was however, highlighted that the referendum was outside of the NWS and Community Partnership process and whilst this could be undertaken, the view of the community was potentially already known and a judgement needed to be made on whether the information received was adequate enough for a test of public support.

Therefore, the Leader stated that he would recommend to Executive Board that the Council withdrew from the process due to the quality of engagement and also the fact that the GDF could be imposed. However, information needed to be gathered to inform that judgement with pre-decision scrutiny planned. The amendment to the Motion was as follows:

'With reference to the proposed nuclear waste site at Theddlethorpe, we request that the executive of this council responds to both proven, overwhelming democratic public opinion, and motions passed recently by the district's town and parish councils and declares support for both our residents and visitors to this district by calling for an immediate test of public support once the Potential Host Community has been established and subject to any amendments made by national infrastructure policy. This to take place within 12 months or withdrawal of this council from the geological disposal facility process.'

Councillor Graham Marsh seconded the proposed amendment.

Councillor Danny Brookes stated that he had no trust in NWS and was not in support of the proposed amendment in relation to the establishment of the host community and was concerned that NWS was trying to dilute the area. He considered that Theddlethorpe was the host site and that the community needed to have the vote.

In response, the Leader of the Council highlighted that the process was laid out in government policy which the Council had followed. Members were advised that all the terminology regarding host communities and the right of withdrawal were sequential and in date, however the Council was testing this in terms of shortening timescales. The policy was being followed, therefore the amendment to the Motion was picking up the policy process, whereby the

Council needed to recognise that a test of public support could not happen until the potential host community had been established.

Councillor Claire Arnold advised Members that she was a member of the Community Partnership and shared the frustrations that this was not working. Councillor Arnold added that the voluntary membership on this group were finding it difficult to fulfil their role through liaison and being the pathway between the residents and NWS and now believed that NWS should be held to account. It was further highlighted that by supporting the amendment the Executive Board could also be held to account.

In response and also as a member of the Community Partnership, the Leader of the Council acknowledged the frustration that existed, however considered that there was the energy and will to make the Community Partnership work and the potential for this to be delivered and moved on.

Councillor Bristow asked for clarification of the additional wording *'once the Potential Host Community has been established and subject to any amendments made by national infrastructure policy'*.

In response, the Leader of the Council confirmed that he was responding to whether the host community site had not been established within 12 months and stated that he could not pre-determine the decision that Executive Board would be making at that time. However, the Council had to recognise that the test of public support could not happen until the host community had been identified.

Councillor Travis Hesketh raised a concern with regards to the approach that had been put forward as he considered that it had no definition about what information the Council would be provided with to make a decision in the future. He considered that a principle issue in terms of the decision was whether a geological disposal facility works would be putting high level nuclear waste underneath the linkage of coastline and by dragging in other issues, for example poverty, flooding and longevity of the economy, although well-meaning these should already be addressed by LCC and ELDC. Councillor Hesketh highlighted that the Council was very successful at bidding for funding and delivering on projects and considered that the focus should be on the tourist and rural economies, the agricultural economy and the small and specialist industries.

In conclusion, Councillor Hesketh stated that NWS had not delivered and concerns had been raised relating to competence in how it was operating. Therefore, a call for a test of public support to the Community Partnership to make a decision on the host area should be sought and a vote by referendum as put forward by the local MP. If that did not happen then the Council should withdraw immediately from the geological disposal facility process.

In response, the Leader of the Council stated that there were a lot of issues that had not yet been fully established and determined in the process so far which would not survive any scrutiny if undertaken at this stage. One key

area that had not been raised or addressed was safety aspects and highlighted that it would be remiss of the Council if all of these issues were not considered before a decision to withdraw was made and stressed that time was limited to do this.

The Leader further highlighted that it was not just about money involved, should a GDF site go ahead, but dealing with fundamental challenges. For example, environmental and coastal challenges that had been an issue for many years, most of which had fallen due to lack of funding and emphasised that the Council had to be realistic about what challenges had to be faced financially.

Councillor Tom Ashton, Portfolio Holder for Planning advised that he was happy to support the amendment and acknowledged that NWS needed to step up and engage in a cooperative and constructive way with the community and with the Council of its plans to move forward. He also acknowledged that the Council had a duty of leadership and asked Members to consider potential benefits that a GDF may bring. Councillor Ashton highlighted that Councillors not only represented their communities but had a duty to inform and understand and help residents to understand all aspects of the proposal and not to pick out specific areas for discussion. It was for NWS to set out a case in such a way that the community and the Council could make an informed decision.

In response, the Leader of the Council thanked Councillor Ashton for his comments and support.

Councillor Jill Makinson-Sanders stated that it was clear that NWS had not been following procedure correctly and queried whether a judicial review by LCC and ELDC might create positive benefits.

In response, the Leader of the Council stated that if the Council did not provide the opportunity for a consultation to take place and withdrew without any understanding of the issues that had been raised it could itself be up for a judicial review. This was a process open to people and whilst being informed that the majority of residents were concerned over the GDF proposal there may be voices out there that had not yet been heard.

In summing up, the Leader of the Council referred back to the Proposer of the Motion who highlighted Holderness Council had rejected a proposal for a nuclear waste site by withdrawing from the siting process after less than one month. In response, the Leader clarified that it was a charity that had invited NWS in and not a government body, therefore was able to dismiss this so quickly and move on.

In response to the Amendment, Councillor Robert Watson thanked the Leader of the Council for his engagement with the Motion, however he strongly disagreed with the arguments for the amendment to allow a further 12 months and stressed that residents directly affected needed a voice now to express

their views. Councillor Watson urged Members to reject the amendment and resort to immediate action to resolve this.

Before proceeding with the vote on the amendment, the Chief Executive read out the amendment as follows:

'With reference to the proposed nuclear waste site at Theddlethorpe, we request that the executive of this council responds to both proven, overwhelming democratic public opinion, and motions passed recently by the district's town and parish councils and declares support for both our residents and visitors to this district by calling for an immediate test of public support once the Potential Host Community has been established and subject to any amendments made by national infrastructure policy. This to take place within 12 months or withdrawal of this council from the geological disposal facility process.'

Upon being put to the vote, the Amended Motion was carried.

Speaking to the substantive Motion, Councillor Steve Kirk, Portfolio Holder for Coastal Economy stated that the process sat uncomfortably with him and he was strongly opposed to nuclear power. Furthermore, he did not see how any of the proposed benefits would be a boost to tourism or agriculture. He stated that he was disappointed that he had not got the facts and figures, however he was happy to listen to the argument if he received full information before he made a decision.

Councillor Danny Brookes considered it may take up to 3 years to establish a host community site and did not see the position changing in 12 months' time. Councillor Brookes also highlighted his concern that if an incident took place with nuclear waste stored at Theddlethorpe it would affect Skegness. Therefore, he was not supportive of a GDF that could potentially deter people from visiting the town and was in support of the original Motion.

Councillor Claire Arnold added that she wished to provide reassurance to Members that every voluntary member on the Community Partnership wanted to get this right for its community, by ensuring NSW delivered or by holding them to account.

In his summary to the original Motion, Councillor Travis Hesketh stated that he had listened carefully to NWS and the Community Partnership over the last 12 months, however had not detected a single piece of new information regarding nuclear waste storage and handling. He highlighted several examples of poorly run sessions run by NWS and inaccurate information gathering that misrepresented the community, which had since been discredited. NWS had produced a vague plan to the GDF that set no milestones and no deliverables and had failed. It was also clear that NWS was reluctant to publish any form of information release schedule to indicate when the new significant element of information would be brought forward. He therefore considered it was time to call for the process to end.

Councillor Hesketh urged Members to support a withdrawal from the GDF process.

Councillor Robert Watson stated that it was a simple matter of democracy to give the long-suffering residents of Theddlethorpe, Mablethorpe and Withern a voice to be heard.

Following which, it was

RESOLVED

That the Amended Motion be supported.

N.B. Councillor Paul Rickett left the Meeting at 8.12pm and re-joined the Meeting at 8.17pm.

N.B. Councillor Colin Davie left the Meeting at 8.12pm and re-joined the Meeting at 8.14pm.

N.B. Councillor Fiona Martin left the Meeting at 8.13pm and re-joined the Meeting at 8.17pm.

33. DRAFT MINUTES OF THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE:

Members received the draft Minutes of the Audit and Governance Committee held on 19th June 2024 for noting.

Councillor Jill Makinson-Sanders, Vice-Chairman of Audit and Governance Committee highlighted several key points from the Meeting as follows:

- The Committee were pleased to note that since Procurement had been identified as a risk, robust arrangements were now in place to address this.
- There was a delay in signing off the accounts due to a number of factors, including auditing of the accounts and staffing issues both in the external audit sector and finance department, however it was expected that this would be resolved in the autumn.
- All Councillors were invited to the Audit and Governance annual training session to be held on Wednesday 11 September commencing at 9.00am.

Members were invited to put their comments and questions forward. None were received.

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Audit and Governance Committee held on 19th June 2024 be noted.

34. QUESTIONS:

Question 1	Councillor Hesketh
Subject	Understanding of Guidance – Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy Document (2018)
Response by	Councillor Leyland
Supplementary	None
Question 2	Councillor Danny Brookes
Subject	Illuminations in Skegness
Response by	Councillor Leyland
Supplementary	None
Question 3	Councillor Danny Brookes
Subject	Promotion of Skegness
Response by	Councillor Leyland
Supplementary	How much does ELDC spend promoting Skegness?
Response	I will provide a written answer.
Question 4	Councillor Danny Brookes
Subject	Additional support from ELDC to promote Skegness
Response by	Councillor Leyland
Supplementary	Is it the case that Skegness should have been getting support from East Lindsey as well as from the BID?
Response	<p>The BID undertook its own promotional work and did a lot of good work, it's a shame that it does not exist anymore.</p> <p>I'm happy to quantify the work that's being done through the Growth team in respect of the tourism website that's been created and all that continuation of work that is really important for the promotion and there's now a website for the coast. Skegness is getting a lot of attention from East Lindsay and its Growth team to keep the momentum going to make it the visitor attraction that it is. It's been a challenging couple of years, so our teams will be focusing on making sure that we keep the visitors coming to our wonderful coast and the attractions that we have across the district. We also have market towns and a lot of other things that are attractive.</p>
Question 5	Councillor Watson
Subject	Beach Nourishment
Response by	Councillor Leyland
Supplementary	The beach nourishment scheme along our coast has now concluded with what seems to be an insufficient level of sand at a reasonable distance from the sea wall. Will you urgently develop some forward strategy

	for the defence of the coastline and define a timescale on when we can expect to receive an update? Furthermore, can you confirm that this issue is not reliant on a decision on the nuclear waste dump?
Response	There are significant concerns about the state of coastal defences, the Environment Agency has recently undertaken a study of that and there are significant concerns which has brought that work forward in terms of what the future plans should be for the maintenance of those defences and it is a significant challenge. Funding is also a challenge. I'll happily provide an update once I have received this from the EA and our teams that are working with them in conjunction with the county.
Question 6	Councillor Leonard
Subject	Remedial work at the Hub
Response by	Councillor Leyland
Supplementary	If the work on the car park is substandard now, what else is going to appear as substandard in the future and will appear outside the remedial work guarantee?
Response	I will get advice from the officers and provide a written response.
Question 7	Councillor Leonard
Subject	Staff Poll – April 2024
Response by	Councillor Leyland
Supplementary	None
Question 8	Councillor Leonard
Subject	Maintenance of landscaping at the Hub
Response by	Councillor Leyland
Supplementary	Can we get the front door and surrounding areas sorted out to look less like sand dunes?
Response	I am happy to get a report on the state of the gardens for you.
Question 9	Councillor Makinson-Sanders
Subject	Tree survey on Council land
Response by	Councillor Ashton
Supplementary	Who did the assessment in Westgate Fields in April 2024 and what were the results?
Response	I will find out and forward the information to you.
Question 10	Councillor Makinson-Sanders
Subject	Air quality
Response by	Councillors Foster and Ashton
Supplementary	Would you like me to provide you with this article as I cannot believe it is not affecting some areas?

Response	Yes, I would love to see this.
Question 11	Councillor Makinson-Sanders
Subject	Markets
Response by	Councillor Leyland
Supplementary	Who is going to come onto Louth Market and sort the problems out – we need someone on hand as we have 3 markets a week in Louth? Why do you think that one person can look after all markets?
Response	Markets are important. I will gather an understanding of how we should have that operating. Logically it does make sense to have someone across the Partnership looking after this, but I understand your local concern and I will get some feedback on this.
Question 12	Councillor Makinson-Sanders
Subject	Grass Cutting in Old Cemetery, Louth
Response by	Councillor Foster
Supplementary	None

A full copy of the questions is attached at **Appendix 2** to these Minutes.

35. DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

The programmed date for the next Meeting of the Council was noted as Wednesday 9 October 2024 commencing at 6.30pm.

36. EXEMPT INFORMATION:

RESOLVED

That under Section 100(a)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the Meeting for the following item on the grounds that, if they were present, there could be disclosed to them exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act (as amended).

N.B. Councillor Richard Fry left the Meeting at 8.40pm.

37. LAND FOR FUTURE REGENERATION IN MABLETHORPE:

An Exempt report was presented.

RESOLVED

That Recommendations Nos 1 and 2 as set out in the Exempt Minute be agreed.

38. DISPENSATION REQUESTS:

An Exempt report was presented to enable consideration of a Dispensation for a Member of the Council.

Following which it was Proposed and Seconded that the recommendation contained within the Exempt Report be supported.

RESOLVED

That in accordance with Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972, that a dispensation be approved for a period of 6 months from 17th July 2024 as set out in the recommendation in the Exempt report.

The meeting closed at 8.43 pm.

**QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC FOR COUNCIL UNDER RULE 10 OF THE
COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES – COUNCIL 17 JULY 2024**

1. Question by Paul Fisher to Councillor Craig Leyland, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs.

I would like to know what the size of the GDF top site will be at Theddlethorpe.

A. *Thank you for your question.*

Nuclear Waste Services current estimate is that the surface site of a GDF would be approximately 1 square kilometre.

2. Question by Katherine Barker to Councillor Craig Leyland, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs.

The prospect of a Nuclear dump has been hanging over me, my family, and my community for 3 years now. Residents and businesses are suffering from the uncertainty it has brought. This year has brought no new information and nothing new to us. What exactly do we need to be informed of now, before you let us as a community vote on whether we want to host a "Geological Disposal Facility?"

A. *'Thank you for your question.*

As a Relevant Local Authority, and a member of the Community Partnership, we are engaging in the process and continually learning about various factors that are relevant to understanding the impact of a GDF on our community. In order to enable an informed view to be taken, by the Community Partnership, ourselves and LCC, we all need to understand the full picture. There are a considerable number of technical factors relevant to the potential siting (including geology, ecology etc); and subsequent positive and negative impacts on matters such as transport, flood risk, skills, jobs etc; as well as potential infrastructure provision to support a GDF; all of which need to be properly understood. This information then needs to be presented in a way which can be relayed to the community to enable them to make an informed decision when the Test of Public Support is brought forward. Through the Community Partnership, we also receive regular updates from NWS regarding the various engagement exercises which they are undertaking with the community.

I am committed to ensuring that the community as a whole, including Members of this Council, are provided with sufficient, accurate and robust information to ensure that they can make their views known at the right time. Both myself and the Leader of LCC have set out our desire for this to be progressed efficiently, and effectively, to enable the Test of Public Support to be taken by 2027. This position has not changed, and I accept that there needs to be some certainty given, so that this process does not extend for a prolonged period with no end in sight. Through our representation on the Community Partnership, we will do all we can to

The wording of the question(s) above is replicated directly from the original written question submitted

move the process on, but, in the right way. The process we have to follow is clearly laid out by a Government Framework; but I hope you will agree, that whilst speed is a factor, this should be appropriately balanced with having robust information upon which the community can consider and base its decision upon.

However, you will notice a motion relating to this issue later on this agenda where further information will be given on this matter'.

Ends.

240717

**Questions to Council Under Rule 11 of the Constitution –
Council 17 July 2024**

Q1. Councillor Hesketh to Councillor Leyland, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs

In the Department for Business, Energy & industrial Strategy Document (2018) "Implementing Geological Disposal – Working With Communities" section 6.45 it states that "In the event that the relevant principal local authorities do not agree on whether to invoke the Right of Withdrawal or move to the Test of Public Support, RWM could fund independent mediation to ensure concerns are heard, understood and attempts made to address them" – this means that ELDC can request Withdrawal or request a move to a Test of Public Support and remain part of the Community Partnership even if LCC disagree, until a final decision is made. What is your understanding of this guidance?

- A. All relevant principal local authorities on the Community Partnership must agree before the Right of Withdrawal can be invoked or the Test of Public Support can take place. Therefore, in an area such as ours with two tiers of local government, and where both relevant principal local authorities are on the Community Partnership, then they must both agree to invoke the Right of Withdrawal or to carry out the Test of Public Support.*

Q2. Councillor Danny Brookes to Councillor Leyland, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs

Is Skegness getting any illuminations this year?

- A. Skegness and Mablethorpe will both be receiving seasonal illuminations as normal in 2024. The lighting contractor is installing illumination hardware at various locations currently with a view to the normal switch on times being available for both locations.*

Officers from the Council's Property Team are working closely with the contractor to make sure that festoon lighting and other lighting features are fully working at both locations.

Q3. Councillor Danny Brookes to Councillor Leyland, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs

How much is spent promoting Skegness each year?

- A. Promotion of Skegness had been part of the remit of the Skegness Business Improvement District (BID). Since the BID ceased ELDC has supported the promotion, but without any of the infrastructure behind it. In 2022/2023 there was limited promotion of the coast as a whole with a reliance on existing promotional work that was already planned by the County Council ([The Lincolnshire Coast - Visit Lincolnshire](#)).*

In order to address and remedy the situation, Destination Lincolnshire were awarded UK Shared Prosperity Funding to create a new coastal destination website to aid promotion. This new site covers the whole of the East Lindsey

coastal area including Skegness. The website was launched in May of this year (<https://visitlincscoast.co.uk/>). The award from UKSPF to Destination Lincolnshire was £60,000. This is a one-off award to create the website with ongoing financial support currently under discussion with Destination Lincolnshire which would include promotion and web access.

At present the Place Team does not have a specific budget for Skegness, although it does not have a specific budget for any other location but instead seeks to bring together opportunities for best effect and promote these. Given that this work was previously the remit of the BID, over time the investment in promotion of Skegness specifically will increase.

In parallel, there are a number of projects that are benefiting Skegness that will lead to its promotion:

- The granting of Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) status to Destination Lincolnshire will ensure that the coast plays a prominent role in the county's promotion.
- The £24.5m investment in Skegness as part of the Town Deal (of the seven projects, two are delivered with the remaining five in delivery – including the Learning Campus, the railway station works, Embassy Theatre works and the Foreshore project. There has also been a town centre improvement project which remains ongoing, all designed to make improvements for visitors).
- £20m over 10 years through the Long-Term Plan for Towns, currently undergoing final works before submission following public consultation on what improvements are desired.

Q4. Councillor Danny Brookes to Councillor Leyland, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs

Do we have a dedicated team for promoting the coast?

- A.** *Promotion of Skegness had been part of the remit of the Business Improvement District (BID). Since the BID ceased, ELDC has supported the promotion of the coast, but without any of the infrastructure previously funded and managed by the BID or owned and operated by Lincolnshire County Council (Visit Lincolnshire).*

The Place Team, within the Economic Growth Directorate, provide place making and place shaping support for locations across East Lindsey including promotion of the Visitor Economy. No single officer is responsible for promoting the coast, but the team works together to identify opportunities and promote these as appropriate, be that independently or with/through partners.

ELDC has had a Service Level Agreement (SLA)/Partnership Agreement in place with Destination Lincolnshire to deliver Visitor Economy activities on its behalf, including in 2023/2024 promotion and marketing activities. The current contract for 2024/2025 is under discussion and includes access to the new coastal website that Destination Lincolnshire have produced, launched in May of this year (<https://visitlincscoast.co.uk/>).

Officers from the Place Team, as well as through Grants4Growth and the Economic Development Team, have been promoting the opportunities for businesses to create profiles on the new website to help promote their business wherever possible.

Q5. Councillor Watson to Councillor Leyland, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs

May we have an update on the progress of the Lincolnshire 2100+ partnership set up by the Environment Agency, please?

I have seen evidence of the work being carried out by the Fens 2100+ partnership and the Humber 2100+ partnership but nothing on our stretch of coastline. With no strategic plans for coastal defences in place from next year onwards, I am alarmed that unless a strategic case for investment is formulated urgently, we are putting our large population of elderly residents who live on the coast (predominantly in single floor accommodation) in great danger.

A. *Thank you for your question. I share your concerns and agree.*

Work is ongoing in respect of the Lincs 2100+ Project. Our officers continue to engage with partners, including the EA, LCC and IDBs. We hope to be in a position to provide a more detailed update shortly.

Q6. Councillor Leonard to Councillor Leyland, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs

Remedial work was undertaken last September on the car park and now this June resurfacing work has also been carried out.

Given the short time since the original completion of the site in its entirety, why has follow up work been necessary?

A. *All works to the car parking surface at the Hub have been undertaken to address post construction defects that have been identified by the Property Team as part of their routine inspection processes.*

All works have been undertaken during the defects liability period associated with the original construction and at no additional cost to the council.

Q7. Councillor Leonard to Councillor Leyland, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs

The April staff poll showed on average about 25% of the staff felt undervalued. Senior levels wanted to know more about what was happening and a cultural change to "empower and trust colleagues" was required to list but a few of the gripes.

What is being done about this and who is carrying the responsibility?

A. *Thank you for your question.*

You have mis-interpreted the information you've received. Whether we sufficiently empower and trust colleagues was a discussion point that came up at a manager's conference. It wasn't a workforce gripe as suggested.

74% of respondents to the quarterly staff survey said they felt valued.

We all – Councillors and Officers – have a responsibility for ensuring our Officers / colleagues feel valued at work.

90% of our workforce say they feel informed either all the time or some of the time.

Some highlights from the last survey include:

- The positive impact of the Future Leaders Programme, particularly in officers feeling valued, providing networking and development opportunities.*
- Recognition of the positive impact of Mental Health First Aiders.*
- Recognition of the positive impact of line managers, when well-equipped with guidance to support, and the positive impact of flexible working.*

Each Assistant Director fully considers the data received each quarter for their service from the survey and what action might be required to bring about improvements.

We accept that not everything is perfect all of the time, but our Council is a good place to work, and we have a passionate and committed workforce we should all be very proud of.

Q8. Councillor Leonard to Councillor Leyland, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs

At what point will the patchy collection of grasses outside the front door be restored or better still removed. If they must stay, then perhaps the weeds could be removed on a more regular basis as they seem to have a better survival rate than the formal planting.

What are your thoughts on this please?

- A.** *The landscaping at the hub was designed and planted as part of the initial construction project. Now the planting has established, the design will be reviewed to ensure the plants particularly around the front door are suitable and provide a welcoming entrance to visitors.*

Q9. Councillor Makinson-Sanders to Councillor Tom Ashton, Portfolio Holder for Planning

When was the last tree survey conducted on council land and what were the outcomes? How is this addressed on the council's risk register? What is the likely cost to ameliorate any problems and how is your budget allocated?

- A.** *The Council has a Tree Risk Management Strategy. Trees are assessed based on the Strategy, rather than assessing them all every X number of years. The last active assessment carried out was in April 24 at Westgate Fields and no unacceptable risks requiring remedial work were found. The risk is managed in accordance with the Strategy. Costs of dealing with tree risk reduction vary according to circumstances such as weather conditions and tree health. There is an annual budget and where this is exceeded any remedial work is funded according to an assessment of its priority.*

Q10. Councillor Makinson-Sanders to Councillor Foster, Portfolio Holder for Operational Services and Councillor Tom Ashton, Portfolio Holder for Planning

According to recent national reports air quality is increasingly compromised by intensive chicken farming.

What has been the effect locally, especially in villages where there is a preponderance of this type of farming? How is the planning process kept up to date with such data to ensure public safety is addressed?

- A.** *From a planning perspective any application for such an installation would require various technical studies to determine whether there was an impact in terms of various matters, including pollution. Relevant conditions would also be attached to any planning permission. The Planning Department would routinely consult with specialist colleagues in Environmental Health/Public Protection to determine whether the impact was acceptable or not in coming to a recommendation/decision. Sites with more than 40,000 poultry places are required to hold an Environmental Permit from The Environment Agency. Of particular interest is paragraph 194 of the National Planning Policy Framework, which states:*

"The focus of planning policies and decisions should be on whether proposed development is an acceptable use of land, rather than the control of processes or emissions (where these are subject to separate pollution control regimes). Planning decisions should assume that these regimes will operate effectively. Equally, where a planning decision has been made on a particular development, the planning issues should not be revisited through the permitting regimes operated by pollution control authorities."

ELDC manage a network of diffusion monitoring tubes for air quality which focusses on NOx from traffic. Currently there is no requirement under this regime to specifically monitor poultry farming sites.

The air quality regime is reviewed annually to determine what further work may be needed in order to maintain our current good standards or air quality. At this

time we have no indication that poultry farms within ELDC are adversely affecting air quality.

All air quality info for ELDC is on our website at [Air Quality in East Lindsey - East Lindsey District Council \(e-lindsey.gov.uk\)](http://Air Quality in East Lindsey - East Lindsey District Council (e-lindsey.gov.uk))

Q11. Councillor Makinson-Sanders to Councillor Leyland, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs

Why are markets not under the umbrella of the Growth team? How many markets function across the Partnership and what guarantee can you give the people who stand Louth market there will be a professional there to listen to their concerns, to plan where market stalls are erected three days a week and work closely with elected members (who shop regularly on the market and have to listen to myriad complaints)?

- A.** *The decision to move the Markets service from Neighbourhoods to the Leisure & Culture Services was taken when East Lindsey District Council joined the South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership in 2021. There are Council managed markets in Louth, Horncastle, Spilsby, Boston Spalding, Crowland, Holbeach and Long Sutton. Work is ongoing to develop the Markets Service across the Partnership and a permanent Markets Manager is currently being sought to support their continued operation and support.*

Q12. Councillor Makinson-Sanders to Councillor Foster, Portfolio Holder for Operational Services

What do we have to do to make sure we cut the grass regularly in the Old Cemetery in Louth to a length where people can actually use the facility as a park, see where their dogs have pooped and remove the ridiculous sign which says it's a space run by the district council where you can even have a picnic? (Photos can be provided)

- A.** *The discouraging weather, this year, has proved a challenge for grass cutting across the district.*

If the weather continues to be adverse for weeks at a time, it may mean that a number of schedule cuts may be missed resulting in a poor overall standard of grass cutting.

We have been working closely with our grass cutting contractor, to understand the challenges this season and consider ways to improve standards, where possible.

An additional higher specification cut has been organised for w/c 15th, at St Mary's Old Cemetery, Louth – to improve the standard of cut at this particular site.

Ends.