

Minutes of a Meeting of the Council held in the Hub, Mareham Road, Horncastle, Lincolnshire LN9 6PH on Wednesday, 9th October, 2024 at 6.30 pm.

## PRESENT

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

Councillors Terry Aldridge, Claire Arnold, Tom Ashton, Richard Avison, Stef Bristow, Danny Brookes, Sandra Campbell-Wardman, Graham Cullen, Richard Cunnington, Mark Dannatt, Colin Davie, Roger Dawson, Sarah Devereux, Carleen Dickinson, Dick Edginton, Stephen Evans, Richard Fry, William Gray, Adam Grist, Will Grover, Alex Hall, David Hall, Darren Hobson, George Horton, Rosalind Jackson, Neil Jones, Sam Kemp, Thomas Kemp, Steve Kirk, Terry Knowles, Andrew Leonard, Craig Leyland, Stephen Lyons, Steve McMillan, Daniel McNally, Carl Macey, Jill Makinson-Sanders, Kate Marnoch, Ellie Marsh, Graham Marsh, Fiona Martin, M.B.E., Paul Rickett, Daniel Simpson, Robert Watson and Ruchira Yarsley.

On behalf of all Councillors, the Chairman extended a warm welcome back to Councillor Graham Cullen.

### **39. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Billy Brookes, Jimmy Brookes, Stephen Eyre, Martin Foster, Travis Hesketh and James Knowles.

### **40. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS (IF ANY):**

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

- Councillor Steve Kirk asked it be noted that in respect of Exempt Item No. 19 (a), he would leave the Meeting.

### **41. MINUTES:**

The Open and Exempt Minutes of the Meeting held on 17 July 2024 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

### **42. ACTION SHEETS:**

The Actions were noted as complete or in hand.

### **43. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CHAIRMAN:**

The Chairman was pleased to advise that since the last Full Council Meeting he had attended the following Civic engagements:

- English Bowling Federation and English Women's Bowling Federation National Championships Closing Ceremony at the Suncastle in Skegness
- Lincolnshire County Council Chairman's Civic Service of Dedication
- South Holland District Council Chairman's Civic Service
- Mablethorpe Carnival Parade
- UK FPN Evening Reception - House of Lords Reception

The Chairman thanked Councillor Terry Taylor, Vice-Chairman who attended the Sibsey Memorial Lancaster Trust Remembrance Service on his behalf.

Representing the Council, the Chairman also attended the funeral of Councillor Sid Dennis at St Matthew's Church, Skegness.

#### 44. QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC:

Three 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	Mike Crookes
Subject	Evaluation for disposal of low-level nuclear waste underground between 1985 and 1988
Response by	Councillor Leyland, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs
Supplementary	Does the Leader not find it strange that Nirex (so called at that time) was rebuffed in two areas in Lincolnshire, including Theddlethorpe for low level nuclear waste? Nuclear Waste Services (NWS) Community Partnership has failed and 85% of residents oppose the dump, why did you not reject their advances at the outset?
Response	<p>I have to recognise the situation nationally in respect of nuclear waste storage. There are over 20 sites across the country that store various levels of nuclear waste. The government's solution to that is to engage with communities that have put themselves forward, in this case Lincolnshire County Council. We as a District Council thought it would be better to be involved in the process than be excluded from it and that's our involvement.</p> <p>The last Motion regarding this to Council being that the Council would see the intent and work of NWS over the next year, before making a</p>

	<p>decision whether it left the process or not. Equally, LCC have made a statement together with myself as Leader of this Council, that by 2027 there should be a test of public support. In all of this, it comes down to the local community making a decision through a test of public support and will be for the local community, whether this goes ahead or not.</p>
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Question 2	Carl Davis
Subject	Positioning of public waste bins
Response by	Councillor Foster, Portfolio Holder for Operational Services
Supplementary	None
Question 3	Sarah Goodley
Subject	Opinion on the question/answer posed on the Community Partnership Website
Response by	Councillor Leyland, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs
Supplementary	<p>Are you aware of the Radioactive Waste Management report of 2016, where losses to the economy were reported as 1.7 billion during the lifetime of the project, or the NWS tourist survey in 2023 which shows 16% would not visit. Also, the resident survey of 2023 of which 74% said they would not visit or the NWS survey of 2004 in which 23 said the GDF would impact their decision to visit?</p> <p>I myself have been surveying visitors with others over the summer and over 80% said they would stay away. After four years, why have you not studied the impact of a GDF on the visitor economy, which is currently worth £800 million per annum?</p>
Response	<p>The reality is, we will have to have an understanding of that and we have done great work with our Connected Coast Board to know the impact and the value of our tourism industry and wouldn't want to see anything harm that. It is in our interest to understand the potential impact, if any, of the GDF and that work will be done. The surveys that you talk about will have to be understood by this authority.</p> <p>The reality is, as a local authority, we took a decision to be involved in this process because we felt it was better to be involved than be</p>

	external to it so we can understand what the impacts potentially could be, but at this point in time, we can't come to a judgement and equally all those surveys that you mentioned over a period of time need to be fully understood and interrogated. You're right to highlight the value of the tourist economy to our coast. It's much valued and it's something that we wouldn't want to see damaged. So it's in our interest to make sure we understand those issues.
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A full copy of the questions is attached at **Appendix 1** to these Minutes.

#### **45. REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD:**

The Leader of the Council presented Members with his report, pages 35 to 38 of the Agenda refer.

Following which, the Leader read out an addendum to his report in relation to the East Lindsey Investment Fund as follows:

*'We are delighted to be able to bring forward this ambitious new £10m investment to transform local places in East Lindsey as part of the new plan to boost growth and prosperity. The fund will prioritise investment in four distinct target areas: community development, promoting visitor economy, business support and to boost the attractiveness of the area. A key part of the East Lindsey Investment Fund is about making the district's places more welcoming through initiatives that help improve cleanliness, safety, promote tidy and attractive shop fronts and enhance parks and public spaces. These are the main concerns residents regularly raise with us and we want to address them face on. We believe that this will help attract more people to visit the Lincolnshire Wolds and coastal areas, which is vital to our local businesses and economy.'*

The Leader highlighted that the Council was looking to support all communities and it was critical to point out that the smallest parish should be able to gain from this as well as the larger parish and town councils and he looked forward to working with them during the process. Thanks were also passed to Councillors Grist and Kirk who had worked very hard with officers to make this possible.

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

##### APSE Awards

Further to the update on the APSE Awards, a Member asked for clarification from the Retrofit Team on how long the funding for improvements would continue.

In response, the Leader of the Council advised that he would seek details with regards to the funding for improvements.

It was further queried whether small business rate relief was likely to end in March 2025.

In response, the Leader of the Council stated that there could be changes from the new government that potentially could have a damaging effect on small businesses. There could also be changes that affected how the Council dealt with things in terms of council tax and how and where this was spent.

### Wellbeing Service

A Member offered her congratulations to the Heart Team and the team responsible for the HUGS grant delivery. Thanks was also extended to the Wellbeing Service, and clarification was sought on whether the contract was for 5 or 10 years. A Member added that the Wellbeing Service in East Lindsey was second to none and had helped many residents in Skegness.

In response, the Leader of the Council thanked Members for their supportive comments and to the teams involved.

### Household Support Fund (HSF)

A Member expressed her thanks on behalf of the people of Louth and district who had benefited from the funding and had been pleased to work with families to offer help and support.

A Member highlighted that a number of councils had already published their plans for the HSF allocated to them and queried whether ELDC had a plan in place.

In response, the Leader of the Council thanked Members for their supportive comments and to the teams involved.

### Events

A Member commented that the Teenage Markets were first introduced as a result of the scrutiny on markets and its success highlighted the importance of the scrutiny process. With regards to the recent Louth Food and Drink Festival a query was raised on how attendance compared with the previous year and how it was promoted.

In response, the Leader of the Council commented that he was pleased the Teenage markets had been successful and was supportive for them to continue.

With regards to the Food and Drink Festival, the Leader of the Council informed Members that he understood that attendance was similar to the

previous year, but the team was currently evaluating the figures for an accurate assessment.

With regards to Conservation Areas, a Member highlighted that Louth Town Centre had been classed as at risk and was disappointed that this had still not been addressed.

In response, the Leader of the Council advised that the Council wanted to see the investment fund potentially working to create shop front grants so there could be improvements in market town presentation and place. He further highlighted that in terms of the conservation area appraisal, that officers could work with English Heritage to make this happen as it had elsewhere within the district.

A Member referred to the events in Skegness and Sutton on Sea and hoped that Mablethorpe Councillors would apply for funding to host events.

In response, the Leader of the Council stated that the Council was committed to ensure the events continued, particularly as they had been so successful.

#### UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)

A Member offered his thanks for the Honda Goldwing Light Parade in Skegness that had been funded through the UKSPF. It was highlighted that this brought a lot of money out of season into the town which businesses were very thankful for, as well as raising money for cancer charities.

In response, the Leader of the Council thanked the Member for his kind comments and added that events brought great vitality to communities and businesses and was supportive for this event to continue for future years.

#### East Lindsey Investment Fund (ELIF)

A Member referred to a presentation circulated to Members on the ELIF and was concerned that where it referred to coastal communities, Theddlethorpe was the highest point. He stressed that the coast extended further north into Saltfleet and Somercotes and did not want parishes to think they were excluded from the funding.

In response, the Leader of the Council advised that it had always been the intention that the fund would be for all communities across the district, however he would ensure that this was clarified so that parishes understood that they were eligible to apply for funding.

A Member commented that he hoped the Council would consider using some of the funding for the Honda Goldwing Light Parade in future years. He also wished to highlight that money the coast had received to date was government money for levelling up to the rest of the district and that Skegness still deserved to be funded out of the East Lindsey Investment Fund.

In response, the Leader of the Council commented that he wished to see events encouraged across all communities in the district as they made a real difference.

With regards to levelling up, the Leader stated that the government's levelling up programme had a very specific agenda and direction of travel to meet certain challenges. The East Lindsey Investment Fund was about spreading joy to all communities and that it was also right that this should include communities that had gained some benefit from levelling up.

### Pylons

A Member requested an update on the latest situation with the pylons.

In response, the Leader of the Council advised Members that the Council was currently engaged with colleagues at Lincolnshire County Council and other councils that were involved in raising concerns about the pylons. A National Grid consultation was held January to March 2024 whereby it sought technical agreement from the Planning Inspectorate in respect of the scope of its forthcoming environmental statement; this commenced in August 2024 and was ongoing. The current timetable for the next stage of public consultation was mid-2025.

It was highlighted that South Holland District Council had made a statement of intent to recognise the Fenland as a particular asset in terms of food production, and the Portfolio Holder for Planning was working with SHDC to understand whether there was any potential across all three districts that there could be some designation for those very vulnerable areas.

Concerning potential development in respect of planning and due to ongoing concerns, the Council would be employing a specialist planning officer to deal with the national strategic infrastructure projects as it was faced with many large applications, not just in terms of the National grid but in terms of the large solar panel farms and potential onshore developments.

## **46. 2024/25 QUARTER ONE FINANCE UPDATE:**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance presented a report to enable consideration of the current financial position for the Council at the end of the first quarter of 2024/25 forecasting to the year end.

During his introduction the Portfolio Holder for Finance highlighted that it was important to ensure the Council's forecast financial position for 2024/25 was considered and related decisions approved, and that Council was aware of the financial position of the General Fund to ensure that it could make informed decisions that were affordable and financially sustainable for the Council.

The report provided information on the forecast full year financial performance as at 30 June 2024 and was detailed at Appendix A for the following areas:

- The General Fund Revenue Budget,
- The General Fund Reserves Position,
- The Capital Programme for 2024/25, and
- The Treasury Management Performance for the year.

Further detail was also provided on the General Fund Revenue Provisional Outcome, Savings Target, Internal Drainage Boards, Capital – General Fund and Treasury Management, pages 40 to 41 of the Agenda refer.

Following which the recommendation was duly Proposed and Seconded.

Members were invited to put their comments and questions forward and during discussion the following queries and comments were made:

- In relation to Table 2 – Trading Income Budgets ‘Markets’ Impact by poor weather during Q1, page 47 of the Agenda refers, a Member sought clarification on claims for damage by market stall holders following adverse weather conditions.

In response, the Portfolio Holder for Finance advised that he would look into this and provide an update after the meeting.

- A Member highlighted concerns with staffing capacity in some departments and asked for clarity whether this was part of efficiency savings.

In response, the Portfolio Holder for Finance acknowledged the issues with staffing capacity in certain departments, however confirmed that in other areas it was part of efficiency savings that were being considered, with more information available as this developed.

A Member highlighted typographical errors on Appendix A – Table 1 ‘Net spend by Assistant Director Area’ and Table 5 ‘Capital Resources’ Recommendations, pages 45 and 51 of the Agenda refer. These errors were to be amended from ‘Executive Board’ to ‘Full Council’ and were noted by Council.

RESOLVED:

That the Capital Programme detailed at Appendix A, Table 4 be amended to take into account the changes set out in the report.

#### **47. SOUTH & EAST LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCILS PARTNERSHIP PERFORMANCE REPORT:**

The Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs presented a report that set out the progress of the South and East



Lincolnshire Councils Partnership since the last update on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

The background to the report was highlighted to Members, as set out at Paragraph 1, page 60 of the Agenda refers and particular reference was made to the following:

- Progress of the Alignment and Delivery Plan 2024/25 (section 2)
- Peer Challenge update (section 3)
- Updates from the Priority Partnerships (section 4)
- Partnership Scrutiny update (section 5)

In summing up, the Leader of the Council highlighted that the report was an interesting read and showed the progress that had been made as a Partnership, delivering on aspirations that had been identified in the corporate plans.

Members were invited to put their comments and questions forward.

- A Member commented that he was disappointed that Louth had not been mentioned as the largest market town in East Lindsey. In response, the Leader of the Council stated that he was quite happy to recognise Louth as a significant market town in East Lindsey.

## RESOLVED

That the following areas of the report be noted.

1. Progress of the Alignment and Delivery Plan 2024/25 (section 2)
2. Peer Challenge update (section 3)
3. Updates from the Priority Partnerships (section 4)
4. Partnership Scrutiny update (section 5)

## **48. MOTIONS ON NOTICE:**

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

### Winter Fuel Allowance and protecting pensioners from fuel poverty.

‘This Council is very concerned by the recent decision of the government, confirmed by a House of Commons vote on 10th September 2024, to restrict the Winter Fuel Payment to only pensioners in receipt of certain means-tested benefits. This will affect over 2 million pensioners nationally and, in East Lindsey, over 36000 vulnerable pensioners will now not receive the Winter Fuel Payment. Forcing many into “heat or eat” dilemmas during the coldest months of the year with direct impacts on health and wellbeing.

Leading charities including, Age UK, highlight the social injustice and the health risks of this sudden policy change and the additional strain this will

place on some of our most vulnerable residents, many of whom don't claim Pension Credit despite being eligible.

We ask that this Council:

- Continue to promote the uptake of the Pension Credit benefit through Council services, partnerships, charities and community organisations. We need to make sure our most vulnerable pensioners are supported in claiming their entitlement.
- To support our residents across the district, this council should register its strong disapproval with the government and Members of Parliament for taking away the winter fuel payment. It fails to acknowledge the plight of those now discriminated against who do not qualify within the threshold for support and yet fall below the income level of those who do not need the payment. Many of our rural residents, unlike their metropolitan cousins, do not have the luxury of having a gas supply to their homes and in the case of oil, wood, LPG and solid fuel must pay upfront prior to delivery for their winter fuel. Finding a large sum to cover this cost can and does force people into very dire straits. The unintended consequences have not all been identified or even been considered.
- Commits to signing the 'Save the Winter Fuel Payment for Struggling Pensioners' petition being run by Age UK and write to all members offering them the opportunity to sign the petition themselves'.

Proposed Cllr Carl Macey

Seconded Cllr Daniel McNally

In his introduction, Councillor Macey thanked Councillors Makinson-Sanders and Simpson and the East Lindsey Independent Group for their endorsement of this motion.

Councillor Macey highlighted his disappointment that the Labour government were removing the winter fuel payment from some of the most vulnerable and elderly residents which was often a lifeline to them through the coldest of months. He was further concerned that the government had not undertaken an impact assessment to see how many of the elderly and vulnerable residents this would affect, or the detrimental impact that would be put on the NHS and social care system.

Councillor Macey strongly urged all Members to support the Motion.

Councillor Daniel McNally seconded the Motion.

Whilst agreeing with the sentiment of the Motion, a Member highlighted his disappointment that the proposal had been politicised by colleagues and asked that this debate remained about the interest of vulnerable and elderly

people, following which this comment was endorsed by a number of Members. It was further highlighted that the newly elected Labour government had removed the winter fuel payment despite making an absolute commitment that it would remain.

Following which, an amendment to the Motion was proposed by Councillor Ros Jackson, Leader of the Labour Group as follows:

‘Remove paragraph four (bullet point 2) and replace with the following:

- Urges government to revise the threshold for qualifying for credit benefits to enable more lower-income pensioners to receive the winter fuel allowance;
- Request the Executive Board to consider adding a fifth target area to the £10m East Lindsey Investment Fund, targeting help for vulnerable households in fuel poverty to increase the energy efficiency of homes rated D to G;
- Request the Executive Board to consider ensuring funds from the Household Support Fund also help households and residents in fuel poverty who may not be in receipt of benefits but who miss out by a small amount and publicising this information in ways accessible to pensioners with disabilities’.

Councillor David Hall seconded the Amendment.

In her introduction, Councillor Jackson considered that the original Motion was weak and the amendment proposed actions that sat within the Council’s control to make a real difference to pensioners in fuel poverty, whereas the original Motion would not do so as it stood. Councillor Jackson further highlighted her disappointment that none of the £10m East Lindsey Investment Fund had been allocated to improving pensioners’ energy efficiency and further considered that the Council needed to boost the Household Support Fund by promoting it to disabled people in ways they could access this quickly.

Speaking to the substantive Motion, the following comments were received:

- A Member could not support the amendment as he did not agree with using the East Lindsey Investment Fund. He highlighted that other funding schemes were in place that could provide residents with financial assistance and considered that it was about connecting with residents to advise them what support was in place. He further referred to other schemes currently in place to make homes safer and more energy efficient.

In response, Councillor Jackson advised that she had spoken to the Heart Team and Group Manager, Climate Change and Environment who had advised that there was further scope for more and stated that there was a huge need for retrofitting homes for improving people’s energy efficiency.

- A Member added that he would also not be supporting the amendment and was very concerned for over 400 people in his ward that lived in old traditional trailer parks as permanent residents which used a huge amount of energy to heat. He added that the Council and other councils across the county had a lot of work to do to ensure that its vulnerable and elderly residents received all the help and support they needed. Members were urged to support the original motion.
- The Leader of the Council stated that he would not be supporting the amendment. He highlighted the excellent work that the Council had undertaken under the current administration to support its most vulnerable and elderly residents and also by the officers within the teams that made residents aware of the benefits and services available to them. It was considered that approximately 40,000 residents would be affected by the withdrawal of the winter fuel allowance. The Leader of the Council added that he would be writing to the government to make clear the Council's strong disapproval of the government's poor decision for taking away the winter fuel allowance. However, it was highlighted that the Council did a lot for its communities and an aspect of the £10m East Lindsey Investment Fund included a community aspect which would go to support town and parish halls in disparate communities.

In response, Councillor Jackson considered the Conservative Group Members had added politics into the debate and highlighted that a choice could be made that would make a difference.

- A Member did not agree with the part of the amendment that related to a fifth target area to help vulnerable households in fuel poverty to increase the energy efficiency of homes. He highlighted that most energy grants did not cover 100% of the costs and many people could not afford to pay the difference. It was further considered that there was no time for this work to be undertaken before the cold weather arrived. Therefore, he would not be supporting the amendment.

In response, Councillor Jackson stated that some good points had been made in relation to energy efficiency grants, however considered if a proportion of money was allocated from the East Lindsey Investment Fund the Council could set the criteria for helping residents. It was further highlighted that the government had to take a decision in year to make savings, and there were very few ways that this amount of savings could have been achieved in a year. Councillor Jackson also considered that by writing to the government in good time ahead of the budget on 30 October was worthwhile.

- The Portfolio Holder for Communities and Better Ageing strongly objected to the amendment for a number of reasons. He highlighted

that pension credit was a notoriously underclaimed benefit and by removing the winter fuel allowance, many residents would suffer unnecessarily. There were approximately 10,000 low-income households in East Lindsey who were currently in receipt of pension credit, but many more eligible. In 2022/23, over 40,000 East Lindsey residents received the winter fuel allowance, a large percentage who were now no longer eligible.

The Council employed an Age Friendly Communities Officer who raised awareness to encourage people to apply for pension credit and provided advice. Lincs Digital also worked closely with residents across the district to offer drop-in sessions, including bespoke pension credit eligibility and checking sessions. Work was also undertaken by a host of age friendly work and through this considerable support and funding was afforded to the most vulnerable people in the district.

In response, Councillor Jackson acknowledged what was already being done, however highlighted that currently more needed to be done to tackle the issue of withdrawal of the winter fuel allowance and the position it left vulnerable and elderly residents in.

- A Member commented that the Labour Group had already written to the government and asked that the pension credit threshold be lowered so more people became eligible to claim and was happy to support the amendment.
- A Member stated that he would be supporting the amendment and was disappointed by the extent several councillors had politicised the motion in the Chambers. He highlighted that the motion should be debated in terms of the interest of the residents independently and separately from the national issues which several councillors had done.
- In support of the amendment, a Member was disappointed with those Members who considered that the topic of withdrawing the winter fuel allowance should not be made political, particularly as it would severely affect vulnerable and elderly residents.
- A Member commented that he could not support the amendment as he strongly considered that the £10m East Lindsey Investment Fund should remain for the purpose it had been allocated.

In response, Councillor Jackson stated that she understood Skegness was reluctant to lose any funding for events, however sometimes difficult choices had to be made.

In summing up, Councillor Jackson thanked her colleagues on the Labour Group for their support on the motion.

Upon being put to the vote, the Amendment was lost.

Following which, Members were invited to speak to the original motion.

- A Member supported the motion and hoped that the government would readjust its decision which had been made in haste.
- The Portfolio Holder for Planning stated that he was happy to support the substantive motion. However, he acknowledged the shock that residents felt when they had already planned their household budget and to have the winter fuel allowance taken away with no notice.
- The Leader of the East Lindsey Independent Group stated that her Group undertook their roles to support residents and not to make a political statement. It was highlighted that residents in rural areas often did not benefit from a mains gas supply and had to pay up front for gas cylinders and heating oil. Members were advised that 29% of East Lindsey residents were in the older age group and taking away the winter fuel allowance would have an effect on health challenges that would be made worse.
- The Portfolio Holder for Coastal Economy congratulated Councillors McNally and Macey for the excellent motion and highlighted the second paragraph with regards to difficulties for residents paying up front for oil, wood, LPG and solid fuel. He further highlighted the deprivation along the coast and stated that he was happy to support the motion.
- A Member commented that she only supported the motion as far as challenging the pension credit element of entitlement.
- A Member considered that if the motion had been written in terms that were less editorialising politically it may have commanded the unanimous support of Councillors. Therefore, he was unable to support the motion.
- A Member commented that he was happy to support the motion, however wished to highlight that part of it was put forward by the East Lindsey Independent Group.

In response, the Leader of the Council highlighted that it was quite rare that the Council engaged in a fracturing political debate, however considered that it was proper to occasionally have one and it was important that Members expressed their opinions. The Leader of the Council added that he was happy to support the motion, and if passed would write to the Chancellor to highlight that the withdrawal of the winter fuel allowance was very damaging for rural communities, particularly the ageing communities. He stated that he was happy for the letter to be countersigned by all Group Leaders and hoped that this was an act of conciliation in respect to making the motion non-political.

As seconder to the substantive motion, Councillor McNally stated that he was disappointed that a number of Members considered that the motion was political. He reiterated that the abolishment of the winter fuel allowance would have far reaching consequences for up to 36k residents across the district and was not prepared to stand by whilst elderly and vulnerable residents were treated in such an appalling way. Councillor McNally thanked Members for their support and asked that they supported the motion.

In his summary to the original Motion, Councillor Macey thanked all Members across the Chambers for their comments and a good debate and points which were well made. He highlighted that the word 'choices' had been used several times and that it was a choice by government to remove the winter fuel allowance for up to 36k residents in East Lindsey. He considered that this was not right, and asked Members to support the motion.

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

RESOLVED

That the Motion be supported.

*N.B. Councillor Claire Arnold left the Meeting at 8.08pm.*

#### **49. DRAFT MINUTES OF THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE:**

Members received the draft Open and Exempt Minutes of the Audit and Governance Committee held on 11 September 2024 for noting.

Councillor Ros Jackson, Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee highlighted key elements from the Minutes as follows:

- The Committee considered the Annual Safeguarding report and Members were encouraged to read the report and associated policies.
- The Committee had scrutinised procurement exemptions, risk report, Quarter 1 Treasury report and Internal and External Audit progress.
- Mazars LLP External Auditors had progressed on the 2021/22 audit. The 2022/23 audit was likely to hit the backstop which was the government's deadline of 13 December 2024 that it had imposed and be disclaimed. It was highlighted that this was a national issue and many other councils across the country were in this position.
- KPMG External Auditors was progressing the 2023/24 audit. It was noted that the cost of the audit would be higher than previous years.

Councillor Jill-Makinson-Sanders asked it be noted that her apologies had been omitted from the draft minutes. The Chairman asked that the minutes be amended to reflect this.

No comments or questions were received.

RESOLVED

That the draft Open and Exempt Minutes of the Audit and Governance Committee held on 11 September 2024 be noted.

**50. AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24:**

Members received the Audit and Governance Committee Annual Report 2023/24 from Councillor Ros Jackson, Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee, pages 91 to 102 of the Agenda refer.

Members were referred to the details which included the following areas:

- Audit and Governance Committee Membership 2023/24
- Committee Meetings and Summary of Work
- Internal and External Audit
- Governance
- Treasury and Accounts
- Risk Management
- Training and Development

The Leader of the Council paid compliment to the members of the Audit and Governance Committee for the way in which it had conducted its extensive business with thoroughness and detail and there was no doubt that the Committee had a very high standard in its approach to championing good governance throughout 2023/24, reviewing Treasury, Risk, Audit and other key financial and governance related matters. He added that he was pleased to hear that Committee members had undertaken an extensive programme of training and development and acknowledged that the Committee had dealt with some complex audits, financial matters and reviews during that period.

Members were invited to put their comments and questions forward.

- A Member referred to the Internal Audit Update and reference to 58 recommendations made from audits undertaken during 2023/24. Following which, clarification was sought on how many of these had been actioned and where this was reported.

In response, Councillor Jackson stated that very few recommendations were outstanding but would seek a written response to clarify this.

RESOLVED:

That the Audit and Governance Committee Annual Report 2023/24 be noted.

**51. QUESTIONS:**



Question 1	Councillor Watson
Subject	Reducing paper copies of Agendas
Response by	Councillor Leyland
Supplementary	None
Question 2	Councillor Jackson
Subject	Alternative options for 3G pitch in Louth
Response by	Councillor Graham Marsh
Supplementary	None
Question 3	Councillor Jackson
Subject	Cost of fires as a result of lithium batteries
Response by	Councillor Graham Marsh
Supplementary	None
Question 4	Councillor Ellie Marsh
Subject	Six-month rule for attendance at meetings
Response by	Councillor Leyland
Supplementary	Do you think this is a disappointing way of measuring a Councillor's worth?
Response	I recognise the sentiment, but it a binary and arbitrary way of dealing with non-attendance and is set in the legislation. This question may be raised with the Audit and Governance Committee's Constitution Working Group.
Question 5	Councillor Ellie Marsh
Subject	Public toilets in Spilsby
Response by	Councillor Foster
Supplementary	None
Question 6	Councillor Simpson
Subject	Monies received from s106 agreements
Response by	Councillor Ashton
Supplementary	None
Question 7	Councillor Simpson
Subject	Allocation of s106 agreements
Response by	Councillor Ashton
Supplementary	None
Question 8	Councillor Simpson
Subject	Applications for s106 monies
Response by	Councillor Ashton
Supplementary	None
Question 9	Councillor Simpson
Subject	Presentation to Council ref Invest East Lindsey's

	business case
Response by	Councillor Leyland
Supplementary	None
Question 10	Councillor Simpson
Subject	Devolution programme – planning decisions
Response by	Councillor Leyland
Supplementary	None
Question 11	Councillor Horton
Subject	ELDC's role with London Road Sports Partnership
Response by	Councillor Graham Marsh
Supplementary	Until such time the charity is formed, do I take it that the Council is paying the bills or how is this working at the moment?
Response	To the best of my knowledge, the Council is paying the London Sports Group monies to run the sports ground as this needs to keep running. We are not handing over the full amount until the Charities Commission has formed the charity. We do have oversight of the bills and costs.
Question 12	Councillor Horton
Subject	Costs involved ref concerns to the proposed new plastic pitch on Wood Lane
Response by	Councillor Graham Marsh
Supplementary	Because of the news received today relating to objections received from the Environment Agency and that the pitch may not go ahead on Wood Lane, will the Portfolio Holder be looking at any other sites?
Response	If anyone has any other sites to consider, please let me know and we can look at the feasibility and funding.
Question 13	Councillor Horton
Subject	Commitment of spending for projects on the coast
Response by	Councillor Leyland
Supplementary	None
Question 14	Councillor Horton
Subject	Potential to find more grass sports fields
Response by	Councillor Graham Marsh
Supplementary	None
Question 15	Councillor Makinson-Sanders
Subject	Investment in extending Louth Industrial Estate
Response by	Councillor Grist
Supplementary	None

Question 16	Councillor Makinson-Sanders
Subject	Parking situation on Louth Industrial Estate
Response by	Councillor Grist
Supplementary	None
Question 17	Councillor Makinson-Sanders
Subject	Trading with organisations who offer zero hours contracts
Response by	Councillor Leyland
Supplementary	None
Question 18	Councillor Leonard
Subject	Administration of Towns Fund money and return of the Shop Front Grant
Response by	Councillor Leyland
Supplementary	None
Question 19	Councillor Leonard
Subject	Remaining area of Louth Charles Street Pond site
Response by	Councillor Leyland
Supplementary	None

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

**52. DATE OF NEXT MEETING:**

The programmed date for the next Meeting of the Council was noted as Wednesday 11 December 2024 commencing at 2.00pm.

*N.B. Councillors Terry Aldridge and Sarah Devereux left the Meeting at 8.27pm.*

**53. DELIVERY OF THE ELDC TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION PROGRAMME:**

The Chairman highlighted that Appendix A was Exempt. Should Members wish to discuss this paper, a vote would be taken to go into Exempt session.

The Portfolio Holder for Communities and Better Ageing presented a report that sought approval for delivery of the ELDC Temporary Accommodation Programme utilising the £1million funding allocated through the Council's Capital Programme and the award of DLUHC LAHF 3 funding for Temporary and Resettlement homes, pages 103 to 120 of the Agenda refer.

In September 2023, Executive Board agreed to provide £1m to increase the Council's temporary accommodation (TA) stock. Subsequent to this decision, Full Council approved the amendment to the 2023/24 Capital Programme

budget to include this provision at its meeting held on 11 October 2023, Minute No. 48 refers.

More recently, the Council had been notified by DLUHC of the award of £1.067m grant in response to its Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) Round 3 expression of interest for the delivery of further re-settlement homes and temporary accommodation units.

In light of the LAHF 3 funding offer, on September 18<sup>th</sup> 2024 the Executive Board met and formally agreed the following, Minute No. 26 refers;

- To take part on the Local Authority Housing Fund Round 3 programme, with a view to bringing 12 properties into the council's ownership to meet short, medium and long-term housing needs within the district.
- The approach to be adopted in respect of the spend of the funds, including type, priority location and delivery approach. This approach is detailed within this report.
- To delegate authority to the Assistant Director of Strategic Growth & Development, in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder for Communities and Better Ageing, to finalise and agree the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the LAHF Round 3 programme with DLUHC and,
- To recommended to Council that the 2024/25 capital programme, as set out in Appendix 2, is amended to reflect the LAHF 3 funds.

The report sought Full Council approval on the matter of amendments to the 2024/25 capital programme, as set out in Appendix 2.

The Portfolio Holder for Communities and Better Ageing passed his thanks on to the Assistant Director for Strategic Growth and Development and his team for the tremendous work that had gone into the programme and for the success that it had become.

Following which the recommendation was duly Proposed and Seconded.

Members were invited to put their comments and questions forward.

- A Member queried what the total need and total projected need was for this type of accommodation in the future and whether more of this type of accommodation was planned and if so, the payback time.

In response, the Portfolio Holder for Communities and Better Ageing stated that the Council would never have enough of this type of accommodation, with 820 applicants on the waiting list for one-bedroom accommodation. However, alternative ideas had been considered regarding modular design and construction which may

come forward and would hopefully increase the number of one-bedroom accommodation.

- A Member queried whether it was possible to house Afghan people reasonably close to each other for support. It was further queried that if properties were converted into smaller units they were classified as a house of multiple occupation.

In response, the Portfolio Holder for Communities and Better Ageing advised that Afghans were matched to a location or property through a matching service and that they chose the property where they wanted to live. It was confirmed that the temporary accommodation units would not be houses of multiple occupation and would be two distinct separate flats and occupants would not be sharing communal facilities.

- A Member highlighted the problems with flood risk in Skegness for one-bedroom properties and queried whether this could be overcome.

In response, the Portfolio Holder for Communities and Better Ageing acknowledged the difficulties with flood risk and advised that the query raised was addressed at Paragraph 1.15 in the report, page 108 of the Agenda refers.

RESOLVED:

That the Council's 2024/25 capital programme be amended to include the £1.067m in Local Authority Housing Fund Round 3 funds, taking the Council's total capital budget for temporary accommodation investment to £2.067m.

*N.B. Councillor Steve Kirk left the Meeting at 8.36pm.*

#### **54. 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 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act (as amended).

#### **55. REPORTS FROM SCRUTINY AND POLICY PANELS:**

- (a) Scrutiny Panel Report - To review the running of Invest East Lindsey Limited, with a particular focus on Kingfisher Caravan Park:**

Councillor Daniel Simpson, Chair of the scrutiny panel 'To review the running of Invest East Lindsey Limited, with a particular focus on Kingfisher Caravan Park' presented a report together with the recommendations of the panel.

During his introduction, Councillor Simpson expressed his thanks to all involved in the scrutiny as set out in the acknowledgements, pages 125 to 126 of the Agenda refers.

Members were referred to the recommendations detailed at page 139 of the Agenda pack. Councillor Simpson highlighted Recommendation No. 14 and asked that the Leader of the Council supported a presentation to Council with regards to Invest East Lindsey that included a business case to justify its future.

In response, the Leader of the Council acknowledged receipt of the report and the recommendations made, however highlighted that Executive Board had not yet discussed this in terms of the recommendations but confirmed that the report would be passed onto the Portfolio Holder and the wider Board for full consideration prior to responding to Overview Committee.

Members were advised that the recommendations pertaining to Kingfisher Caravan Park were set out at Exempt Appendix A1 of the report referred. Should Members wish to discuss the detail within the Appendix, a vote would be taken to move into Exempt session.

During his summary, Councillor Simpson stated that he was happy to take questions arising from the report.

- Councillor Fiona Martin, Chairman of the Overview Committee thanked Councillor Simpson and the members of the panel for their input into the report and reassured Members that once a response had been received from Executive Board, the recommendations agreed would be added to the Scrutiny Recommendation Tracker for monitoring.
- A Member raised her concern in relation to how Invest East Lindsey was set up and considered that the Leader and Executive Board Members needed to give this due consideration as good governance was vital and stressed that the setting up of a company must be done properly and diligently.
- A Member stated that his view of Invest East Lindsey was that the Council was essentially trying to run this as a private business and did not consider that this worked well in terms of financial management or relevant experience.

The Chairman thanked Members for their comments and questions.

Following a brief discussion, it was

**RESOLVED**

- That Recommendations Nos. 1 to 14 at Appendix A to the report be noted.

- That Council move into Exempt Session to discuss Appendix A1.

The meeting closed at 9.05 pm.

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