Minutes of a Meeting of the Council held in the Hub, Mareham Road, Horncastle, Lincolnshire LN9 6PH on Wednesday, 5th March, 2025 at 2.00 pm.

PRESENT

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

76. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Billy Brookes, Adam Grist, Stephen Lyons, Steve McMillan, Paul Rickett and Terry Taylor,

77. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS (IF ANY):

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

- Councillors Richard Fry and Jill Makinson-Sanders asked it be noted that in respect of Item No. 16 ‘Public Sector Partnership Services Business Plan 2025 to 2028’’, as PSPS Board Directors they would leave the Meeting for that item.

- Councillor Stef Bristow asked it be noted that in respect of Item 8 ‘Motions on Notice’ she was Clerk to Theddlethorpe Parish Council and Great and Little Carlton Parish Council.

78. MINUTES:

The Open and Exempt Minutes of the Meeting held on 11 December 2024 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

With regards to Item 70(a) ‘Scrutiny Panel Report: Review of the Carbon Reduction Plan and associated carbon reduction activity at ELDC’, page 23 of the Agenda refers, Councillor Ros Jackson clarified that she had referred to the wording within the report and that this was not her personal view. Following which, it was confirmed that the wording had been amended in the Minutes to reflect this.

With regards to Paragraph 2, page 35 on the Exempt Minute refers, it was highlighted that the wording should read ‘re-appoint’ and not ‘re-point’.

With regards to Paragraph 4, page 36 on the Exempt Minute refers, the phrase ‘stepped through that advice’ related to the Council proceeding in a careful manner.

79. ACTION SHEETS:

The Actions were noted as complete.

Action No. 63 (b) – Report of the Chairman of Executive Board - Social Isolation Grant.

A Member asked that the list of grants circulated in the Members’ Point Brief be included as separate links to make it easier to forward on to community groups. The Assistant Director (Corporate) confirmed he would pass this on to be actioned.

80. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CHAIRMAN:

The Chairman advised of an item for noting as follows:

In pursuance of Section S91 of the Local Government Act 1972, East Lindsey District Council had appointed District Councillors Terry Taylor and Wendy Bowkett to Toynton St Peter Parish Council so that the Parish Council meetings were able to convene.

The Chairman advised that his Civic Service would be held on Sunday 30 March 2025 at St Mary’s Church, Marshchapel which would also celebrate the dedication and restoration of the church bells and all were welcome. The Chairman advised Members that funds raised would support his chosen charity, the Lincolnshire Rural Support Network who helped those troubled by mental health and financial worries.

The Chairman passed on his thanks to Christine Marshall as she left her role as Deputy Chief Executive (Corporate Development) and Section 151 Officer across the Partnership. He highlighted that the outstanding work she had undertaken crossed all committees and in particular, complimented her input with the budgets over the last few years and wished her well in her new role.

The Chairman reflected on the past year in his role and thanked all Members for their support and the respectful and civil manner in which they had conducted themselves during debate of many matters, some of which had caused great concern to local communities. He highlighted that he was pleased to see a greater attendance of members of the public during the last year which had shown him that many were passionate about their communities and acknowledged that change could cause worry and concern and thanked them for their involvement.

81. 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	Denise Lindley
Subject	Nuclear Waste Project Lincolnshire
Response by	Councillor Leyland, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs
Supplementary	None

Question 2	Katherine Barker
Subject	GDF – Acreage of Theddlethorpe site
Response by	Councillor Leyland, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs
Supplementary	The GDF in Theddlethorpe would have occupied the surrounding farmland which is currently productive agricultural land and your current stance on the new proposed site also applies to Theddlethorpe, so why were you not prepared to defend this valued agricultural land and why did you leave the communities of Theddlethorpe and Mablethorpe to suffer for three years?
Response	There are a number of reasons why we left the process and key to it was the change in location and the change in nature of the lands. I take your point about there being agricultural land surrounding the brownfield site at Theddlethorpe, but the key about this is the operation of the site as a gas terminal and the acceptance of that within the local community. We are very aware that it's taken four years to get to this point which has been frustrating. I've made these points directly to Nuclear Waste Services and the Community Partnership. In my view, NWS's understanding of what the safety issues were, the potential of the site in terms of apprenticeships and all those things that we know potentially could have benefited the area were poorly delivered over a period of time, and only now is it starting to deliver the critical information that residents need. That was one of the other reasons why we left the process, because it wouldn't be fair to all communities in Theddlethorpe and the new search area site to continue the process longer than absolutely necessary.
Question 3	Gregory Smith

Subject	Ref NWS Project – support for residents
Response by	Councillor Leyland, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs
Supplementary	None

A full copy of the questions is attached at **Appendix 1** to these Minutes.

82. MOTIONS ON NOTICE:

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

Motion 1

On 30th January Nuclear Waste Services (NWS) announced that an area of open countryside and productive farmland in between Gayton le Marsh and Great Carlton had been identified as the location of a massive tunnel entrance leading to the coast. High level nuclear waste would be transported using these tunnels and dumped under the Lincolnshire Coastline

Motion

'This council urges the Executive and Leader of East Lindsey District Council to issue a statement opposing the Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) for nuclear waste in Lincolnshire and urge Lincolnshire County Council to withdraw from the project'.

Proposer. Travis Hesketh
Seconder Robert Watson

In his introduction, Councillor Hesketh highlighted to Members that the process for the GDF began on 20 March 2020 when a meeting was held to discuss the possibility of siting a nuclear dump in Lincolnshire, following which people in this region were left in the dark until the news was broken on TV on 23 July 2021 that the 67-acre brownfield site of the former gas terminal had been selected as the intended site entrance for a GDF. He stressed that the community had no say in this decision that would forever change their lives. Residents' minds were consumed by the fear of nuclear waste and their homes, security and futures had been thrown into uncertainty. And since that day, Theddlethorpe had been blighted as every conversation, thought and decision was overshadowed by the nuclear dump proposal and residents had been fighting for their homes and way of life.

On 30 January 2025, NWS abandoned the brownfield former gas terminal site and instead identified 1000 acres of farmland between Gayton Le Marsh and Great Carlton and understandably the residents from these communities reeled in horror at the news. NWS proceeded to host 8 specific public events where they brought along their scientists, geologists and engagement officers armed with expensive models and polished scripts. Following which, Councillor Hesketh strongly urged Members to support the Motion.

Councillor Robert Watson seconded the Motion.

Speaking as Seconder to the Motion, Councillor Watson added that despite the polls, surveys and meetings there would never be a willing community for a nuclear waste dump in East Lindsey or other parts of the country and urged the Council to do everything within its power to stop the county becoming the bin emptier for the nuclear industry and the refuse collector for the most toxic waste known to mankind. He stated that it was time to show strength and leadership in this matter and strongly urged Members to support the Motion.

Speaking to the Motion, the Leader of the Labour Group queried why Louth had not been properly consulted on the proposed GDF area, as Ludensians were as close to this site as Mablethorpe. This equated to 17k plus residents who were going to be equally affected by this industrialisation of the countryside and it was highlighted that it had always been the Labour Group's position to oppose the GDF. She considered that it was important to support the Motion and also to urge Lincolnshire County Council to withdraw from the GDF project.

A Member stated that it was good to see the high level of public support against the GDF and was also pleased that the Leader of the Council had issued a statement of the Council's intention to withdraw from the Community Partnership and urged Members who were also County Councillors to have their voices heard.

Speaking to the Motion, the Leader of the Council clarified that the decision to withdraw from the Community Partnership was for the Executive Board to make. He thanked the members of the public for their attendance and acknowledged their concerns that had been at the forefront during the process, however highlighted that if LCC withdrew from the process it would potentially leave a vacuum of where public opinion actually was and referred to the specific timescales in relation to the test of public support. He continued that LCC would either stay or withdraw as determined by its own voting process and stated that the Council needed to consider putting to LCC that once local opinion was determined by a ballot of residents in the search area, then that would be binding on LCC. If the Council pushed LCC to leave the process without any record of public opinion for or against the proposal, it gave government no sounding board to understand how vocal residents were against it.

A Member disagreed with this statement and considered that if both ELDC and LCC withdrew now, the proposal for a GDF was over. As none of the communities concerned were willing, it was considered that LCC should withdraw from the process immediately.

In response, the Leader of the Skegness Urban District Society (SUDS) Group queried why it had taken so long for a decision to be made to withdraw from the process, and was unhappy with the quick turnaround when the

proposed site moved inland. He fully supported the Motion to keep nuclear waste out of Lincolnshire.

Several Members concurred with the points made, acknowledging that process had to be followed but stressed that now was the time to fight on behalf of the residents. It was queried why LCC was holding out for a test of public support when it was in fact, a test of public opinion.

The Portfolio Holder for Coastal Economy considered that the essence of the Motion was correct and highlighted the need for parish, town, district and county councils to be united moving forward. He agreed with the Leader's comments with regards to LCC fully understanding public opinion by compiling data from a test of public support and stated that he would be happy to support the Motion if it made clear that LCC would withdraw from the project as soon as the vote had been taken.

The Leader of the East Lindsey Independent Group queried why the decision was to be made by Executive Board and not Full Council. It was further highlighted that Louth would be affected by a GDF and would not benefit from any rewards should the proposal proceed. Thanks were offered to Councillors Hesketh and Watson in particular, who had fought for their residents whose lives had been blighted for several years.

Following which, an amendment to the Motion was proposed by Councillor Graham Marsh, Deputy Leader of the Council as follows:

The addition of a sentence to be added to the end of the Motion *'Once local opinion is determined by a formal ballot of residents in the search area, this is to happen as soon as possible'.*

Councillor Craig Leyland seconded the Amendment.

Speaking to the Amendment, Councillor Marsh stated that he had also had people approach him that supported the GDF, therefore it was very important for a properly regulated ballot to be held as there was clearly an element of people in favour as well as those against the proposal and everyone should be allowed to have their fair say on the matter.

The Portfolio Holder for Coastal Economy highlighted the importance for the ballot to be undertaken strictly in line with government legislation.

In response, the Leader of the Council clarified that the Amendment did not affect the Council withdrawing from the process.

A Member strongly considered that the vote should be now, as residents had lived with uncertainty for 4 years and urged all Members to reject the Amendment.

A Member stated that he would not be supporting the Amendment due to the potential effect on Louth as a market town.

The Leader of the SUDS Group stated that he would not be supporting the Amendment and highlighted the detrimental affect the matter had on residents, including their mental health. He did not consider that another vote was required and considered the reference to the 'search area' was ambiguous.

A number of Councillors concurred with the comments made and stated that they would not be supporting the Amendment. It was highlighted in particular, that the wording in the Amendment 'as soon as possible' meant nothing.

In summing up, Councillor Hesketh stated that after 5 years there was no clarity on who should get a vote, if there would be a vote and no date had been set. He added that LCC invited NWS into the county and had no mandate to do that and during this time there had been no effort to understand community sentiment. He urged Members to stand up for the district and reject the amendment.

In response, the Leader of the Council stated that there was no diminishing of why people were so concerned about the GDF proposal and why they were seeking ELDC to urge LCC to withdraw from the process as soon as possible. He clarified the points around the test of public support which happened in a timeline and reiterated that it was important for residents' voices to be clearly heard to gain a true record of public opinion. He further stated that this was not an attempt to undermine the position of residents and their concerns.

In response to the comments made, Councillor Marsh as Proposer of the Amendment highlighted that the Council had committed to withdrawing from the process by 2027 and that the Council had made it quite clear that the proposal would not get the support of the public. He stated that it was important for a vote to be undertaken correctly and in a way that was robust and could not be rebutted.

No further comments on the Amendment were received.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 18.5, Members requested that a recorded vote be taken on the Amendment to the Motion. Upon being put to the vote, Members voted as follows:

For the Amendment:

Councillors: Ashton, Bowkett, Davie, Drury, Edginton, Foster, Jones, Sam Kemp, Tom Kemp, Kirk, James Knowles, Leyland, Macey and Graham Marsh. (14)

Against the Amendment:

Councillors: Aldridge, Arnold, Avison, Bristow, Danny Brookes, Jimmy Brookes, Campbell-Wardman, Cullen, Cunnington, Dannatt, Dawson, Devereux, Dickinson, Evans, Eyre, Fry, Gray, Alex Hall, David Hall, Hesketh,

Hobson, Horton, Jackson, Terry Knowles, McNally, Makinson-Sanders, Marnoch, Ellie Marsh, Martin, Mossop, Simpson, Watson and Yarsley. (33)

Abstentions:

None.

RESOLVED

That the Amendment to the Motion be not supported.

Following which a vote was taken on the Substantive Motion

For the Motion:

Councillors: Aldridge, Arnold, Avison, Bristow, Danny Brookes, Jimmy Brookes, Campbell-Wardman, Cullen, Cunnington, Dannatt, Dawson, Devereux, Dickinson, Drury, Evans, Eyre, Foster, Fry, Gray, Alex Hall, David Hall, Hesketh, Hobson, Horton, Jackson, Jones, Sam Kemp, Tom Kemp, Kirk, James Knowles, Terry Knowles, Leyland, McNally, Makinson-Sanders, Marnoch, Ellie Marsh, Graham Marsh, Martin, Mossop, Simpson, Watson and Yarsley. (42)

Against the Motion:

None.

Abstentions:

Councillors: Ashton, Bowkett, Davie, Edginton, Macey. (5)

RESOLVED:

That the Motion be supported.

<u>Motion 2</u>

ELDC intends to withdraw from the GDF project. On Page 34 of the document "Community Guidance How we will work with communities in England" it states

"Relevant principal local authorities will receive financial support to participate in the process, so that local taxpayers do not incur any additional financial burden."

Motion

This council urges the Executive to generate a claim against NWS for all costs that the Council has incurred in participating in the GDF project.

The money claimed should be split as follows:

50% to mitigation of risk for the flood defence report.
50% to be split evenly between the parishes in the search area.

Proposer Travis Hesketh
Seconder Robert Watson

In his introduction, Councillor Hesketh stated that as the Council withdrew from the GDF project, its involvement in the process required significant time, financial resources and effort. One of the fundamental principles was that no local authority should be financially disadvantaged for participating in the process. Therefore, he urged the Council to commission a professional project manager with expertise in contractual claims to formally qualify and submit a claim for reimbursement. Taking all costs into consideration, he considered that a justifiable and necessary claim could be circa £25m. Funds could be re-invested into critical local projects, for example coastal sea defences to protect the communities. Furthermore, this would fairly compensate Mablethorpe and Theddlethorpe for enduring the disruption caused by the unwanted project. Members were urged to support the Motion and take swift and decisive action to recover the costs from NWS.

Councillor Robert Watson seconded the Motion.

Speaking to the Motion, the Leader of the Council stated that he was fully aware of the potentials of submitting a claim for reimbursement and had directed the Chief Executive to look into this in detail. He added that the Council had not engaged in consultancy work at the current time as it needed to undertake research work for the process and get an understanding of what was involved.

The Leader added that he was happy to support the Motion, however considered that it was important to broaden the potential spend of any claim further than that as set out in the Motion as there were some existing community pots of money that could be supplemented by a successful claim.

The Leader further advised that if LCC remained in the process, NWS would in effect be the developer of the site and the Council would have a role and responsibility as a local planning authority.

A Member stated that she was happy to support the Motion and that the cost to residents' lives over the last 4 years needed to be considered.

The Leader of the SUDS Group stated that the was happy to support the Motion, however did not agree that a percentage of the money could be split between the villages or parishes as the search area had not been defined.

A Member stated that she was happy to support the Motion, however proposed an amendment that the money claimed be put to a politically

balanced committee and a decision deferred on where such reclaimed funds would be allocated until such time.

The proposed amendment was put to the Proposer and Seconder who stated that they were both happy to accept the change. Following which, consent from Council was received.

Debate on the Motion continued and a Member stated that consideration should be given to paying the Council Tax of those communities who had endured mental health issues and stress over the last 4 years, rather than spending on general projects.

Several Members concurred with the points made and supported that any monies from a claim be used towards flood defences and the affected communities.

Following which, an amendment to the Motion was proposed by Councillor Steve Kirk, Portfolio Holder for Coastal Economy, Deputy Leader of the Council as follows:

The second point to be *'50% to be split evenly between parishes affected by the GDF projects that include parishes of old and parishes of new'*.

The Amendment was not seconded.

A Member stated that she would like to see community facilities, for example a visitor centre benefit from any monies received.

In conclusion, Councillor Watson as Seconder to the Motion commented that it was clear to all present that the Council would be failing in its duty not to generate a claim against NWS for all costs incurred and urged Members to support the Motion.

Upon being put to the vote, the Chairman advised Members that they were voting on the amended wording to the Motion as follows:

'That the money claimed be put to a politically balanced committee and a decision deferred on where such reclaimed funds would be allocated until such time'.

RESOLVED:

That the Motion be supported.

83. REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD:

The Leader of the Council presented Members with his report, pages 63 to 64 of the Agenda refer.

Further to his report, the Leader provided an update in relation to the Healthy Living Team – local support as follows:

It was highlighted to Members that the Council was committed to supporting its residents to access and navigate online support and services as basic digital skills and confidence helped people save time, money, reduce social isolation and helped them fully engage with society.

The Council's Healthy Living team had been working closely with local digital inclusion charity Lincs Digital to help people at the Council's community digital drop-ins across the district and together had offered people non-judgemental and friendly help.

Following this successful partnership, the Leader of the Council was pleased to announce it would continue working with Lincs Digital this year and the charity would become ELDC's 'digital inclusion partner' to help it better understand the needs of the community and offer practical help to reduce barriers to accessing the internet.

To find out more about the Council's digital inclusion work, community-drop-ins or information and advice for people on accessing data, devices and support Members could visit: https://www.e-lindsey.gov.uk/DigitalInclusion

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

Internal Drainage Board (IDB) Special Interest Group (SIG)

Members were pleased to see that the SIG had successfully obtained an uplift to the one-off grant awarded to meet the levy increases which had increased from £3m to £5m.

A Member considered that it was important to leave a legacy for the future with the IDBs and SIGs and queried how this would translate into a new authority following local government reorganisation and how plans would be put in place for this to go forward.

In response, the Leader of the Council advised that with regards to legacy projects there would be limited time to engage in this, however the Council was in a fortunate position where it had the means to do this. The Leader added that IDBs would continue after the new local government structures were in place and it was important to ensure they continued to be well-funded, as well as maintaining good working relationships with external agencies.

Thanks were passed to the out-going Deputy Chief Executive (Corporate Development)/Section 151 Officer who had been a wonderful advocate for East Lindsey for the IDB levies.

GDF Update

A Member queried whether the Community Partnership's (CP) search area/ward boundaries remained appropriate as they did not take Louth into account.

In response, the Leader of the Council advised that the search areas would be discussed at the next CP Meeting and he would continue to attend the meetings until the ELDC Executive Board made a decision to leave the GDF process.

A Member thanked the Leader of the Council for his update on the proposed nuclear waste dump. However, it was considered that if the Council wished to portray itself as a caring Council then it needed to focus on the people affected by this rather than the land and acknowledge the stress and anxiety caused to the people of Theddlethorpe by offering an apology to them.

In response, the Leader of the Council stated that he was intensely aware of the hurt and concern that had been suffered by local residents and added that the statement he made when he announced the Council's intention to withdraw from the Community Partnership clearly addressed that. He added that he could not make an apology as any responsible council would have had to engage in the process from start to finish to gain a full understanding of the proposal. He regretted that the process had taken 4 years to get to this point, however many challenges had been presented along the way.

A Member thanked the Leader of the Council for his leadership, and for his statement on the intention to leave the NWS Community Partnership (CP) which bode very well for the new authority to be set up. He further asked that the Leader made it his intention to oppose nuclear reactors on the Lincolnshire coastline.

In response, the Leader of the Council thanked the Member for his comments and hoped that after the local government reorganisation there would be Councillors in the new model authority to shape the changes that were to come and to maintain a strong link between residents and representatives.

<u>Healthy Living Team – local support.</u>

Members collectively offered their best wishes to the future success of the Healthy Living Team and agreed that it was really important that all lived healthier lives.

<u>Local Government Reorganisation</u>

A Member queried why there was no public update relating to Local Government Reorganisation and highlighted that it was a concern that the Council had to take a position on this by 21st March 2025.

Following which, assurance was requested that any representations made on this would be backed by evidence on council spend, income generation, travel

and work patterns, for example, so that any future authority was sustainable and not set up to fail the residents.

In response, the Leader of the Council thanked the Member for the points well-made and advised that similar issues had been highlighted at the District Leaders and Chief Executive Meeting earlier that day. He agreed that it was important for evidence to be put forward and also an understanding of what any potential structures would be. Members were reminded that an all-Councillor Member Briefing had been scheduled after the close of the meeting.

In conclusion, the Leader of the Council passed his thanks to the Chairman of the Councillor for his exemplary service during the year and further extended his best wishes to the Deputy Chief Executive (Corporate Development)/S151 Officer in her new role.

N.B. The Meeting adjourned for a comfort break at 3.35pm and re-convened at 3.51pm.

N.B. Councillor Andrew Leonard joined the Meeting at 3.51pm.

84. SUSPENSION OF COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES:

RESOLVED:

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

85. ANNUAL BUDGET REPORT 2025/26, MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY, CAPITAL PROGRAMME AND CAPITAL STRATEGY, TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICY/STRATEGY AND ANNUAL DELIVERY PLAN:

N.B. A recorded vote was mandatory on the Annual Budget Report 2025/26 in line with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014.

A report was presented to enable consideration of the Annual Budget Report 2025/26, Medium Term Financial Strategy, Capital Programme and Capital Strategy, Treasury Management Policy/Strategy and Annual Delivery Plan, pages 65 to 232 of the Agenda refer.

During his introduction Councillor Kemp, Portfolio Holder for Finance highlighted that for 2025/26 the challenges before the Council remained, but with a different emphasis. These were not being driven from worldwide events as the Council had previously experienced, but from government and through policy changes. This meant that the Council was receiving significantly less government support than in previous years, with the removal of the Rural Services Delivery Grant. Further significant changes were

planned for the coming year in terms of Business Rates and more changes to future year settlements, plus Devolution and Local Government Re-organisation, therefore there could be no doubt there would be further challenges ahead.

Main points relating to the budget were explained in detail on pages 67 to 60 of the Agenda referred, as follows:

- Key Budget Pressures
- Council Tax and Business Rates
- Local Government Settlement
- Internal Drainage Boards
- Capital Programme
- Reserves
- Balancing the Budget and other proposed changes
- Additional Considerations

In summary, the Portfolio Holder for Finance considered that the budget presented a balanced and positive picture, despite challenging circumstances and appropriately met the issues the Council faced whilst maximising grant income to invest in local assets to the benefit of the communities.

Following which, it was Proposed and Seconded:

- That Recommendations 1 – 9 of the Annual Budget Report 2025/26, Medium Term Financial Strategy, Capital Programme and Capital Strategy, Treasury Management Policy/Strategy, MRP Policy and Annual Investment Strategy and the Annual Delivery Plan including the approval of Council Tax levels as considered by Executive Board on 20 February 2025 be approved.

An Amendment by the Labour Group was Proposed by Councillor Ros Jackson and Seconded by Councillor David Hall as detailed below.

Labour budget amendment 2025/26:

<u>HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND BOOST</u>

Due to cost of living pressures, ELDC's Household Support Fund ran out earlier last year due to high demand. This year there will be expected pressures on household budgets due to rising food prices and sustained fuel prices. Therefore, we propose to supplement the Household Support Fund by an extra £250,000 in order to help more of the district's vulnerable households. The existing government funding is £445,293.

<u>CAR PARK SOLAR PANELS</u>

We propose to invest in improvements to the council's car parks with solar canopies in order to create an increased ongoing revenue stream for the council, and to assist in the transition to net zero by 2040. This may also

include charging points for electric vehicles. EV charging points will increase the capital costs but reduce the payback time for any installation.

A reserve of £330,000 will be created to draw on to begin work on installing solar panels over the most promising car parks in ELDC ownership. The project will draw on experience from the pilot solar installation at the Hub in Horncastle.

SUPPORTING AFFORDABLE HOMES

We will be putting £300,000 towards supporting the delivery of affordable rented homes in the district, whether those homes are via council housing or in collaboration with a social housing provider. This money will be used to help build more sites for affordable housing throughout the district that would not otherwise be viable.

SAVINGS

We plan to fund these projects in three ways. We will allocate £680,000 from the Corporate Priorities Reserve. This would leave a projected £13,887,000 in that reserve by March 31st 2026, for the delivery of other corporate priorities.
We will also draw £200,000 from the Business Rates Volatility Reserve, leaving a projected £5,595,000 in that reserve by 31st March 2026.

2025/26
Spending

Household Support Fund	£250,000
Solar panels over council car parks	£330,000
Affordable homes support	£300,000
Total	£880,000

Savings Plans

Corporate Priorities Reserve	£680,000
Business Rates Volatility Reserve	£200,000
Total	£880,000

No changes to 2026/27, 2027/28, 2028/29, and 2029/30.

During her introduction of the Amendment, Councillor Jackson highlighted an error in ‘Savings’ and stated that this should read ‘We plan to fund these projects in two ways’.

Debate ensued on the Amendment, and a Member commented that whilst laudable, caution needed to be exercised regarding car park solar panels with

a cost benefit analysis undertaken to ensure the benefits outweighed the investment.

In response, the Leader of the Council acknowledged that some due diligence needed to be undertaken, however the general principle of car park solar panels was supported. With regards to the amendment to the budget proposed by the Labour Group on the whole, the Leader advised that he had spoken to the relevant Portfolio Holders in respect of the subject areas and with the agreement of the Proposer and Seconder of the proposals, he proposed that this be absorbed into the main budget 2025/26 rather than as a separate amendment to the budget.

The Proposers and Seconders of the Motion and Amendment stated that they were happy to accept this proposal and by consent of the Council it was agreed that the detail contained within the Amendment be absorbed into the 2025/26 Budget.

Following which, a Member queried whether the Section 151 Officer considered the above proposal to be a sound decision for the Council.

In response, the Section 151 Officer advised that the proposal would require working up in terms of detail provided, however the Council's reserves were in a healthy condition. It was further highlighted that the Council already had funding for matters such as decarbonisation schemes and also had priorities around supporting the vulnerable. It was clarified that all of the items that were being considered were already within the policy framework which would be expanded with the use of some of the reserves that were as a result of renewable windfall that had occurred.

Debate returned to the original proposition.

The Leader of the SUDS Group passed his thanks to the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Section 151 Officer and the Finance Team for their hard work on delivering a balanced budget and added that he was pleased to see the Amendment had been incorporated into the budget and was happy to support this.

A Member stated that he was not happy with the inclusion of the solar panels for car parks. In response, the Portfolio Holder for Finance stated that putting solar panels on car parks was an issue that divided people, however was very happy to accept this as part of the Labour Group's proposals.

A Member referred to Table 7 'Fees, Charges and Rental Income', page 88 of the Agenda refers and queried whether the £100k set aside for enhancement at Kingfisher Caravan Park would be sufficient. In response, the Portfolio Holder for Finance agreed to seek clarification on this.

A Member queried whether the Council paid Business Rates on its own car parks. She further supported the budget and urged the Council to spend its

reserves to ensure this was spent in the district before it was absorbed into a new authority.

A Member referred to food waste detailed at page 101 of the Agenda and highlighted the £1.375m allocated to this. It was queried whether this amount was for the food caddies and whether it included the costs for collection. Following which, it was requested that a breakdown be provided for this. In response, the Portfolio Holder for Finance advised that he had discussed this with the Portfolio Holder for Operational Services and advised that this was essentially a government mandated cost. The capital cost for this was included in a vehicle procurement process.

A Member thanked the Labour Group for putting the Amendment forward. He referred to the £300k to be allocated to affordable rented homes in the district, however considered whether this amount would be sufficient to make a difference.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning considered the budget to be fair and that it delivered on the Council's ambitions. He stated that credit must be passed to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and his predecessors in post. He added that it was an immense achievement to receive a further one-off grant for the IDBs, a fair increase for council tax and further welcomed the enhancement to the community support grants. He highlighted that he was happy to support the paper and that as a Portfolio Holder he was privileged to work in a council where ambitions were achievable and affordable.

A Member commented that she was pleased to see that after 4 years a proposal for solar panels on car parks had been agreed and was happy to support the budget paper.

A Member offered his congratulations to the Portfolio Holder for Finance for a well-presented budget. He highlighted that inflation was currently forecast at 2.5%, however it was anticipated that this may be upwards of 5% later in the year and asked for clarification on what flexibility had been built into the budget as this would create a pressure on services. He further supported the Labour Group's amendment and concurred with a previous point made with regards to undertaking a feasibility study for the solar panels on car parks.

In response, the Portfolio Holder for Finance stated that all budgets considered the rates of inflation, however advised Members that the Council's reserves were in good shape, if required to fill a gap.

A further comment was made in relation to caravan licensing and the funding that had recently been allocated to addressing this. He highlighted that a large number of sites were breaching the rules and regulations with little enforcement and that the work to be undertaken to address this must be well managed. It was further considered that as a local authority, the Council needed to do more in terms of using technology to bring costs down and also deliver on green masterplans.

A Member commented that it was pleasing to see that car park charges were not being increased which was really good news for market towns.

A further comment was made that investment should be put into Artificial Intelligence (AI) and it was queried why PSPS Limited had the monopoly on this. In response, the Leader of the Council acknowledged that AI was an issue and an area of endeavour with PSPS Limited and thanked the Member for a point well made. The Portfolio Holder for Finance added that as AI was relatively new, there was little legislation and regulations that covered this.

The Leader of the Council passed his appreciation on to the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Section 151 Officer and the Finance Team and highlighted that the Council was in a very fortunate position as it headed towards local government reorganisation. He added that he was pleased to see car parking charges had been frozen and also that Councillor Community Grants had been increased from £2k to £4k for 2025/26.

In conclusion, the Portfolio Holder for Finance thanked Members for their supportive comments to the budget papers.

Upon being put to the vote, it was

RESOLVED:

a) That the results of the Public Consultation process (Appendix 7 of the report referred) and the minute of the Overview Committee held on 28th January 2025 (Appendix 8 of the report referred) be noted.

b) That the following recommendations as considered by Executive Board on 20th February 2025 be approved as follows:

1. That the Revenue Estimates for the General Fund 2025/26 (Appendices 1, 1a and 1b of the report referred) be approved.
2. That the Council Tax for a Band D property in 2025/26 be set at £171.54 (£4.95 per annum increase on 2024/25 levels).
3. The additions to and use of reserves (as detailed at Appendix 1 to the report referred) be approved.
4. The Medium-Term Financial Strategy (at Appendix 1 to the report referred) be approved.
5. The Capital Programmes and Capital Strategy (Appendices 1, 2 and 3 of the report referred) be approved.
6. The Section 25 addendum (Appendix 1 to the report referred) be noted.
7. That the Treasury Management Policy Statement and Treasury Management Strategy Statement including MRP Policy (at Appendix 4 to the report referred) be approved.
8. The Fees and Charges Schedule 2025/26 (Appendix 5 to the report referred) be approved.
9. The Annual Delivery Plan for 2025/26 (Appendix 6 to the report referred) be approved.

c) That by consent of the Council, it be agreed that the detail contained within the Amendment put forward by the Labour Group be absorbed into the 2025/26 Budget.

For the Proposal: Councillors Aldridge, Arnold, Ashton, Avison, Bowkett, Bristow, Danny Brookes, Jimmy Brookes, Campbell-Wardman, Cullen, Cunnington, Dannatt, Davie, Dawson, Devereux, Dickinson, Drury, Edginton, Evans, Eyre, Foster, Fry, Gray, Alex Hall, David Hall, Hesketh, Hobson, Horton, Jackson, Jones, Sam Kemp, Tom Kemp, Kirk, James Knowles, Terry Knowles, Leonard, Leyland, McNally, Macey, Makinson-Sanders, Marnoch, Ellie Marsh, Graham Marsh, Martin, Mossop, Simpson, Watson, Yarsley – 48

Against the Proposal: None

Abstentions: None

Absent: Councillors Billy Brookes, Grist, Grover, Lyons, McMillan, Rickett and Taylor - 7

86. COUNCIL TAX SETTING 2025/26:

N.B. A recorded vote was mandatory on Council Tax Setting 2025/26, in line with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance presented a report to enable consideration of the amounts of Council Tax applicable for 2025/26 for each valuation band and in each part of the district.

The East Lindsey District Council budget for 2025/26 was considered by Executive Board on 20th February 2025, Minute No. 7 refers and recommendations were now provided to Council on 5th March 2025, setting the Band D Council tax at £171.54, a £4.95 (2.97%) increase on 2024/25. The Budget report was based on the finance settlement advised by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

Full details were set out at Sections 1 to 10 and Appendices A to E of the Agenda, pages 234 to 258 refer.

The recommendations were duly Proposed and Seconded.

No comments or questions were received.

RESOLVED:

That the formal Council Tax resolutions for 2025/26 as set out in Appendix A to the report and summarised in Paragraph 4.1 be approved.

For the Proposals: Councillors Aldridge, Arnold, Ashton, Avison, Bowkett, Bristow, Danny Brookes, Jimmy Brookes, Campbell-Wardman, Cullen, Cunnington, Dannatt, Davie, Dawson, Devereux, Dickinson, Drury, Edginton, Evans, Eyre, Foster, Fry, Gray, Alex Hall, David Hall, Hesketh, Hobson, Horton, Jackson, Jones, Sam Kemp, Tom Kemp, Kirk, James Knowles, Terry Knowles, Leonard, Leyland, McNally, Macey, Makinson-Sanders, Marnoch, Ellie Marsh, Graham Marsh, Martin, Mossop, Simpson, Watson and Yarsley– 48

Against the Proposals: None

Abstentions: None

Absent: Councillors Billy Brookes, Grist, Grover, Lyons, McMillan, Rickett and Taylor – 7

87. LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2025/26:

A report was presented to determine the Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2025/26. This report sought Council approval of the Executive Board decision on the final proposals for the 2024/25 Local Council Tax Support scheme.

During his introduction of the report the Portfolio Holder for Finance referred to the results of the 2025/26 Scheme Consultation as set out at Section 3 of the report, pages 259 to 263 of the Agenda refer.

The background to the report and the 2025/26 Scheme Modification Proposals were set out at Sections 1 and 2 of the report. The full consultation report was shown at Appendix 1, pages 267 to 276 of the Agenda refers.

The recommendations were duly Proposed and Seconded.

The Leader of the Labour Group spoke in support of the paper and stated that she was pleased to see that the Council was increasing the maximum Council Tax Support to 85% for households with children which would be key to those households who were in danger of child poverty.

In response, the Portfolio Holder for Finance offered his thanks for the support on the proposal and added that it was a vital piece of work that would provide benefit to those who needed it the most and considered that the Council had always been at the forefront of delivering for those in need.

The Leader of the East Lindsey Independent Group stated that it was pensioners who were particularly in need and that poverty with older people was desperate. Frequently, pensioners had to choose between eating or putting their heating on and it was considered that the Council needed to work harder to support the older generation.

In response, the Leader of the Council stated that the points about supporting the ageing population were well-made and pensioners in particular. Recent changes by the government had caused a lot of concern and Executive Board Members had been working to see what could be done, mitigated or supported and he was happy to support the paper.

In summing up, the Portfolio Holder for Finance considered that the proposal was an excellent first step in terms of addressing some of the issues with more to be addressed in the future and thanked Members for their support.

RESOLVED:

That the Council Tax Support scheme be revised for 2025/26 as follows:

- Increase the maximum CTS for households with children to 85%.
- Remove the earnings disregard to Universal Credit claims.
- Introduce a standard £10 rate for non-dependent deductions.
- Introduce a minimum award of £1 per week.
- Increase the threshold for changes in Universal Credit to £30 per week, with discretion for flexibility.
- Uprate in line with DWP uprating amounts for 2025/26.

N.B. Councillors Richard Cunnington and Terry Knowles left the Meeting at 4.44pm.

88. 2023/24 OUTTURN REPORT & 2022/23 ABBREVIATED OUTTURN INCLUDING AUDIT UPDATE:

A report was presented to consider the 2023/24 Outturn Report & 2022/23 Abbreviated Outturn including Audit Update and detailed the 2023/24 outturn position and the summary outturn position for 2022/23 and provides an update on the overall financial reporting and audit position.

During his introduction of the report, the Portfolio Holder for Finance highlighted the following key areas:

- General Fund Revenue Outturn
- Savings Target
- Reserves
- Capital General Fund

Full details were set out at Sections 1 to 4 and Appendices A to E of the Agenda, pages 278 to 280 refer.

The recommendations were duly Proposed and Seconded.

No comments or questions were received.

RESOLVED

1) That the General Fund outturn position for 2023/24 being an underspend of £914k as detailed in Table 1 of Appendix A to the report be noted and the transfer of the surplus to the Investment Volatility Reserve be approved.

2) That the reserves transactions and balances as set out in Appendix A - Table 3 to the report for 23/24 be approved.

3) That the Capital Programme carry forwards from 2023/24 as set out in Appendix A – Table 4c to the report be approved.

4) That the outturn for 2022/23, reserve balances, including the final year-end adjustments, and that due to delay with the closure for 2022/23 all revenue, treasury and capital year-end adjustments have been dealt with through the year as part of the Quarterly Monitoring, reporting to Audit and Governance for Treasury matters and as part of the 2024/25 budget setting process be noted.

5) That the capital financing adjustments in Appendix B - Table 2 to the report, reserve transactions and balances for 2022/23 as set out in Appendix B – Table 3 to the report be approved.

89. PAY POLICY STATEMENT FOR 2025/2026:

A report was presented to seek approval of the Pay Policy Statement for 2025/2026.

During his introduction of the report, the Leader of the Council advised Members that Under section 38 of the Localism Act 2011, a Pay Policy Statement was required to be produced annually and must be approved by Council. This had been a requirement since 2012/13. Once approved, the Pay Policy Statement must be published on the Council's website by 31 March 2025. This report presented the Pay Policy Statement for 2025/2026.

The background together with further information was detailed at Sections 1 and 2, pages 316 to 317 of the Agenda refer.

The recommendations were duly Proposed and Seconded.

No comments or questions were received.

RESOLVED

That the Pay Policy Statement 2025/2026 at Appendix 1 of the report be approved.

N.B. Councillors Richard Fry and Jill Makinson-Sanders left the Meeting at 4.48pm.

N.B. Councillor Richard Cunnington re-joined the Meeting at 4.49pm.

90. PUBLIC SECTOR PARTNERSHIP SERVICES BUSINESS PLAN 2025 TO 2028:

A report was presented to consider approval of the Public Sector Partnership Services (PSPS) Business Plan 2025 to 2028.

During his introduction of the report, the Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Leisure and Culture and Carbon Reduction informed Members that in 2020, East Lindsey District Council (ELDC) and South Holland District Council (SHDC) signed a new 10-year Joint Venture Agreement with Public Sector Partnership Services. Since that time, Boston Borough Council had also transferred services in the company (from April 2021).

The report brought forward the PSPS Business Plan 2025 to 2028 for consideration which was a matter for ELDC and SHDC Councils only as the founding shareholders of the company and was a requirement under the Joint Venture Shareholder Agreement.

The background was detailed at Section 1 and the PSPS Business Plan 2025-2027 was attached at Appendix A to the report, pages 334 to 360 of the Agenda refer.

The recommendations were duly Proposed and Seconded.

A Member highlighted that within the introduction of the Business Plan there were some missing figures for savings estimates, page 340 of the Agenda refers and highlighted the importance to see what the projections were.

In response, the Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Leisure and Culture and Carbon Reduction agreed to provide a response in writing to the Councillor.

A Member further considered that the Plan was light on detail of how PSPS would get to where it wanted to be and that it was important not to over estimate savings that would be made from Artificial Intelligence (AI).

In response, the Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Leisure and Culture and Carbon Reduction informed Members that currently AI was being used at the cold face of business, for example acknowledging questions received and directing them to the right place. As AI was a relatively new concept to most councils' businesses, work was underway to ensure that every advantage could be taken from this whilst ensuring IT systems were secure. He further considered that Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) was a moving feast and that it was important that the councils and other organisations such as PSPS and Magna Vitae were in a healthy position for when the review came to be able to dictate some of its own terms.

It was also highlighted that LGR would impact on service delivery and governance, therefore needed careful monitoring and overall the Plan would require some refinement.

In response, the Leader of the Council stated that with LGR coming along, it was important for PSPS to be a thriving company as there may be potentials for the company itself.

A Member highlighted the problems experienced with technology and asked for assurance that within the Plan there would be training offered on accessibility features.

In response, the Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Leisure and Culture and Carbon Reduction stated that 'Recite Me' had been added to the website and it was hoped that this would assist people with disabilities to communicate with the Council better. He added that if there was anything further that could be developed, to bring this to his attention and he would look to incorporate this as well as offering training for counsellors or helpers in the communities.

The Portfolio Holder for Coastal Economy congratulated those employed by PSPS and the East Lindsey Members who sat on the PSPS Board. He considered that despite some difficulties along the way, PSPS offered a fantastic service to ELDC residents and also helped the Council to save money.

In response, the Leader of the Council acknowledged the work that had been undertaken by PSPS over a number of years with a broad range of services. He highlighted that some of the service areas were constantly under challenge because of their usage and subject to change at a moment's notice by government decision, however managed to remain an agile organisation that met demands. He added that he was happy to support the Business Plan and added that PSPS had delivered well for both ELDC and SHDC over the years.

RESOLVED

That, subject to a similar decision by the other founding shareholder, the PSPS Business Plan 2025 to 2028 as set out at Appendix A to the report be approved.

N.B. Councillors Richard Fry and Jill Makinson-Sanders re-joined the Meeting at 5.02pm.

91. DESIGNATION OF SECTION 151 OFFICER:

A report was presented to consider approval of a designate Section 151 Officer.

During his introduction of the report, the Leader of the Council informed Members that the Council had an obligation to designate a suitably qualified Section 151 Officer. The Council's existing Section 151 Officer, Christine Marshall, left the Council in March 2025.

The report brought to Council the designation of an interim Section 151 Officer to ensure the statutory functions associated with the role were fulfilled. As at present, the role would be undertaken on a shared basis across the South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership.

The background and detail were set out in Sections 1 and 2 of the report, page 362 of the Agenda refers.

The recommendations were duly Proposed and Seconded.

A Member queried why the role of Section 151 Officer was on an interim basis.

In response, the Leader of the Council stated that the motivation for appointing on an interim basis was due to the current position of the Local Government Reorganisation and not offering permanent contracts if they could not be fulfilled. He added that a Section 151 Officer was a statutory role that attracted a specific skill set.

On behalf of the Labour Group, and as Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee Councillor Ros Jackson paid tribute to Christine Marshall as outgoing Section 151 Officer who had been thorough, reliable and knowledgeable and would be missed,

RESOLVED

That Brendan Arnold, the Council's incoming Director of Finance be designated as the Council's Section 151 Officer with effect from 31 March 2025.

92. APPOINTMENT OF LOCAL RETURNING OFFICER - COMBINED AUTHORITY MAYORAL ELECTIONS ORDER 2017:

A report was presented to consider the appointment of a Local Returning Officer to be responsible for administering the Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority Mayoral Elections in East Lindsey.

During his introduction of the report, the Leader of the Council advised Members that in advance of the forthcoming Mayoral Election in May 2025, the Electoral Commission had advised that each Council should formally appoint an officer of the Council to be a Local Returning Officer for each local area within the Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority.

The recommendations within this report therefore reflected this advice. The appointed Local Returning Officers would be responsible for running the

Combined County Authority Mayoral Elections at a local level (at the District Council or Unitary Council area). Local Returning Officers would deliver the election in accordance with any directions given by the Chief Executive of North East Lincolnshire Council appointed as the Combined County Authority Returning Officer (CCARO) on 12 December 2024.

The background and detail were set out in Sections 1 of the report, page 366 of the Agenda refer.

The recommendation was duly Proposed and Seconded.

No comments or questions were received.

RESOLVED

That Rob Barlow, Chief Executive, East Lindsey District Council be appointed Local Returning Officer for the East Lindsey area for the Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority Mayoral Elections.

93. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSONS:

A report was presented to consider the appointment of two Independent Persons.

During his introduction of the report, the Leader of the Council advised Members that at a recent Group Leaders' Meeting, a discussion was held whereby it was agreed that the appointment of Independent Persons should be undertaken as a matter of urgency. However, at this meeting it was proposed that the Independent Person's Allowance be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with Group Leaders and the remuneration of that post could be discussed or decided at a later date.

In Proposing and Seconding the recommendations, it was proposed that Recommendation 2 be amended to read 'That the Independent Person's Allowance be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with Group Leaders'.

The Council consented to debate the proposed recommendations.

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

A Member queried what process was undertaken to appoint Independent Persons, and whether they still received an allowance if they were not called to meet.

A Member considered that an allowance for an Independent Person should be uniform across the Council, for example the allowance for an Independent Person on Audit and Governance Committee was £650 per annum. Following which, a Member queried why Independent Members were not part of the same process.

A Member queried the process for appointing an Independent Person and asked for clarification on whether the two recommended appointments included a reserve member.

A Member queried that given the historical value of an Independent Person, and how often they were called to fulfil the role, justified the allowance paid.

A Member highlighted that a government consultation on matters relating to standards in public life for elected Members had recently finished and queried whether the outcome of this would put a different light on this matter. It was further queried whether an Independent Person was issued with a formal contract for the role.

In response to the queries raised, the Leader of the Council advised that in effect, a benchmarking exercise had been undertaken in relation to the appointment process. He advised that an Independent Person was a critical role which would support the Monitoring Officer and his team in terms of dealing with complaints, making judgements and a final assessment of what action should be taken.

The Monitoring Officer (MO) clarified that the statutory minimum number of Independent Persons required was one. Members were further advised that the Council had to have an Independent Panel in place to deal with any sort of disciplinary matters arising against statutory officers (Section 1.4 refers) which would suggest that two Independent Persons should be appointed. He further clarified that the Council had initially appointed two Independent Persons, one who had resigned and the other who wished to resign. A second Independent Person would also be used in the event that the other person was not available. He continued that an Independent Person not only supported complaints made against Members of the authority, but also town and parish council complaints. The MO further supported the amendment to Recommendation 2 that the Independent Person's Allowance be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with Group Leaders and advised that all information received would be fed back to ensure that the right level of remuneration was set.

Further to a query raised, the Chief Executive clarified that an Independent Person was not offered a contract of employment and received an allowance which could be stopped at any point.

RESOLVED

1. With immediate effect, Amanda Boustred and David Irvine be appointed as the Council's Independent Persons and that they be appointed to the Council's Independent Panel.

2. That the Independent Person's Allowance be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with Group Leaders.

N.B. Councillor Steve Kirk left the Meeting at 5.18pm.

94. DRAFT MINUTES OF THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE:

Members received the following Minutes for noting:

- Extraordinary Audit and Governance Committee Meeting held on 27 November 2024.
- Re-convened Extraordinary Audit and Governance Committee Meeting held on 13 December 2024.
- Audit and Governance Committee held on 29 January 2025 (Draft).
- Extraordinary Audit and Governance Committee Meeting held on 12 February 2025 (Draft).

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

- The External Auditors (Mazars LLP) disclaimed the 2022/23 Accounts.

- Changes had been made to the Minimum Revenue Provision which would significantly impact the Council's investments policy.

- The External Auditors (KPMG) highlighted a lack of information coming forward on Invest East Lindsey loans.

No comments or questions were received.

RESOLVED

That the Minutes from the Extraordinary Audit and Governance Committee Meeting held on 27 November 2024 and the re-convened Extraordinary Audit and Governance Committee Meeting held on 13 December 2024 be noted.

That the draft Minutes from Audit and Governance Committee held on 29 January 2025 and the Extraordinary Audit and Governance Committee Meeting held on 12 February 2025 be noted.

95. QUESTIONS:

Question 1	Councillor Robert Watson
Subject	Issue of sand on Sutton on Sea Promenade and Foreshore
Response by	Councillor Martin Foster, Portfolio Holder for Operational Services
Supplementary	There are still some areas that are difficult to get the equipment into, and access is particularly difficult for wheeled transport. Can you give me a guarantee that these areas will be accessible for all users by the start of the tourist season?

Response	We had some really bad storms in October and November 2024 whereby a lot of sand was deposited on the promenade. Our teams have been working hard and we are evaluating new heavy-duty equipment to cope with this and that can also operate safely during the summer months. There will also be a new Pride Team 2 initiated and the operatives will be looking after the sand clearance. We are hoping to get this piece of equipment by Easter.
Question 2	Councillor Travis Hesketh
Subject	Claim for costs on GDF project
Response by	Councillor Craig Leyland, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs
Supplementary	None
Question 3	Councillor Robert Watson
Subject	Litter on roadside verges
Response by	Councillor Martin Foster, Portfolio Holder for Operational Services
Supplementary	I welcome the investment in the second Pride Team. How are roads assessed for litter picking needs?
Response	Over many years of operation, we are aware where the problem areas are, particularly with regards to leaves. At those times of year, we send out our operatives with the road sweepers. We take calls readily alerting us to specific areas that we may have missed. We have just purchased two new roadside sweepers and they will be operating through the autumn months and we will react to reported areas.
Question 4	Councillor Travis Hesketh
Subject	Invitation to start GDF project
Response by	Councillor Craig Leyland, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs
Supplementary	None
Question 5	Councillor Jill Makinson-Sanders
Subject	Protection for chalk streams
Response by	Councillor Tom Ashton, Portfolio Holder for Planning
Supplementary	I wasn't aware of the draft Water (Special Measures) Bill, so please can I be kept updated on the progress of this?
Response	I am more than happy to monitor that and to provide assurance, this is part of the Local Plan process and we will do everything we can to make sure these protections are included in that process.
Question 6	Councillor Jill Makinson-Sanders

Subject	Outsourcing of waste services
Response by	Councillor Craig Leyland, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs
Supplementary	None
Question 7	Councillor Travis Hesketh
Subject	Nuclear reactors on Lincolnshire coastline
Response by	Councillor Craig Leyland, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs
Supplementary	Will you show leadership again Leader please, and reject any idea or notion of nuclear reactors on the ELDC coastline, yes or no?
Response	The reality is that we don't fully understand energy needs and this is a challenge we face across East Lindsey that there is a deficit of energy provision. We now have the prospect of pylons coming through the district and we will need to work very closely with our LCC colleagues and consider all things put before us. Government policy is where it is now in terms of nuclear energy and various political parties have also indicated that they would support nuclear energy. We will have to deal with what comes our way and understand what it is before we make any judgement on this.
Question 8	Councillor Daniel Simpson
Subject	Proposals for Local Government Re-organisation (LGR)
Response by	Councillor Craig Leyland, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs
Supplementary	None
Question 9	Councillor Daniel Simpson
Subject	Council's view on developing LGR proposals
Response by	Councillor Craig Leyland, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs
Supplementary	None
Question 10	Councillor Daniel Simpson
Subject	Member and staff consultation on LGR
Response by	Councillor Craig Leyland, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs
Supplementary	None
Question 11	Councillor Daniel Simpson
Subject	Updates regarding devolution
Response by	Councillor Craig Leyland, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs
Supplementary	None
Question 12	Councillor Daniel Simpson

Subject	Handling and disposal of assets ref. devolution
Response by	Councillor Craig Leyland, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs
Supplementary	None
Question 13	Councillor Daniel Simpson
Subject	Ward Member consultation for Asset of Community Value
Response by	Councillor Craig Leyland, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs
Supplementary	Why is there not a more formal active consultation with Members and can we arrange in future for more positive engagement in their ward for an Asset of Community Value application?
Response	I am happy to look at this.
Question 14	Councillor Daniel Simpson
Subject	Decision making process for an Asset of Community Value
Response by	Councillor Craig Leyland, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs
Supplementary	What level are the officers who make the decision about whether to list an asset, and again I highlight the need for more consultation?
Response	This is a process that has been in place for a very long time. I will seek clarity on this and provide you with more information.
Question 15	Councillor George Horton
Subject	Progression of equalisation of pay
Response by	Councillor Craig Leyland, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs
Supplementary	None
Question 16	Councillor George Horton
Subject	Increase in green waste charges
Response by	Councillor Martin Foster, Portfolio Holder for Operational Services
Supplementary	None
Question 17	Councillor George Horton
Subject	Sport England Grant – increasing activity
Response by	Councillor Graham Marsh, Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Leisure and Culture and Carbon Reduction
Supplementary	None
Question 18	Councillor Jill Makinson-Sanders
Subject	District Councillors' involvement in Vital and Viable

Response by	Councillor Adam Grist, Portfolio Holder for Market Towns and Rural Economy
Supplementary	None
Question 19	Councillor George Horton
Subject	Councillor Allowances
Response by	Councillor Craig Leyland, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs
Supplementary	None

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

96. DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

The programmed date for the next Meeting of the Council was confirmed as the AGM on Wednesday 21st May 2025, commencing at 6.30pm.

The meeting closed at 5.39 pm.