

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

1 Councillor Jackson to Councillor Leyland, Leader of the Council

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

A

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

2 Councillor Mangion to Councillor Leyland, Leader of the Council

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

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

A

The projects you refer to are locally driven.

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

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

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

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

A

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

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

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

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

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

A

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

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

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

A

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

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

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6 Councillor Horton to Councillor Marsh, Portfolio Holder for Partnerships

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

A

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

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

The Trust is an independent organisation.

7 Councillor Horton to Councillor Bowkett, Portfolio Holder for Communities

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

A

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

8 Councillor Horton to Councillor Leyland, Leader of the Council

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

A

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

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

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

A

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

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

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

A

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

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

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

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

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

A

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

- **Lincolnshire County Council**

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

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