

Minutes of a Meeting of the Council held in the at the Hub, Mareham Road, Horncastle, Lincolnshire LN9 6PH on Wednesday, 1st March, 2023 at 2.00 pm.

PRESENT

Councillor Helen Matthews (Chairman)  
Councillor Chris Green (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors Terry Aldridge, David Andrews, Claire Arnold, Tom Ashton, Richard Avison, Stan Avison, Wendy Bowkett, Danny Brookes, Jimmy Brookes, Trevor Burnham, Sandra Campbell-Wardman, Graham Cullen, Richard Cunnington, Mark Dannatt, Colin Davie, Sid Dennis, Sarah Devereux, Carleen Dickinson, Dick Edginton, Stephen Evans, Stephen Eyre, Martin Foster, Richard Fry, William Gray, Adam Grist, Will Grover, Alex Hall, David Hall, Sandra Harrison, George Horton, Tony Howard, Rosalind Jackson, Neil Jones, Thomas Kemp, Steve Kirk, Andrew Leonard, Craig Leyland, Jill Makinson-Sanders, David Mangion, Graham Marsh, Fiona Martin, M.B.E., Steve McMillan, Daniel McNally, Sarah Parkin, Julie Platt and Phyll Smith.

**63. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Adrian Benjamin, Billy Brookes, Terry Knowles, Edward Mossop, Paul Rickett, Terry Taylor and Graham Williams.

**64. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS (IF ANY):**

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

- Councillor Tony Howard asked it be noted that he worked for Grimsby College, Minute No. 73 refers.

**65. MINUTES:**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2022 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

**66. ACTION SHEETS:**

The Actions of the Meeting held on 14 December 2022 were confirmed as complete or in hand.

**67. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CHAIRMAN:**

The Chairman had attended several events since the previous Council meeting, including the Louth Choral Society Christmas by Candlelight at St James Church, Louth and the Flood Memorial Services at Chapel St Leonards and Sutton on Sea.

The Chairman reminded Councillors that her Civic Service would be held at 2.00pm on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2023 at the Methodist Church in Sutton on Sea and afterwards for light refreshments at the Bacchus Hotel, Sutton on Sea, and all Councillors were welcome to attend.

The Chairman acknowledged Councillor Stan Avison for his 23 years' service to the Council and wished him a healthy and happy future.

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

Councillor Leyland, Chairman of Executive Board offered his thanks to Councillor Stan Avison for 23 years' service to the Council and extended his very best wishes for the future.

The Chairman of Executive Board presented his report, pages 29 to 32 refer. Further to the update published, Councillor Leyland reflected that it was the last meeting of full council of the current administration and wished to add the following:

- Consistent with the published report was the Council's ambition and action to offer support for vulnerable residents, the economy and driving positive change for residents, including challenging social deprivation.
- Looking to drive the economy with the Economic Growth Team and to succeed with partnership working, the Council had engaged with the government's Levelling Up Agenda.
- The Council understood the impact of climate change and how the council needed to operate to meet the targets.
- In 2019 the Council observed developing technologies, for example video conferencing.
- There were many challenges and issues faced, not least the Covid virus in early March 2020 and putting plans into place for dealing with the possible impacts on residents, businesses and council services and recognising all of the changes as a result of that.
- Teams across the Council worked tirelessly to help those most affected during the resulting pandemic. The Economic Development Teams delivered government support to businesses across the district in a very short space of time. Communities came together and Ward Members organised and facilitated many services to residents and to date continued to take on this role with cost-of-living challenges. Notably, enquiries for council services remained well above pre-pandemic levels.
- The Council had seen many benefits of the Partnership with Boston Borough Council and South Holland District Council, having louder

voices were collectively better understood and achievements had been recognised in securing national grants and funding.

A further update to the published report was received and is attached at Appendix A to the Minutes.

Following which, questions and comments were put forward:

#### L G Challenge

Councillor Jackson was pleased to note that the Partnership had hosted the 2023 LG Challenge and welcomed the Partnership's own challenge 'How can the South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership lead the way for flood resilience in the sub-region, and through innovation maximise the benefit for communities and businesses across all coastal economies' and asked whether the final proposals from the teams that took part could be made available to Members. In response, the Chairman of Executive Board advised Members that it was a very worthwhile event and was happy to share that information.

#### Green Homes Grant

Councillor Jackson further offered her congratulations to the Green Homes Grant Team being shortlisted for the Local Authority Retrofit Programme Category, page 31 of the Agenda refers, however considered that the numbers involved was a fraction of what was actually required.

In response to points raised in relation to the Green Homes Grants, the Chairman of Executive Board stated that the Council would continue to take on the challenges ahead and highlighted that it was important to secure funding to enable to continue offering the grants whilst officers would continue to update on the progress with this. It was acknowledged that technology was not always appropriate for some houses, but the Council would strive to make energy costs more affordable for its residents.

Councillor Smith was pleased to note that the Chairman of Executive Board mentioned that the Hub would become energy neutral, however highlighted his disappointment that this was not undertaken during the building process when it was cheaper, more possible and more efficient and had been suggested by the carbon reduction advisors during the scrutiny panel before the Hub was built.

#### Recycling

In response to a query raised on the payback time to cover the cost of the paper and card recycling scheme, the issues of bin deliveries and communication to those residents with a lack of understanding of how to recycle, the Chairman of Executive Board advised Members that he would provide a response after the meeting. With regards to communications, it was highlighted that there had been various rounds with regards to

recycling and what went in each bin, however, he was happy to speak to the Lead Portfolio Holder and officers regarding that to reach a conclusion.

Councillor Arnold stated that she was pleased that glass was now being collected and recycled, however had concerns with the removal of the bins at community points. It was highlighted that during February 2023 in Sutton on Sea there had been 46 voluntary hours on 29 beach cleans that had collected hundreds of plastic bottles, drinks cans and glass bottles and stressed the importance to recycle at every point possible. In response, the Chairman of Executive Board stated that he would look at the issues raised and wanted to address this so every opportunity was provided to recycle.

### Skegness Travel Lodge

Councillor Howard referred to the written update on the Skegness Travel Lodge, page 30 of the Agenda refers and queried now the land had been sold whether this was the end of the Council's commitment and if there were any hidden costs. In response, the Chairman of Executive Board advised Members that he was kept up to date on the project and was not aware of any other costs and welcomed the investment in Skegness.

A further query was raised on how the Council was proceeding with the challenge with government over its regular local planning regulations with regards to Skegness hotels and considered that an update was appropriate. In response, the Chairman of Executive Board advised Members that with regards to Skegness hotels being used as hostels for asylum seekers, following a letter sent to the Secretary of State a response had now been received. Evidence was being gathered with regards to the planning issue with a view to potentially taking enforcement action against those hotels, although it was not a short-term fix and furthermore implications of taking such action would also have to be considered.

Councillor Danny Brookes thanked the Chairman of Executive Board for his report and the positive items relating to Skegness, in particular the Travelodge which emphasised that Skegness was open for business and investment. In response, the Chairman of Executive Board stated that he was happy to see the ambition in Skegness which had wider benefits of access to employment and extending the season.

### Crowdfunding

Further to the Chairman of the Executive Board's reference to physical health, wellbeing and mental health in his update, Councillor Horton considered that this was being ignored in relation to sport, in particular referencing the lack of football pitches. In response, the Chairman of Executive Board acknowledged the points made and advised that the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Leisure and Culture, and Carbon Reduction would be happy to discuss future plans for Louth and

considered that there would be benefits for a wider discussion to take place.

#### Warm Spaces

Further acknowledgment was given to the Warm Spaces funding and the opportunities that this had provided for residents to take advantage of, and also the benefits of people coming together to share their experiences.

#### Household Support Fund

Councillor Makinson-Sanders highlighted the importance to continue to offer support to those residents who were continuing to struggle financially on the benefits that they received and those in particular that lived alone that faced a bigger financial burden and needed to be given extra help.

Councillor Makinson-Sanders further acknowledged the success with government funding received, however wished to highlight the good work by volunteers in the communities who had assisted in the delivery of this. In response, the Chairman of Executive Board stated that his report acknowledged how incredible the voluntary groups had been and how they had delivered for the communities and was pleased to see that there was evidence and information gathered from that process and banked for future use.

Councillor Smith added that it was within the gift of the Council with regards to reductions on Housing Benefit and Council Tax and did not agree with the Council deterring people from shared occupancy or sharing a tenancy through its own policies which was one way to help people. In response, the Chairman of Executive Board stated that he was happy with the way the Council collected Council Tax and dealt with Housing Benefits but was happy to speak to the Portfolio Holder to understand the points raised.

Councillor Howard stated that it was important that the Council supported the food banks, however was disappointed that people's circumstances had become so desperate over the last few years that there was a need to provide them. With regards to the points made, the Chairman of Executive Board acknowledged that the Council was exposed to certain factors in respect of the cost-of-living crisis, however resolved to support its most vulnerable residents.

### **69. 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.

**70. ANNUAL BUDGET REPORT 2023/24, 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 2023/24 in line with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014.

A report was presented to enable consideration of the General Fund Budget for 2023/24 including the use of reserves, Medium Term Financial Strategy, Capital Programme and Strategy, Treasury Management Policy/Strategy, MRP Policy and Annual Investment Strategy, Fees & Charges, Pay Policy Statement, and the Annual Delivery Plan.

During his introduction Councillor Fry, Portfolio Holder for Finance wished to express his thanks to Christine Marshall, Section 151 Officer and the Finance Team for the time consuming and difficult work undertaken in the preparation of the budget and furthermore for the help and support from all Council service areas, officers and Portfolio Holders.

Councillor Fry stressed the negative effects that international crises were having on the global economy and that of the country, detrimentally affecting the finances of every ELDC resident and of the Council.

Councillor Fry continued that the economic environment was complex and volatile therefore, whilst the words 'Unprecedented and Challenging' were appropriate to describe the budget setting process this year, snakes and ladders or swings and roundabouts might better characterise the lows and highs involved.

A number of positive key points during budget setting were highlighted to Members as follows:

- That ELDC had largely met the challenge had much to do with the success of the South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership 'One Team' approach in maintaining services, driving growth and notably, successfully bidding for £68m of capital funds, which would achieve an estimated £3.271m in 2023/24.
- More recently bids to the UKSPF, the Levelling Up Fund and NPO which, where appropriate, were now features of the Council's 2023/24 revenue and capital budgets.
- At £6m of existing savings the Council's partnership with South Holland and Boston was on target to deliver the projected £42m pounds of savings identified in the business case.

- 2022/23 had seen decisions taken by the Council, such as the sale of Skegness Town Hall and Tedder Hall that generated the budgeted £1.5m capital receipt and resulted in ongoing revenue savings of £400k pa running costs.
- The Council had prudently maintained a capital resource base commensurate with its delivery ambitions. These resources were now being deployed in support of projects such as a new learning and leisure centre in Mablethorpe, a new and innovative regeneration of the Colonnade in Sutton on Sea and Skegness Foreshore.
- However, in all of this, ELDC remained sovereign in terms of its Constitution and budget and its primary priorities remained to ensure that this Council remained financially resilient, able to deliver services it had to by law and to provide support to the district's most vulnerable residents whilst seeking to drive improvement and economic growth to benefit its residents, visitors and businesses.

Main points relating to the budget were highlighted as follows:

- The 2023/24 local government finance settlement was for one year only and was based on the Spending Review 2021, the (SR21) funding levels, updated for the 2022 Autumn Statement announcements. The main points of which were:
- A new Funding Guarantee replaced the Lower Tier Services Grant. This grant ensured that no local authority would see an increase in Core Spending Power that was lower than 3%.
- The Revenue Support Grant had been increased and existing grants had been rolled into the RSG amounts and were expected to continue at the current level until the Council was advised of the 'Fairer Funding Review' result.
- The 'Fair Funding Review' and a reset of Business Rates growth would not be implemented in the next two years. However, the net effect of all the settlement elements on the Council's budgetary position was a £6k reduction, so not significant. The assumptions underlying the budget report were detailed at Appendix 1, Table 1, page 49 of the report refers.
- With regards to income, notably the significantly increased return on the Council's cash investments reflected recent increases to the Bank of England base rate from the recent historic low levels which had teetered on the brink of negative values.

Key points relating to Council Tax and Business Rates were highlighted as follows:

- The previous Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) committed to a Council Tax increase in line with the maximum allowed under the recent Local Government Settlement.
- Therefore, for ELDC in 2023/24 this was a £4.95 (3.16%) per annum increase (for Band D properties). This would generate additional income of £321k and the increase was reflected through the life of the MTFS, Table 3, page 53 of the Agenda refers. The tax base projections for 2023/24 (Table 1) indicated growth of 584 Band D equivalent properties (1.28%). Future growth had been projected at 1.5%.

Key points relating to Expenditure was highlighted as follows:

- For 2023/24, a 5% staff pay award had been assumed which would be adjusted (in year) should it be settled at a lower level.
- Electricity and gas costs had been inflated by 50% for 2023/24 as a result of increased wholesale prices.
- Vehicle fuel costs had been inflated by 25% for 2023/24.
- The IDB levy would not only consume all of the Council's proposed Council Tax increase for 2023/24 but also required that significant savings were identified to meet it. The total additional cost of this year's levy increase represented a pressure in the Council's revenue account of £900k and would bring the Council's ongoing IDB Levy commitment to £5m per annum which was unsustainable, Table 10, page 59 of the Agenda refers.
- The Council's budget deficit amounted to £1.608m, Table 11, page 61 of the Agenda refers.
- The Council's exposure to risk was detailed at Table 16, pages 70 to 71 of the Agenda refer. Although the Council faced a significant risk profile, it was confident that all the assumptions identified in the preparation of the budget estimate and Medium-Term Financial Strategy detailed in Table 1 on p49 were cautious and therefore sound.
- Looking forward into 2023/24, Executive Board would be promoting projects in accordance with the Capital Programme in association with the Towns Fund, attendant business plans and the Council's own commercial initiatives.
- The Council's capital programme was now greater in value than at any time in the Council's history, thanks largely to the repeated success of officers in bidding and winning government funding to spend in the district.



- The Council retained a healthy reserves provision, Table 12, pages 63 to 64 of the Agenda refers.
- In the context of both capitals spend and the Council's reserve position the Portfolio Holder for Finance proposed that the following sums were made available for use in the following areas with immediate effect:
  - £1.5m for the Decarbonisation of Assets and,
  - £1m to provide targeted cost of Living Support for residents, including, but not limited to the following initiatives:
    - Extending the Council's partnership with Citizens Advice Lindsey so more residents could access 'financial first aid'.
    - Providing small grants for warm hubs and community drop-ins to support their work to reduce social isolation.
    - Further support for community hubs to help residents access online support and reduce digital exclusion.
    - Review local Discretionary Housing Budget allocation and process to ensure it met needs of residents at risk of homelessness.

In summary, the Portfolio Holder for Finance considered that in very challenging times, the budget presented a positive picture, appropriately met the challenges the Council faced and most importantly that the team had delivered a balanced budget.

Following which, it was proposed and seconded:

- That Recommendations 1 – 8 of the Annual Budget Report, Medium Term Financial Strategy, Financial Strategies and Council Tax proposed by Executive Board on the 15th February 2023 be approved.
- That the Pay Policy for 2023/24 at Appendix 6 and the Fees and Charges Schedule for 2023/24 at Appendix 7 be approved.

An Amendment by the Labour Group was Proposed and Seconded as detailed below'

Labour budget amendment 2023/24:

**Car Park Solar Panels Project**

*We propose a budget amendment 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. These may also include charging points for electric vehicles, depending on the outcome of a feasibility study. EV charging*

*points will increase the capital costs but reduce the payback time for any installation.*

*The project would have the following elements:*

- 1. A feasibility study to determine which car parks will give the greatest return on investment, and to understand the business case.*
- 2. A reserve of £300,000 to draw on to begin work on installing solar panels over the most promising car parks. This would only begin if the feasibility study determines that the business case is solid.*

*Funding sources:*

*This project would be funded with contributions from the Carbon Reduction Reserve and the New Initiatives/Contingency Reserve. As there is anticipated to be a positive return on investment, there will be no negative impact on future budgets. The savings this initiative will make can't be calculated until the feasibility study is done*

*2023/24*

*Spending*

<i>Car park solar feasibility study</i>	<i>£25,000</i>
<i>Car park solar implementation</i>	<i>£300,000</i>
<i>Total:</i>	<i>£325,000</i>

*Saving Plans*

<i>Carbon Reduction Reserve</i>	<i>£55,000</i>
<i>New Initiatives/Contingency Reserve</i>	<i>£270,000</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>£325,000</i>

*No changes to 2024/25, 2025/26, 2026/27, 2027/28*

<i>Total cost over 5 years</i>	<i>£325,000</i>
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During her introduction of the Amendment, Councillor Jackson acknowledged that it had been a difficult budget to set and asked to pay tribute to officers who had worked through difficulties and for achieving a finalised budget. In addition, Councillor Jackson was pleased to see that £1.5m had been allocated for the Decarbonisation of Assets and that the Council continued to deliver its strategy for Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) considerations.

Debate ensued on the Amendment, and Councillor Jill Makinson-Sanders considered that the design of the solar canopies had to be right for visual impact and that it was important for a feasibility study to be undertaken.

Councillor Tom Ashton, Portfolio Holder for Planning agreed and added that design was very important to minimise a detrimental visual impact on the landscape. With regards to any financial benefits to be had from the scheme into the future, this would be captured by the officers in the Economic Growth Team working on the decarbonisation projects. In response, Councillor Jackson highlighted that officers worked on projects

that had been budgeted for and did not consider they were resourced to work out financial savings on anything outside of this. It was further considered that the proposed amendment would allow the Council to generate income and be more sustainable for residents into the future.

Councillor Danny Brookes stated that he would only consider supporting the amendment if there were proposed designs available to view for the solar canopies. In response, Councillor Jackson advised that the design would not be known until a feasibility study had been undertaken. Furthermore, a separate feasibility study would have to be undertaken for each car park considered due to the difference in geography of areas. Councillor Jackson also highlighted that there was also an auditory element as well as visual, and that the noise from petrol cars had an impact in some of the towns which was detrimental to residents.

In further response to the amendment, the Leader of the Council referred to the £1.5m allocated for the Decarbonisation of Assets that would include car parks as set out by the Portfolio Holder for Finance and considered the amendment unnecessary, therefore would not be supporting it.

Councillor Tony Howard stated that he was disappointed with the comments made and urged that the money allocated to the decarbonisation of assets be used swiftly, furthermore he fully supported the amendment as it was affordable, and the benefits were clear to see.

Councillor David Hall highlighted the huge increase in numbers of electric and hybrid cars on the roads and the distinct lack of electric charging points across the district. He also considered that the amendment went a long way towards the zero-carbon promise and did not agree with the comments made on design.

Following a query, the Leader of the Council provided a point of clarification on the decarbonisation projects and advised Members that it was in relation to reducing energy costs by seeking alternative energy sources on the Council's assets.

Councillor Steve Kirk, Portfolio Holder for Coastal Economy agreed with the notion of the solar panel canopies and highlighted that this was not an innovative idea and had already been considered on a car park in Sutton on Sea. Furthermore, with regards to the second part of the amendment in relation to EV charging points the huge cost involved was highlighted, together with the existing infrastructure that would not be able to sustain this, therefore he could not support the amendment. In response to both Councillor Kirk and Councillor Leyland's comments, Councillor Jackson stated that she did not see any evidence of solar panel canopies in car parks across the district and highlighted that there were many things that needed to be done from the £1.5m allocated to the decarbonisation of assets before specific projects could commence.

Councillor Claire Arnold highlighted that it was important for a feasibility study to be undertaken to plan for the future and supported the amendment.

Councillor Phyll Smith stated that he was pleased to see that the Portfolio Holder was looking at car parking options, as set out in the recommendations from the Carbon Management Plan Scrutiny Panel. With regards to the aesthetics of solar canopies on car parks, he considered that these would look better than a mass of concrete.

Councillor Will Grover queried whether the £325k cost set out in the amendment was sufficient to cover the cost of the project and considered that the research and information provided lacked detail. In response, Councillor Jackson advised Members that it depended on the outcome of the feasibility study and also whether other government grants could be leveraged into the project.

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

Upon being put to the vote the Amendment was declared lost:

For the Proposal: Councillors Aldridge, Arnold, Cullen, David Hall, Howard, Jackson and Smith - 7

Against the Proposal: Councillors Andrews, Ashton, Richard Avison, Stan Avison, Bowkett, Danny Brookes, Burnham, Campbell-Wardman, Cunnington, Dannatt, Davie, Dennis, Devereux, Dickinson, Edginton, Evans, Foster, Fry, Gray, Green, Grist, Grover, Alex Hall, Harrison, Horton, Jones, Kemp, Kirk, Leonard, Leyland, McMillan, McNally, Makinson-Sanders, Mangion, Marsh, Martin, Matthews, Parkin and Platt - 39

Abstentions: Councillor Eyre - 1

Absent: Councillors Benjamin, Billy Brookes, Jimmy Brookes, Knowles, Mossop, Rickett, Taylor and Williams - 8

Debate returned to the original proposition.

Councillor George Horton congratulated Councillor Richard Fry, Portfolio Holder for Finance and his team for the difficult job of producing the 2023/24 budget. As a point of interest, it was highlighted that in relation to Council Tax, Spilsby was the most expensive place to live in the district, however had less to offer than other towns and queried whether there was a reason for this. In response, Councillor Richard Fry highlighted that the reality was that whatever precept town or parish councils asked for was reflected in their Council Tax.

Councillor Tony Howard highlighted the ongoing issue of how much the Council paid for Internal Drainage Board (IDB) levies and whilst acknowledging that they were efficient and effective in the work they did, stressed that this issue must reach a resolution. In response, Councillor Tom Ashton stated that he was pleased that the Council had a good and deepening relationship with the IDBs and other related bodies and hoped that a solution would be offered by the government in the near future. Councillor Fry added that he fully supported and valued the works undertaken by the IDBs across the district.

Councillor Makinson-Sanders, on behalf of the Independent Group thanked Christine Marshall, Deputy Chief Executive (Corporate Development)/Section 151 Officer, Councillor Richard Fry, Portfolio Holder for Finance and officers in the Finance Team for their hard work in putting the budget together and also wished the Section 151 Officer success in her efforts to reach a resolution with government on the IDB levies. In response, the Portfolio Holder for Finance informed Members that he took great pride in the budget and hoped that future funding would meet the issues highlighted.

Councillor Tom Ashton echoed the thanks made and also highlighted that the efforts made extended over a much longer period than one year and even in the face of challenges that were both current and needed facing into the future, the Council had managed to achieve a balanced budget with good management of accounts and whilst continuing to deliver services.

Councillor Danny Brookes offered his thanks to Councillor Fry, Section 151 Officer and the Finance Team for their efforts in delivering a balanced budget.

In conclusion, the Leader of the Council thanked Members for their comments of appreciation for the work that had gone into the budget and those persons involved. In particular, recognition was made to the work of the Section 151 Officer and those involved for trying to seek a resolution to the amount paid over from the Council for IDB levies and he was confident for a positive outcome with this.

Upon being put to the vote, it was

RESOLVED:

That the following recommendations proposed by Executive Board on 15th February 2023 be approved:

1. That the Revenue Estimates for the General Fund for 2023/24 (Appendices 1, 1a and 1b) be approved;
2. That the Council Tax for a Band A property in 2023/24 be set at £107.76 (£3.30 per annum increase on 2022/23 levels) and band D

£161.64 for 2023/24 (a £4.95 per annum increase on 2022/23 levels);

3. That the additions to and use of reserves (as detailed at Appendix 1) be approved;
4. That the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (at Appendix 1) be approved;
5. That the Capital Programme and Capital Strategy (Appendices 1 and 2) be approved;
6. That the Treasury Management Policy 2023/24 (Appendix 3a) and Treasury Management Strategy, including the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy and Annual Investment Strategy 2023/24 (Appendix 3b) be approved;
7. That the Annual Delivery Plan for 2023/24 (Appendix 4) be approved;
8. That approval be delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive Corporate Development (S151), to account as required for any s31 grant and reserve transactions required in respect of the Collection Fund.

That the following items presented to Council be approved:

1. The Pay Policy Statement for 2023/24 (Appendix 6);
2. The Fees & Charges Schedule for 2023/24 (Appendix 7)

For the Proposal: Councillors Aldridge, Andrews, Ashton, Richard Avison, Stan Avison, Bowkett, Danny Brookes, Burnham, Campbell-Wardman, Cunnington, Dannatt, Davie, Dennis, Devereux, Dickinson, Edginton, Evans, Eyre, Foster, Fry, Gray, Green, Grist, Grover, Alex Hall, Harrison, Horton, Jones, Kemp, Kirk, Leonard, Leyland, McMillan, McNally, Makinson-Sanders, Mangion, Marsh, Martin, Matthews, Parkin and Platt – 41

Against the Proposal: - 0

Abstentions: Councillors Arnold, Cullen, David Hall, Howard, Jackson and Smith - 6

Absent: Councillors Benjamin, Billy Brookes, Jimmy Brookes, Knowles, Mossop, Rickett, Taylor and Williams – 8

## **71. COUNCIL TAX SETTING 2023/24:**

N.B. A recorded vote was mandatory on Council Tax Setting 2023/24, in line with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014.

A report was presented to enable consideration of the amounts of Council Tax applicable for 2023/24 for each valuation band and in each part of the district.

The East Lindsey District Council budget was considered by Executive Board on 15th February 2023 (Minute no. 71 refers) and recommendations were now provided to Council on 1st March 2023, setting the band D Council tax at £161.64, a £4.95 (3.16%) increase on 2022/23. The Budget report was based on the finance settlement advised by the Department for Levelling up, Housing and Communities.

Members noted an amended title at Appendix D to the report East Lindsey District Council Levels of Overall Council Tax 2023/24, pages 21-26 of the Supplementary Agenda refer.

The recommendations were duly Proposed and Seconded.

No comments or questions were received.

RESOLVED:

That the formal Council Tax resolutions for 2023/24 as set out in Appendix A and summarised at 4.1 be approved.

For the Proposals: Councillors Aldridge, Andrews, Arnold, Ashton, Richard Avison, Stan Avison, Bowkett, Danny Brookes, Burnham, Campbell-Wardman, Cullen, Dannatt, Davie, Dennis, Dickinson, Edginton, Evans, Eyre, Foster, Fry, Gray, Green, Grist, Grover, Alex Hall, David Hall, Harrison, Horton, Howard, Jackson, Jones, Kemp, Kirk, Leonard, Leyland, McMillan, McNally, Makinson-Sanders, Mangion, Marsh, Matthews, Parkin, Platt and Smith – 44

Against the Proposals: 0

Abstentions: Councillors Devereux - 1

Absent: Councillors Benjamin, Billy Brookes, Jimmy Brookes, Cunnington, Knowles, Martin, Mossop, Rickett, Taylor and Williams - 10

*N.B. Sam Knowles, Assistant Director, Finance left the Meeting at 3.48pm.*

*N.B. The Meeting adjourned for a comfort break at 3.48pm and reconvened at 4.02pm.*

## **72. LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2023/24:**

A report was presented to determine the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2023/24. This report sought Council approval of the Executive Board decision on the final proposals for the 2023/24 Local Council Tax Support scheme

(Executive Board Minute No. 62 from the Meeting held on 11 January 2023 refers).

During his introduction of the report the Portfolio Holder for Finance referred to the results of the 2023/24 Scheme Consultation as set out at Paragraph 3 of the report, page 200 of the Agenda refers.

High level findings were summarised as follows:

- The majority of respondents, (73%) agreed that the Council should retain the main characteristics of the current Council Tax Scheme.
- 53% of respondents felt that the current scheme was fair and provided support to those most vulnerable.
- 60% of respondents agreed that the Council should increase the scheme in line with DWP provisions for 2023/24 and future years.

The recommendations were duly Proposed and Seconded.

During debate Councillor Makinson-Sanders highlighted at Paragraph 2.5 that 'ELDC provides information on a range of wider support schemes which are delivered by, or signposted by the Council. Full details are published, and maintained on the website and include the current Household Support Fund schemes', page 199 of the Agenda refers. A concern was raised that some people may not be able to find or access this information and needed help and support with this. It was, however, highlighted that residents were very grateful for the hubs and warm spaces that had been set up across the district and asked that all Members and volunteers be kept informed as there was a huge amount of hidden poverty. In response, the Leader of the Council stated that Councillor Makinson-Sanders had made a very valid point and that the hubs had been created to support those residents with needs and agreed to raise this with the officers to see if anything more could be done.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance referred to his introduction to the budget and reference that was made to the targeted Cost of Living Support that there would be further support for community hubs to help residents access online support and to reduce digital exclusion and assured Members that Councillors would be kept informed.

RESOLVED:

That the Executive Board recommendation for continuation of the current Council Tax Support scheme, including uprating in line with DWP's annual update of allowances and premiums for 2023/24 be approved.

**73. SOUTH AND EAST LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL'S PARTNERSHIP PERFORMANCE REPORT:**



A report was presented to provide an update on the performance of the South and East Lincolnshire Council's Partnership. The report set out the further progress of the South & East Lincolnshire Council's Partnership since the last update on 12th October 2022.

During his introduction of the report, the Leader of the Council passed his thanks to those who were involved with the joint scrutiny panel and made particular reference to the following:

- With regards to the Growth and Prosperity Priority Partnership, the Growth Team continued to work with existing partners and had developed new relationships with strategic organisations to continue to raise the profile of the SELCP and create valuable connections between business, public sector and national organisations in respect of the Council's energy projects and ambition. The UK Shared Prosperity Fund's prospectus had now gone live and the Council was receiving expressions of interest from a range of partners.
- Confirmation had been received that the Council had been awarded £42.8m across the three sovereign council areas for their levelling up submissions.
- Confirmation had been received from Arts Council England that the National Portfolio Organisation submission was successful and an award of £2m over a 3-year period had been made to the SELCP with East Lindsey being the accountable body.
- The South and East Lincolnshire Healthy Living Board had been established and had provided a collaborative platform for key partners to discuss the District Council's Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
- Following the approval of the South and East Lincolnshire Community Safety Strategy, the sub region's Community Safety Partnership had been working on a number of key community safety priorities including a focus on safer streets and night-time economy, hate crime, vulnerability and safeguarding, the safety of women and girls and the cross-cutting theme of anti-social behaviour.
- Eight sub-groups of the South and East Lincolnshire Climate Action Network (SELCAN)/the Environment Priority Partnership had met on a number of occasions to work on their delivery plans with a view to presenting their priorities for the next 12 months.

The recommendations were duly proposed and seconded.

During discussion reference was made to the following:

- Councillor Jackson referred to the Local Performance Measures (Programme Delivery Directorate - General Fund Assets), page 260 of the Agenda refers and stated that the Partnership worked well and joint scrutiny had provided positive benefits. It was however, highlighted that it was clear that Invest East Lindsey (IEL) and Kingfisher Caravan Park were not meeting some of their targets and those entities required further scrutiny as they were both key to investment in the district. In response, the Leader of the Council considered that IEL was a relatively new company in terms of performance but acknowledged there were challenging times ahead for businesses and welcomed scrutiny to address this.
- Councillor Makinson-Sanders referred to the Healthy Lives Priority Partnership and access to health services, page 213 of the Agenda refers and referred in particular to health inequalities and demand on health services that was discovered during the caravan scrutiny. It was further highlighted that access to health services was currently extremely poor.
- Further to the growth and prosperity partnership detailed at Paragraph 5.2.2, page 213 of the Agenda refers, Councillor Makinson-Sanders noted that the Partnership was extending its connection to universities to include Peterborough and queried why Lincoln and Grimsby were not referred to. In response, the Leader of the Council confirmed that there was involvement of local universities and the Council worked well with Lincoln and Nottingham, particularly with the Towns Fund ambitions for the Campus for Future Living. With regards to Grimsby College, the Council was working with them in terms of the new Campus in Skegness and there was also a wide range of involvement and partnership working across the organisations.

N.B. At this point in the Meeting, Councillor Tony Howard asked it be noted that he worked for Grimsby College.

- Councillor Makinson-Sanders referred to the corporate performance measures within the Communities Directorate (Wellbeing and Community Leadership, page 231 of the Agenda refers and stated that she was interested in the data for those people who terminated a call due to the length in time waiting to be connected. In response, Councillor Marsh stated that he considered there was a wide range of data provided relating to performance, however was happy to speak with the Councillor after the meeting. The Leader of the Council added that in terms of monitoring, the numbers of calls picked up through the customer contact centres were significant but the Council continued to do so whilst it dealt with a higher volume as a result of the cost of living challenge for help and advice. It was recognised that there were issues with call numbers and the Council was doing its utmost with partners for this to be resolved as quickly as possible.

RESOLVED

1. That the Annual Delivery Plan (ADP) 2022/23 update (section 2) be approved;
2. That the Performance Framework 2023/24 (section 3; Appendix A) be approved;
3. That the Peer Review Action Plan delivery progress (section 4) be noted;
4. That the updates from the Priority Partnerships (section 5) be noted;
5. That the Partnership Scrutiny Action Plan delivery progress (section 6) be noted.

**74. REQUESTING COUNCIL TO ADOPT THE UPDATED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME FOR THE LOCAL PLAN:**

A report was presented to enable consideration of the adoption by Council of the updated Local Development Scheme (LDS) for the Local Plan.

The Council was required to produce an updated Local Development Scheme at appropriate times. The Local Development Scheme set out various things, including what documents formed the Development Plan, details of any Neighbourhood Plans, and a timeline of key stages. As the review was now gathering pace this report introduced the updated East Lindsey Local Development Scheme. The updated LDS would also contain the list of the policies to be reviewed and an updated timeline for the review.

In introducing the report, Councillor Tom Ashton, Portfolio Holder for Planning made reference to the legislation that required the Council to update the LDS as appropriate. Members were informed that the current LDS was out-of-date and needed replacing with the amended version to ensure the Local Plan review process could continue smoothly.

The recommendations were duly proposed and seconded.

- During debate reference was made to Appendix A, Table of policies to be reviewed, page 279 of the Agenda refers. Councillor Tony Howard asked it be noted that he was frustrated to see that no significant changes were to be made to Policy SP12 'Gypsies, Travellers and Showpeople.' Councillor Howard advised Members that a report was presented to Planning Policy Committee on Gypsy/Traveller Needs Assessment (GTNA) (Minute No. 22 from the Meeting held on 10 November 2022 refers) which based on surveys, had identified that there was no need for gypsy and traveller households in East Lindsey that met the Planning Definition, however strongly disagreed with this. It was acknowledged that the process of reviewing the Local Plan was a

massive exercise undertaken over a long period of time but stressed that changes needed to be made now for the long-term. In response, the Portfolio Holder for Planning advised Members that an extensive debate on this item was had by Committee Members. The GTNA was undertaken by independent consultants and they had concluded that there was no need to allocate additional sites and was reassured that the evidence base was sound.

- Councillor Makinson-Sanders stated that during the work of the caravan scrutiny panel, there was dissatisfaction shown by panel members that many villages had been taken over by caravan sites and this was damaging the quality of life of local residents. It was further highlighted that the Assistant Director, Planning and Infrastructure had advised that the district plan would not be looked at for a number of years, therefore the panel members considered that this was something that should be looked at without delay. In response, the Portfolio Holder for Planning advised Members that although the process was slow, he was pleased that the review including the monitoring and refreshing background evidence of the adopted policies had started early. Furthermore, he was happy to pick up the comments made in relation to SP15 and SP19 highlighted by Councillor Makinson-Sanders and looked forward to seeing the caravan scrutiny panel's recommendations to see what could be taken forward for the future.

As a point of clarification, Councillor Phyll Smith highlighted that during the extensive debate at Planning Policy Committee over the evidence in the GTNA, he was unsure whether the action to go back to the external consultants to query the methodology behind the survey work had been completed. The Portfolio Holder for Planning responded that he was happy to have a conversation with Councillor Smith outside of the meeting.

#### RESOLVED

1. That the Local Development Scheme be adopted as part of the Local Plan by the Council as the Local Planning Authority;
2. That delegation be granted by the Council as Local Planning Authority to the Planning Policy and Research Service Manager in consultation with the Assistant Director – Planning and Chairman of Planning Policy Committee, the ability to make adjustments to the LDS timeline as necessary to reflect the programme of work, with any significant amendments being reported to the Planning Policy Committee/Council for noting.

#### **75. CARRINGTON PARISH COUNCIL - CHANGE OF NAME:**

A report was presented to enable consideration of a request from Carrington Parish Council to change the name of the parish.

The Leader of the Council introduced the report and made reference to the Parish Council's proposal to change of name to reflect the communities within the Parish area and to recognise the recent 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of New Bolingbroke.

The recommendations were duly proposed and seconded.

No comments or questions were received.

RESOLVED

1. That the name of Carrington Parish be changed to Carrington and New Bolingbroke;
2. That delegation be granted to the Assistant Director for Governance and Monitoring Officer to give notice to effect the change of name as soon as is reasonably practicable.

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

The Chairman of Audit and Governance Committee presented the Draft Minutes of the Audit & Governance Meeting held on 1st February 2023 for noting.

No comments were received.

RESOLVED

That the draft Minutes of the Audit and Governance Committee held on 1st February 2023 be noted.

#### **77. QUESTIONS:**

Question 1	Councillor Horton
Subject	S106 Conditions
Response by	Councillor Ashton
Supplementary	What evidence have you got that these have been carried out?
Response:	I am more than happy to ensure you have this information following the meeting. It's the only system we have in East Lindsey, as we move towards delivering biodiversity net gain, this will continue to strain the current system. S106 is not perfect but does bring in contributions.
Question 2	Councillor Makinson-Sanders
Subject	UK Shared Prosperity Fund
Response by	Councillor Grist
Supplementary	Who is on the local partnerships, how are they set up and what expertise do the members

	have. Can you provide further information to me.
Response	I will speak to you after the meeting and provide the information.
Question 3	Councillor Makinson-Sanders
Subject	Council Tax Response Times
Response by	Councillor Fry
Supplementary	Is 28 days an industry standard and do you think that this is acceptable?
Response	Clearly 28 days seems wrong, I see the KPIs and I do know that the service has been under tremendous pressure, but I do have a Board Meeting shortly with PSPS and I will raise this question with them.
Question 4	Councillor Makinson-Sanders
Subject	Safeguards for grants of public money
Response by	Councillor Fry
Supplementary	Did you write the answer or was this provided by an officer?
Response	I am fully consulted and I have sight of every response, therefore it is a co-ordinated response and I am content with the answer provided.
Question 5	Councillor Horton
Subject	Grant of planning permission
Response by	Councillor Ashton
Supplementary	None
Question 6	Councillor Cunnington
Subject	Response to letter from a resident
Response by	Councillor Fry
Supplementary	With the amount of time it's taken for you to answer the question, does this indicate that there are some discrepancies with the BID?
Response	ELDC only acts as financial managers for the BID and it is not directly involved. I appreciate your concern and I advised you that a response is due next week. The reply was provided within the current procedural timescales.
Question 7	Councillor Cunnington
Subject	Legal proceedings
Response by	Councillor Fry
Supplementary	As far as I am aware the CEO and S151 are aware of conversations with the auditors and I don't think that transparency has been

	provided.
Response	I'm conscious of your concerns but I stand by my answer. The BID is being wound up and the matters around this are being dealt with.
Question 8	Councillor Makinson-Sanders
Subject	Invest East Lindsey and Kingfisher Caravan Park
Response by	Councillor Fry
Supplementary	None
Question 9	Councillor Leonard
Subject	Landscaping outside of the Hub
Response by	Councillor Leyland
Supplementary	How long will the building with boarded windows be outside of the Hub?
Response	We know there is a potential use and until that is confirmed we are reluctant to demolish until we are sure it's not required which is the prudent thing to do.
Question 10	Councillor Leonard
Subject	Green credentials of 3G pitch
Response by	Councillor Marsh
Supplementary	Your response indicates residents around that proximity will not be consulted, certainly at LTC there is a great swell against it. Can I be assured that they will be consulted?
Response	Yes, residents will have the opportunity to put their views forward as part of the planning process.
Question 11	Councillor Leonard
Subject	Consultancy arrangements – 3G Pitch
Response by	Councillor Marsh
Supplementary	My concern is that operatives within this Council are cost saving, so can I be assured that this practice will be stopped as these are community spaces.
Response	We follow procedures as required and not every consultant needs to visit each site, if it can be considered without by other means, but I can assure you we will look to ensure that any advice given to us is high quality and correct advice.
Question 12	Councillor Leonard
Subject	Cost of heating Louth Swimming Pool
Response by	Councillor Fry
Supplementary	I am concerned over the cost and also of

	repairs for this, at what point do we draw the line and say it's enough?
Response	At the present time we have no plans to offset the costs on behalf of MV and they will utilise this from their reserves.
Question 13	Councillor Horton
Subject	Contact details
Response by	Councillor Leyland
Supplementary	I appreciate senior officers are often very busy. With due respect, other officers may not be entirely in the loop. As far as the IT sessions, I've never heard that we can contact via the Teams method.
Response	In respect of Teams, I use it quite often and it's straightforward and a very good system. I'd be happy to provide further information outside of the meeting and also pass to the officer who triages any enquiries.
Question 14	Councillor Horton
Subject	Increase in recycling following introduction of purple lid bins.
Response by	Councillor Foster
Supplementary	None
Question 15	Councillor Horton
Subject	Cost of IT for the Horncastle Hub/old equipment.
Response by	Councillor Leyland
Supplementary	None
Question 16	Councillor Makinson-Sanders
Subject	Towns Fund Schemes
Response by	Councillor Leyland
Supplementary	We only learnt about Members' responsibilities and portfolios for something in Mablethorpe recently, have you had a communications course as well as Teams?
Response	Practically is the best way to engage regarding these projects and we are happy to provide information and will support the projects.

A full list of these questions is attached at **Appendix 1** to these minutes.

#### **78. DATE OF NEXT MEETING:**

The programmed date for the next Meeting of the Council was noted as the Council Annual Meeting on Wednesday 24th May 2023 at 6.30pm.



The meeting closed at 4.57 pm.

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APPENDIX A

**Chairman, Councillors**

**This is an important meeting in the calendar of council meetings.....not only is it the budget setting meeting, it is also the last meeting of this council before the local elections on the 4<sup>th</sup> May.....**

**My leaders report is as published and I'm happy to take any questions.....the content of the report is consistent with the ambition and action in helping our most vulnerable residents, delivering for our economy and establishing this council as a key partner in driving positive change for our residents.....**

**Four years ago my leaders report highlighted this Conservative councils ambition to look after our most vulnerable.....challenging the entrenched impacts of social deprivation with the attendant issues of skills provision and lack of access to further education.....so needed to raise the opportunities for our residents of all ages...**

**We also looked to drive the economy with an ambitious growth team and we recognised that the only way to succeed was through partnership working....and of course we began to engage with the Levelling Up agenda**

**I also acknowledged that we had to understand the impact of climate change on our residents and how we operated as a council.....in 2019 I observed that**

**technologies were good enough to have video conferences.....**

**Only those with the most perfect of hindsight could have predicted the issues we have had to face and the challenges we have had to overcome.....**

**I will never forget the meeting the Chef Exec and I had to discuss a virus that was spreading from the far east and its possible impacts on our residents and council....that meeting in March 2020 will never be forgotten**

**Within weeks all our officers were working remotely....council meetings became virtual and our residents realised the superhuman effort needed to deliver services such as waste collection....and our wellbeing teams worked tirelessly to support those most affected by the enforced isolation of the pandemic....**

**Our communities organised and supported each other....you as councillors played a crucial role in your wards...organising and facilitating food deliveries, prescription collections and much more....**

**We still take on that role dealing with the cost of living challenges....as councillors and as a council.....**

**In fact the volume of calls and enquiries accessing support and council services is still well above pre pandemic levels.**

**So what has this Conservative administration achieved against those benchmarks I set out in 2019 and how have we delivered government assistance for our most**

**vulnerable and how have we worked to meet the challenges I have highlighted....**

**In all this, we should not underestimate the beneficial impacts of being part of the South and East Lincolnshire Councils partnership...our voice is louder....our collective needs are better understood and our achievements in securing government and national body grants and funding is unprecedented.....**

**Here is the list....**

- **Household Support Fund Grant aid delivered**
- **£334,750 allocated to residents in receipt of housing benefits**
- **£131,151 targeted at vulnerable households**
- **£30,000 support for community foodbanks**
- **Support for Warm Spaces initiative**
- **£22,000 support for Community Foundation Grants**
- **£404,000 ELDC Homeless Prevention Grant enables us to support our most vulnerable and access more funding because of government confidence in our service**
- **Age Friendly Communities Officer now in post supporting the interests of our older residents**
- **Local Lottery and Crowd funding enabled to support local charities and good causes.**

**Our ambitious partnership working has secured over £70million in Levelling Up funding for East Lindsey to be spent supporting our coastal communities and market towns.**

- **£24.5 million Towns Fund deal for Skegness including delivering a high quality learning campus, investment in the foreshore and railway station**
- **£23.9 million for Mablethorpe to provide a new leisure centre and digital learning complex and new Colonnade at Sutton on Sea**
- **£8.8 million for the restoration of historic sites in our Market Towns**
- **£6 million UK Shared Prosperity Funding for local business support, training and skills development**
- **Support for all our Market Towns. Our Vital and Viable programme delivers extensive and individual action plans to support independent retailers and encourage tourism. Making sure our spend is local.**
- **We are committed to expand our industrial estates across the district**
- **Established Boston College campus at the Horncastle Hub working with the College and the Greater Lincolnshire Enterprise Partnership.**

**Arts Council England funding has also landed to support our cultural ambitions that drive economic growth and well-being. Working with our Leisure provider Magna Vitae we have secured funding for a new Astro Turf pitch**

**at London Road Louth and we are working with partners to install new 4G pitches in Louth and Horncastle.**

- **£20000 to support our cultural framework making sure that culture and economic regeneration go hand in hand.**
- **£30000 to deliver Festive Fabuloso cultural events across the district**
- **£650000 National Portfolio Organisation funding for three years to deliver culture and economic development in East Lindsey**

**For the environment .....**

- **New fleet of energy efficient Refuse Collection Vehicles**
- **Kerbside glass collection and separate paper and card recycling**
- **New environmental crime officers tackling fly tipping and littering**
- **New Pride in East Lindsey cleaning support team that tackles grot spots in our towns and villages**
- **Energy efficient ELDC headquarters and campus at the Horncastle Hub saving £300,000 in heating costs**
- **£3.1million in Green Home funding**
- **£3.65million in Sustainable warmth grants making homes more energy efficient and helping to reduce fuel poverty**

- **Carbon reduction plan in place for the whole council**

**I have to acknowledge that many of the actions we have brought to full council have been supported by councillors of all political colours....for that I am grateful ....but the fact remains that this Conservative administration has delivered over the last 4 years in the most challenging of times....**

**My thanks to the officers and to my colleagues and to all our councillors who have supported our ambitions.....**

**This Conservative Council has delivered for residents of all ages, businesses and the environment....**