

Minutes of a Meeting of the Council held in the Hub, Mareham Road, Horncastle, Lincolnshire LN9 6PH on Wednesday, 11th December, 2024 at 2.00 pm.

## PRESENT

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

Councillors Terry Aldridge, Tom Ashton, Richard Avison, Wendy Bowkett, Stef Bristow, Billy Brookes, Danny Brookes, Jimmy Brookes, Sandra Campbell-Wardman, Graham Cullen, Colin Davie, Roger Dawson, Sarah Devereux, Carleen Dickinson, Stephen Evans, Stephen Eyre, Martin Foster, Richard Fry, William Gray, Alex Hall, David Hall, Travis Hesketh, Darren Hobson, George Horton, Rosalind Jackson, Terry Knowles, Andrew Leonard, Craig Leyland, Stephen Lyons, Daniel McNally, Carl Macey, Jill Makinson-Sanders, Kate Marnoch, Ellie Marsh, Graham Marsh, Edward Mossop, Paul Rickett, Daniel Simpson, Terry Taylor, Robert Watson and Ruchira Yarsley.

### **56. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Claire Arnold, Richard Cunnington, Mark Dannatt, Carl Drury, Dick Edginton, Adam Grist, Neil Jones, Tom Kemp, Steve Kirk, James Knowles, Steve McMillan and Fiona Martin.

*N.B. Councillor Darren Hobson joined the Meeting at 2.03pm.*

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

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

- Councillors Tom Ashton, Wendy Bowkett, Colin Davie, William Gray, Alex Hall, Daniel McNally and Carl Macey asked it be noted that in respect of Item No. 21 'Alford Windmill Project Variation', as Lincolnshire County Councillors they would leave the Meeting for that item.
- Councillors Richard Fry and Jill Makinson-Sanders asked it be noted that in respect of Item 20 'Public Sector Partnership Services (PSPS) – Governance Report' as Board Directors of PSPS they would leave the Meeting for that item.
- Councillors Terry Aldridge, Tom Ashton, Wendy Bowkett, Stephen Eyre, Darren Hobson, Daniel McNally, Edward Mossop and Daniel Simpson asked it be noted that in respect of Item 11 'Coastal Strategy' they were appointed Members to Lindsey Marsh Drainage Board,

however would remain in the Meeting for that item and discussion and voting thereon.

**58. MINUTES:**

The Open and Exempt Minutes of the Meeting held on 9 October 2024 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

**59. ACTION SHEETS:**

The Actions were noted as complete or in hand.

**60. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CHAIRMAN:**

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

- In conjunction with the Royal British Legion, the Mayor of Mablethorpe and Sutton on Sea's Evening of Remembrance.
- Congratulations were passed to Councillor Terry Aldridge who had taken part in the Louth Charity Santa Run and had raised a sum of money for Cancer Research.
- Thanks were passed to all Councillors for their support over the year and for the work they undertook in their communities. He further conveyed his thanks to the officers for their hard work in what had been a very busy year across all sectors and wished everyone a very Happy Christmas and Prosperous New Year.

**SUSPENSION OF COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES:**

RESOLVED:

That Council Procedure Rules be suspended for the following item to allow the Public Questioners in response thereto, to speak for no longer than 15 minutes on one occasion.

**61. QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC:**

Question 1	Gillian Henshaw
Subject	Consideration of alternative sites for GDF
Response by	Councillor Craig Leyland, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs
Supplementary	None

Question 2	Jeff Bedford
Subject	Support for MP's call for a vote on the GDF
Response by	Councillor Craig Leyland, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs
Supplementary	None
Question 3	Nigel Barker
Subject	Effectiveness of the Community Partnership
Response by	Councillor Craig Leyland, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs
Supplementary	As ELDC are interested in the flood defences, given the sighting process is 10 to 15 years where NWS is concerned and regardless of whether the Council pulls out or gives us the vote in in 2027, I assume ELDC is already repeatedly and vigorously lobbying central government for the money it needs for local investment, and in particular for sea defences? Can we wait up to 15 years before improving our sea defences?
Response	ELDC is a responsible Council and recognises all the challenges that we face in East Lindsey. Some of those are exacerbated by our coastal communities in terms of our indices of deprivation. Our economy, our skills, agenda, and looking at statistics on indices of deprivation, you'll understand why we are engaged in this process. We are not wasting our time. Our engagement with NWS is ongoing. And the funding formula for flood defences is complicated and is not as generous as you think to areas such as East Lindsey where farmland isn't recognised in terms of its value that it should be, and we are constantly talking to government about how that changes. But we will take any opportunity that we can to secure those flood defences and it's not inappropriate for us to engage in conversations with the Environment Agency,

	Lincolnshire County Council and also NWS as a government agency. This is all government money, and as a Council, we have to seek every opportunity that we can to gain funding and also to get the investment that we need along our coast and in East Lindsey in general.
Question 5	Peter Hill
Subject	Lack of assurance and clarity ref. the GDF
Response by	Councillor Craig Leyland, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs
Supplementary	None
Question 6	Bridget Odlin
Subject	Alternative areas for exercise - Wood Lane, Louth
Response by	Councillor Graham Marsh, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Leisure and Culture and Carbon Reduction
Supplementary	None
Question 7	Phil Odlin
Subject	Removal of green space – Wood Lane, Louth
Response by	Councillor Graham Marsh, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Leisure and Culture and Carbon Reduction
Supplementary	Doesn't Wood Lane support other sports and functions rather than just football?
Response	It does, and part of this development is to increase and improve the MUGA area and the youth skate parking area. Those will be used for other sorts of sports, but I think the primary use at the moment for Wood Lane is for football.

Question 8	Robert Duell
Subject	Respect to withdraw application – Wood Lane, Louth
Response by	Councillor Graham Marsh, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Leisure and Culture and Carbon Reduction
Supplementary	In light of this, does this mean that the views and mental well-being of local residents are not taken into consideration as this application was submitted without any public consultation at all?
Response	This is not the case. The notice going out with the planning application and the responses back is a form of consultation and we do take seriously the views of local people. It is the views of a great many people that I've been involved with in the layout area that say there is not enough sports facilities to meet the demand that is currently available. This development will allow this pitch to be used seven days a week for several hours a day rather than the grass pitch where use is weather dependent. So this is an expansion of the facilities that are available which people have rightly asked us for because of the growth in popularity of the sport.
Question 9	Mrs A Duell
Subject	Noise level – Properties adjacent Wood Lane, Louth
Response by	Councillor Tom Ashton, Portfolio Holder for Planning
Supplementary	Does any of you on this Council have a clue how the noise affects us? it's got worse since the MUGA pitch was built.
Response	This is a matter that's going to come to the Planning Committee. It's not my place as the Portfolio Holder for Planning to direct the Planning Committee in any of its decision

	making. To undertake a site visit would be a decision for those Members on that Committee at that time. But given that this is a live planning application, it would be wrong of me to speak further.
Question 10	James Timson
Subject	Protection and increase of green space in Louth
Response by	Councillor Tom Ashton, Portfolio Holder for Planning
Supplementary	The answer that you've given me only refers to the Local Plan. What about the Council's overall responsibility to provide and protect open space for residents and take pride in our places as set out in the Council's own corporate strategy, not just through the Local Plan?
Response	The adopted Local Plan, which includes relevant policies are described in the full answer relating to the provision of open space. From a planning perspective this policy will be reviewed. Through the update of the Local Plan, as part of this process the evidence base is being updated, with the results expected in early spring. There is a pressure through biodiversity net gain requirement to provide social housing requirement and to provide NHS and education provision and the requirement as it's coming down the track to provide a 150% uplift in the number of houses being built in East Lindsey and the deliverability of this.
Question 11	Clive Damms
Subject	Failure to provide sufficient grass pitches in Louth
Response by	Councillor Graham Marsh, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Leisure and Culture and Carbon Reduction

Supplementary	When the leisure centre was built, there was a 25-year agreement which never got signed and that was one of the main agreements why the leisure centre should have been built. The replacement football pitch got condemned and that never got replaced. So, we've lost 4 football pitches and nothing's been done about it in that time and I just want to know why we've been left in a bit of a mess?
Response	It's important that we put this into perspective. I'm fully aware that there is a dire need of more grass pitches in Louth and I have spoken to both the local town council, local councillors and it's also been in the Press. Again, this is a request if you, the residents of Louth know of areas which would be suitable to put a grass pitch on, please let me know and we will investigate it and see what we can do to bring that land forward. We rely on local people informing us of opportunities that we may have missed.
Question 12	Andrea Spink
Subject	Progress made on GDF in last 6 months
Response by	Councillor Craig Leyland, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs
Supplementary	None
Question 13	Elizabeth Lawton
Subject	Information withheld ref moving GDF site
Response by	Councillor Craig Leyland, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs
Supplementary	None

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

*N.B. Councillor Billy Brookes joined the Meeting at 2.23pm.*

## 62. MOTIONS ON NOTICE:

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

### Understanding the Impact of a GDF

This council acknowledges the significance of the October 2024 report by Guardians of The East Coast (GOTEC), titled '*The Nuclear Option – Radioactive Waste Disposal on the Lincolnshire Coast,*' as an important piece of evidence regarding the potential effects of a Geological Disposal Facility on the visitor economy.

Proposed Cllr Travis Hesketh

Seconded Cllr Robert Watson

In his introduction, Councillor Hesketh stated that it was really important that the right level of evidence was available to understand what the impact of a geological disposal facility would be on the area in terms of the economy, the tourist industry and visitor economy.

There had been a number of times Nuclear Waste Services (NWS) and the NWS Community Partnership had been asked to undertake an impact study. As this had not been forthcoming, Councillor Hesketh referred to the report created and produced by GOTEC, a grassroots organisation whose interest was committed to preserving the natural beauty and quality of life on the Lincolnshire coastline. GOTEC had undertaken this study on a voluntary basis and it was carried out by researchers who were pro and against a nuclear dump and who had no vested interests. Councillor Hesketh advised Members that the report looked at the radioactive waste disposal and the impact on the Lincolnshire coast and provided Members with pertinent facts and figures contained within the report.

Councillor Hesketh commended the report to Council and asked that Members supported the Motion for Council to acknowledge the significance of this report as an important piece of evidence regarding the potential effects of a Geological Disposal Facility on the visitor economy.

Councillor Robert Watson seconded the Motion.

Speaking to the Motion, the Leader of the Council advised Members that Councillor Hesketh was a member of GOTEC and had previously made his views clear on the GDF at Council. The Leader stated that he would not support the Motion to recognise the report as a significant piece of evidence as the report had not been created by an independent group as GOTEC was an advocacy group whose social media posts were clearly against the GDF or its potential.



The Leader of the Council continued that ELDC fully understood the value of tourism to the district and had undertaken much work to grow that industry. He highlighted that the report did not consider the impacts of COVID and the increase in business for the Council in 2022 and 2023 and there was no reference in the report to various documents in relation to tourism, consultation, funding and investment to the coast and was concerned over some glaring inaccuracies in terms of some of the wording and misleading descriptors.

The Deputy Leader of the Council added that he had spoken to people who were both for and against the proposal of a GDF. He highlighted those people that were in support of the proposal, was for the benefits that this could create for the future of younger people by bringing forward employment. He considered at this stage it was an opportunity to look at what was possible and see what advantages this could bring to the area.

An Independent Member stated that she was happy to support the Motion for the reason she had not seen an independent study on the proposed GDF over the last 3 ½ years since this had been in the public domain. Of the various studies she had read, the Member considered that the GOTEC report had been the most comprehensive.

The Leader of the Labour Group thanked the contributors to the report and was pleased to see the depth of its content and stated that based on the overall weight of evidence provided to date, the Labour Group remained opposed to a GDF.

The Leader of the SUDS Group stated that he liked the report and was happy to support the Motion. He highlighted that it was important to consider both sides of the argument.

The Leader of the East Lindsey Independent Group considered that a scrutiny should inform any Executive Board decision on the matter.

A Member warned against the potential of costs falling upon the Council should the community vote for a Test of Community Support and the Planning Inspectorate found against the Council for presenting evidence for a major application that was not impartial in its evidence gathering. Therefore, he would not be supporting the Motion.

A Member stated that he was in support of the Motion and was surprised by those Members who wished to discard the report. He was content that the evidence had been independently statistically verified, and he challenged the Leader of the Council to set up a survey which measured up to his own quality mark using the Community Partnership. He added that he had attended a consultation meeting at Theddlethorpe Village Hall and was disappointed to see only two members of the Community Partnership Group were in attendance. He reiterated what had been previously highlighted that the benefits of a GDF would be for future generations and that the Motion was for the Council to acknowledge the significance of GOTEC's report and the

contribution that it made to understanding the effect of nuclear waste on the coastal economy of Lincolnshire.

A Member highlighted that the proposer and seconder of the Motion were both part of GOTEK who produced the report and asked for clarification on the legality of this. He further stated that he supported an independent report and survey being undertaken.

In response, the Monitoring Officer advised that in terms of the Motion itself, this was not contrary to the Council Constitution which was why it had been brought forward to the meeting. In terms of a Member's interest, that was a matter for each individual Member to consider and would be dependent on the level of involvement that Members may have had in the production of that particular report. The Monitoring Officer clarified that the Motion was to acknowledge the significance of the report and not for it to be adopted as a piece of evidence, therefore moving forward it would not bind the Executive in terms of its role with the Test of Public Support or withdrawal, nor affect the response that the Council may in future submit as part of a response to a planning application should that come forward in due course.

A Member raised his concern of an independent report and considered that the outcome of any such report would only reflect the briefing provided when the report was commissioned.

As a Point of Order, the Leader of the Council clarified that the Council would submit a detailed independent study of the impacts of a GDF on the wider economy, including tourism and this would be submitted to the Community Partnership in order that it could weigh the pieces of evidence up as to when it went forward for a test of public support.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning stated that the Council had a duty both collectively and individually to be entirely objective in decision making and would not support the Motion for the Council to endorse the report as he considered that there was a clear potential conflict of interest between its proposer and the organisation. He further considered that the GOTEK report made a lot of assumptions in certain sections which betrayed a fundamental lack of objectivity behind the conclusions it had reached.

No further comments were received.

In summing up, Councillor Hesketh reiterated that the GOTEK report included people who were both for and against the proposed GDF and highlighted that evidence provided by NWS and the Community Partnership was not impartial. He stressed that the Motion was for the Council to acknowledge the report and urged Members to support this.

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

For the Motion:

Councillors: Aldridge, Bristow, Billy Brookes, Danny Brookes, Jimmy Brookes, Cullen, Dawson, Dickinson, Eyre, David Hall, Hesketh, Hobson, Horton, Jackson, Terry Knowles, Lyons, McNally, Makinson-Sanders, Marnoch, Ellie Marsh, Mossop, Simpson, Watson and Yarsley (24)

Against the Motion:

Councillors: Ashton, Avison, Bowkett, Campbell-Wardman, Davie, Devereux, Evans, Foster, Fry, Gray, Alex Hall, Leyland, Macey, Graham Marsh, Rickett and Taylor (16)

Abstentions:

None

RESOLVED

That the Motion be supported.

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

The Leader of the Council presented Members with his report, pages 67 to 70 of the Agenda refer.

Further to his report, the Leader provided an update in relation to the recent Peer Review and passed his thanks to all Councillors for their work with their communities and for their diligence and commitment to the Council. He added that as part of the administration or opposition, the forward looking and ambitious work in the Chambers enabled so much to happen across the district and beyond for the benefit of residents and businesses and whilst there had been many challenges to deal with, this had been recognised by the recent Corporate Peer Challenge. The Leader stated that the report was one that the Council could be very proud of and reflected the hard work and commitment from both Members and officers and asked the Chief Executive to pass on the Council's thanks and appreciation to all who worked for ELDC.

The Leader of the Council also provided an update on Nuclear Waste Services (NWS). Members were advised that NWS had recently made a statement indicating that competing interests at the Theddlethorpe Gas Terminal site had meant that they potentially needed to consider other options for the Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) surface site. It was highlighted that it was important to reiterate that NWS's interest was only within the already established search area and that as yet, no other potential surface sites had been identified and NWS were looking to publish an update early in 2025 on its potential options. The Leader acknowledged that this would be a concern to residents within the wider search area, however until NWS had made known those findings it was the view of the Executive Board that the Council should remain engaged in the process. He added that there had been much

unhelpful speculation on social media with regards to this and urged those advocating against the GDF that they had a responsibility to concerned residents as well. The key fact being that NWS was not looking beyond the already established search area and Members were reminded that through debate at Council there was a backstop position in respect of the Council's involvement and also with Lincolnshire County Council.

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

#### MHCLG Pilot Fund

A Member queried whether the three-day energy training session for volunteers was part of the pilot fund.

In response, the Leader of the Council advised that he would provide a response after the meeting.

#### East Lindsey Community Ambassador Awards

A Member commended the efforts of Summer Willits from Skegness and stated that the award was well deserved.

#### Social Isolation Grant

A Member queried whether a list of grant aid that was available for people to apply for was still communicated in the Councillor weekly bulletin.

In response, the Leader of the Council advised that he would follow this up to ensure it was included.

#### Household Support Fund (HSF)

A Member highlighted that the Council was not delivering the application section for residents to apply for the HSF until January 2025. It was queried why this was delayed when some other councils had already opened their application process and highlighted this as a concern due to the very cold weather at present.

In response, the Leader of the Council advised that he would provide a response to this after the meeting.

A Member considered that the Council should take a more proactive approach to seeking out those who might be eligible for benefits but were not claiming them. It was highlighted that the Council's media releases were predominantly digital and raised concerns that in particular, elderly residents had no access to this information. It was queried whether the Council used Council Tax and Housing Benefit data to actively identify and contact those who might be eligible for pension credit and other benefits. It was further queried whether the Council would investigate the low-income family tracker

developed by the Policy in Practice organisation as a potential aid to identify vulnerable households.

In response, the Leader of the Council acknowledged that there was quite a lot of digital exclusion, however equally the Council made sure that benefits available reached as many people as possible and would ensure that the Council understood how it accessed its most vulnerable residents and would also be interested to understand the low-income family tracker issue.

On behalf of Louth Baby Bank, a Member passed on its thanks and was pleased to report that help had been provided to assist people with social problems as well as baby clothing and equipment. Furthermore, in the region of £6k funding had been provided by the HSF to families who had been struggling financially.

In response, the Leader of the Council was pleased to hear that the Baby Bank was doing well and low-income families had benefited from the HSF.

### Scrutiny Review

A Member stated that she was pleased to see that Executive Board had agreed the recommendations from the Invest East Lindsey scrutiny review with an action plan of implementation dates and thanked Councillor Simpson as Chairman of the Panel for his intellectual rigour that he brought to the Panel.

### East Lindsey Investment Fund (ELIF)

A Member queried that given the scale of the funding available, why this was an Executive Board level decision rather than one for Full Council.

In response, the Leader of the Council advised that he would provide a response to after the meeting.

A Member queried whether the funding would be allocated on a first come, first served basis or whether all applications received up to a cut off date would be considered on where best to allocate funding. It was highlighted that it was not clear on the ELDC website where to access information/apply for funding which some community groups may find difficult to locate and asked that this be made clearer.

In response, the Leader of the Council advised that there were some helpful pointers with regards to the ELIF in terms of its potential and how it should be run in terms of delivering the funding and the timeliness of this. This would be monitored to ensure that there was a fair way of the funding being delivered. He confirmed that the point raised with regards to accessing information would be followed up.

### Corporate Peer Challenge

A Member queried whether a timeframe could be provided whereby Members could make comment on the report. It was considered that whilst the tone of the report was very positive, the recommendations and areas needed a 'critical friend' to look at these. It was further queried whether it would be useful for the report to be reviewed through the scrutiny process for general member input. A further comment was made that the report made little reference to whether the partnership with South Holland District Council and Boston Borough Council was contributing to the wellbeing of those within it.

In response, the Leader of the Council advised that a timeline was in place, as a report back was due as part of the process and an action plan would also have to be produced and would likely go through Overview Committee. In respect of the comments about the Partnership, the Leader clarified that the peer review was specifically for ELDC, however in reality it recognised the work of officers that cut across to the other two councils and this clearly showed the benefits gained for the Council by working in partnership.

The Leader concluded by wishing everybody a Merry Christmas and Prosperous New Year and asked that everyone kept an eye out for elderly and vulnerable residents in their communities.

#### **64. DISTRICT JOINT COMMITTEE:**

The Leader of the Council presented a report that considered a proposal to establish a District Joint Committee for the purpose of devolution and participation on non-constituent local authorities at the Greater Lincolnshire Mayoral Combined County Authority (GLMCCA). Participation in the District Joint Committee would ensure that the identities and interests of local communities in the East Lindsey District were fully represented.

During his introduction, the Leader of the Council advised Members that the purpose of the 'Joint Committee' was to establish a collaborative platform for coordination among the non-constituent authorities and be a mechanism through which their interests were represented on the GLMCCA. The District Joint Committee would seek to enhance efficiency, effectiveness and accountability in the delivery of services and policies within the GLMCCA and promote the shared interests of the district authorities for the benefit of Greater Lincolnshire. It was proposed that the District Joint Committee should nominate four non-constituent members to participate in the GLMCCA and its committees.

The full background to the report was set out at Paragraph 1, page 72 of the Agenda refers.

Following which the recommendations were duly Proposed and Seconded.

Members were invited to put their comments and questions forward.

- A Member supported district councils having a seat around the table however did not consider that 4 places would be sufficient and was concerned that money would not be distributed equitably.
- A Member added that his full support went to the Leader of the Council to get a fair share of the money made available to support coastal communities.
- A Member agreed with the way forward and highlighted the need for district councils to have a voice.
- A Member queried the value of the new working group and whether this would safeguard the Council and all the other constituent organisations against the threat that the new mayoral combined authority presented to residents. He hoped it would succeed in preventing local councils becoming anything more than cash strapped agencies of central government. He was further concerned that the Council's local knowledge and expertise in balancing demands of food, nature, homes and infrastructure would be swept aside and that local planning officers and committees would be disempowered.

In response, the Leader of the Council thanked Members for the overall support and highlighted that this was new territory for the Council to approach with caution. He added that the Council had always made the argument about its place and would continue to do so. He considered that the willingness of other councils to be part of the District Joint Network and how the Council worked with four places on the mayoral combined authority would be important.

The Leader of the Council added that the Council had been engaged in this process since 2016 in terms of devolution discussions. With regards to centralisation, the government White Paper had not yet been published and there were rumours of a potential local government reorganisation. Whatever happened, it was crucial to get the scale right. The ability to deliver locally at a district council level and talking about the experiences of a partnership at the scale the Council operated at enabled good granular detail and understanding of all the issues faced and the Council had proven that it delivered well at that scale.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the establishment of a District Joint Committee of the Lincolnshire District/Borough Authorities for the purposes of devolution and participation at the Greater Lincolnshire Mayoral Combined County Authority be approved.
2. That approval be granted for the Leader of the Council to represent East Lindsey District Council at the District Joint Committee;

3. That the attached proposed Terms of Reference (Appendix A) and Standing Orders (Appendix 1) for the District Joint Committee be approved.
4. That delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader and Monitoring Officer to approve amendments to the Terms of Reference, noting that such amendments shall require the approval of all members of the District Joint Committee.

## **65. COASTAL STRATEGY:**

The Leader of the Council presented a report to consider receiving funding to prepare the Coastal Strategy and provided an update on the Lincs 2100+ proposals and highlighted the implications and opportunities afforded by this strategic collaborative work on the current and future works to be undertaken for the East Lindsey Local Plan.

Members were advised that the proposed works for Coastal Strategy offered major outcomes and opportunities for not only East Lindsey and the coast, but also wider Lincolnshire. The benefits of this programme of works could include the following:

- The document and evidence base produced by this work would form the basis for business cases and discussions by the partner organisations with the Government for funding to deliver the proposed vision, strategy and delivery plan.
- This work would enable the Council's wider ambition of maintaining coastal defence and providing future security for our businesses and communities.
- It would support and accelerate the continuing collaboration with partners in enabling development, bring forward economic change and enhance community resilience.
- The work proposed here would have long term implications on ensuring food security/productivity, energy resilience (current and future) and the visitor economy at local, regional and national level.
- This work would help to bring forward a Local Plan predicated on managed growth and help unlock development potential for coastal communities.

The background to the report was highlighted to Members, as set out at Sections 1 and 2 of the report, pages 90 to 93 of the report refer.

Following which, the recommendations were duly Proposed and Seconded.

Members were invited to put their comments and questions forward.



As a Point of Order, a Member asked for clarification on how accepting the money from Nuclear Waste Services (NWS) via the Environment Agency (EA) to undertake the works for coastal strategy ensured the Council's independence with NWS.

A Member strongly disagreed with the Council accepting money from NWS via the EA and proposed an amendment to Recommendation No. 2 as follows:

'That this Council rejects the NWS and EA funding stream, and requests that our Executive Board work with the Environment Agency and that the EA takes responsibility for funding and delivery of the coastal strategy, thus keeping East Lindsey District Council out of the pocket of NWS via the Environment Agency'.

In response, the Chief Executive explained that the proposed amendment negated the recommendation put in front of Members. Therefore, if the Member wished to go ahead with what had been proposed it would be a case of voting against the recommendation.

A Member strongly opposed Recommendation No. 2 and was disappointed that the Council was accepting the money from NWS via the EA. He was further concerned that there remained a clear risk that if the funding proposed by NWS should cease for any reason, for example work discontinuing on a GDF as a consequence of a change in strategic direction or a negative vote of public confidence that the money would have to be found from alternative sources.

A Member commented that he would not be supporting the recommendations as he made decisions based on evidence and not on how big someone's wallet was.

A Member raised her concerns over flooding issues and highlighted that despite many issues being raised over the years there had been little done on the coast in terms of improving flood defences. The Member was disappointed that the money was coming from NWS and that there were no suggestions within the report for alternative funding streams, however acknowledged that flood defences were needed to protect people's lives.

Further concerns were also raised in relation to the risk of non-payment if NWS withdrew at any stage and it was queried how the investment was divided into phases of work and what the timescale would be for each. It was further clarified that the £3m was not going to result in building works but was for desk-based studies and strategies.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning referred to a scrutiny panel on flooding in 2015 which included the state of the sea defences and the challenges with funding at that time. Although beach re-nourishment had continued on the Lincolnshire coast since that time, it was considered that to improve the

existing sea defences would be several hundred million pounds and was currently well in excess of that amount as by 2040 the sea defences would need replacing in their entirety. As such, Members had a clear duty to the people they were elected to serve to accept the money from the EA and put it to good use because fundamentally the decision on whether a GDF happened or not would come down to a test of public support and not made by the Council.

It was further highlighted that the government was imposing a 150% uplift in housing targets and he referred to the current restraints and challenges that already existed with new housing development in the coastal zone. He added that he did not want housing in these areas to stagnate and urged Members to support the paper as it was a fantastic opportunity to accept this money and put it to good use.

As a Point of Order, a Member highlighted Recommendation No. 2 and Option 3 under 'Other Options' which he understood was actually part of the original recommendation rather than a separate option as set out in the report, pages 89 to 90 of the Agenda refer.

A Member who lived close to the sea and represented the people in Mablethorpe understood how important the sea defences were. However, she was of the opinion to save houses and the community, people would have to accept a GDF but wanted reassurance that money would be available for the sea defences.

A Member referred to the Nolan Principles and considered that if the £3m was accepted from NWS through the EA the Council would lose its integrity. However, it was agreed that a coastal strategy was needed and suggested that other forms of funding coming in to the Council should be utilised for this.

In response to the comments made, the Leader of the Council considered that there was a misunderstanding about how the EA was funded and how it worked along the coast and added that over the years there had been various iterations of the coastal strategy. The EA currently had £100m backlog in maintenance and had a 25-year backlog in maintenance in terms of work, not including the lesser river courses and the government would not fund significant infrastructure along the coast after repeated endeavours by Lincolnshire County Council. It was clarified that the £3m was for the study of what was proposed along the coastline and not capital funding and if ELDC withdrew from the process LCC remained. Members were further advised that it had been clearly stated that NWS would not reclaim the money.

*N.B. Councillor Andrew Leonard joined the Meeting at 4.11pm.*

The Leader of the Council considered the first challenge was getting a coastal flood defence study in place and urged Members to support the paper to invest in this.

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

For the Proposal:

Councillors: Ashton, Avison, Bowkett, Davie, Dawson, Devereux, Dickinson, Evans, Foster, Fry, Gray, Alex Hall, David Hall, Jackson, Leyland, Lyons, McNally, Macey, Graham Marsh, Mossop, Rickett, Simpson and Taylor (23)

Against the Proposal:

Councillors: Aldridge, Bristow, Billy Brookes, Danny Brookes, Jimmy Brookes, Eyre, Hesketh, Hobson, Horton, Terry Knowles, Makinson-Sanders, Ellie Marsh, Watson and Yarsley (14)

Abstentions:

Councillors: Campbell-Wardman, Cullen, Leonard and Marnoch (4)

RESOLVED:

1. That the work being undertaken by the Council and its partners in preparing the Coastal Strategy, delivery plan and associated workstreams for coastal development in collaboration with the Environment Agency (EA) and Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) be noted.
2. That the receipt of up to £3m from Environment Agency (EA) to undertake the works and amend the Council's revenue budget for this purpose be approved.

*N.B. The Meeting adjourned for a comfort break at 4.25pm and reconvened at 4.35pm.*

*N.B. Councillors Terry Aldridge and Jimmy Brookes left the Meeting at 4.25pm.*

## **66. TREASURY ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23:**

The Leader of the Council presented a report to consider approval of the Annual Treasury Report 2022/23 in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Code of Practice on Treasury Management to ensure best practice was maintained.

During his introduction, the Leader referred Members to the Treasury Annual report attached at Appendix 1 to the Agenda, pages 103 to 122 refer which detailed the Council's activities and actual prudential and treasury indicators for the following areas:

- An economic update for the 2022/23 financial year;
- A review of the Council's investment portfolio for 2022/23;
- A review of the Council's borrowing strategy for 2022/23;
- Debt position;
- Compliance with Treasury and Prudential Indicators.

The report also referred to a key element of the Council's Governance Framework and represented an important contribution to the evidence trail in support of the Annual Governance Statement 2022/23.

Following which the recommendation was duly Proposed and Seconded.

Members were invited to put their comments and questions forward.

The Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee advised Members that the Annual Treasury Report 2022/23 was reviewed by Audit and Governance Committee on 30 October 2024, Minute No. 43 refers and was pleased to see the subsequent treasury reports coming through.

Members were advised that the value of Property Fund investments had decreased by £4.5m in value during the financial year, page 108 of the Agenda refers. Following which, this had highlighted the need for a review and an active decision to be taken to revise the portfolio. However, it was confirmed that the Council had made money on its investments in Property Funds over a period of time.

The Vice-Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee asked that her thanks be noted to the Section 151 Officer and the Interim Treasury Manager (PSPS) for the excellent and well-timed work undertaken with the Property Funds.

RESOLVED:

That the Treasury Annual Report 2022/23 at Appendix 1 to the report, as required by the Local Government Act 2003 following scrutiny by the Audit and Governance Committee at its meeting on 30 October 2024 be approved.

#### **67. TREASURY ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24:**

The Leader of the Council presented a report to consider approval of the Annual Treasury Report 2023/24 in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Code of Practice on Treasury Management to ensure best practice was maintained.

Members were referred to the Treasury Annual report attached at Appendix 1 to the Agenda, pages 129 to 148 refer which detailed the Council's activities and actual prudential and treasury indicators for the following areas:

- An economic update for the 2023/24 financial year;
- A review of the Council's investment portfolio for 2023/24;

- A review of the Council's borrowing strategy for 2023/24;
- Debt position;
- Compliance with Treasury and Prudential Indicators.

The report also referred to a key element of the Council's Governance Framework and represented an important contribution to the evidence trail in support of the Annual Governance Statement 2023/24.

The Leader of the Council highlighted a key event whereby on 9 October 2023 the Council repaid its £20m borrowing with the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB). Based on market rates at that time, the Council received a discount of £8.334m resulting in an actual payment of £11.656m.

Following which the recommendation was duly Proposed and Seconded.

No comments or questions were received.

RESOLVED:

That the Treasury Annual Report 2023/24 at Appendix 1 to the report, as required by the Local Government Act 2003 following scrutiny by the Audit and Governance Committee at its meeting on 27 November 2024 be approved.

#### **68. MID-TERM TREASURY REPORT 2024-25:**

The Leader of the Council presented the Mid Term Treasury Management update 2024/25 as at 30 September 2024 (attached at Appendix A) to provide Members with an update on Treasury Management performance and activity to ensure best practice was maintained.

During his introduction of the report, the Leader of the Council outlined the background to the report and key figures relating to investment income detailed at Sections 1 and 2, pages 150 to 152 of the Agenda refers.

The recommendation was duly Proposed and Seconded

Members were invited to put their comments and questions forward.

The Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee referred to Section 9 'Annual Investment Strategy', p166 strategy of the Agenda refers. Whilst this included security of capital, liquidity and yield, it was highlighted that there was still no official environmental, social and governance (ESG) criteria and considered that the Council should be working towards this.

The Leader of the Council asked that his recognition be noted for the work undertaken by the Audit and Governance Committee which covered items in a very complex area.

A Member referred to the work undertaken in relation to Invest East Lindsey. He considered that this was an area that needed seriously addressing, stating that the company was borrowing money to service its loans and referred to the losses for 2023 and 2024 as published on Companies House.

Upon being put to the vote, it was

RESOLVED

That the contents of the report attached at Appendix A be noted.

**69. GAMBLING ACT 2005 - REVIEW OF GAMBLING POLICY STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES:**

Taken as an urgent item under Section 100B (4(B) of the Local Government Act 1972. By reason of special circumstances, the Chairman of the meeting was of the opinion that the item should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency.

The Leader of the Council presented Members with the Gambling Act 2005 – Review of Gambling Policy Statement of Principles report.

Members were asked to consider and approve the updated Gambling Policy Statement of Principles (attached at Appendix 1). This was a statutory policy which the Council was required to revise and adopt at least every three years, following consultation. The updated policy would come into effect on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2025.

Following which the recommendation was duly Proposed and Seconded.

Members were invited to put their comments and questions forward.

The Chairman of the General Licensing Committee thanked the Chairman for allowing the item and advised Members that this paper was fully considered by the Committee and was happy to endorse for approval.

A Member highlighted recent statistics had found that 1 in 40 people had a gambling problem which equated to 40k people in East Lindsey suffering from this type of harm. It was further highlighted that a large number of licensed betting shops were on the coastal strip in an area of high deprivation. Whilst welcoming the updated policy, it was questioned whether the Council could do more, particularly by enforcement of protections within the policy.

A Member referred to the public consultation, Section 2.7 on page 3 of the Supplementary Agenda refers and queried whether the one response referred to was for the whole consultation process.

A Member queried how the policy was enforced locally and whether the Council employed sufficient staff to carry out enforcement effectively.

The Chairman of the General Licensing Committee responded that it was one response in total and considered the Council employed a very good Licensing Team.

The Group Manager – Public Protection endorsed the comments made and stated that the Council had a reasonable sized licensing team and had recently recruited a new officer whose role included carrying out inspections and investigating complaints.

RESOLVED

That the updated Gambling Policy Statement of Principles which would take effect from 9<sup>th</sup> January 2025 be approved and adopted.

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

### **(a) Scrutiny Panel Report: Review of the Carbon Reduction Plan and associated carbon reduction activity at ELDC:**

Councillor Paul Rickett, Chair of the Scrutiny Panel 'Review of the Carbon Reduction Plan and associated carbon reduction activity at ELDC' presented a report together with the recommendations of the panel (attached at Appendix to the report), page 196 of the report refers.

Councillor Rickett commended the report to Council and stated that he was happy to take questions arising from the report.

*N.B. Councillor Terry Knowles left the Meeting at 4.50pm.*

A Member referred to adding a Photovoltaic (PV) on car port solution in car parks, page 193 of the Agenda refers and highlighted to Members that the Hub Solar Project was to pilot on this scheme. However, this was now not considered the right solution at this stage due to cost and needed considering against other emerging potential solutions. It was highlighted how quickly plans changed and that the report emphasised that this did not happen automatically with local government often having to make the initial investments.

A Member commented that a lot of contract works were undertaken through a framework process and queried whether contractors' carbon reduction credentials were advertised as part of the process and were considered when offering the contract. An anecdotal example was provided in relation to the Warm Homes Grant with regards to quality and costings of two local solar panel installations.

The Chairman of the Scrutiny Panel responded that the Panel had looked into this as part of the scrutiny process and had spoken to the Procurement Team. Assurance had been given that this was well policed, with a harsh penalty if the criteria was not met, including losing the contract. He added that he

would seek out the related information and was happy to share this detail with the Member concerned.

The Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Leisure and Culture, and Carbon Reduction advised Members that the Council had a Warm Homes Grant Team and further explained the process for the grants, including the process undertaken by the contractors. He confirmed that there was a stringent checking system, and that Members of the team would undertake checks upon completion of the work. He added that there was currently only one contractor and that only positive comments had been received from people whose homes had undergone improvements.

A Member queried in relation to social value whether the Council always bought local and whether this was a number one priority. The Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Leisure and Culture, and Carbon Reduction responded that he understood contracts were issued from a framework and that the contractor sourced the materials. Anything in addition to this would be procured through the Carbon Reduction Team who would look at the best quality, carbon reduction and price, however, would ask for clarification from the Group Manager, Climate Change and Carbon Reduction.

The Chairman thanked the Chairman of the Scrutiny Panel for his comprehensive report.

#### RESOLVED

- That the attached report be noted.
- That the recommendations by the relevant Portfolio Holder be fully considered, with a subsequent response back to the Overview Committee.

#### 71. QUESTIONS:

Question 1	Councillor Ros Jackson
Subject	Number of Empty Homes in East Lindsey
Response by	Councillor William Gray, Portfolio Holder for Communities and Better Ageing
Supplementary	Can we be assured that an analysis will be undertaken on the main reason homes remain empty?
Response	You will see in my response, once the strategy is adopted we are bringing forward an empty homes policy so watch this space.
Question 2	Councillor Travis Hesketh
Subject	New information from NWS on the GDF
Response by	Councillor Craig Leyland, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs
Supplementary	The last government held a referendum for Brexit with



	everything tied up in 3 ½ years. Why can't your administration do this for the proposed GDF in the same amount of time?
Response	The timescale has been frustrating. We have had a motion to Council and NWS is engaging with community activities in terms of getting their experts in to discuss issues. The Community Partnership side needs to be equally paced. As a Council, we said we would review in June/July 2025 on the back of that motion and we are progressing, but I understand your frustration.
Question 3	Councillor Travis Hesketh
Subject	Timeline of NWS changes announcement
Response by	Councillor Craig Leyland, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs
Supplementary	NWS Community Partnership knew nothing about the announcement that Theddlethorpe was too small for the GDF. There are no actions recorded in their last set of minutes, so how do you hope things will work in the future?
Response	As Leader of the Council, I have the opportunity and obligation and sometimes the responsibility and burden where information is given and I have to make a judgement when it is shared. We received an update from NWS that said they had a competing interest on the site and it may be that they had to look elsewhere. On that basis I had to wait until the Community Partnership discussed it and it is a burden of knowledge.
Question 4	Councillor Travis Hesketh
Subject	Expansion of search area for GDF
Response by	Councillor Craig Leyland, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs
Supplementary	Why are you not suggesting other areas that are more suitable for a nuclear waste dump?
Response	If the recommendation was to consider other areas I would have an open mind of the benefits of that going forward. In respect of where this process goes, the search area is discussed by the primary senior council involved (LCC) at the working group stage. Currently the search area remains the same and there has been no intention to change this by NWS as I understand this. We have not received a report back from their investigations into potential other sites in the search area.
Question 5	Councillor Travis Hesketh
Subject	Financial and community benefits from proposed

	National Grid infrastructure project
Response by	Councillor Craig Leyland, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs
Supplementary	How can you come to a wise and right decision so quickly when it takes you 3 ½ to 7 years to make a decision on what my community knows intuitively from the outset?
Response	The siting of the potential GDF site follows a government process in the same way the proposed pylons will follow a process but they have different timelines. According to government guidance, we are adhering to the timelines for the GDF proposal and we have accelerated this by taking the decision with regards to the motion and also the agreement with LCC that by 2027 we would be pulling out of it unless there was a test of public support.
Question 6	Councillor Jill Makinson-Sanders
Subject	Criteria for Changing Places initiative
Response by	Councillor Craig Leyland, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs
Supplementary	This was funded by the Council, so why is it called a changing place facility when it isn't. A member of the public has queried this because it is not accessible for the public to use it?
Response	It is but a name, but in respect of that we don't know any future needs of staff or Councillors. The changing place name describes the facilities and I take your point that it is named after a government initiative.
Question 7	Councillor George Horton
Subject	Criteria for writing off debts
Response by	Councillor Tom Kemp, Portfolio Holder for Finance
Supplementary	Do any of the claims reach court and how long before it becomes a bad debt.
Response	A written response to be requested.
Question 8	Councillor George Horton
Subject	Reduction of waste refuse collections
Response by	Councillor Martin Foster, Portfolio Holder for Operational Services
Supplementary	I still have not received information on the acronyms, could this be made available.
Response	I will share the response with you that provides the details for this.
Question 9	Councillor George Horton
Subject	Cost for application – 3G Pitch, Louth
Response by	Councillor Graham Marsh, Portfolio Holder for

	Community Safety, Leisure and Culture and Carbon Reduction
Supplementary	None
Question 10	Councillor George Horton
Subject	Lack of dentistry across the district
Response by	Councillor William Gray, Portfolio Holder for Communities and Better Ageing
Supplementary	None
Question 11	Councillor George Horton
Subject	Council spend on external consultants
Response by	Councillor Tom Kemp, Portfolio Holder for Finance
Supplementary	None
Question 12	Councillor Roger Dawson
Subject	Impact from post-planning permission delays
Response by	Councillor Tom Ashton, Portfolio Holder for Planning
Supplementary	None
Question 13	Councillor Roger Dawson
Subject	Value/legal requirement for post-planning permission work
Response by	Councillor Tom Ashton, Portfolio Holder for Planning
Supplementary	None
Question 14	Councillor Roger Dawson
Subject	Lessons learned from Briggs Meadow planning application
Response by	Councillor Tom Ashton, Portfolio Holder for Planning
Supplementary	Specifically to the Briggs Meadows application, could I have a response regarding the specific application process and why it took so long?
Response	I'm happy to take that as noted and facilitate.
Question 15	Councillor Roger Dawson
Subject	ELDC's current planning capacity
Response by	Councillor Tom Ashton, Portfolio Holder for Planning
Supplementary	The responses to these questions refer to a service review of capacity and process – when would it be started and expected to be completed and who would the report go to?
Response	I'm happy to talk to the Overview Committee at any time with regards to this review and planning processes. I am optimistic that the work the Assistant Director for Planning and Strategic Infrastructure has been doing and we will see clear evidence of progress in the new year.

Question 16	Councillor Daniel Simpson
Subject	Position on resolving legal matters at Kingfisher Caravan Park
Response by	Councillor Craig Leyland, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs
Supplementary	None
Question 17	Councillor Daniel Simpson
Subject	Infrastructure issues at Kingfisher Caravan Park
Response by	Councillor Craig Leyland, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs
Supplementary	None
Question 18	Councillor Daniel Simpson
Subject	Future of Kingfisher Caravan Park
Response by	Councillor Craig Leyland, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs
Supplementary	None
Question 19	Councillor Daniel Simpson
Subject	Consideration of Invest East Lindsey (IEL) Scrutiny report
Response by	Councillor Craig Leyland, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs
Supplementary	None
Question 20	Councillor Daniel Simpson
Subject	IEL presentation to Council
Response by	Councillor Craig Leyland, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs
Supplementary	None
Question 21	Councillor Daniel Simpson
Subject	Response times to email and phone calls
Response by	Councillor Craig Leyland, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs
Supplementary	None
Question 22	Councillor Jill Makinson-Sanders
Subject	Explanation of domestic abuse meaning
Response by	Councillor William Gray, Portfolio Holder for Communities and Better Ageing
Supplementary	(Further to an anecdotal situation highlighted) Can you follow this up and make sure adequate training is provided to the right people in the right places?
Response	If you can provide me with the details I will follow up with Platform Housing Group.

Question 23	Councillor Jill Makinson-Sanders
Subject	Re-housing of asylum seekers
Response by	Councillor William Gray, Portfolio Holder for Communities and Better Ageing
Supplementary	Further to the list of asylum support agencies provided, the recipients are isolated so could this be fed back?
Response	I provided a detailed response so all Councillors know who to contact. If we hear about these things we do feed back. We will be having a meeting in the new year to address any local issues highlighted to us.

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

**72. DATE OF NEXT MEETING:**

The programmed date for the next Meeting of the Council was noted as Wednesday 5 March 2025 commencing at 2.00pm.

**73. DRAFT MINUTES OF THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE:**

Members received the draft Open and Exempt Minutes of the Audit and Governance Committee held on 30 October 2024 for noting.

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

- A typographical error was highlighted at the Chairman's Update, Minute No. 38, page 204 of the Agenda refers. The Audit Fee should have been recorded as in the region of £154k, not £54k. The increase was linked to the delays in local authority audits.
- An Extraordinary Meeting of the Audit and Governance Committee had been convened on 27 November 2024 with a further Extraordinary Meeting to be held on 13 December 2024 to consider reports that had been delayed due to the accounts and external audit reports not being finalised. A further deadline in February for the 2023/24 External Audit report would also likely require a further extraordinary meeting to be convened. The Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee stated that she was very grateful to the Accounts Team for the significant work undertaken to ensure everything was as up to date as possible.
- The Chairman was delighted to welcome Chris Pilkington and Ian Silcox-Crowe as the newly appointed Independent Co-Opted Members to the Audit and Governance Committee.

No comments or questions were received.

RESOLVED

That the draft Open and Exempt Minutes of the Audit and Governance Committee held on 30 October 2024 be noted.

**74. PUBLIC SECTOR PARTNERSHIP SERVICES (PSPS) - GOVERNANCE REPORT:**

The Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Leisure and Culture, and Carbon Reduction presented a report to consider approval to facilitate a number of required updates to PSPS governance arrangements.

During his introduction, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Leisure and Culture, and Carbon Reduction advised Members that in 2024 the Local Government Association undertook a scheduled Corporate Peer Challenge at Boston Borough Council. In that Peer Challenge the following recommendation was made:

*'Take external advice on the PSPS Board governance to seek assurance to ensure that structures reflect good practice'.*

PSPS had taken legal advice (attached at Exempt Appendix A) on behalf of the Councils and that advice made a series of recommendations that were for the founding Shareholders of PSPS, East Lindsey District Council and South Holland District Council, to consider acting upon. The advice also referred to Guidance, produced by Local Partnerships, on behalf of Government, that related to good practice for Local Authority Trading Companies (LATCo).

This report brought forward a series of the actions that were required to address the matters identified.

Following which, the recommendations were duly Proposed and Seconded.

At this point in the Meeting, it was Proposed and Seconded that Council move into Exempt Session to enable discussion on Exempt Appendix A.

**RESOLVED**

- That under Section 100(a)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the Meeting for the following item on the grounds that, if they were present, there could be disclosed to them exempt information as defined in paragraphs 3 and 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act (as amended).
- That Recommendations as set out in the Exempt Minute be agreed.

*N.B. Councillors Jill Makinson-Sanders and Richard Fry left the Meeting at 5.33pm.*

*N.B. Councillors Colin Davie, Carl Macey, Wendy Bowkett, Richard Fry, Richard Avison, Tom Ashton, William Gray and Daniel McNally left the Meeting at 5.39pm.*

*N.B. Councillor Jill Makinson-Sanders re-joined the Meeting at 5.40pm.*

Following which, it was Proposed and Seconded that the Meeting move back into Open session to discuss the following item.

RESOLVED

That the Public and Press be invited to rejoin the Meeting.

**75. ALFORD WINDMILL PROJECT VARIATION:**

The Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Leisure and Culture, and Carbon Reduction presented a report to consider approval to progress a local project adjustment request for the sub project of Alford Windmill, which was part of the Lincolnshire Wolds: Culture & Heritage programme (Levelling Up Fund).

During his introduction, the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Leisure and Culture, and Carbon Reduction advised Members that the Lincolnshire Wolds Culture and Heritage programme (Levelling Up Fund) was within the Council's capital programme and consisted of 3 main elements – Alford Windmill, Alford Manor House and Spilsby Sessions House. The report set out the rationale, context, requirement for and benefits of progressing a local Project Adjustment Request (PAR), along with next steps (including decision making), funding implications and future use. The PAR proposed the reallocation of remaining funds from Alford Windmill to Alford Manor House, both sub projects of the Lincolnshire Wolds Culture and Heritage programme. Utilising the PAR mechanism would enable the LUF programme to continue at pace and deliver revised outputs and outcomes to those defined in the Levelling Up Fund bid and as set out by Government in the Memorandum of Understanding and as contained within the Council's capital programme. Securing a local PAR through this decision-making process was necessary to ensure the sub projects were completed within the Government's prescribed longstop date of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026, together with the delivery of the outputs and outcomes.

The proposal to reallocate funding had followed a formal decision by Alford Town Council not to receive the freehold of the site on completion of the works and extensive discussions with Lincolnshire County Council (LCC), as the current owner of the site and provider of the match funding of the Windmill structure.

A local PAR was beyond existing officer limits and in the scheme of delegation and the requirements under Grant Conditions was a Section 151 function. This report was intended to be the mechanism that informed that decision.

Following which, the recommendations were duly Proposed and Seconded.

Members were invited to put their comments and questions forward.

A Member queried when the Levelling Up Funding had been received by the Council. The Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Leisure and Culture, and Carbon Reduction advised that the funding was received in March 2023.

A Member asked for clarification with regards to Section 2.21 of the report in relation to the 30%/33.3% freedoms and flexibilities and what this referred to, page 238 of the Agenda refers.

A Member referred to Section 1.2 of the report where it stated that once work was completed, the asset would be transferred to Alford Town Council who would establish a new charity. It was highlighted that based on that, the freehold of the property would remain with Alford Town Council. A concern was raised that should Alford Town Council be hit financially, or in the event of a government restructure it would be better to transfer the asset to a newly formed trust for it to not only remain independent, but be eligible to apply for other grants and funding.

A Member highlighted his disappointment that the Alford Windmill project had changed and the 18 months it had taken to get to this stage. He raised concerns that the government may ask for the funding to be returned should it not be spent as it was intended which was a risk to the Council and asked for assurance that having transferred £2.9m over to the Alford Manor House project that there would be a commitment on paper that the blades and cap would be put back on the windmill as they should have been in the first instance. He further considered that for future projects there should be a resident scrutiny panel set up to monitor these projects which would provide an opportunity for concerns to be voiced if projects did not progress.

In response to the queries raised, the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Leisure and Culture, and Carbon Reduction explained to Members that the Alford Windmill Scheme had been on Alford's wish list for some time. The windmill was a Grade 1 Listed Building owned by Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) and had been a profitable windmill, milling corn, selling to the public and also operating a tearoom. Members were advised that the Levelling Up Funding was not for the repair of the mill, but to update the miller's cottage, the café, teaching area and museum area so that the enterprise would have an income to make itself self-sustainable.

LCC was keen to take on the windmill once it had been fully restored but difficulties had ensued due to the prohibitive cost of the repair which was circa £480k.

*N.B. At this point in the Meeting, as Council had been in session for 4 hours, a vote was required to continue the business. It was Proposed, Seconded and agreed that the Meeting continued.*



However, Alford Town Council would have taken on the leasehold and sub-let to Alford Windmill Trust to run the mill and that was still the hope and aspiration. If work was not immediately started on the windmill, due to a shortage of millwrights and a workforce with that expertise, it was clear that the work on the windmill would not have been completed by the deadline of March 2026 and this would have exposed the Council to having to return the funding.

It was highlighted to Members that in the rules as recipient of the funding, the Council could make an application to move up to 30% of the funding around. This funding redistributed to Alford Manor House would cover extra work they wished to undertake, on top of the funding already allocated to them.

The Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Leisure and Culture, and Carbon Reduction wished to praise the officers that had dealt with the Alford Windmill project in a very professional manner.

As Ward Member, the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships highlighted that an incredible amount of work had been undertaken with the different groups in Alford and was disappointed that the windmill project had not got off the ground as anticipated.

In conclusion, the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Leisure and Culture, and Carbon Reduction informed Members that where the Council had incurred costs, any money allocated to the windmill project which was credible against that sum would be taken out and the remainder passed across to the Manor House, however this would have to be rubber stamped by government.

A Member highlighted that she knew some millers in Amsterdam who would be pleased to restore the windmill and queried whether the funding could be used for its original purpose and whether any other funding could be secured for the repairs. The Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Leisure and Culture, and Carbon Reduction responded that he was happy to speak to the Member outside the meeting with regards to this.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the Council's capital programme be amended to move the remaining funding allocated to Alford Windmill to the eligible works at Alford Manor House.
2. That the Section 151 officer be delegated authority to submit the recommended Project Adjustment Request for sign off and advisement to HM Government.

The meeting closed at 6.05 pm.

