

**Questions to Council Under Rule 11 of the Constitution –
Council 16 July 2025**

Q1. Councillor Richard Cunnington to Councillor Craig Leyland, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs.

Skegness Hospital could be converted to meet Wes Streeting’s plans for Neighbourhood Health Centres and I ask when our Leader Cllr Leyland attends the new Combined Authority meetings to propose this and follow this up with letters both to the government and our MP Richard Tice as well as the local Integrated Care Board and our hospital trusts in Lincolnshire. Are there any funding opportunities which would support my proposal to help improve poor health outcomes in one of the area’s most deprived communities?

A. Thank you for your question.

In general, we welcome the Government’s new initiative for Neighbourhood Health Centres which aim to make healthcare more accessible, patient-focused and closer to home.

I agree these services are particularly needed in coastal communities where people experience deprivation, poor access to services and poor health outcomes.

The detail of this policy has not been confirmed but we expect there will be around 200 Neighbourhood Health Centres by 2035 and we hope the Lincolnshire Integrated Care Board considers areas of highest need as a priority.

The Council do not fund these services, but the Executive Board will continue to highlight local need and work with the ICB and through our Healthy Living Board to ensure equitable access to services.

Q2. Councillor Richard Cunnington to Councillor Steve Kirk, Portfolio Holder for Coastal Economy.

Our hearts go out to the families who lost two much loved members of their family off our coast during the hot weather. What extra measures have we put in place to warn swimmers about the dangerous rip tides and have we increased our lifeguard staffing to address the issue?

A. I echo your sympathy regarding these tragic incidents and our thoughts remain with their families.

Signage including safety warnings is provided on the main beaches in Skegness, Mablethorpe and Sutton on Sea. In addition to this, RNLI display additional signage every day when lifeguards are on duty, which includes the national RNLI flag warning system.

We will continue to provide funding for lifeguarding provision through RNLI, however I am aware that the incidents that have resulted in a fatality so far this year

have been outside the lifeguarded areas on the coast. The lifeguarded areas of our beaches – Skegness, Mablethorpe and Sutton on Sea - are the safest places to enter the water when the staff are on duty.

Our communications team are promoting water safety messages shared from partners including the RNLI, RNLI Lifeguards Lincolnshire and the Coastguard. We recognise that many of those who visit our coastline may not follow our channels due to them not living within the District. As a proactive measure, the communications team is contacting a number of Councils to encourage them to share our beach safety messaging.

Q3. Councillor Jill Makinson-Sanders to Councillor Tom Kemp, Portfolio Holder for Finance.

Can you give me at least three examples of how this council has carried out the terms of the Road Traffic Act 1984 Section 55?

*A. I thank Councillor Makinson-Sanders for notification of her question, section 55 of the Road Traffic **REGULATION** Act 1984 does not apply to this Council as it is not a Highway Authority.*

Q4. Councillor Jill Makinson-Sanders to Councillor Tom Kemp, Portfolio Holder for Finance/Councillor Martin Foster, Portfolio Holder for Operational Services.

Please can you explain why our Neighbourhoods Division had to spend over £1/2m on the use of agency Labour to maintain standards in 2024-25. What steps are being taken to ameliorate this situation and is there a timescale?

A. The council's Neighbourhoods Division (Neighbourhood Services, Waste Service and Market Operations), comprises of approximately 170 operational staff whose work consists of waste collection, market operations, street cleansing, removal of fly-tips and dead animals, cleansing of foreshores and beaches, and coastal event support, plus the grounds maintenance of our parks, public owned spaces, and assets - throughout 700 square miles of East Lindsey's district.

To provide statutory services efficiently it is necessary that these services operate with a full establishment of staff.

Waste Services cannot logistically and safely crew the HGV vehicles for the daily collection of household waste, recycling, and garden waste, with reduced staffing numbers.

In Neighbourhoods, agency workers are essential to cover a temporary shortfall in staff due to vacancy management and long-term sickness to support service provision during the busy tourist season on the coast.

Agency staff are also sourced to support additional Neighbourhood Service requirements in the event of an emergency incident – most recently in response to

the north-sea ship collision, which resulted in the pollution of ELDC's beaches with plastic 'nurdles', which required manual removal.

Clearly all managers comply with the South and East Lincolnshire Coastal Partnerships (SELCP) workforce policies and annual leave entitlement(s).

The cost of agency is offset by a reduction in staff costs when there are vacancies. In 2024/25 the variance between salary costs and agency costs in Neighbourhoods was -£37,000, and in waste was £43,600. So while there is a considerable agency spend, the actual cost of using agency support in 2024/25 to the whole Division was £6,600.

Notwithstanding that, there are other measures we use to reduce the amount of agency required. Staff sickness absence is diligently managed in partnership with PSPS HR services, to ensure employees are supported through any ill health and are able to return to work as soon as possible. Vacancies are also turned around as quickly as possible.

Additionally, a cross council (SELCP) procurement exercise for agency supply has recently been concluded, which will ensure best value rates for agency staff moving forward.

Q5. Councillor Jill Makinson-Sanders to Councillor William Gray, Portfolio Holder for Housing Communities and Better Ageing.

One of the most common complaints councillors receive is why do our social landlords remove carpeting in particular when a property becomes vacant, leaving people very often in financial crisis facing huge bills for flooring? Is there anything we can do to influence the situation as I appreciate we no longer own our housing stock?

- A.** *Our Senior Housing Register officers reached out to the three main registered providers and obtained the following responses.*

Lincolnshire Housing Partnership

We undertake a pre leaving visit on all terminated properties (we don't get in them all, but we try)

It is at that point when we have a conversation with the outgoing tenant. If the carpets are really rough or smell of dog for example we would ask them to be removed (or we would remove them after void)

If the carpets or any flooring is in fair order we do try to preserve it during the void period for the incoming tenants.

We believe that any help that can be given to incoming tenants is a bonus. We often recycle other furniture too, if we know of someone who moves in with nothing and someone else has left 'stuff' we try wherever possible to shift it around.

Amplius Homes (Formerly Longhurst)

We would review at the end of tenancy inspection and/or at void and if the flooring was in a good condition we would leave for the incoming customer- this approached was rolled out in 2023. This included carpets, grippers, laminate and ceramic/porcelain tiles. We would gift anything like this so would be the next customers responsibility to maintain.

Platform Housing Group

We don't often relet properties with flooring for several reasons;

- They are in a poor condition and we have to remove them.*
- PHG complete works in a property and we have to remove flooring for access to floorboards etc or the flooring is damaged during works.*
- PHG has a recharge policy for outgoing customers, and as we often have to remove the flooring due to the condition, customers tend to remove the flooring in advance to avoid the recharges as they can dispose of it for free or cheaper than we can.*

There are some occasions where no works are required and the flooring is in good condition so we will leave it, but we find this is happening less and less.

Further enquiries were made with Platform Housing about their response and to enquire whether there was more they could do on this matter. Platform have advised that they are now allowing outgoing tenants to gift certain items including carpets and other flooring provided they are safe and in reasonable condition and approved by Platform. They do now have this option added on their website and will be providing guidance to contractors regarding leaving carpets in place where possible. Further information is being added to the "leaving your tenancy" section of the website and Platform will be more actively promoting the option of gifting carpets and flooring.

Housing Standards

There isn't anything within the Housing Act that requires a property to be fitted with carpets.

Consultation on a reforms to Decent Homes Standard

As part of the consultation, the updated standard could require private landlords and social sector landlords to provide suitable floor coverings at the beginning of tenancies, but this might not come in until 2035 or 2037.

Other options

Carpet firms will have to pay to dispose of carpets and other flooring that they have removed from homes when replacing the flooring. Often the flooring that have been removed is still in a good condition. The carpet firms could be approached to see

if they could pass on the removed carpets to the tenant who would then have to arrange the fitting or could pay the carpet firm.

Online Platforms – new tenants could post on sites such as Facebook asking if anyone has any flooring that they could purchase or be given or search on sites such as Facebook Marketplace.

Q6. Councillor Jill Makinson-Sanders to Councillor Tom Ashton, Portfolio Holder for Planning.

Under this government’s insatiable drive for growth, it is stated that Louth will get over 1600 new homes which roughly will equate to an increase of around 18 percent in our population. Our infrastructure is Victorian, there are very few jobs particularly for unskilled workers, we have few dentists, even fewer GPs, our schools are overflowing, we are losing banks at an alarming rate and have only two cash machines serving the town. Basically, my community cannot cope already but who is listening in our cries for help and actually achieving anything tangible? How can this ever be called good planning?

- A.** *I would like to confirm that we have not yet started with developing a spatial distribution for East Lindsey as part of the Local Plan review so therefore, numbers for settlements are yet to be agreed. I am aware that Louth has had previous development allocated in the existing Local Plan and share your concerns that further development there will exacerbate problems with infrastructure provision. We will be providing a fresh look at all settlements and their capacity to deliver housing, employment and most crucially infrastructure by engaging with stakeholders early on in the process of the review plan including LCC, Anglian Water, Health services etc. Please rest assured that we are at the very start of the review process so your community will have every opportunity to consider options and proposals as they are outlined through each stage to help shape and construct a sustainable spatial strategy for the district.*

Q7. Councillor Travis Hesketh to Councillor Craig Leyland, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs.

In February 2024 you reported to full council that “National Grid must be under no illusion the Executive board and by extension, this Council, cannot support their current proposal for overhead transmission cables running the length of East Lindsey.”

Please provide a summary of the work that has been completed and ongoing strategy to oppose the pylons, substations and converter stations in East Lindsey.

- A.** *National Grid’s Grimsby to Walpole Project is currently in the pre-application stage of the NSIP process. Non-Statutory Consultation took place between January 2024 and March 2024. The Project has now reached the Statutory Consultation Stage which started on the 11 June 2025 and closes on the 6th August 2025. The Statutory Consultation includes the Preliminary Environmental Information Report*

(PEIR). The District Council are currently carrying out their own consultation on the consultation information, which will include a review of the PEIR and will provide a response to the Statutory Consultation by the above deadline.

National Grid will then review and consider the Statutory Consultation responses received which may include the consideration of design alterations. National Grid will undertake further environmental survey work whilst also engaging further with the District Council on the outcome of such environmental surveys leading into the preparation of the Environmental Statement and the Submission of the Development Consent Order to the Planning Inspectorate programmed for Summer 2027.

The Council's response as local planning authority will be a professional and technical response in the spirit of the planning process. However, of course this does not preclude individual members submitting their own responses. Indeed, it is my intention as Leader to submit my own comments and concerns accordingly.

Q8. Councillor Travis Hesketh to Councillor Craig Leyland, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs.

For the current National Grid proposals what is the estimate of the additional annual business rates that ELDC will receive if the project is completed.

A. *It is not possible at this time to estimate the business rates position in respect of the national Grid proposals for: -*

- *Grimsby to Walpole - converter stations, substations and pylons*
- *EGL 3,4,5 - underground cables and converter station*

Any decision on entry into the rating list, including rateable value, is a decision which would be made by specialists in the Valuation Office Agency.

It is likely that the Grimsby to Walpole assessment may be entered in the central rating list, not the local rating list. In which case there would be no local business rates benefit to the local authorities this passes through.

During construction however there may be temporary rateable assessments for contractor huts etc.

In terms of EGL 3,4,5 the proposals indicate landfall will be at Anderby Creek, with cabling running through East Lindsey, Boston and South Holland. Again, it will be for the Valuation Office to determine which authority's rating list the assessment is entered into, and its Rateable Value, which in turn will inform the business rates payable. The rateable value will also have regard to the operating capacity and any constraints.

Q9. Councillor Andrew Leonard to Councillor Craig Leyland, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs.

How do you feel the new planting layout outside the Hub will work in the future and does it need to be tweaked in any way?

- A. *I thank Councillor Leonard for notification of his question; for his assurance, we have extended an invite to Monty Don for his critique and feedback.*

Q10. Councillor Andrew Leonard to Councillor Craig Leyland, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs.

Do you feel the planting choices this time will be more welcoming to visitors and visually work better than the recent dead grass look scheme?

- A. *I thank Councillor Leonard for notification of his question; given his recurring concerns, I'd like to invite Councillor Leonard to meet with our officers and discuss his thoughts in detail to see how we might make the new scheme even more visually appealing and welcoming to visitors.*

Q11. Councillor Travis Hesketh to Councillor Craig Leyland, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs.

Whilst we reject current National Grid proposal, we do need to be prepared that the project may go ahead despite widespread public opposition.

National Grid States "The way we deliver community benefit funding is informed by government guidance published in March 2025. This sets out the types of infrastructure projects that should deliver community benefit funds, and the level of funding that should be made available. This is based on: • £530,000 for new substations, converter stations and switching stations • £200,000 per kilometre of new overhead line." The East Lindsey section equates to around £15M over a 15-year period. A consultation is in place that closes on 6th August 2025.

Will you please make an East Lindsey District Council formal submission to National Grid before 6th August with a strong recommendation that any community benefit funding arising from National Grid projects be allocated and managed directly at the Parish level, ensuring local accountability and relevance.

- A. *The Statutory Consultation for the National Grid Grimsby to Walpole (G to W) Project includes a Community Benefits Survey that is intended to help National Grid to understand what is important to the Community and to deliver genuine long-lasting benefits in the areas hosted by the G to W Project. The Council's Statutory Consultation Response to the Project is to be submitted by the 6th August 2025, will include the Council's view that the communities that host the infrastructure should be the ones that also benefit from it as well as welcoming further engagement on Community Benefits. This part of the Response can be qualified by the recommendation that funds should be allocated and managed directly at the Parish level, ensuring local accountability and relevance.*

Q12. Councillor George Horton to Councillor Tom Kemp, Portfolio Holder for Finance

Please can you explain what safeguards are in place to ensure that our debt collecting agency complies with the rules and regulations designed to protect debtors from harassment and unfair practices?

A. *The enforcement industry is highly regulated.*

The Tribunals, Courts, and Enforcement Act 2007 and the Taking Control of Goods Regulations 2013 were established to protect vulnerable individuals from enforcement actions. Key provisions include the Compliance Stage, which mandates a statutory Notice of Enforcement, informing individuals of their debt, potential fees, and available free advice services, and standardises fees.

Whilst not a requirement, a pre-Compliance Stage has also been put in place for ELDC which offers an additional opportunity for individuals to settle their debts before enforcement progresses.

During the Compliance Stage, multiple notices are issued, accompanied by outreach efforts through calls and text messages to encourage early engagement. If contact details are missing, efforts are made to obtain them to avoid the need for an Enforcement Agent visit.

Legislation includes safeguards to prevent enforcement action in the presence of vulnerable individuals, and cases identified as vulnerable are reviewed by a Welfare Team. Severe vulnerability cases are discussed with the council (PSPS) to determine appropriate actions.

Enforcement Agents are prohibited from removing goods or vehicles without local authority and senior management approval, and all visits are recorded with Body Worn Video for compliance review. Calls to Enforcement Agents are also recorded and reviewed. Any complaints are managed through a secure system, with copies of video and audio files being made available to the council (PSPS) where customers have raised concerns over Enforcement Agent conduct. The Enforcement Conduct Board oversees the enforcement sector, introducing new complaints processes and standards.

In addition to the legislation, Enforcement Agents are managed through their contract with the council, and PSPS, on behalf of the council, meets regularly with Enforcement Agent Managers to review performance. PSPS officers can also have access to the enforcement agent systems to check cases should a customer make a complaint or raise a concern.

Both Enforcement Agents contracted by ELDC are members of the Civil Enforcement Association (CIVEA) and adhere to the Code of Practice which sets standards for conduct, communication, and behaviour. This includes specific provisions designed to protect vulnerable individuals and prevent aggressive enforcement.

Q13. Councillor Roger Dawson to Councillor Craig Leyland, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs.

Given that ELDC's Local Government Reorganisation model includes a pledge to ensure "Greater local decision-making including for all town and parish councils and enhanced area based governance", should the immediate reinstatement of Area Forums be considered in order to engage Town and Parish councils to proactively participate in the design of "local area committees" under the new Unitary Council, and encourage Town and Parish Councils' support for the Local Government Reorganisation model.

A. Thank you for the question. We need to engage with Town and Parish Councils across Greater Lincolnshire, not just those in East Lindsey and South Holland. A number of engagement sessions are being arranged for Town and Parish Councils in respect of Local Government Re-organisation and a letter has gone to all Clerks in respect of these. In addition, I am attending the LALC conference on the 16th July to engage with those Town and Parish Councils present. We have a clear and firm commitment to ensure we listen to Town and Parish Councils as we develop our bid.

Q14. Councillor Roger Dawson to Councillor Tom Ashton, Portfolio Holder for Planning

LEGAL STATUS OF LOCAL PLAN

Given that the review of the current Local Plan is now three years overdue, what is the legal status of the Local Plan now, how is the Local Plan review process impacted by Local Government Reorganisation and when is completion of the review anticipated?

A. The Local Plan is still part of the statutory development plan for East Lindsey and should be given appropriate weight in decision making. As outlined at the February meeting of the Planning Policy Committee we await legislation from Government on the process for a new local plan to be produced. Until such time as this is known a detailed timeframe for the review cannot be produced. Officer's will keep members of the Planning Policy Committee updated as matters become clearer.

Q15. Councillor Roger Dawson to Councillor Tom Ashton, Portfolio Holder for Planning.

PLANNING IMPACT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION MODELS

Given that the terms of the reference of the Planning Policy Committee include "To consider matters affecting ... planning policy ... received from Central Government, Lincolnshire County Council, ...[and] Other District Councils", will the Planning Policy Committee be asked to review the planning implications of this Council's proposed model for Local

Government Reorganisation and of alternative models, and make recommendations to Executive Committee?

- A.** *The Council's preferred model for Local Government Reorganisation has already been agreed and members will be aware of it. Any new model of Government in Lincolnshire will require a new style Local Plan to cover its geography. Hence it is not considered appropriate for Planning Policy Committee to consider this further at this time.*

Ends.