

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Council held at <https://west-lindsey.public-i.tv/core/portal/home> on 7 September 2020 at 7.00 pm.

Present: Councillor Steve England (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs Angela Lawrence (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Owen Bierley	Councillor Matthew Boles
Councillor Mrs Jackie Brockway	Councillor Stephen Bunney
Councillor Liz Clews	Councillor Mrs Tracey Coulson
Councillor Timothy Davies	Councillor Michael Devine
Councillor Jane Ellis	Councillor Ian Fleetwood
Councillor Mrs Caralyne Grimble	Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan
Councillor Mrs Cordelia McCartney	Councillor Giles McNeill
Councillor John McNeill	Councillor Mrs Jessie Milne
Councillor Keith Panter	Councillor Roger Patterson
Councillor Mrs Judy Rainsforth	Councillor Mrs Diana Rodgers
Councillor Mrs Lesley Rollings	Councillor Jim Snee
Councillor Mrs Mandy Snee	Councillor Mrs Anne Welburn
Councillor Mrs Angela White	Councillor Trevor Young

In Attendance:

Ian Knowles	Chief Executive
Alan Robinson	Director of Corporate Services and Monitoring Officer
Tracey Bircumshaw	Assistant Director of Finance and Property Services and Section 151 Officer
Matthew Snee	Community Engagement Officer
Katie Storr	Senior Democratic & Civic Officer
James Welbourn	Democratic and Civic Officer

Apologies

Councillor David Cotton
Councillor David Dobbie
Councillor Tom Regis
Councillor Robert Waller

16 REGISTER OF ATTENDANCE

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed all present to the second virtual meeting of Full Council.

The Monitoring Officer was requested to undertake the formal roll-call to confirm all Members were in attendance.

The roll-call for both Members and Officers was undertaken, during which apologies were noted from Councillors Cotton, Dobbie, Regis and Waller.

17 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

a) Minutes of the Meeting of Full Council held on 29 June 2020

Having being moved and seconded, on being put to the vote it was:

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of Full Council held on 29 June 2020 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

18 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Mandy Snee and Jim Snee declared a personal interest in relation to agenda item 9 (b) (New Fee for Community Defibrillator Scheme) as the item was being presented to Members by their son.

Councillor Tracey Coulson also declared a personal interest in relation to agenda item 9 (b) (New Fee for Community Defibrillator Scheme) as her company was a custodian for a defibrillator and would be eligible to apply for the scheme.

19 MATTERS ARISING

The Chairman introduced the report advising Members that the report would be taken "as read" unless Members' had any questions.

With no questions posed and with no requirement for a vote, the Matters Arising were **DULY NOTED**.

20 ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman

The Chairman started his announcements advising that due to the continued restrictions in place many events that would have taken place were either cancelled or postponed.

However with the wonders of technology, he been able to attend some events virtually, especially Armed Forces Day and Merchant Navy Day, the latter accompanied by the Leader and Chief Executive.

The Chairman had been able to attend, in person, the public opening of the superb new facility at Market Rasen where he had been joined again by the Leader and Ward Members.

On the 25th of August, along with Councillors Rodgers and Grimble the Chairman had

welcomed the Chief Executive for a tour of the Dunholme and Welton Ward which he hoped had been both informative and useful for the Chief Executive.

Over the Bank Holiday weekend, accompanied by the Leader, the Chairman had had the pleasure of visiting the Continental Market in Gainsborough. It had been great to speak to many of the stallholders and customers and have the opportunity to purchase some of the “goodies” on offer. He made special mention of one particular stall holder, and daughter of a fellow Councillor who had been manning a stall selling bird boxes to fund a trip next year to Ecuador.

In concluding his announcements, the Chairman commented on her remarkable commitment, her adventurous spirit and wished her well, before handing over to the Leader.

Leader

The Leader made the following address to Council: -

“Chairman, when this Council last met, some ten weeks ago, at the end of June we were three months into lockdown and the Covid-19 pandemic was upon us. Whilst lockdown has loosened, we continue to confront this emergency. I had hoped that we might have made more progress and be able to hold meetings once again in the Chamber. This has not been possible.

The impact on the Council’s finances of this pandemic is significant, with reduced income and additional costs, a portion of which are still not being met by HM Government. I have regular contact at ministerial level and will continue to press the Secretary of State on this point.

I remain tremendously proud of our Officers at the Guildhall, who have changed their ways of working, changed the work they are doing, and the overwhelming majority have decamped to their homes to work remotely. These changes were handled with considerable agility and in a way that minimised disruption to our residents.

We are now faced with increased financial uncertainty from the long-term effects of Covid-19 in addition to the impact of the, once again, delayed Fairer Funding Review and Business Rates Retention Review. Whilst it is right that we should all be deeply concerned at any reduction in overall funding levels, this administration remains dedicated to continue with delivery of our plans to build a brighter future for everyone in West Lindsey; through effective and efficient delivery of our services and ensuring that every penny of public money is spent wisely.

Nevertheless, despite the difficulties that we face, as the district lead on the Recovery Cell, I can report that West Lindsey is probably the best placed district, in the county, to withstand the challenges of this pandemic.

I regret that we have not yet published and debated the LGA Peer Review. I have discussed this with our Chief Executive in our weekly meetings and I am pleased to say that progress is being made on a number of the recommendations in the report. I am pleased to announce that the LGA Review will be on the agenda for our next meeting of Full Council on

Monday, 2nd November.

Since I last reported on my activities to Council work has intensified on Devolution. A meeting was held with Simon Clarke MP, Minister of State for Regional Growth and Local Government, with all local authority Leaders and Chief Executives from the Greater Lincolnshire. It has become clear that any new devolution deal for Lincolnshire will only be on the basis of the reorganisation of local government – or unitarisation. This administration remains resolutely committed to resisting such a reorganisation. However, should such a reorganisation be forced upon us, it would be foolish to take no action. We have a responsibility to take any and all appropriate actions to ensure the best possible outcomes for our residents.

Chairman, like you, I was enormously pleased to attend the opening of our stunning new West Lindsey Leisure Centre in Market Rasen on Saturday, 25th July. Everyone Active, our partners who deliver leisure services on behalf of the Council, have done a tremendous job in opening only a few weeks after the scheduled date, and in a way that is Covid-secure.

With phase 2 of our investment in leisure facilities now complete and concluded I will begin, in the coming months, the process of looking at forming policy around what might constitute new phases for the future. In line with my Group's manifesto the next phase will include reassessing the viability of building the swimming pool module at the West Lindsey Leisure Centre, Market Rasen.. Chairman, I want to go further, I believe that for too long the villages and communities of West Lindsey on the periphery of Lincoln have not benefited from the investment in new facilities that other areas have. Today I commit my administration to ensure that a future phase of our investment in new leisure facilities will look at options to establish a West Lindsey Leisure Centre in the Lincoln Fringe; looking for a viable option in Torksey, Saxilby, Sudbrooke, Nettleham, Cherry Willingham or Bardney.

Members will be aware of HM Government's planning white paper 'Planning for the Future' that was published last month and is currently being consulted upon. I am confident that we will submit a comprehensive response to the consultation that closes at the end of October.

I attended a virtual roundtable meeting with the Rt. Hon. Christopher Pincher MP, Minister of State for Housing, four weeks ago. I subsequently submitted several questions and I am pleased to report that last Friday, I received a response, which I have passed to our Planning department.

Over the Bank Holiday weekend, I was very pleased to see the return of the Continental Market to Gainsborough. I visited the stalls in Marshall's Yard and the Market Place with you Chairman and it was very pleasing to see the town looking so vibrant. You have mentioned the stall being run to raise funds for the Leader of Opposition's daughter's trip to Ecuador – I would like to wish her every success in her fundraising efforts; and will shortly tweet a link to her fundraising site, should anyone wish to make a donation.

Chairman, I am looking forward to attending the virtual Community Awards event at some point in the future. I look forward to rewarding and acknowledging the tremendous contributions that so many volunteers and community groups do to make West Lindsey such a special district.

I was pleased to announce, at the end of July, the formation of the RAF Scampton Partnership Board, which replaces the Scampton Strategic Steering Group. The new board will bring together key partners from across the local community, the Defence Infrastructure Organisation and Lincolnshire County Council. The Board will work together to support and develop long terms plans for Scampton following the Ministry of Defence's withdrawal.

I started my announcements by restating my desire to return to meetings in the Guildhall. Last Friday, the Chief Executive, the Rt. Hon. Sir Edward Leigh MP and I met with representatives of Scampton Holdings, a group that have ambitious plans for the base and are looking at making a bid for RAF Scampton. This was the first meeting in the Guildhall since lockdown, with strict social distancing measures in place. Following the meeting Sir Edward met with myself and the Chief Executive and then the various Committee Chairmen to update him on the Council's activities and programmes. I hope that these tentative steps will help us to begin to return to some limited meetings in the Guildhall in the coming months and begin the process of normalisation as we increasingly move out of full lockdown.

With the August hiatus behind us, in the coming weeks we will return to our normal schedule of committee meetings. The Core and Full Leaders' Panels will meet in three weeks' time and will consider a number of issues; particularly the recent announcement by Lincolnshire County Council regarding the roll-out of collecting recyclable paper & card, separate from other recycle, which I would hope we can align to the new Central Depot at Glentham becoming operational – which we will be breaking ground on in the very near future.

Chairman, I have had numerous meetings with Councillors, Officers, stakeholders, and the media, and will have further such meetings prior to the next meeting of Council on Monday, 2nd November. “

Chief Executive

The Chief Executive addressed Council, and started his announcements by providing an update in respect of COVID-19. A total of 1599 grants had been completed with the amount paid totalling £17,043k. The Town centre opening was progressing well with few incidents and the hosting of a successful continental market, mentioned by both the Chairman and the Leader in their announcements.

WLDC continued to be the lowest area for infections in Lincolnshire, which itself was a low area of incidence nationally. Employees had been advised that they will continue to work from home until January 2021 and Management Team would consider any requests to work from the Guildhall on a needs basis.

An appointments system was being implemented for residents to arrange a face to face visit with certain services. The Management Team had held its first face to face meeting earlier in the day, using both Ancholme and Trent meeting rooms for a meeting of seven people. We will be looking at how more meetings can be held, but clearly capacity was going to be greatly reduced.

The Chief Executive then turned to the Organisational Structure, and was pleased to advise that as of the end of July the structure below Chief Executive had been implemented and the Authority was currently out to advert for two remaining vacancies. Interviews would be held

on the 30th September and 1st October. The Chief Executive would be implementing interim arrangements to cover those posts for the next six months.

The Authority had also taken all necessary steps to close down the Customer First project, which was to be replaced by T24. Both this and the organisational re-structure were issues raised within the Peer Challenge and the Chief Executive was pleased to advise that progress had been made on both. He would be bringing forward the final report to the Full Council meeting on the 2nd November. This would allow the report to be published which had been delayed since March due to the Covid Pandemic Emergency.

The Chief Executive's programme of ward visits had continued on a socially distanced basis and he thanked those Members for their hospitality. Having visited six out of the 20 Wards, the Chief Executive had covered 30% of the District and was looking to finalise dates for two final visits which would mean all ward visits would be completed by the end of January 2021.

Turning to Devolution, over the summer, and as mentioned by the Leader, there had been a number of meetings amongst districts. However work was ongoing and a letter from the Secretary of State was awaited. This would likely require an Extraordinary Council meeting should the letter be received and a response was to be submitted.

Finally, the Chief Executive concluded his announcements, by stating he was delighted to advise, that having made a submission to the MJ Awards for the Senior Team of the Year for 2020, West Lindsey had been shortlisted by the Judges. The submission was based on the achievements of the previous management team under the executive model, in order to mark the contributions of colleagues who had now left the organisation. It also provided a line in the sand to determine the successes of the new management team moving forward.

21 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Chairman advised the meeting that one question had been submitted to the meeting. The question had been submitted by the Reverend Jon Harper, from Scotter. Unfortunately Mr Harper had not been able to attend the meeting due to a prior commitment and therefore the Chairman requested that an Officer read the question aloud to the meeting.

The Monitoring Officer read the question as follows: -

"Recent reports - eg <https://www.lincolnshirelive.co.uk/news/local-news/lincolnshire-community-highest-child-poverty-4075844> - have revealed shockingly high Gainsborough poverty levels, including an indefensible child poverty rate of 44% in one area.

Increasing numbers are dependent on food parcels from Gainsborough Food Bank, Affordable Foods, the Salvation Army etc. The Venue at Roses alone has already provided over 700 meals.

What are WLDC doing about this unnecessary problem in the 21st century? Should this major concern not be an item at every council meeting until resolved?

Will the Council consider bringing in an organisation such as Child Poverty Action Group, or similar, to help formulate an action plan?"

The Chairman thanked the Reverend Harper, in his absence, and invited Councillor Giles McNeill, Leader of the Council to respond.

The Leader provided the following statement in response: -

"I welcome the question from Rev. Harper and the opportunity to respond to it.

What are WLDC doing about this unnecessary problem in the 21st century?

West Lindsey District Council have a proactive approach to supporting vulnerable communities, each year we prepare our State of the District report, which looks at the current position of the District and the characteristics of the people who live and work here. This work is vital. It enables us to understand what issues need to be addressed, to achieve our vision for the District and to see the effects of the work that we have been doing. Current active work includes, Contextual Safeguarding, the Safer Streets Fund, an Affordable Housing Solution together with numerous community engagement and development projects

- Contextual Safeguarding – which seeks to understand the impact on young people, of their circumstances and the behaviour they are exposed to.
- Safer Streets Fund (CCTV and community engagement work) – Working jointly with Lincolnshire Police with a successful bid for funds from the Government's Safer Streets Fund that has resulted in £250,000 award for CCTV provision and enhancement, along with community engagement work in Gainsborough
- Affordable Housing Solution – Council approved in July 2020 a package including £1m funding and transfer of 12 properties to deliver:
 - Significant intensive holistic support to households designed to enhance education, training and life skills;
 - Increased neighbourhood management;
 - Improving the quality of housing stock; and our longer term aim of open, green spaces with a community feel to expand on existing green spaces
- Various community engagement/development projects in South West Ward are already active and we are actively working to support the linking of these projects.

Should this major concern not be an item at every council meeting until resolved?

I would like to reassure Rev Harper that improving the lives of all our residents is the primary concern of the Council. However, my understanding of Council Procedure Rule 2 is that it does not allow for standing agenda items as he suggests. Nor do I accept that Full Council would be the right place to try and engage in solving the issues he

highlights, owing to our fourth option governance structure.

Will the Council consider bringing in an organisation such as Child Poverty Action Group, or similar, to help formulate and action plan?

I am pleased to say that the Council already works in partnership with numerous groups and organisations to improve the life chances of the district's children. But the Council is not just focused on efforts in Gainsborough South West ward;

- Intensive support to the Hemswell estate from 2017 to date, working in partnership with other agencies has seen real progress in stabilising and normalising the area.
- Following the Vulnerable Communities Audit in 2019 we have acted on the areas highlighted for improvement including the introduction this year of the new Communities at Risk Policy and Action Plan.
- During the ongoing pandemic our COVID-19 Community Fund has supported a wide mix of projects that in-turn are supporting vulnerable people in Gainsborough. This includes over eleven thousand pounds to organisations involved with feeding projects in Gainsborough.

As part of our bid to the Local Access Fund for Gainsborough; the town is one of six communities that will share £33m of funding.

We are part of a successful partnership between, Lincolnshire Community Foundation, Key Fund, Sortified, Voluntary Centre Services. The money will support charities and social enterprises in Gainsborough to grow the local social economy to tackle local issues.

This partnership will develop the local infrastructure required to support and fund an evolving social economy. This will include developing a package of support and investment around planning, infrastructure, development and funding for charities and social enterprises. These organisations play a vital role in helping to address inequalities in Gainsborough. The partnership is now in a co-design process with Access and Big Society Capital to refine our plans.

We are all tremendously grateful to our teams and the legion of volunteers who support those most in need in our society. It is proper that we record out thanks to them, particularly those who have continued to do so – or taken up additional responsibilities – during the pandemic.”

The Chairman thanked the Leader for the response and advised the meeting that he would ensure the Reverend Harper received the same response in writing within 7 days.

22 QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO. 9

The Chairman confirmed to the meeting that no questions, pursuant to Council Procedural No.9, had been received.

23 MOTIONS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO. 10

The Chairman confirmed to the meeting that no motions, pursuant to Council Procedural No.10, had been received.

24 ANNUAL TREASURY REPORT 2019-20

The Chairman of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee presented the report and advised his Committee had considered this report at their meeting on Thursday, 23rd July and had resolved to recommend the report to Full Council.

Members were responsible for the review and scrutiny of treasury management policy and activities. The report provided details of the outturn position for treasury activities to the end of March 2020 and highlighted compliance with the Council's policies, previously approved by members.

The Chairman of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee was pleased to report that there were no breaches to prudential indicators during the year and the treasury management function was undertaken in accordance with the Strategy, and Borrowing, Investments and Minimum Revenue Provision Policies.

Worthy of note was Section 3 of the report which detailed a delegated decision undertaken at the end of March 2020 to revise the Treasury Counterparty limits to allow for Grant Funding received from HM Government in relation Covid-19. Specific details in relation to this were detailed in Section 6.1 of the report.

Investment interest of 1.655% was above the benchmark of 0.7977% generating £269,000 of income. investment balances totalled £11.6m as at the year end.

Referencing Section 4.3 the report. Members were reminded that the report focused on activity to the end of March 2020 and whilst a gross yield of 6.53% (a net income of £721,000) was just shy of being 9% above target an impact was expected on this revenue due to Covid-19. The balance of the Valuation volatility reserve was £1.767m. Members noted that revenue was still being generated from the Commercial Property Portfolio and, was expected to achieve close to the 6% target in the current year, despite the pandemic.

During the year the Authority had borrowed an additional £6.5m, bringing the total amount borrowed to £20m. In addition, internal borrowing of £16.991m saved £419,000 in interest charges during the year.

The Chairman of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee proposed the recommendations.

With no questions posed the recommendations were seconded and on being put to the vote it was: -

RESOLVED that the recommendation from the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee be accepted and the Annual Treasury Management Report and actual Prudential Indicators 2019/20 be approved.

25 NEW FEE FOR COMMUNITY DEFIBRILLATOR SCHEME

The Council had provided community accessible defibrillators across West Lindsey since 2016. Since launching the scheme the Authority had installed over 75 defibrillators.

On 23rd April 2020 an updated Community Defibrillator Scheme was approved by delegated decision to include the provision of a maintenance service to be provided by the Council. The Delegated Decision Notice requested that Full Council be presented with a recommendation to approve the new annual maintenance fee of £100.

Members gave consideration to a report which proposed the introduction of this new fee.

Debate ensued and Members could not speak more positively or passionately about the scheme, its necessity and the difference such machines could make especially in rural locations and communities, and in times when ambulance services were at their most stretched.

Members noted the benefits the maintenance scheme afforded such as ensuring the assets remained in working order. Members considered the fee to be a reasonable one in response to questions, Members were advised how the machines functionality was tested, what actions were taken once a machine had been deployed and how quickly the machine became operative again once used, usually 24 to 48 hours following automatic notification. Members were also advised there was an easy to use on-line reporting tool to report any concerns “guardians” had regarding their machines.

Further questions were asked in respect of training and it was noted that whilst training was usually offered to “guardians” on installation, current restrictions had made this offer difficult. Officers were also mindful that people “moved on” and training and knowledge was not always passed on. It was hoped that a series of on-line videos could be made and “cluster” training events organised once current restrictions eased.

The Leader suggested Communications Officers provide template letters that parishes could use in local magazines to promote the scheme. Caution was expressed in not over promising delivery as sites needed to have minimum spec to host a defibrillator.

In response to further questions Officers undertook to circulate a map of the district, detailing the locations of WLDC installed defibrillators. It was also suggested the website be updated to reflect the current number of installations as this page appeared to be out of date.

Having being proposed and seconded, on being put to the vote it was

RESOLVED that the new fee of £100 per annum for the Community Defibrillator Scheme, be approved for immediate implementation.

The meeting concluded at 8.03 pm.

Chairman