

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Council held in the <https://west-lindsey.public-i.tv/core/portal/home> on 2 November 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 David Cotton	Councillor Mrs Tracey Coulson
Councillor Christopher Darcel	Councillor Timothy Davies
Councillor Michael Devine	Councillor David Dobbie
Councillor Jane Ellis	Councillor Ian Fleetwood
Councillor Mrs Caralyne Grimble	Councillor Cherie Hill
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 Tom Regis	Councillor Mrs Lesley Rollings
Councillor Jim Snee	Councillor Mrs Mandy Snee
Councillor Jeff Summers	Councillor Robert Waller
Councillor Mrs Anne Welburn	Councillor Mrs Angela White

In Attendance:

Ian Knowles	Chief Executive
Alan Robinson	Director of Corporate Services and Monitoring Officer
Nev Brown	Senior Neighbourhood Planning Policy Officer
Katie Storr	Senior Democratic & Civic Officer
Ele Snow	Democratic and Civic Officer

Also in Attendance: Mr Richard Armstrong, Normanby resident and public question time participant.

Apologies

Councillor Liz Clews
Councillor Mrs Diana Rodgers
Councillor Trevor Young

26 REGISTER OF ATTENDANCE

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed all present to the third 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 Clews, Rodgers and Young.

27 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

a) Minutes of the Meeting of Full Council held on 7 September 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 7 September 2020 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

28 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made at this point of the meeting.

29 TO ELECT A LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

It was proposed and seconded that Councillor Owen Bierley be appointed as the Leader of the Council.

Opposition Members sought indication from the newly proposed Leader as to the status of the former Leader in terms of whether he remained a member of the administration and whether he would be present and voting this evening.

The Monitoring Officer, addressed Members advising that Councillor G McNeill remained a serving member of Council, whilst he was suspended from the Conservative Group, he remained a Member of the Administration, hence no adjustment to the political balance was required.

There were no further nominations. On being put to the vote it was:-

RESOLVED that Councillor Owen Bierley be elected Leader of the Council for the remainder of the 2020/21 civic year.

Councillor Bierley addressed Council and expressed his thanks at having been appointed and made the following address to Council: -

“Thank you, Council, for your confidence in and support for me.

Although I assume the role of Leader of the Council with great humility, I also do so with firm resolve and a clear vision for the future direction and place of our District.

I'd like to put on record my deep gratitude to my predecessors, Cllrs Giles McNeill and Jeff Summers, for their dedicated, effective and tireless work on behalf of this authority and the whole of West Lindsey.

Chairman, in normal times our success as an organisation would be measured by how well we deliver, improve and innovate the services we provide.

However we are (and will remain for some time to come) in unprecedented circumstances owing to the coronavirus pandemic, with a second national lockdown taking effect on Thursday.

That places an additional duty and expectation on us all, elected representatives and Officers alike, as one Council, to fully support our businesses, communities, individuals and organisations through such a challenging, worrying, time.

We demonstrated how effective we are in doing so during the first lockdown and I firmly believe we can do so again this time.

Thank you again”

30 TO ELECT A DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

It was proposed and seconded that Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan be appointed as the Deputy Leader of the Council.

There were no further nominations. On being put to the vote it was: -

RESOLVED that Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan be elected Deputy Leader of the Council for the remainder of 2020/21 civic year.

Councillor Howitt-Cowan addressed Council and expressed his thanks at having being appointed.

31 MATTERS ARISING

The Chairman introduced the report advising Members that the report would be taken “as read” unless Members’ had any questions.

With reference to the action entitled “Fireworks Motion” in response to a Member’s request, Officers undertook to again pursue a response from the County Council.

With no requirement for a vote, the Matters Arising were **DULY NOTED**.

32 ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman started his announcements advising that Civic commitments for obvious reasons had been limited, and following the Government announcement on Saturday were likely to remain the same for some time.

He had however had the pleasure and privilege of travelling around the district meeting and

presenting the Community Awards in person to the worthy recipients. Having had to forgo the usual awards ceremony, a different approach had been adopted this year, presenting the awards at the recipient's home or workplace. The Chairman considered, in many ways, it had been ideal, allowing him to spend more time chatting and getting to know the winners than a ceremony would usually allow, making it a far more personal affair.

What had been apparent from these doorstep visits, from all the winners their humility and a desire to "put something back into the community" approach.

In concluding his announcements, the Chairman publicly congratulated the winners again, thanked them for the great work they undertook in in their communities and wished them well for the future, before handing over to the Leader.

Leader

The Leader made the following address to Council: -

"Members will be aware that Lincolnshire was not included as one of the areas to go forward for local government reorganisation this year. I welcome that for a number of reasons, with the need to focus all of the resources we have available, both financial and human, in supporting businesses, communities and individuals through the coronavirus pandemic being foremost among them. However, to be clear, I remain steadfastly supportive of the need for fairer funding for rural areas in general and for Lincolnshire in particular and for the principle of devolved powers and budgets.

I very much welcome the announcement that the John Coupland Hospital now serves as an Urgent Treatment Centre. Already a great asset to Gainsborough and the wider area this is an appropriate and pragmatic development made even more significant by the second national lockdown.

Finally I'm pleased to confirm that West Lindsey District Council's response to the recent consultation on the Planning for the Future White Paper has been submitted. Thank you to all Members and officers who contributed to the process."

Chief Executive

The Chief Executive addressed Council, and started his announcements by providing an update in respect of COVID-19 and the work that would be undertaken in the coming days / weeks, following the Government's announcement of a further national lockdown to take effect, Thursday, this week. He was currently working with the Management team to ensure the authority were in a position to be able to offer appropriate support to businesses and the community over the next four weeks.

Final details on the support being offered were still emerging from the Government and the Chief Executive undertook to include as much detail as possible in his weekly message to Members on Friday.

With regards to National Lockdown Business Grants, again recently announced by the Government, as with previous grant regimes the authority would establish a local grant support programme as soon as it was able to. The headline guidance, was outlined to Members, as follows:

Businesses required to close in England due to local or national restrictions will be eligible for the following:

- For properties with a rateable value of £15k or under, grants to be £1,334 per month, or £667 per two weeks;
- For properties with a rateable value of between £15k-£51k grants to be £2,000 per month, or £1,000 per two weeks;
- For properties with a rateable value of £51k or over grants to be £3,000 per month, or £1,500 per two weeks.

It was anticipated that there would also be a discretionary fund, as with previous rounds. Further guidance was expected either tomorrow or the following day and Management Team were working with colleagues across the county and the LEP to align support and establish a response as quickly as possible.

Moving to Local Government Reorganisation, also referenced by the Leader previously, in October three County areas were invited to submit plans for re-organisation. Lincolnshire was not one of them.

It was clear the White Paper has been postponed until at least next spring, at the earliest, and the Secretary of State Robert Jenrick had publicly stated that it is no longer a current issue and the focus for Local Government should be Covid and Brexit. That said a letter from the Minister for Local Government Luke Hall indicated he was still willing to hear plans from other County areas that have wide support.

Moving on, the Chief Executive was pleased to announce that the final appointment had been made to the Management Team. Nova Roberts would be joining the authority on 7th December as Assistant Director – Regulatory Services and Change Management.

In concluding his announcements, the Chief Executive advised that he had taken the decision to postpone the remaining Ward Visits with a view to rescheduling them from March 2021. He thanked Members for their understanding.

Councillor Cotton, as Chairman of the Joint Staff Consultative Committee, requested that staff receive all the necessary support they required acknowledging the difficult circumstances in which they were continuing to deliver services.

In response, the Chief Executive outlined to all Members the numerous measures which had been taken to ensure staff were both physically and mentally well. All staff had previously been surveyed and this information had been used to further tailor support, on an individual basis if necessary. As circumstances continued to change and absence from the main office continued, a further survey was currently underway to ensure staff continued to be supported and engaged. A further round of virtual Corporate Updates for all staff was also planned for early December.

33 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Chairman advised the meeting that one question and one statement had been submitted to the meeting.

The question had been submitted by Mr Richard Armstrong, who was present at the meeting to address Council. The statement had been submitted by Normanby-by-Spital Parish Council, who had been unable to send a representative and as such the Monitoring Officer would read the statement to the meeting.

The Chairman welcomed Mr Armstrong and invited him to put his question to the meeting: -

“How do WLDC expect to respond to the overwhelming comments and feedback received for a Normanby by Spital Single Neighbourhood Plan?

- Will WLDC decide to endorse a single plan and simply note the residents feedback in the consultancy Neighbourhood Plan documents or
- Will they chose to intervene and advise Normanby Parish Council that residents clearly want a joint plan with Owmbly?
- Whilst WLDC may not have the power to overturn the Normanby Parish Council decision, WLDC I feel have a moral duty to act and mediate with Normanby PC over this injustice and lack of respect for the villagers they are meant to represent but simply don't.

Considerations: -

The situation is about a lack of trust from Normanby Council towards both its residents and Owmbly Parish Council and even West Lindsey District Council and the Localism Act.

Residents overwhelmingly support a Joint Plan and we have collected approximately 100 letters/emails of support all from residents, all within the consultation period and all of which were willing to sign.

Additionally a Petition signed by 138 residents requesting the Parish Council reconsider reinstating the Joint Plan was completely ignored in November 2019 and not even mentioned. How can that be right? Normanby Council may argue that residents have been coerced into signing the petition and neighbourhood plan support letter. I am afraid that is not true. Me and 8 other very honourable residents of this village received those signatures very easily and very willingly from residents of the village. Residents clearly want and demand change and want a joint plan. The Localism Act empowers residents, but Normanby simply don't listen and are stopping democracy working. It feels like the real reason the Joint Plan was voted down was due to long standing personality clashes and a lack of trust in both Owmbly and West Lindsey District Council. This is evidenced in one of the three attachments I have provided – please do read them especially paragraphs 4 and 6 and the reasons to object to the joint plan, as this evidences how a lack of trust, is impacting rational decision making. Another important letter

is the letter I have provided from the Chairman of Owmbly Parish Council.

West Lindsey's Officers recommend that you agree to two separate plans, on the technicality that the village boundaries can be withdrawn. How does this leave 138 villagers and democracy in our village. And finally, please leave this meeting knowing you made the right decision and only decision in support of localism. Please vote for a joint plan and end the charade which is affecting everybody together in Normanby and Owmbly. Together we are better and stronger and please remember the main reason for objecting is simply because Normanby cannot get on with Owmbly and it is not the joint plan which is at question.

Thank you for listening and for your time and support.”

Mr Armstrong had submitted a number of supporting documents which had been provided to Councillors under exempt cover.

The Chairman, as Member Champion for Neighbourhood Planning, responded as follows: -

“All previous applications to prepare neighbourhood plans in the district have been determined under delegated powers. In reaction to, as you note, the overwhelming comments and feedback received for a single plan, The Leader of the Council decided that this should instead be a matter for Full Council to consider and determine at tonight's meeting.

The application is the subject of item 11 for which there is a detailed report for Members' consideration covering: the background to the application, residents' responses, and how the applications should be determined. Accompanying the report is a separate document running to about 130 pages containing all the responses received and noting that the majority oppose the single plan in favour of continuing the joint plan. The Council is therefore taking this matter very seriously and it would be unreasonable to think that they are simply noting resident feedback. It should also be said that Nev Brown cannot recall making such a suggestion.

As previously mentioned the application for a single plan for Normanby is being given special consideration by Full Council on tonight's agenda under item 11. A report is available together with a document containing all residents' responses. Most relevant to the question is that the report sets out how the application for a single plan should be considered and determined. It explains what actions should be taken to ensure that the application is dealt with procedurally in order for this Council to comply with neighbourhood planning legislation.

You are correct in saying that WLDC does not have the power to overturn Normanby Parish Council's decision. This is quite true. Indeed under neighbourhood planning legislation parish councils like Normanby Parish Council have sole power to decide to prepare a neighbourhood plan and also to withdraw from one.

WLDC has played an active advisory role in the preparation of the joint plan and has endeavoured to help resolve the current issue with the single plan application. The Council's Neighbourhood Planning Officer has been in regular

contact with the parish clerks of Normanby and Owmbly PCs and joint plan group members and helped draft a terms of reference for the two parish councils and the steering group to agree governance arrangements that were questioned late last year. I myself (Cllr England) with the Ward Councillor for Normanby parish have been involved in detailed discussions with Normanby Parish Councillors and residents to help resolve the matter. It is considered the Council has done all within its limited duties and powers to help overcome the situation.”

The Chairman thanked Mr Armstrong for his question and advised him and the meeting that he would ensure the same response was sent in writing.

The Chairman then requested the Monitoring Officer read the statement as submitted by Normanby-by-Spital Parish Council, as follows:-

“Our comments relate to the application for a single neighbourhood plan.

We analysed 100 letters: 3 were not named or addressed

72 on template letters
25 individual letters

Including 8 non residents

Concerns have been raised by certain individuals who felt obliged to sign what was put in front of them and who openly admit to not knowing what it was about. Some are from very vulnerable residents, who were not informed that their details would be placed into the public domain.

Not all households were approached by the “Action Group”.

We would like to thank WLDC for all their help and understanding regarding this matter.”

The Chairman thanked the Parish Council, in their absence and the Chamber noted the comments.

34 QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO. 9

The Chairman advised the meeting that three questions pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No.9 had been submitted to the meeting. Unfortunately the first questioner, Councillor Trevor Young, had had to submit his apologies to the meeting. Therefore, at the request of the Chairman, the Monitoring Officer read aloud the question submitted from Councillor Young as follows: -

“Since the start of the Covid Pandemic in March, the local business sector including manufacturing, hospitality and retail have suffered immensely, and we face risks of serious job losses in our area.

Could the Leader of the Council please inform the council if the administration

has carried out an economic impact assessment across the district. If so, could the Leader please share the analysis and what are the main priorities for protecting and supporting businesses in each of the main towns.

Also, could the Leader share the administrations intended strategy of supporting the local business sector and provide some examples of recent activity.

Thank you”

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Owen Bierley, responded as follows: -

“Thank you for your question Councillor Young and whilst the question is relatively short, the answer I wish to provide would take far more time than this question procedure would permit.

In summary, yes, an Economic Impact assessment has been undertaken; weekly summaries are prepared by the Local Enterprise Partnership and West Lindsey is an active partner in that process. This work is discussed and actioned through the Economy Recovery Group and fed into our Management Team Recovery Group.

What these assessments have told us is that the key challenges for WLDC are:

- * Micro businesses and the lack of resilience
- * Retail, Hospitality, Leisure, Visitor Economy and manufacturing are fragile
- * There were high levels of furlough comparable to the rest of the County in Summer 2020
- * There are high claimant counts, particularly in the 18-24 co-hort.

West Lindsey’s response to date has included:

- * Business grants totalling £17,747,000 to over 16,000 businesses
- * Business Lincolnshire Growth Hub established as key point for all business support- new web pages and messages to articulate this.
- * Think Local Campaign, almost 100 businesses signed up and pages / posts getting high levels of interaction
- * Launched Kickstart Scheme to offer at least 30 paid work placements in partnership with local businesses
- * Re-Opening High Streets Safely – focussed campaign on 7 retail areas
- * FSB Partnership

We are the only district in the County to have brought in the Federation of Small Businesses partnership in recognition of the make-up of our economy being largely focused on micro businesses.

The short-term priorities, which are articulated through the economy recovery plan, are as follows: -

Business Support (Delivery Measure)

Strategic Objective : to re-purpose existing business support schemes and design new business support schemes that meet the challenges of Covid-19.

Workforce (Delivery Measure)

Strategic Objective : To take measures to meet the changing employment and training needs of the Greater Lincolnshire workforce in the context of Covid-19.

Sectors (Delivery Measure)

Strategic Objective : To provide tailored support to Greater Lincolnshire's most important economic sectors so that they can respond to Covid-19.

Economic Intelligence (Enabling Measure)

Strategic Objective : To ensure that accurate and current business intelligence is available and informs decision making in the Business and Economy Recovery Plan.

Business Support (Enabling Measure)

Strategic Objective : To use regeneration funding in a strategic way to tackle the current challenges of Covid-19 and to support the Business and Economy Recovery Plan.

Future planned Actions include : -

Redundancy Toolkit for employers and employees – priority being worked on by WLDC and the Redundancy Workgroup of the Lincolnshire Resilience Forum.

Local Restrictions Support Grant – draft WLDC guidance and process being developed should it be required. Currently awaiting FAQ's from the Government.

Retail Business Advisor – Recruited through the Re-Opening High Street Safely Fund, to commence late 2020.

Improved Footfall Counters – Following a three year pilot with the Local Data Company for the provision of 10 footfall counting devices from 2017-2020, the Council have agreed a further three year contract for the provision of five new camera devices to collect footfall data across the three market towns . Data will be available from the end of October.

Medium to Long Term Investment Planning – Further developing our investment plans for the District, aligned to national and regional funding opportunities and priorities.

Brexit Planning – Working to secure support, advice and guidance for local businesses to adapt and make plans.

This is an area I can assure you the Council is working hard at both a county and district level. We have very much been informed by our conversations with hundreds of businesses and our active response to local needs.

Officers have prepared a slide presentation on this subject which provides much more detail and which I am happy to share with all Members.”

Councillor Anne Welburn, Ward Member for the Cherry Willingham Ward, submitted the following question to the Leader of the Council.

“Leader, My question relates to the mandatory and discretionary Test and Trace Support Payments , I understand West Lindsey have been awarded a total of £23,131.35 to fund the scheme. Could the Leader please confirm that West Lindsey District Council will ensure that all qualifying applicants receive support even when the Government funding has been exhausted

Thank you”

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Owen Bierley, responded as follows: -

“Thank you for your question Councillor Mrs Welburn. I believe that it is vital that we support our residents to do the right thing with regard to Test and Trace. It is also clear that the allocation of funding for these cases is relatively small. I will work with Officers to ensure that there is sufficient resource in place both by continuing to lobby our colleagues in Central Government and exploring options for reallocating existing funding streams to meet this essential requirement”

Councillor Anne Welburn, Ward Member for the Cherry Willingham Ward, had also submitted the following question to the Leader of the Council.

“Could the Leader of the Council give Members the assurance that the Districts need for active travel and sustainable infrastructure development, particularly in our rural communities, are being strategically considered and planned for?

I quote as an example: The residents of North Greetwell feel like the forgotten village of Lincolnshire, they have been fighting for many years for a crossing on the A158 so that villagers can cross the road in safety, to use the shop and restaurant and more importantly the bus service to the city. At the moment the traffic is so heavy, 640 cars an hour have been recorded, it is impossible to cross the road and for resident to exit their drives on the north side which results in a detour via Nettleham to get to work, school etc if they are travelling west.

This is totally against all policies of trying to ensure use of public transport where possible and is actually increasing private transport by forcing such a long detour.

You can image their dismay therefore to hear that Wragby some 10 miles further along the same road is to get two new crossings in addition to those already there as the Highways deem they will suffer in coming years from an increase in traffic most of this will have travelled through North Greetwell which also has local traffic as above.

Thank you”

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Owen Bierley, responded as follows: -

“Thank you for your question Councillor Mrs Welburn. I can assure Members

that enabling active travel and the provision of sustainable infrastructure development across the District is a key priority for this Council, and in my role on the Central Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee I have championed these matters. We are currently refreshing the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan, and as per the approved Statement of Community Involvement, I would encourage all Members to engage in the next round of public consultation which is due to take place during January and February 2021.”

Having heard the response Councillor Welburn made a supplementary statement.

“It is my understanding that CIL payments were designed to alleviate problems caused by development by supporting infrastructure and I would ask for your support to ensure that North Greetwell, the village affected by development are allowed to use some of this money towards a crossing because they sorely need it.”

The Leader indicated he understood the position undertook to get a full response to Councillor Welburn outside of the meeting.

35 MOTIONS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO. 10

Councillor Stephen Bunney had submitted the following motion

“Combating Litter

Chairman, I am sure that we will all have spoken to residents over the last few months who have commented on how dramatically litter levels declined during the national lockdown. However, litter is again becoming a common issue despite the hard work of the street cleaners and bin men. Therefore, all of us must play our part in preventing the build up of litter in our community. This motion outlines how we can do this.

West Lindsey District Council notes that:

- The Keep Britain Tidy Campaign offers local councils the opportunity to become members of a Network, which provides access to specialist advice and support.
- The campaign is also promoting a Love Parks campaign and a Charity Bin sponsorship scheme whereby the monies raised from recycling cans is contributed to local charities.
- Several national supermarket chains are now operating trials of reverse vending machines, whose customers are rewarded for returning used cans and bottles for recycling.
- DEFRA has published a voluntary code for local businesses and groups to sign up to and reduce the litter that results from fast food businesses.

West Lindsey District Council recognises that:

- Whilst we are committed to tackling litter in our District and to working for cleaner streets, roads, verges and public spaces across our communities, we cannot do this alone.
- In the battle for cleaner streets and public spaces, we must involve the public

and businesses in a co-operative effort.

- There are community champions and organisations commendably 'doing their bit'.
- In doing their bit, residents and businesses help the Council make the streets, town/villages, parks and public amenities of our District more inviting to residents and visitors.

West Lindsey District Council resolves to:

- Promote participation in litter prevention activities to members of the public, community, faith and youth groups, through our social media, website and existing emails-outs to partners.
- To examine the merits of becoming a local authority member of the Keep Britain Tidy Network, and identify which of the campaign's including Love Parks and Charity Bins, could be introduced in the District.
- Ask the Leader and Chief Executive to write to national supermarket chains with stores in this district asking them to install a reverse vending machine.
- Promote take up of the DEFRA voluntary code amongst our fast food businesses and local business partnerships and seek their sponsorship for the introduction of a Charity Bin scheme and for public education programme.

I so move.

Councillor Stephen Bunney”

The Leader of the Council made an initial response to the motion: -

“I would whole-heartedly support this motion and its intention. Tackling litter in our District and working for cleaner streets, roads, verges and public spaces across our communities, has always been a priority for this Council. It is also fully recognised (and I support your view) that the battle for cleaner streets and a more inviting District for residents and visitors alike is something the Council must work in partnership to deliver.

I also believe some of the actions and activities proposed by this Motion support the Council's already agreed commitment to sustainability and are to be welcomed.

We have a collective responsibility as a whole community, elected representatives, residents, businesses, everyone, to address both these matters.

I will, should Council require me to, write to the national supermarket chains regarding reverse vending machines.

I think the additional promotion proposed is to be welcomed and again would support the motion and activity suggested, the emphasis being on collective responsibility.

I think it would be remiss to not examine the merits of becoming a LA member of the Keep Britain Tidy Network and would support that such examination is undertaken by a report to the Prosperous Communities Committee.

Whilst I am aware of the DEFRA Voluntary Code, given the current ongoing national situation relating to Covid-19, it is unclear whether the DEFRA code is now aligned with the Covid secure guidance, which favours disposable items for infection control purposes. I am also conscious the final element of this motion has resource and capacity implications, which would firstly need to be assessed

I am therefore happy to second the motion subject to the final element of the motion being further explored by way of a report to the Prosperous Communities Committee for a formal decision.”

At the request of a Member, the Monitoring Officer advised, with the indicated agreement of the original mover, Members would not be required to vote on the amendment. The original mover of the motion did indicate his agreement to the Leader’s proposed amendments.

Members wished to take the opportunity to again thank all of the refuse and street cleaning team for their continued hard work.

On being put to the vote, it was **RESOLVED** that the motion as amended, be **ACCEPTED** and as such the Council commits to : -

- (a) promoting participation in litter prevention activities to members of the public, community, faith and youth groups, through our social media, website and existing emails outs to partners;
- (b) by way of **report to Prosperous Communities Committee**, examine the merits of becoming a local authority member of the Keep Britain Tidy Network, and identify which of the campaign’s including Love Parks and Charity Bins, could be introduced in the District;
- (c) the Leader and Chief Executive writing to national supermarket chains with stores in this district asking them to install a reverse vending machine.
- (d) by way of **report to Prosperous Communities Committee**, investigate whether promoting take-up of the DEFRA voluntary code amongst our fast food businesses and local business partnerships is appropriate and investigate the resource and capacity implications, of seeking their sponsorship for the introduction of a Charity Bin scheme and for a public education programme. Prosperous Communities Committee are charged with making a formal decision in respect of this aspect of the motion.

Councillor Stephen Bunney had also submitted the following motion to the meeting: -

“Chairman, it is widely accepted that the £20 per week uplift to Universal Credit and Working Tax Credit along with the provision of vouchers to those families eligible for Free School Meals has been a lifeline for families during the coronavirus storm.

The ending of the Universal Credit uplift in April 2021 will see families, representing around 16 million individuals, overnight lose £1040 per year.

Inevitably this will hit those on the lowest incomes and families with children. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation estimate that this will pull 700,000 more people into poverty. This at a time when the Government is continually promising to protect living standards and level up the economic and regional divides in our country.

The impact of the cut will be multiplied in the future as job losses, brought about by the pandemic, occur over the next few months. There is serious concern among social economists that this will plunge a further 500,000 individuals into deep poverty – 50% below the poverty line.

No region, let alone West Lindsey, is immune from these devastating problems and so urgent action is required.

West Lindsey District Council require The Chief Executive and Leader of The Administration to write to The Chancellor of The Exchequer, The Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP, supporting both;

- the open letter, written at the end of September, from at least 50 leading welfare charities, calling for the permanent £20 uplift to Universal Credit and Working Tax Credit; and
- Marcus Rashford MBE's call for the Government to provide food vouchers during all holidays for those families with young people entitled to free school meals.

I so move and commend this motion to the Council.

Councillor Stephen Bunney”

The Leader of Council made an initial response as follows: -

“Thank you for bringing this motion forward Cllr Bunney. With regard to your proposal I do, of course, acknowledge the value of the extra funding that Government has already provided to help alleviate the real and increasing financial pressure people face in such challenging times and especially as we approach the second lockdown of the pandemic.

However, I believe the provision of meal vouchers for pupils during school holidays to be a simple and targeted measure that is valuable not only for qualifying pupils, their parents and carers, but also for the reassurance it would provide to the wider community.

Accordingly, whilst I personally support your motion and am happy to second its content, I leave it entirely to other Members to form their own view and reach a consensus.

Debate ensued with a number of Members from across the political parties speaking in support of the motion. Food poverty was an issue across the District and the ongoing work undertaken by voluntary organisations should be acknowledged.

On being put to the vote it was **RESOLVED** that the motion as submitted, be **ACCEPTED** and as such Full Council requests The Chief Executive and Leader of The Administration to write to The Chancellor of The Exchequer, The Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP, in line with the motion.

Note: Councillor John McNeill declared a personal interest in the above matter as lay Vice-Chairman of the Lincoln Cathedral Community Association and Chairman of the Executive Committee of the same body, both organisations which had provided in recent years a substantial amount of money to the charity currently supported as the Chairman's Charity – FISH (Food in School Holidays).

36 LGA PEER CHALLENGE OUTCOME AND UPDATE

The Chief Executive introduced the report, advising that in January 2020, West Lindsey District Council had received a visit from a Peer Team provided by the Local Government Association.

The final report was expected to be presented to the Annual Council in May 2020, however due to the impact of Covid-19, that meeting had been cancelled.

The report sought to provide an update on progress against the recommendations arising from the Peer Review

The full report was available at Appendix 1 to the report. The overall message from the Peer Group was very positive and they had been particularly complimentary about the passion and commitment of both elected Members and Officers.

The final report had made ten recommendations. These had previously been shared with Members and were set out at Section 2 of the report.

The presentation attached at Appendix 2 provided an update on progress against the recommendations and this was summarised to the meeting, noting good progress had been made, in particular, in implementing the Senior Structure and simplifying Customer First.

The Chairman of the Governance and Audit Committee assured Members that the Action Plan would be monitored by his Committee and would remain a priority for the Council.

Debate ensued and the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee shared with the meeting her experience of the review process, which she considered had been unfairly led and the questioner negatively influenced by previous comments. Objectivity she felt had been lacking, and she felt the criticisms levied against the Scrutiny Committee, which she felt was in its infancy under her leadership, had been given undue prominence within the report.

Councillor Rollings believed there was a greater conflict between community services/ well-being role of the Authority and the income generation ethos of the Council, which the report failed to highlight but needed to be investigated.

Noting the recommendation, the Council should develop a Cultural Strategy, she urged that

culture be considered in the widest sense, personal development, well-being and mental health. There was a real need to improve Sporting activities and participation rates across the District and to seek a view from the community.

Acknowledging all the great work the Council and Officers undertook, Councillor Rollings indicated she could not support the report, due mainly to her concerns around the process which had been undertaken, its impartiality and fairness.

In response, the Chief Executive confirmed that the Cultural Strategy would be developed in the widest sense, encompassing, arts heritage and leisure in a single strategy. Regarding the process, it was imperative that all involved felt it was inclusive, and such Councillor Rollings comments would be fed back to the LGA.

In response to further comments, and concerns regarding how the current Pandemic may affect performance particularly financially and the need to improve community outreach and improve stakeholder communication the Chief Executive advised the Peer Review had concluded the Council was in a good financial position. Acknowledging Councillors' concerns, the planned half year review of the Medium Term Financial Plan would set out any adjustments needed in response to the Pandemic. With regards to community outreach and the Cultural Strategy the purpose was to capture current activity, where it was being delivered and where the Council might do more to support parishes and communities, as such this part of the action plan would entail stakeholder consultation and communication.

The Action Plan would be developed and progressed using existing tools such as the MTFP, the Annual Governance Statement and the Corporate Plan, for example, as opposed to creating a separate line of activity to monitor. As previously advised this would be monitored by the Governance and Audit Committee and should any areas of the Action Plan not be addressed by one of these key documents then separate work would be undertaken.

In response to earlier comments, the Leader shared his experience of the Peer Review, which he considered had been very different. He acknowledged that a number of circumstances had considerably changed since the review. Whilst the lockdown had brought challenges it had also brought with it some added benefits around increased activity rates, cycling and walking which needed to be harnessed. He considered there was a real opportunity to improve the offer and moved the recommendations.

With reference to succession planning, as Chairman of the Joint Staff Consultative Committee, this area had been a concern for a while. The Council, did have an ageing workforce and lots of "single" jobs with individuals holding considerable knowledge and he considered there was real need for a risk based succession planning approach. There were a number of good examples where proper succession planning had been really successful and vital and this needed to be replicated across the board.

The Director of Corporate Services advised that this was something that was done as part of work force planning, but due to the size of the organisation, it was developed on a risk based approach and timing appropriate. Such matters were also captured in Service Plans, including personal development and identified individuals for progression to help with not only personal development but succession planning across the Council. At the time of the peer review, there had been a number of interim contracts in place, whilst structures were being determined, this had now been resolved.

Some considered the effectiveness of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and had been questioned previously and were of the view that the Peer Review had confirmed that this continued to be the case. Attendance was poor and outcomes lacking

This view was strongly refuted, and the current Scrutiny Chairman outlined how the Committee had changed its approach, how it was calling external agencies to account and of the recent training undertaking specifically designed to improve effectiveness. As previously outlined to the meeting she did not consider the process had been a fair and balanced one.

The Monitoring Officer outlined some of the work he had undertaken to support the Committee since January. The Chairman of the Governance and Audit Committee gave assurance that the effectiveness of all Committees was under review, including his own, and that an effectiveness review was something which all Committees would be subjected to at some point as part of good governance practices. This would be very much a collaborative approach.

Having being moved and seconded it was **RESOLVED** that: -

- (a) the final report of the Peer Challenge Group be accepted;
- (b) the report be published on the Council website; and
- (c) the progress made against the recommendations be welcomed.

Note: The meeting adjourned, following consideration of the above item at 9.09 pm and re-convened at 9.14pm.

At the request of the Chairman, the Monitoring Officer repeated the roll-call to ensure all Members had returned to the meeting.

Each Member re-affirmed their attendance.

37 NORMANBY BY SPITAL AND OWMBY BY SPITAL PARISH COUNCILS - APPLICATIONS FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS

The Chairman of Council, in his role as Member Champion for Neighbourhood Planning presented the report to Members. The report requested Members to determine separate applications received from Normanby by Spital and Owmbly by Spital Parish Councils to prepare their own neighbourhood plans for their parish areas only.

It was noted that such applications were normally dealt with under delegated powers but due to the level of public response from consultations on the applications it was agreed that this should instead be a matter for Full Council.

Normanby by Spital and Owmbly by Spital Parish Councils had been working together on a joint neighbourhood plan covering both parishes. Although evidence base work had been

undertaken, a first version of the joint NP had not been prepared.

Late last year the Council had become aware that the joint NP was having governance difficulties, and in May this year the Council received notification from Normanby by Spital Parish Council (PC) that it had decided to formally withdraw from sharing the joint neighbourhood plan with Owmbly by Spital PC. Instead, it had applied to the Council to prepare its own neighbourhood plan for Normanby by Spital parish only. Owmbly by Spital subsequently did the same.

Public consultations on both applications had been completed. The Council was very much aware that the majority of comments were not in favour of the separate applications and that those residents would like to see work on the joint NP continue.

However, it was stressed to the Chamber that in determining such applications the Council legally could only take into consideration the appropriateness of the areas put forward. Both applications were for parish areas which were considered logical and appropriate areas to select in terms of the legislation.

Normanby Parish Council's decision to withdraw from the joint NP meant that it could not continue. The report recommended that both Neighbourhood Plan applications be approved and confirmation of the joint plan's withdrawal be publicised on the Council's website.

Debate ensued and the Ward Councillor for both parishes addressed the meeting. He considered the situation both disappointing and frustrating. A joint plan made perfect sense considering the jointly shared assets across the two communities. Working together should always be encouraged and usually brought about improved outcomes. He outlined the work that had been done jointly across the Parishes resulting in a community space and children's play area. That being said, he recognised and had to accept the rules of Neighbourhood Planning legislation and reluctantly moved the recommendation as he considered both parties needed to move past the current difficulties. He placed on record his sadness that the community had not been heard and that their views were being disregarded. Parish Councils had a duty to respond to the community wishes, so long as they did not conflict with the law, this had sadly not been the case for these residents.

Numerous Councillors spoke in similar vein, expressing concern at the lack of representation, and of the democracy deficit. West Lindsey took no pleasure in passing such a recommendation but had an extremely limited role at this stage in the Neighbourhood Planning process. Councillors took reassurance from the fact that for any Neighbourhood Plan to become effective it needed to be passed by a local referendum. Every Member of the community would ultimately get to vote on any proposed plan. For this reason, some commented the current approach was not only unrepresentative and undemocratic but a waste of time and money if it lacked public support.

Regardless of District Councillors' views, it was clear that the authority had no powers to prevent the application for two plans. The Neighbourhood Planning Officer outlined clearly what the District Council could and could not do and was clear that only the Parish Council could make such a determination at this stage.

The recommendation was seconded with regret. Councillors across the Chamber urged the two communities to re-think their position, the decision this evening would not prevent the

parishes from deciding to work together as they once had in the future.

In response to concerns around Parish Council's who failed to represent their communities, the Chairman of the Governance and Audit Committee reminded Members of the planned fourth tier governance review and undertook to include concerns regarding this area forward.

Before moving to the vote several Members again expressed their dissatisfaction and concern at the lack of democracy in action but acknowledged the limited powers the District Council had in respect of such matters.

It was **RESOLVED** that : -

- (a) the applications by Normanby by Spital and Owmbly by Spital Parish Councils, to have their respective parishes designated as separate neighbourhood plan areas for the purposes of producing their own independent neighbourhood plans be approved; and
- (b) the withdrawal of the designated neighbourhood plan area for the joint Normanby by Spital and Owmbly by Spital Neighbourhood Plan be noted and advertised on the website.

38 LICENSING POLICY REVIEW - APPROVAL

Councillor Jessie Milne as Chairman of the Licensing Committee, presented the report to Council and advised that Section 5 of the Licensing Act 2003 required each Licensing Authority to prepare, consult on and determine a Statement of Licensing Policy, which must be kept under review on an ongoing basis and consulted upon and reviewed every 5 years.

This five year review had recently been undertaken and Councillor Milne was pleased to present to Council the updated Licensing Policy, approved and recommended to Council for adoption by the Council's Licensing Committee after consultation with licence holders.

The policy aimed at ensuring the effective and safe operation of licensed premises across the District and ensured that they were adhering to a regulatory framework, which had become ever more important over the last 12 months and would enable the Council to continue to deliver its statutory obligations in relation to licensing.

Full Council were asked to accept the recommendation from its Licensing Committee and approve the revised policy for implementation.

Thanks were expressed to the Licensing and Enforcement Officers for their work throughout the pandemic.

Having being moved and seconded it was:-

RESOLVED that the recommendation from the Licensing Committee be accepted and the Revised Licensing Policy be adopted and approved for implementation.

39 APPOINTMENTS ON SUB-COMMITTEES, BOARDS AND OTHER BODIES (INCLUDING OUTSIDE BODIES) AND THE RE-ALIGNMENT OF COMMITTEE CHAIRMANSHIPS

The Chairman presented the report to Council which sought to realign a number of previously made appointments on sub-committees, boards and other bodies (including outside bodies).

The report also sought to amend some Committee Chairmanships / Vice Chairmanships, arising from the change in Leadership and at the request of the Administration.

Having been moved and seconded it was **RESOLVED** that:-

- (a) the positions which automatically transfer to the new Leader, on taking up Office, as set out in Section 2.1 of the report be noted; namely: -

Type of Appointment	Name of Body
Outside Body	District Councils Network
Outside Body	East Midlands Council
Outside Body	LGA General Assembly
Outside Body	Central Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee (full member)
Working Group	Scampton Local Infrastructure Group

- (b) that the persons named in section 3.3 of the report be appointed to the positions stated, namely: -

Chairman of Corporate Policy and Resources Committee	Councillor Anne Welburn
Vice-Chairman of Corporate Policy and Resources Committee	Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan
Vice-Chairman of Chief Officer Employment Committee	Councillor Owen Bierley

- (c) that Membership on the APSE National Council (Lincolnshire Representative) be approved as a formal outside body and be aligned to the Office of Leader.

The meeting concluded at 10.08 pm.

Chairman