

## WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Council held in the <https://west-lindsey.public-i.tv/core/portal/home> on 29 June 2020 at 7.00 pm.

**Present:** Councillor Steve England (Chairman)

Councillor Owen Bierley	Councillor Matthew Boles
Councillor Mrs Jackie Brockway	Councillor Stephen Bunney
Councillor Liz Clews	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 Giles McNeill	Councillor John McNeill
Councillor Mrs Jessie Milne	Councillor Keith Panter
Councillor Roger Patterson	Councillor Mrs Judy Rainsforth
Councillor Tom Regis	Councillor Mrs Diana Rodgers
Councillor Mrs Lesley Rollings	Councillor Mrs Mandy Snee
Councillor Jeff Summers	Councillor Robert Waller
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
Andy Gray	Housing and Enforcement Manager
Sally Grindrod-Smith	Assistant Director of Planning and Regeneration
Ady Selby	Assistant Director of Commercial and Operational Services
James O'Shaughnessy	Corporate Policy Manager & Deputy Monitoring Officer
Ele Snow	Democratic and Civic Officer
Katie Storr	Senior Democratic & Civic Officer
James Welbourn	Democratic and Civic Officer

**Apologies**

Councillor Mrs Angela Lawrence  
Councillor Jim Snee

**1 WELCOMES, INTRODUCTIONS AND REFLECTIONS FOR COUNCILLOR LEWIS STRANGE**

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

Since Council had last met, Council had lost one of its most valued members, a Member who served for over 19 years and was a stalwart across the Chamber floor, Councillor Charles Lewis Strange.

The Chairman paid his own personal tribute to Councillor Strange whom on a personal level he considered a friend who could always be relied upon for guidance and support, he was kindness itself.

The Chairman asked all colleagues present to join him in a minute's silent reflection for this wonderful gentleman, following which a number of Members paid their own personal tributes to Councillor Strange, including the Leader of the Council, the Leader of the Opposition, Members from all political persuasions and those who had known him for a "lifetime". Fond words and fond memories were shared and all who knew him would sorely miss Councillor Strange.

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

Before the roll-call commenced, the Opposition Leader made reference to a recent article in the Market Rasen mail and questioned the source of the story and what safeguards the Monitoring Officer could put in place to protect Members from abuse whilst in their homes.

In responding, it was noted that, whilst not recommended for transparency purposes, Members were permitted to turn off their camera whilst in a meeting.

The roll-call was undertaken.

## **2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

### **a) Minutes of the Meeting of Full Council held on 2 March 2020**

Opposition Members questioned statements contained in the Leaders' Announcements on Page 17 and 18 respectively. The Leader confirmed these statements were accurate at the time they were made.

Following further similar comments, a Point of Order was raised regarding the purpose of minutes, this being to confirm their accuracy as a record rather than to debate their contents.

Whilst accepting this fact several Members indicated they would be voting against the minutes.

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Meeting of Full Council held on 2 March 2020 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Following the vote a Member raised a Point of Information, challenging those Members who had voted against the minutes and reminding the meeting again of the purpose of the minutes. General challenge was offered around Members conduct. In response, a Councillor re-stated his position and his right to do so.

### **3 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor David Cotton declared a personal interest in relation to agenda item 9 (c) (Appointments to Vacancies on Sub-Committees Boards and Other Bodies) and its reference to Crematorium Working Group due to him undertaking funeral services as part of his role within the church.

### **4 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**.

### **5 ANNOUNCEMENTS**

#### **Chairman**

The Chairman started his announcements by paying his own tribute, and he was sure, and that of all Members, to the Officers, who through the last difficult months had ensured the council retained the highest level of service to the people of West Lindsey.

The Chairman also acknowledged the difficulties many staff would have faced working from home whilst juggling family concerns and commitments, like many across the country and thanked them for rising to the challenge. He highly commended those Officers whom had been re-deployed to ensure essential services had maximum capacity.

A number of events the Chairman had had the pleasure in attending, on behalf of the Council, prior to the Lockdown, were shared with Members these had included: -

The well attended launch of the West Lindsey Good Cause Lottery Launch at Hemswell Court on 3 March;

Civic functions hosted by both North Lincolnshire Council and Market Rasen Town Council on 6 and 8 March respectively

The opening of the welding and fabrication suite at Gainsborough College on 13 March where it had been a pleasure to accompany Sir Edward Leigh to the event.

And finally attendance at the Market Rasen Races Family Day Event partly sponsored by West Lindsey District Council on 15 March.

The Lockdown had seen a number of the Chairman's own events cancelled most notably the Annual Community Awards and his much anticipated Charity concert. It was hoped both events could be re-arranged once Government advice allowed.

Lockdown had brought with it the opportunity to experience some events on a virtual platform for the first time, such as the Lincolnshire Show and the Mayflower 400. Whilst the

experience had been different nothing could quite beat the atmosphere of the real thing!

## **Leader**

The Leader addressed Council and updated the Chamber in respect of the following matters: -

It had been several weeks since Council had last met and the Leader was hopeful it would not be long before we could meet again at the Guildhall. He understood from the Secretary of State, the Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP, that Government advice would soon be available to help facilitate this.

When last addressing Council the Leader had hoped that that LGA Peer Review would have been discussed and published, he apologised that this had not been feasible owing to the Covid 19 pandemic. He remained committed to the outcome of the report and hoped to be able to complete this by the Autumn of this year.

The Leader spoke of how tremendously proud he had been of the Council Officers over the past 3 months as they had played their part in providing the civil response to the national emergency.

Thirty seven members of staff had been re-deployed from their regular duties to new roles supporting the work related to Covid 19; and many others have remained in their posts albeit the vast majority of them working from home continuing to provide the public services local residents relied on. Meanwhile, the refuse collection teams had been out collecting an additional 100 tons of household waste every week – which was an increase of about a quarter. He, like many he was sure, was enormously grateful to all of them.

As mentioned by the Chairman, the Leader had had the pleasure of attending the Love Market Rasen Race Day, in partnership with Market Rasen Town Council. It was a great opportunity to celebrate all that was wonderful about the local community whilst joining in the excitement and thrills of a day at the races. Due to Covid 19 all horse racing fixtures across the country had been cancelled until the end of August. Whilst meets had been taking place behind closed doors, he hoped it would not be long before the race course is open to the public again.

The Leader had also attended the online opening of Lieden 400, which was one of the partnership events related to the Authority's own Mayflower 400 celebrations. He had been tremendously impressed with the virtual tours of the Dutch city and considered there may be some ideas that could be useful to the Council's own plans for the future.

Most recently, only the previous week, the Leader had enjoyed attending the Lincolnshire Show online. He was confident that we would be able to return to a more normal county show experience next year, and was pleased with the Authority's efforts to provide a virtual pavilion in a very short timescale, given that the Communications team had been heavily involved in the Local Resilience Forum "Warn and Inform" cell.

At the end of March, the Leader had his first, and what had now become a regular fixture, video teleconference with the Ministerial team at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and

Local Government, about the Covid 19 pandemic. These had been a very useful forum for getting the latest information from Local Government and from National Government, providing feedback and dialogue with the Ministry and the Ministers and Senior Civil Servants.

The Leader had also been attending regularly the District Council Network meetings with the Chief Executive, which had had a range of individuals from across Government, the Civil Service, Local Government and the Emergency Response sector, and had proved helpful in understanding the context of this pandemic effect on Local Government.

The Leader had had numerous meetings, all virtual, in relation to his duties to the Council, and made mention of the following: -

- Friday 24 April, a meeting was held with the local Parliamentarian, the Rt Hon Sir Edward Leigh MP, and the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of Policy and Resources, Prosperous Communities and Planning Committees, together with the Chief Executive. This was a useful meeting and one that the Leader hoped would be replicated in the future
- Tuesday 19 May, the Leader received the bad news that RAF Scampton would be closed by the Ministry of Defence as an active base. The Council had been working in partnership in recent years for this eventuality, withdrawing Government funding, to existing plans. This work would be intensified in the future as the District moved forward and out of the pandemic.

The Leader had had numerous meetings with Councillors, Officers, stakeholders and the media, he undertook to have further such meetings prior to the next meeting of Council on Monday 7 September.

### **Chief Executive**

The Chief Executive addressed Council advising that much of the last few months had been spent dealing with the COVID response. This had involved many weekly meetings across Chief Executives' and Leaders, the Strategic Co-ordination Group, DCN, and the East Midlands Council to name a few.

He thanked colleagues for covering the many strategical, tactical and operational groups which had been established. This was the focus of much Officer time and WLDC had played a full role in the LRF response.

Throughout June worked had turned to a recovery scenario, with the Chief Executive chairing the county Resources Cell, charged with looking at the cost of COVID, the cost of recovery and the development of the new normal working environment.

Regular updates had been provided to both employees and elected Members and would continue over the coming months. 17 decisions had been taken under urgent delegated powers in consultation with the Chairmen of the Policy Committees and the Leader of the Opposition. Decisions were publicly available for viewing.

Members were thanked for continuing to undertake Ward visits where appropriate as a step

to some sort of return to normal.

The new senior structure had been agreed and was in the process of being implemented. The Chief Executive was pleased to advise that as of Wednesday Alan Robinson would become the Director of Corporate Services, Ady Selby, the Assistant Director of Operations and Commercial Services and Tracey Bircumshaw, the Assistant Director of Finance and Property Services. All three were congratulated. The remaining two posts would be advertised.

The Chief Executive concluded his announcements by paying tribute to all staff for maintaining services through what had been a difficult and unprecedented times.

## **6 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

The Chairman confirmed to the meeting that no questions had been received from members of the public.

## **7 QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO. 9**

Councillor John McNeill, Ward Member for the Market Rasen Ward, submitted the following question to the Chairman and the Leader of the Council: -

“Chairman and Leader, during and after the easing of the Coronavirus lockdown the requirements regarding isolation and social-distancing do not appear to have always been met at Willingham Woods in my ward. Do you agree that any lack of attention to the regulations by an individual endangers the safety of everyone, potentially with fatal consequences? Unfortunately, according to our officers, the enforcement of the appropriate regulations are a Police matter and not something that West Lindsey District Council can take up directly. Therefore can I ask you to write to the Police and Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable of Lincolnshire Police to request that more is done by Lincolnshire Police to ensure that Willingham Woods is a safe place, where the threat of the spread of Coronavirus (Covid-19) is limited as far as possible?

Thank you  
Councillor J McNeill”

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Giles McNeill, responded as follows: -

“Thank you to Cllr McNeill for your question regarding the issues arising at Willingham Woods. It has been some time since I last visited, but I need not bore colleagues with tales of the county cross-country championships.

I agree that the actions of individuals you outline in your question do present a greater risk to the public. The Government has been explicitly clear that each individual needs to take responsibility for their own actions in order to help control the spread of the virus and alongside this, has granted powers to relevant agencies

to ensure that, in some circumstances, this can be enforced. I can confirm to colleagues that where situations like this have arisen, the Council have and will continue to liaise with the relevant parties, business operators and landowners, to provide advice and guidance to enable the spaces to function and operate safely.

In a specific regard to Willingham Woods, I have today written to the Police & Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable of Lincolnshire Police to raise the issue relating to outdoor gatherings and seek assurances that they are taking the necessary steps to ensure that they are being done so within the requirement of the law. Given the Government's clear stand on outdoor activities and the burden this has placed on public spaces and the natural environment, it is essential that we all work together to ensure that these spaces feel safe and to enable all residents to enjoy them."

## **8 MOTIONS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO. 10**

The Chairman confirmed to the meeting that no motions had been submitted under Procedure Rule number 10.

## **9 REVIEW OF THE ALLOCATION OF SEATS TO POLITICAL GROUPS ON COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES**

The Chairman presented the report, which set out details of the political groups on the Council, the number of Members to be appointed to serve on each Committee, and the allocation of seats on each of the Committees based on political groupings.

This was a matter, which had been determined by the Head of Paid Service under his delegated authority, and as such, there was no requirement for a vote.

With no questions posed, the following was **DULY NOTED**: -

- (a) the details of the political groups, as set out in Appendix A of the report,
- (b) the number of Members to be appointed to serve on each committee and sub-committee; and
- (c) the allocation to different political groups of seats on committees/sub-committees, as set out in Appendix B of the report.

## **10 APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES**

The Chairman of the Council presented the report which set out the wishes expressed by the political groups in respect of the appointment of Members to serve on each of the Council's formal Committees for the 20/21 Civic Year.

Requests had been received that the Overview and Scrutiny be not politically balanced.

Members were asked to suspend the rules relating to proportionality in respect of the

Overview and Scrutiny Committee and appoint the members named in the report to the respective Committees.

Whilst the Council had had the need to re-appoint the Committees in accordance with its duty to make appointments to Committees in accordance with the wishes expressed by political groups, all Group Leaders had indicated they have no wish to amend the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmanship appointments previously made.

In light of this position, Members were merely asked to re-affirm the appointments previously made to these positions.

With no questions posed, following a unanimous vote in favour it was

**RESOLVED** that: -

- (a) the rules relating to proportionality be suspended in relation to the Overview and Scrutiny; and
- (b) in accordance with the provisions of section 16 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the wishes expressed by political groups, the following members be appointed to serve on the Council's committees for the remainder of the civic year as follows:

**Chief Officer Employment Committee (10 Members)**

**Councillor Jackie Brockway – Chairman**

Councillor Mick Devine

Councillor Cherie Hill

Councillor Angela Lawrence

**Councillor Giles McNeill – Vice Chairman**

Councillor Diana Rodgers

Councillor Lesley Rollings

Councillor Anne Welburn

Councillor Angela White

Councillor Trevor Young

**Corporate Policy and Resources Committee (14 Members)**

Councillor Owen Bierley

Councillor Matthew Boles

Councillor Stephen Bunney

Councillor David Cotton

Councillor Mick Devine

Councillor Ian Fleetwood

Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan

**Councillor Giles McNeill – Chairman**

Councillor John McNeill

Councillor Mandy Snee

Councillor Jeff Summers



Councillor Robert Waller  
**Councillor Anne Welburn – Vice Chairman**  
Councillor Trevor Young

**Governance and Audit Committee (7 Members)**

**Councillor Jackie Brockway – Vice Chairman**  
Councillor Stephen Bunney  
Councillor Tracey Coulson  
Councillor David Dobbie  
Councillor Caralyne Grimble  
**Councillor John McNeill – Chairman**  
Councillor Angela White

**Licensing Committee (11 Members)**

Councillor David Cotton  
Councillor Liz Clews  
Councillor Tim Davies  
Councillor Caralyne Grimble  
Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan  
**Councillor Angela Lawrence – Vice Chairman**  
Councillor Cordelia McCartney  
**Councillor Jessie Milne – Chairman**  
Councillor Judy Rainsforth  
Councillor Jim Snee  
Councillor Jeff Summers

**Regulatory Committee (11 Members)**

Councillor David Cotton  
Councillor Liz Clews  
Councillor Tim Davies  
Councillor Caralyne Grimble  
Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan  
**Councillor Angela Lawrence – Vice Chairman**  
Councillor Cordelia McCartney  
**Councillor Jessie Milne – Chairman**  
Councillor Judy Rainsforth  
Councillor Jim Snee  
Councillor Jeff Summers

**Planning Committee (14 Members)**

Councillor Owen Bierley  
Councillor Matthew Boles

Councillor David Cotton  
Councillor Mick Devine  
Councillor Jane Ellis  
**Councillor Ian Fleetwood – Chairman**  
Councillor Cherie Hill  
Councillor Cordelia McCartney  
Councillor Jessie Milne  
Councillor Keith Panter  
Councillor Roger Patterson  
Councillor Judy Rainsforth  
**Councillor Robert Waller – Vice Chairman**  
Councillor Angela White

**Prosperous Communities Committee (14 Members)**

**Councillor Owen Bierley – Chairman**  
Councillor Stephen Bunney  
Councillor Tracey Coulson  
Councillor Chris Darcel  
Councillor Mick Devine  
**Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan – Vice Chairman**  
**Councillor John McNeill – Vice Chairman**  
Councillor Jessie Milne  
Councillor Judy Rainsforth  
Councillor Tom Regis  
Councillor Jim Snee  
Councillor Mandy Snee  
Councillor Anne Welburn  
Councillor Trevor Young

**Overview and Scrutiny Committee (12 members)**

Councillor Liz Clews  
Councillor Tim Davies  
Councillor David Dobbie  
Councillor Jane Ellis  
Councillor Caralyne Grimble  
Councillor Cherie Hill  
Councillor Angela Lawrence  
Councillor Keith Panter  
Councillor Roger Patterson  
**Councillor Diana Rodgers – Vice Chairman**  
**Councillor Lesley Rollings – Chairman**  
**Councillor Angela White – Vice Chairman; and**

- (c) the current committee Chairmen, and Vice-Chairmen (shown in bold above) be re-affirmed.

## 11 APPOINTMENTS TO VACANCIES ON SUB-COMMITTEES, BOARDS AND OTHER BODIES (INCLUDING OUTSIDE BODIES)

The Chairman introduced the report which sought to appoint to vacancies on a variety of sub-committees, boards and other bodies (including outside bodies) arising from the death of Councillor Lewis Strange.

**RESOLVED** that: -

- (a) the following persons be appointed to the current vacancies as detailed below

Standards Sub-Committee	Councillor Bob Waller
Joint Staff Consultative Committee (JSCC) (Reserve Member)	Councillor Jane Ellis
Healthwatch Provider Network Meeting (YourVoice@HWL)	Councillor Mrs Diana Rodgers
Lincolnshire Forum for Agriculture and Horticulture	Councillor Tom Regis
Wold Community Transport	Councillor Tom Regis
Member Champion for Community Transport, Public Rights of Way and Rural Issues.	Councillor Tom Regis

- (b) the Crematorium Working Group be formally closed and its Members thanked for the work they have undertaken in completing a successful project.

## 12 RE-DESIGNATION OF THE SECTION 151 OFFICER

Members gave consideration to a report which sought the re-designation of the statutory position of Chief Finance Officer under the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972.

Members praised the calibre of the Officer proposed and offered her congratulations in her absence.

On being put to the vote it was: -

**RESOLVED** that Tracey Bircumshaw, Finance and Business Support Manager, be designated as the Council's Chief Finance/Section 151 Officer.

### **13 ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE GOVERNANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE 2019/20**

The Chairman of the Governance and Audit Committee was delighted to present the first Annual Report from the Governance and Audit Committee covering the civic year 2019 to 2020.

The report aimed to provide Council with an overview of the Committee's work for the year, as advised by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accountancy (CIPFA), and highlighted the work done and the Committee's compliance with its Terms of Reference.

In presenting the report the Chairman took the opportunity to thank the Members, both elected and independent, and Officers of the Committee for their hard work and professionalism during the last civic year. In particular, recognition was paid to the Independent members, Mrs Alison Adams, Mr Andrew Morriss and Mr Peter Walton, who brought a variety of experience and knowledge to the Committee's work. Thanks were also paid to Officers who supported the Committee with special mention going to Mr Alan Robinson, Mr James O'Shaughnessy, Mrs Tracey Bircumshaw and Mr James Welbourn as well to the the Internal Auditors, Assurance Lincolnshire headed by Mrs Lucy Pledge, and the External Auditors, Mazars.

The Vice-Chairman of the Committee in turn paid tribute to her Chairman for his rigorous Chairmanship.

**RESOLVED** that the work undertaken by the Governance & Audit Committee during 2019/20 be noted and supported.

### **14 CLIMATE STRATEGY**

Members gave consideration to a report which presented an initial scoping document, which allowed for an "interim" update to be provided in respect of work undertaken in progressing the Council resolution to consider environmental and other implications associated with climate change. The report presented set out a strategy development plan, as requested by Council and had been recommended to Council by the Prosperous Communities Committee

Councillor Coulson, as Chairman of the Working Group, presented the report to the meeting and highlighted several key points including, the work undertaken to-date (Section 3 of the report); the Interim findings (Section 4 of the report) and arising from this, the proposed way in which the Strategy would be developed: namely by adopting the Asden toolkit, which would provide a robust framework around which the Strategy could be built.

Debate ensued and the report on the whole was welcomed as was the proposed approach.

It was suggested that Officers should be encouraged to complete the Climate Related Risks and Opportunities box on all committee reports as this work progressed. The need to ensure linkages to the Council's Corporate Plan was also raised.

The planned consultation work was outlined. Some suggested whilst a strategy was important, there was a need to take action and be more precise about what issues the Council was going to tackle and challenge and how it was going to look at its services and

policies to encourage and if necessary enforce change for example through the planning process.

This led to lengthy debate around the need for Central Government to greater support the need for climate change through legislation; for buildings standards to be reformed; for the planning regime to be over-hauled and for there to be changes in funding to support rural communities, and increased public transport.

There were aspirations to include such requirements in the Local Plan review but without a change in legislation there was no mechanism to do such. All were in agreement there was a need to continue to lobby the Government for changes.

In response to comments the Chief Executive advised lobbying was undertaken at every opportunity and this would continue to be the case. The County Council were in receipt of circa £54m funding for climate change and he undertook to ascertain with LCC how they intended to use the fund across the county. With regard to the planning regime, the Council was duty bound to develop policy in-line with Government guidance. There was real commitment as part of the Local Plan review to ensure climate impact was taken into consideration, as far as guidance allowed. Specialist resource had been commissioned to ensure this matter could be explored to its fullest extent. A word of a caution was expressed in that the authority must ensure it retained its housing land supply, else it risked losing control of such decisions. This was fine balance that needed to be taken into consideration.

The Group were thanked for their work to-date

**RESOLVED** that :-

- (a) the work to-date the Working Group had undertaken in this subject matter be endorsed and supported; and
- (b) the recommendation made by the Prosperous Communities Committee, to approve the suggested approach to developing the Strategy, be accepted.

**Note:** The meeting adjourned following consideration of this item, reconvening at 9.10 pm. A further roll-call was undertaken to ensure everyone had returned to the meeting. This was confirmed to be the case.

## **15 DISCUSSION PAPER - COVID 19 IMPACT ON WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL'S RESIDENTS, SERVICES, PERFORMANCE AND FINANCES TO DATE**

The Chairman formally welcomed Mr Derek Ward, Director of Public Health Lincolnshire, to the meeting.

Mr Ward gave a brief presentation to Members (copy appended) starting by outlining the current number of confirmed cases across the county, the headlines being: -

- 1149 cases, 143 confirmed deaths in Lincolnshire

- Lincs 152 cases per 100,000 population – lowest in Midlands (excluding Rutland)

Members were provided with data to demonstrate how West Lindsey fared in comparison to other Lincolnshire areas, with Mr Ward pleased to report that West Lindsey did in fact have the lowest infection and mortality rates. A number of statistical slides were shown to demonstrate trends over the recent weeks and months.

Finally, Mr Ward concluded by providing information around the developing track and trace programme, the role of Local authorities within this structure and the operation and tactical response arrangements in place between the County, Districts and Public Health England to deal with outbreaks & complex cases.

Members sincerely thanked Public Health England for their sterling work and the support provided to communities during these unprecedented times. Whilst the pandemic had brought with it some extremely difficult situations, it also had helped organisations realise the move to on-line services, often increasing access to services for the most vulnerable and isolated, at an accelerated pace. It was confirmed that on-line services were expected to become the new normal for a far greater number of services and would likely remain indefinitely in some form.

There followed a period of questioning by Members during which questions were raised regarding, the basis of the statistics, anti-body testing, the average number of tests being administered per week across the District compared to nationally, and when a return to routine surgery and increased capacity in serious illness care would be seen.

In responding, Members were advised data was assigned to a person's address, as opposed to where the tests were carried out, however there was frustration that Public Health England did not directly receive information to this level. In respect of anti-body tests, these posed some operational challenges. Those deemed reliable did require a full blood test in a hospital setting. Furthermore it was still unclear even if the presence of anti-bodies was detected, what level of protection this offered a person, or for how long. This was still something very much being researched, with this being a new virus there were many unknowns. Track and Trace was expected to continue to be developed and it was also anticipated there would be a national review of the response. Assurance was offered that all agencies were taking much learning from the each situation as it developed.

PHE did not currently get testing stats to allow regional comparisons, this was again something that was anticipated and had been requested and pushed for from Central Government. Once received such analysis could be undertaken and would be shared back through the Lincolnshire Resilience Forum on which the District Council was a partner. Data other than national data was currently limited and where available under restricted publication rights. This situation was expected to be "eased" over the next week or so. Resuming normal NHS procedures was a matter for Trust Executive's however assurance was given that over the past four weeks there had been a focus on and trying to resume normal day to day services whilst managing the risks. The situation highlighted by Members was a recognised concern, as were the links between education, income, mental health all of which would need to be balanced as decisions were made around easing lockdown and some return to a new normal.

Members further questioned why West Lindsey rates were so low if contributing factors were

age and obesity both of which were prevalent across the county. Analysis continued but early work to establish agreed leaving mechanisms between hospitals and care homes it was believed had greatly contributed and had been invaluable. Appropriate testing and quarantine rules had been stringently applied.

Further questions were posed in respect of normal mortality rates, normal flu epidemic levels in an average winter. Without question normal mortality rates had risen above normal levels. Such data was shared through the LRF and was publicly available. Excess deaths were seen in April, levels were currently at a seasonal average and showing signs of dipping below the seasonal average. The way of recording possible COVID-related deaths had changed throughout the pandemic, with only those testing positive recorded in the early stages. "All cause" mortality rates was the key indicator, based on a 7 year rolling average, due to the unknowns cited by Members Learning would continuously be applied.

Final questions related to future plans to support the physical and emotional well-being of young people to mitigate the documented effects resulting from lockdown and the additional risks posed to BAME residents and reasoning for this.

A Work programme, focusing on well-being and mental health, including that of young people was being developed and was being led through the Lincolnshire Recovery Group, on which the Council did have a representative and through which further information could be obtained. The relationship between BAME residents and COVID 19 was not as clear as first thought due to a number of reasons which were outlined. Two recent studies by Kevin Fenton were referenced. The mortality rates were undisputed and work continued with the Equalities Minister. Tools were been developed to better risk assess front line staff, a large proportion of which were from the BAME community.

In conclusion, Members again expressed concern at the lack of local level data being supplied by Central Government and urged political Leaders to campaign for change and greater transparency. It was confirmed both the County Council and PHE continued to make multiple representations regarding this matter.

The Chairman thanked Mr Ward for his time and presentation before he left the meeting, handing over to the Chief Executive who gave a short presentation to Members on the service and financial impact of COVID 19 on the Council's services (copy appended).

A period of questioning followed during which Members sought information on the Gainsborough Leisure Centre, the investment portfolio and the mitigation actions being considered should the financial impact continue and investments not materialise as predicted. Political statements were made around the appropriateness of the Commercial investment portfolio, and the need for non-essential spends and non essential staffing to be reviewed / frozen citing suggestions.

In responding, the Chief Executive confirmed that a deep clean would be undertaken at the Leisure Centre, prior to its opening. This work had not taken place during lockdown as the majority of Staff were furloughed with only key essential staff remaining on site. In terms of the strategic risk, decisions had been taken immediately to mitigate risks examples being the postponement of the new financial system. All non essential spend had been minimized and a full review of all budgets would be taken through the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee in November. The Chief Executive was of the view that no "emergency budget"

was required at this time, the Authority had sufficient reserves to manage in the short-term, work would focus on ensuring levels could be replenished in the medium to long term.

The Commercial Development Manger was a new role created to oversee the Council's Trading Services. Commercial property enquiries should be directed to either the Chief Executive or the Property Services Manager, Mr Reeve. In terms of the portfolio's value going forward, valuations were undertaken every year, the Council had also established a volatility reserve, which had been designed to allow some losses to be absorbed. Valuations were based on the value of the leases and this would be very much dependent on the status of each tenant post lockdown. It was hoped the Council had mitigated the risk as far as it could by having a diverse portfolio over a number of sectors with a variety of tenancy arrangements in good quality buildings. Members had been provided with current best knowledge information regarding the "asks" of tenants to-date in good faith. The situation would be monitored. Finally addressing the comments around staffing and working practices, an internal recovery group had been established to investigate what the new normal might look like and it was hoped some of the benefits seen would be maintained, examples being on-line meetings reducing both travel time, associated costs and the impact on the climate. The Chief Executive was also involved in the Lincolnshire wide resources cell looking at how this could be achieved collectively across Lincolnshire also. There was no block on vacancies, if the Council was to continue to deliver it needed its roles filled. All vacancies as standard practice were reviewed and needed MT approval to fill, no additional measures were considered required at this time in terms of staffing.

The Leader objected to specific teams being identified. The Leader also referenced his comments made at a previous committee around the robustness of the Council's situation.

Due to the lateness of proceedings the Chairman indicated he would take two more speakers before moving to the vote. This was met with discontent from Opposition Members.

Further questions and comments were raised in respect of the support being offered to licensed premises to ensure they were business ready, including the new street licenses. Fly-tipping had increased and Members felt it was time to lobby for the opening of household recycling sites to alleviate the issue, and sought information on what activity the Council was actively undertaking.

Tribute was paid to the waste collection teams and the ways they had engaged with the local community especially the young people waving for example.

The Leader questioned the appropriateness of speakers asking multiple questions within an address. The Monitoring Officer at the request of the Chairman outlined the relevant procedure rule. Strong discontent was shown, there were outcries from Opposition Members and calls from the Administration for the meeting to be drawn to a close due to unruly behavior. The Chairman called Members to order and asked the Chief Executive to respond to the questions which had been raised during which Members noted the Council had a 48 hour response rate to fly-tipping incidents and had maintained performance during lockdown. The Authority had lobbied from the outset regarding recycling centres and sites were now open. Regarding licensing, notification had only been received over the weekend and the Authority was working with the County Council regarding street licenses.



Further discontent was expressed that the debate was been brought to a close, some suggested deliberately. Order was again called for by the Chairman with warnings issued around unruly conduct.

On being put to the vote it was:

**RESOLVED** that a further informal workshop on the ongoing impact of COVID-19 be held towards the end of July 2020.

The meeting concluded at 10.34 pm.

Chairman