

# Public Document Pack

West Lindsey District Council - 24 January 2022

## WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Council held in the Council Chamber - The Guildhall on 24 January 2022 at 7.00 pm.

### Present:

Councillor Mrs Angela Lawrence (Vice-Chairman) - in the Chair for the meeting.

Councillor Owen Bierley	Councillor Matthew Boles
Councillor Mrs Jackie Brockway	Councillor Stephen Bunney
Councillor Liz Clews	Councillor David Cotton
Councillor Mrs Tracey Coulson	Councillor Michael Devine
Councillor David Dobbie	Councillor Jane Ellis
Councillor Ian Fleetwood	Councillor Mrs Caralyne Grimble
Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan	Councillor Mrs Cordelia McCartney
Councillor John McNeill	Councillor Mrs Jessie Milne
Councillor Peter Morris	Councillor Jaime Oliver
Councillor Keith Panter	Councillor Roger Patterson
Councillor Mrs Judy Rainsforth	Councillor Tom Regis
Councillor Mrs Diana Rodgers	Councillor Jim Snee
Councillor Mrs Mandy Snee	Councillor Jeff Summers
Councillor Mrs Anne Welburn	Councillor Mrs Angela White
Councillor Trevor Young	

### In Attendance:

Ian Knowles	Chief Executive
Tracey Bircumshaw	Assistant Director of Finance and Property Services and Section 151 Officer
Emma Redwood	Assistant Director People and Democratic Services
Katie Storr	Democratic Services & Elections Team Manager

### Also in Attendance:

Mr Richard Quirk, Chairman of the Independent Remuneration Panel

### Apologies

Councillor Steve England  
Councillor Christopher Darcel  
Councillor Timothy Davies  
Councillor Cherie Hill  
Councillor Mrs Lesley Rollings  
Councillor Robert Waller

## **50 CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME**

The Vice Chairman (who was taking the Chair for the meeting) welcomed all Members and Officers to the meeting, the first meeting of Full Council, back in the Chamber for nearly two years.

A warm welcome was also extended to Mr Richard Quirk, Chairman of the Independent Remuneration Panel, who would later in the meeting present his Panel's recommendations to Full Council.

Well wishes were extended to the Chairman of the Council, in his absence following recent ill health. A speedy recovering was hoped for by all.

Brief reference was made to Covid measures still in place, and Members were advised to wear masks, when not speaking, given the closer proximity of attendees.

The public gallery, for those wishing to view proceedings remained suspended for Full Council, due to space limitations, but the meeting could be viewed live on the Council's website.

## **51 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

(a) Minutes of the Meeting of Full Council held on 1 November 2021

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Meeting of Full Council held on 1 November 2021 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

## **52 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

For the avoidance of doubt, the Chairman advised the Chamber that Members were not required to make declarations in respect of the Members' Allowance Report, as this was an area in which all Councillors were granted an exemption by the relevant legislation.

## **53 DISTRICT COUNCIL NETTLEHAM WARD BY-ELECTION RESULT - DECEMBER 2021**

Members gave consideration to a report which set out the results of the recent District Council By-Election for the Nettleham Ward held on 16 December 2021.

Members welcomed and congratulated newly elected Councillor, Councillor Ms Jaime Oliver.

**RESOLVED** that the results of the District Council By-Election for the Nettleham Ward held on 16 December 2021 be received and noted.

## **54 MATTERS ARISING**

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

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

## **55 ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **Chairman**

In the absence of the Chairman of Council, the Vice-Chairman highlighted to the meeting a few events Councillor England had supported since the last Meeting of Full Council, this included:-

- Reception in the Heritage Centre at RAF Scampton on 11 November -
- A delayed tour of Lea Fields Crematorium on 12 November - for the first charity, St Barnabas, who had received donations from the metal recycling scheme. Ward Member Councillor Mrs Jessie Milne had also been in attendance.
- Remembrance Sunday attendance at two services, All Saints Church in Gainsborough in the morning and All Saints Church in Nettleham in the afternoon
- The Official opening of the new depot at Caenby Corner on 26 November
- The Salvation Army Toy Service in Gainsborough on 12 December

The pandemic had continued to see events interrupted with the Chairman’s Annual Carol Service having again been cancelled, although he had been able to create and distribute video Christmas messages to staff and the community filmed in St Mary’s Church in Welton.

### **Leader**

The Leader made the following address to Council: -

“May I begin by congratulating our new colleague, Councillor Jaime Oliver, on her election to the Council; I keenly anticipate working alongside her. It is also most pleasing that we are able to come together in this Chamber once again; the last time we met here was on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2020!

This reflects the success to-date of our collective national response to the coronavirus pandemic; the fact that a meeting of the Lincolnshire Outbreak Engagement Board was postponed from last Wednesday to this really speaks volumes. Whilst infection rates remain relatively high, the latest information I have is that Lincolnshire ranks third in England for the take up of booster

vaccinations and that there are now only two Covid-19 patients in County intensive care units. Given the lifting this Thursday of the Government's Plan B restrictions (and our return to Plan A) continued adherence to all official guidance and regular self-testing will remain vital tools to help keep one another and our communities safe and to protect our valued National Health Service.

**The ten upper-tier Councils in Lincolnshire have been working collaboratively in preparation for the imminent publication of the Government's ambitious Levelling Up White Paper, which will include a strategy for devolved decision-making. This presents an opportunity to reset the relationship between central and Local Government and to give councils more power to deliver effectively on behalf of the areas and communities they serve. Our aim is to achieve the early submission of a compelling case for devolved powers for the historic area we represent. Not to do so would, without doubt, be regarded as a huge missed opportunity to build a better future.**

Officers in the Joint Planning Unit are presently preparing the submission draft of the new Central Lincolnshire Local Plan informed by representations made during the 2021 consultation. Subject to approval by Committee members at the meeting on Monday, 28<sup>th</sup> February the document will then be published ready for a further formal six-week public consultation period (Regulation 19) in the spring. Following that, the document will be finalised and submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for its Examination in Public and adoption, expected to be later in 2022.

Preparations are well under way for the introduction of the separate collection of paper and cardboard in West Lindsey, an environmental imperative. New purple-lidded bins will be delivered in March, with the service beginning in April. Copies of the 2022 collection calendar and recycling guide are currently being delivered to every home. These specify the date of commencement, however further detailed information packs will also be provided to further assist householders. New and renewal subscriptions to the Council's popular green bin service are also welcomed. The material collected is composted and used as a soil improver within the district exemplifying a 'virtuous circle'."

## **Chief Executive**

Following on from the Leader, the Chief Executive echoed his comments with regard to being able to make a safe return to the Chamber in the Guildhall, taking the opportunity to remind Members they should wear their masks around the building. The Chief Executive confirmed that the District Council alongside a number of Local Government officer groups continued to lobby Government to legalise virtual meetings.

Council were advised that the Authority had been visited by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) the previous week. Having viewed the Authority's arrangements on the ground floor and having spoken at length with the Council's Health and Safety Officer – the HSE were more than satisfied with the arrangements and mitigations in place. The Chief Executive placed on record his thanks to Simon Hunt, the Health and Safety Officer and all employees

for their co-operation in keeping the building and their colleagues safe.

Following the recent relaxation of regulations the Chief Executive advised that employees were again being asked to start and book desks in the Guildhall; this would assist in developing new working patterns that would in-turn assist with identifying the appropriate capacity required in the Guildhall.

Moving on to the Levelling Up Fund Programme, the Chief Executive advised recruitment had commenced for a programme team to deliver this key project for the District and was pleased to confirm that the first round of recruitment had been successful, with six appointments having been made.

Finally, consultation on a new Selective Licensing Scheme had commenced in the month and would remain open until 11 April. Members were asked to encourage all relevant landlords and tenants to engage with the consultation.

## **56 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

The Chairman advised the meeting that no public questions had been received.

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

The Chairman advised the meeting that four question pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No.9 had been submitted to the meeting. This had been circulated to all Members, separately to the agenda.

The Chairman invited, Councillor John McNeill, Ward Member for Market Rasen, to put his question to the Leader, as follows: -

"The Boundary Commission for England following the passing of the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 2020 in December 2020 and the publication of the relevant Parliamentary electorate data in January 2021 commenced a new review of Parliamentary constituencies in England (referred to as the '2023 Review'), of which the first statutory consultation on initial proposals concluded on 2nd August 2021.

The Boundary Commission for England anticipate publishing the responses to the first consultation early this year and undertaking their second consultation from 22nd February 2022 for six weeks. Following this and the formulation of their proposals they intend to publish their proposals late this year and conduct a four week consultation on them. Their intention is then to submit and publish their final report in June 2023.

The current proposals by the Boundary Commission for England for the Gainsborough constituency, of which West Lindsey is a part, is to remove that part of the constituency comprising Wragby Ward of East Lindsey District Council and in effect make the Gainsborough constituency have the same boundary as the district of West Lindsey.

Is the Leader aware of the detail of these proposals?

Given the current proposal, would he support the District Council engaging in the Boundary Commission for England's second consultation to propose that the name of the Gainsborough constituency, despite its historical associations, be amended to 'West Lindsey'? Would he further agree that and support all members of this Council to make representations on this matter to the Boundary Commission for England?

"Surely the Leader will agree that there can be few similar opportunities to, not only promote the brand of West Lindsey nationally, but also to support the desire of many in this Council and District who are concerned about the perceived Gainsborough-centric bias of the District Council.

Councillor John McNeill"

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

Thank you for your question Cllr McNeill.

Yes, I am indeed aware of the review of the Parliamentary constituencies in England and in particular of the proposals for the Gainsborough constituency which, as you suggest, do present a unique opportunity to further our ambition to firmly place West Lindsey as a distinct and acknowledged entity, recognised at a national level.

This is especially important in the context of a potential bid for devolved powers for our County and in light of the present consultation on an extended Selective Licensing Scheme. It is closely related to our success, last year, in gaining an award of £10.27m in the first round of bidding in the Levelling Up Fund and in demonstrating the efficient delivery of the scheme.

Whilst I believe many people are aware of the Ridings of Yorkshire there is far less recognition of the significance of the historic Parts of Lincolnshire, Lindsey, Kesteven and Holland another matter this could only help to address.

Accordingly I welcome your timely question Cllr McNeill and will be pleased not only to make such a representation on behalf of our Council, but also to promote the opportunity and support others to engage in the forthcoming consultation too.

Thank you again for your question Cllr McNeill."

Councillor McNeill thanked the Leader for the response.

The Chairman then invited the second questioner, Councillor Trevor Young, Ward Member for Gainsborough South West Ward to put his question to the meeting, as follows: -

"In recent weeks there has been numerous rumours and concerns from the

public regarding the newly opened waste depot site facility at Caenby Corner, could the Leader of the Council please provide a verbal update to members.

Councillor Trevor Young”

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

“Thank you for your question Cllr Young.

Sir Edward Leigh MP formally opened our new Operational Services Depot in early December and the facility is now fully operational. I’m delighted to report that the levels of safety and welfare facilities for our operational colleagues have improved enormously following the move. This has been a major capital investment and unsurprisingly, there have been a few very minor teething issues. I am confident the Waste Management Team, alongside the developer will resolve all of these in the coming weeks. A stage four project closure report will be heard by the internal Portfolio Board in the next couple of months, however it is very much being viewed as a success as the project has been delivered on time, under budget and to a very high standard.

Thank you again for your question Cllr Young.

Having heard the response Councillor Young, with permission from the Chairman, posed a supplementary question:

Leader in terms of the planning and approval process for the facility Members were assured that this was a state-of-the-art facility and that it was future-proof. It is concerning that reports I am receiving from public and staff regarding such things as doors not being wide enough to take vehicles, platforms not high enough for machines such as the sand bagger and the facility does not take items such as brick rubble, or no provision has been made – that is a real concern given the level of fly-tipping. Can I ask Leader what are your views on that?

The Leader of the Council responded, indicating that this was the first time he had been made aware of such issues. As such he indicated that he would need to speak with relevant Officers and provide further information outside of the meeting to Councillor Young.

The Chairman invited the third questioner, Councillor Liz Clews, Ward Member for Scotter and Blyton, to put her question to the meeting.

With Councillor Clews having been addressing Council for a short time, a point of Order was raised as concerns were raised that Councillor Clews was not putting the question as submitted. The point of order was upheld by the Chairman, who advised Councillor Clews that she could only raise the question she had submitted and information previously stated would fall outside of the question.

Councilor Clews then put her question as submitted and as follows: -

“Lincoln County Hospital serves a large proportion of West Lindsey residents in relation to urgent treatment and emergency health services.

Following the recent announcement that the County Hospital declared a ‘major incident’ there are obvious concerns by Gainsborough and surrounding village residents regarding accessing emergency treatment in a timely and safe manner.

Could you explain what discussions have been taken place with NHS colleagues and what systems have been put in place following the announcement of the ‘major incident’ to ensure West Lindsey residents have access to the appropriate services in time of emergency?

Councillor Liz Clews”

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

“Thank you for your question Cllr Clews.

The situation is being managed through the Lincolnshire Resilience Forum (LRF). Depending on the nature of the current threat, strategic and tactical meetings can be held as often as daily in order to identify the need for, and provide, mutual support. This includes information sharing regarding the current risk level within each partner agency and ensures a timely response to emerging issues. Senior officers have engaged fully with this process throughout the Covid crisis and have offered support to other agencies whenever it has been logistically possible. This support means that the NHS and other agencies can concentrate on delivering their core functions, especially primary care. Practical examples where the Council has supported the LRF include our Communications team sharing important messages on all our platforms, especially the booster vaccine campaign, which helped Lincolnshire have one of the highest rates of fully vaccinated residents in the country. We have also helped logistically, for example offering up a van and driver to distribute LFT tests to local pharmacies. This is quite understandably appreciated and indeed all members will recently have received a copy of a generous letter of thanks from the Lincolnshire Clinical Commissioning Group.

Thank you again for your question Cllr Clews”.

Whilst Councillor Clews did indicate she held real concerns and wanted to understand what was happening at the hospital, in the light of concerns residents had raised with her, the Chairman ruled it was not a matter that the District Council had authority over, nor could individual cases or complaints regarding the services and practices at The John Coupland Hospital be discussed, and as such, there was no supplementary question to be put.

The Chairman invited the fourth and final questioner, Councillor David Dobbie, Ward Member for Gainsborough East to put his question to the meeting as follows: -

“I am aware of the personal reasons for the changing of the time of the Governance and Audit Committee from an afternoon meeting to a morning



meeting but this has led to me having to step down from this Committee, as I work nights and cannot make morning meetings.

Should meetings not be held mostly on evenings to facilitate the engagement of those that work?

Councillor David Dobbie”

Councillor McNeill, Chairman of the Governance and Audit Committee responded to the question as follows: -

“Thank you for question, as Chairman of the Governance & Audit Committee, I have been asked to respond on behalf of the Chairman of the Council and the Leader of the Council.

I can confirm that the majority (seven of nine) of the meetings of West Lindsey District Council or its Committees are scheduled to meet in the evening, while only two meet during the day – being the Chief Officer Employment and the Governance & Audit Committees.

When meetings should be held is a matter determined by Members and it is considered annually by Full Council under Part V, Rule 1.3 (f) of the Constitution. The next opportunity to do so will be at our Annual Meeting of Council on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2022 at 7.00pm.”

Having heard the response Councillor Dobbie, with the permission of the Chairman posed the following supplementary question:-

“I understand the Governance and Audit Committee are always striving for best practice and have an opportunity to attend North Kesteven’s Committee next week. They hold their meetings at 5.00pm. Why do we not look at something like that? Then we would hold meetings that facilitate people like myself , who work nights, I am not asking for late evenings but early evenings, like North Kesteven who we are going to share best practice with. Why can’t we do something like that? I will be proposing that going forward and would like this Council to consider it as an option. Thank you.”

Councillor McNeill responded as follows

Following the meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2021, I received representations from three members of the current Governance and Audit Committee, to consider the possibility of changing the time of our meetings from afternoons to mornings.

Therefore, I made enquiries regarding the matter with Officers at the Governance and Audit Committee Chairman’s Briefing on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2021 and I undertook an informal consultation exercise with all the elected and independent Members of the committee during late October and early November 2021. The result of this was that Officers, including representatives of our audit functions, and all nine members who responded to the consultation were either very much in favour of

the change or at worst indifferent to it. To be clear no one expressed a view that the proposed change would cause a difficulty or be in any way inconvenient. Although I acknowledge that you were the one member, I had been unable to contact and obtain your views.

Given the response to the consultation the possibility was raised during the Governance and Audit Committee's Pre-Meeting Briefing on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2021 and again during the Governance and Audit Committee meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2021 – Minute 40 refers – where your objection to the proposal was first raised.

Members will be aware that this was not a matter which the Governance and Audit Committee can determine itself, and so a report was submitted to the meeting of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2021, requesting such a change.

At that meeting a lengthy debate was had about the advantages and disadvantages of changing the time of the meetings of the Governance and Audit Committee, both in terms of Member availability and public participation – available to watch on the Council's website.

At the end of the debate the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee voted and resolved that the meetings of the Governance and Audit Committee would commence at 10.00am for the remainder of the civic year - these being meetings 11<sup>th</sup> January 2022, 8<sup>th</sup> March 2022 and 12<sup>th</sup> April 2022.

Thank you.”

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

The Chairman advised the meeting that one motion pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No.10 had been submitted to the meeting, this was as set out in the agenda.

Councillor Bunney, was invited to put his motion to the meeting, and with the permission of the Chairman offered brief context asking Members to recognise that as a Government and Council we had agreed to work towards net zero carbon emissions by 2050, and understanding that to reach that target urgent action would be needed. The existence of the Council's Carbon Management Plan was acknowledged but Councillor Bunney referenced how this did not include carbon measurements for Council investments or some property in ownership.

The motion as submitted was then put as follows: -

“Chairman - It is generally recognised that burning fossil fuels contribute significantly to global warming, climate change and the decline in the biodiversity of the planet. If we are to meet the target for climate change mitigation it is imperative that current reserves of fossil fuels remain in the ground; their continued exploitation presents a substantial environmental risk to the survival of the planet for current and future generations.

West Lindsey District Council in adopting its Sustainability, Climate and Environmental Strategy has laid out a strong policy to address the threat from continued use of fossil fuels. However, to ensure successful implementation of replacing fossil fuels with renewable energies and green technologies the Council is asked to commit to the following:

1. Recognise that Fossil Fuel Investments are considered part of the Council's Carbon Footprint.
2. To review its investment strategy to create an Environmental Responsible Investment Policy which not only rules out new investments in companies involved in fuels but also divests in such companies.
3. Through the above policy to actively seek to invest in companies that reduce greenhouse emissions and minimize climate risk and biodiversity decline.
4. To work with our Pension Fund Partners to adopt the same criteria to investments as outline in 2 and 3 above.
5. To actively oppose any new venture to extract fossil fuels ensuring that they remain safely in the ground.

I so move.

Councillor Stephen Bunney”

Having being duly seconded, the matter was opened for debate, with the Leader making a lengthy response to each of the five points raised, as follows:-

**“Re - Recognise that Fossil Fuel Investments are considered part of the Council's Carbon Footprint.**

West Lindsey, along with all Local Authorities has a key role to play in achieving the UK's 2050 Net Zero greenhouse gas emissions target and phasing out the use of fossil fuels as soon as possible is crucial to that. Whilst West Lindsey District Council is directly responsible for only a small fraction of local emissions, through policies and partnerships Local Authorities have strong influence over more than a third of emissions in their area. Work to cut direct and indirect emissions is already underway through the Environment and Sustainability Action Plan and The Council's Carbon Management Plan.

When measuring and reporting on the Council's greenhouse gas emissions or carbon footprint, we refer to Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions:

- Scope 1 is direct greenhouse gas emissions from sources owned or controlled by the local authority, for example emissions from boilers and vehicles. The Council has direct control over these emissions.
- Scope 2 accounts for emissions of purchased electricity consumed by the local authority. West Lindsey District Council impacts our Scope 2 emissions by choosing to purchase low carbon electricity, noting that 'green tariffs' do not necessarily support increased renewable energy provision. Checks are made if the energy is low carbon, using the Government's greenhouse gas conversion factors for company reporting.

- Scope 3 includes indirect emissions from wider supply chains (often reaching international jurisdictions) emissions from the use of local authority services, contracted out services and investments. Councils have a strong influence over some of these emissions (e.g. contracted out services and investments) and less over others.

The Council makes no direct investment in companies. However, it may be investing indirectly in financial instruments, which are either provided by banks, building societies or managed funds, which may have associations with fossil fuel companies. We do not have influence on these organisations.

West Lindsey does go further than most Authorities by already recognising and considering scope 3 emissions. An estimated 69% of the 2019/20 footprint is associated with scope 3 emissions from leased buildings, leisure centres, business travel and commuting, water and waste.

For the council to decarbonise effectively and deliver on wider environmental and sustainability objectives it is vital that consideration of these impacts form part of every decision the council makes – including our investment decisions. Officers are developing tools and methods to better enable decision-making and financial appraisals that consider the environmental impacts of each decision alongside other factors. This is recognised as a priority in the 2021 Environment & Sustainability Action Plan.

Incorporating the full carbon impact of our investments into West Lindsey's carbon footprint would be a challenging undertaking, but is something that can be considered by the Environment and Sustainability Member Working Group, alongside things that we are committed to examine such as our procurement decisions. Conclusions could be reported within, or alongside in the annual Greenhouse Gas Emissions report.

The GHG report is the performance framework that the LGA is looking to standardise across Authorities to make action on climate change visible and accountable within the everyday business of Councils, to allow performance to be tracked consistently and transparently.

**Re - To review its investment strategy to create an Environmental Responsible Investment Policy which not only rules out new investments in companies involved in fuels but also divests in such companies.**

Our Investment Strategy is reviewed on an annual basis and we are able to adapt it to what the Council considers appropriate.

Our strategy will always prioritise Security Liquidity and Yield, as required by legislation, as the key elements of our investment strategy and investments made.

The Council's ethical approach lies within its Treasury Management Investment Strategy and includes provision for investment in Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) investments that are, by definition, responsible investments.

In relation to the Capital Investment Strategy all projects are subject to full business cases, which include the requirement to consider Environmental Implications.

By making the policy too restrictive then other considerations may result in increased risk, so if an organisation had bad governance for example, we would be at increased risk of losing our investment and if most banks had some association with fossil fuel companies, or if local authorities we invest with have agreed to fracking in their area, reduce our counterparties. Undertaking the due diligence on such matters would take additional resources and potentially limit the opportunities for investment.

The definition of 'involved' becomes onerous without a clear definition, for example those involved in fuel extraction, banks that hold accounts on behalf of such companies, investment funds that invest in such companies, property funds that have tenants in these industries, for example.

**Re -Through the above policy to actively seek to invest in companies that reduce greenhouse emissions and minimize climate risk and biodiversity decline.**

We do not invest directly with companies from a Treasury Management perspective.

However we do try to keep abreast of new capital investment opportunities and would consider the environmental implications along with other factors as part of the business case for any capital investment.

Whilst West Lindsey does not invest in companies directly, as per (1) above, the wider impact of our decision making, including the commissioning, procuring and managing of contracts offers considerable scope for influencing carbon reduction. By encouraging and enabling our supply chains to become more carbon efficient, the council will be helping our suppliers to become better placed to thrive in our future low carbon economy.

It is a stated aim of West Lindsey's Environment and Sustainability Strategy that our procurement decisions should better align with our action plan and targets. Carbon emissions that relate to goods and services procured by councils are classed as 'Scope 3' emissions. Councils have taken different approaches to whether they include Scope 3 emissions within their Net Zero targets. By looking at ways to incorporate procurement into our scope 3 considerations and favour companies with green credentials, our Council can increase its influence in this area and potentially have a similar effect as investing directly.

**Re - To work with our Pension Fund Partners to adopt the same criteria to investments as outline in 2 and 3 above.**

The pension fund currently categorises its investments based on the Global Industry Classification Standard (GICS) for holdings classified as 'Oil, Gas and

Consumable Fuels'. This category includes oil and gas exploration, production, refining & marketing, storage and transportation (including pipelines), and coal and consumable fuels.

At the end of December 2019 these holdings accounted for £20.7million of the total fund value of approximately £2.5billion – a very small percentage, but one that we would aspire to reduce. For context, in 2020, it was found that many councils that had declared climate emergencies still had substantial investments in fossil fuel industries through their pension funds; nearly £10billion in total.

The Council does have representation on the Pensions Board and as such can relay any decision the Council wishes to make. The view from the Local Government Association is that Local authority pension funds should disclose their approach to assessing and managing climate risks and should consider investing in Net Zero aligned schemes within their legal duties.

**Re- To actively oppose any new venture to extract fossil fuels ensuring that they remain safely in the ground.**

The determination of planning applications in relation to the extraction of fossil fuels is dealt with by Lincolnshire County Council under the current Lincolnshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan adopted in 2016. There is a policy that supports the 'exploration, appraisal and/or production of conventional and unconventional hydrocarbons' (Policy M9). However, the Central Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee, of which West Lindsey District Council is a partner authority, has taken the view that both the legislative and policy context has evolved considerably since then.

As such the Draft Central Lincolnshire Local Plan, which will be consulted upon in Spring 2022, prior to submission to the Planning Inspectorate for Examination in Public (expected later in 2022) contains Policy S19 *Fossil Fuel Exploration, Extraction, Production or Energy Generation*, which makes it clear any proposal for fossil fuel based exploration, extraction production or energy generation for the determination by City of Lincoln, North Kesteven District Council or West Lindsey District Council will be refused on the basis that any remaining fossil fuels should remain under the ground as part of the commitment to a net zero-carbon society and economy.

Therefore, notwithstanding the County Council's responsibilities as the likely decision makers on such proposals, should one of the three district based Local Planning Authorities be the decision maker on a proposal which relates to fossil fuel exploration, extraction, production or energy generation, then policy S16 confirms such proposals will be refused. Ordinarily, however, the County Council is likely to be the decision maker. In such instances, the following policy cannot apply. However, the Joint Committee expresses its in-principle opposition to such proposals, and continues to respectfully request the County Council, as decision maker, and the District Councils as consultees, to take account of the Joint Committees' in-principle opposition when each party either makes a decision or comments on a proposal, respectively.

This policy currently has limited weight in decision-making, however it provides a

clear direction of travel and sets the context for West Lindsey's position on the extraction of fossil fuels.

In effect we have ethical strategies in place, which may not be as specific as this motion would propose, but which ensure we consider and assess environmental impacts.

Whilst recognising the laudable aims of the motion, which is also clearly reflective of the Council's direction of travel, I, and the Administration Group, are unable to support it and will vote against it for the reasons I've set out".

At the conclusion of his response, the Leader requested that the Council's Section 151 Officer, address the meeting to offer further advice and guidance to members.

In addressing the meeting, the Section 151 Officer indicated that in the context of the motion the term "involved in" would require an agreed definition. From a Treasury Management perspective, the Council was not permitted to invest directly into equities/companies, however the Council did invest in such projects as Money Markets Funds that may package together a number of organisations, some of which may be associated with fossil fuel extraction for example. Should the motion be supported, all Council investments would need to be reviewed. The Council's Treasury Management Strategy currently indicated that the Council would consider ESG investments, which was a transparent ranking of all organisations available to the Council. There would need to be forensic analysis of any investments made in the future, which would require professional treasury advice or additional resources to enable Officers to look at investments in such a way. The risks and financial implications of such a change in Policy would need to be considered in greater detail, should the motion be supported.

Further debate ensued during which the matter of pension investments was raised. Pension investments was not a matter determined by this Authority, but by the Pensions Committee of the LCC, a former serving member of the Committee indicated that consideration had been given to such matters and concern was expressed that the motion would hinder plans already in place. The Green agenda and the use of fossil fuels was a complex issue with many difficult decisions and conflicting ramifications, and as such a number of Members expressed their satisfaction at the current approach and direction of travel to come in the future.

Members spoke of the laudable aims of the motion, but the specific nature and specific details, many considered put the Council at risk, giving examples. Should the Council not use fossil fuels in its vehicles? Do we invest in electrical vehicles, however their production came with ethical issues. The complex nature of sustainability was again raised. A number of Members considered the current policies in place provided a strong position and to adopt the motion would remove the Council's flexibility to move forward in the clearest and most advantageous ways for both West Lindsey and the bigger picture. The specific nature of the motion some considered would not allow the Council to act agilely when needed.

In response to a Members' enquiry the S151 Officer apologised to the meeting advising the Treasury Management Strategy, which included – ESG investments, previously referred to was not yet adopted but stood recommended to Council at their next meeting.

Other Members spoke in support of the motion particularly, aspect 5. Exercising his right of reply the submitter of the motion, addressed the meeting, thanking Members for the debate and views shared. He acknowledged the complex and area of work and the complex nature of the work that would need to be undertaken. He strongly believed that we needed to move forward, and act collectively across the world, to ensure everyone was held to account and as such it was a “fight” worth having.

A request for a recorded vote was made and duly seconded by a further Member.

On being put to the vote, votes were cast in the following manner: -

**For:** - Councillors Boles, Bunney, Clews, Cotton, Dobbie, Oliver, Panter, Rainsforth, M Snee, J Snee, and Young (11)

**Against:** - Councillors Bierley, Brockway, Coulson, Devine, Ellis, Fleetwood, Grimble, Howitt-Cowan, Lawrence, McCartney, J McNeill, Milne, Morris, Patterson, Regis, Rodgers, Summers and Welburn (18)

**Abstentions:** - Councillor White (1)

With a total of 11 votes in favour, 18 votes against and 1 abstention, it was **RESOLVED** that the motion be **NOT ACCEPTED**.

## **59 REVIEW OF THE ALLOCATION OF SEATS TO POLITICAL GROUPS ON COMMITTEES/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.

The requirement to review the allocations was as a result of the recent by-election held in the Nettleham Ward at which Councillor J Oliver was elected. Councillor Jaime Oliver had given due notice under Regulation 9b that she wished to be treated as Member of the Liberal Democrat Group

This was a matter, which had been determined by the Head of Paid Service under his delegated authority, in Consultation with the Group Leaders, all of which had indicated their agreement, 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.



## **60 APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES AND TO RE-AFFIRM COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN/ VICE-CHAIRMEN FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE 21/22 CIVIC YEAR**

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 remainder of the 21/22 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 line with the wishes expressed by political groups, all Group Leaders had indicated they had no wish to amend the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmanship appointments previously made.

This report therefore merely sought re-affirmation of the positions previously appointed to.

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

### **RESOLVED** that

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

#### **Chief Officer Employment Committee (9 Members)**

Councillor Owen Bierley	
Councillor Jackie Brockway	Chairman
Councillor Stephen Bunney	
Councillor Mick Devine	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 Matt Boles  
Councillor Stephen Bunney  
Councillor Liz Clews  
Councillor Mick Devine  
Councillor Ian Fleetwood  
Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan  
Councillor John McNeill  
Councillor Tom Regis  
Councillor Mandy Snee  
Councillor Jeff Summers Vice-Chairman  
Councillor Bob Waller  
Councillor Anne Welburn Chairman  
Councillor Trevor Young

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

Councillor Jackie Brockway Vice-Chairman  
Councillor Stephen Bunney  
Councillor Tracey Coulson  
Councillor Chris Darcel  
Councillor Caralyne Grimble  
Councillor John McNeill Chairman  
Councillor Angela White

**Licensing Committee (14 Members)**

Councillor Liz Clews  
Councillor David Cotton  
Councillor Tim Davies  
Councillor Caralyne Grimble  
Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan  
Councillor Angela Lawrence Vice-Chairman  
Councillor Cordelia McCartney  
Councillor Jessie Milne Chairman  
Councillor Peter Morris  
Councillor Keith Panter  
Councillor Judy Rainsforth  
Councillor Diana Rodgers  
Councillor Jim Snee  
Councillor Jeff Summers

**Regulatory Committee (14 Members)**

Councillor Liz Clews  
Councillor David Cotton

Councillor Tim Davies  
Councillor Caralyne Grimble  
Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan  
Councillor Angela Lawrence Vice-Chairman  
Councillor Cordelia McCartney  
Councillor Jessie Milne Chairman  
Councillor Peter Morris  
Councillor Keith Panter  
Councillor Judy Rainsforth  
Councillor Diana Rodgers  
Councillor Jim Snee  
Councillor Jeff Summers

**Planning Committee (14 Members)**

Councillor Matt Boles  
Councillor David Cotton  
Councillor David Dobbie  
Councillor Mick Devine  
Councillor Ian Fleetwood Chairman  
Councillor Cherie Hill  
Councillor Cordelia McCartney  
Councillor Jessie Milne  
Councillor Peter Morris  
Councillor Roger Patterson  
Councillor Judy Rainsforth  
Councillor Jeff Summers  
Councillor Bob Waller Vice-Chairman  
Councillor Angela White

**Prosperous Communities Committee (14 Members)**

Councillor Owen Bierley Chairman  
Councillor Stephen Bunney  
Councillor Tracey Coulson Vice-Chairman  
Councillor Chris Darcel  
Councillor Mick Devine  
Councillor Jane Ellis  
Councillor Steve England  
Councillor John McNeill Vice-Chairman  
Councillor Jessie Milne  
Councillor Jaime Oliver  
Councillor Roger Patterson  
Councillor Jim Snee  
Councillor Mandy Snee  
Councillor Trevor Young

**Overview and Scrutiny Committee (11 members- unbalanced )**

Councillor Liz Clews  
 Councillor David Dobbie  
 Councillor Tim Davies  
 Councillor Caralyne Grimble.  
 Councillor Cherie Hill  
 Councillor Angela Lawrence  
 Councillor Keith Panter  
 Councillor Roger Patterson  
 Councillor Diana Rodgers  
 Councillor Lesley Rollings  
 Councillor Angela White

Vice-Chairman  
 Chairman  
 Vice-Chairman

- (c) The current committee Chairmen, and Vice-Chairmen, as follows, be re-affirmed: -

Committee	Chairman	Vice-Chairman/men
Chief Officer Employment	Councillor Jackie Brockway	Councillor Mick Devine
Corporate Policy and Resources	Councillor Anne Welburn	Councillor Jeff Summers
Planning	Councillor Ian Fleetwood	Councillor Robert Waller
Governance and Audit	Councillor John McNeill	Councillor Jackie Brockway
Licensing	Councillor Jessie Milne	Councillor Angela Lawrence
Overview and Scrutiny	Councillor Lesley Rollings	Councillor Diana Rodgers Councillor Angela White
Regulatory	Councillor Jessie Milne	Councillor Angela Lawrence
Prosperous Communities	Councillor Owen Bierley	Councillor Tracey Coulson Councillor John McNeill

**61 APPOINTMENT TO VACANCIES ON BOARDS AND OTHER BODIES (INCLUDING OUTSIDE BODIES) FOLLOWING RESIGNATION**

Members considered a report which sought to appoint to vacancies on boards and other bodies (including outside bodies) arising from the resignation of former Councillor Giles McNeill.

**RESOLVED** that the following persons be appointed to the following vacancies: -

Lincoln Transport Strategy Delivery Board	Councillor Mrs Anne Welburn
PATROL	Councillor Mrs Diana Rodgers
Lincolnshire Show Panel	Councillor Mrs Diana Rodgers
Jubilee Events Planning Group	Councillor Mrs Anne Welburn

**62 RECOMMENDATION FROM THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL - MEMBERS ALLOWANCE SCHEME 22/23**

The Chairman again welcomed Mr Richard Quirk, Chairman of the Independent Remuneration Panel to the meeting and invited him to introduce the report.

Mr Quirk outlined the process that had been undertaken to produce the recommendations set out in the report. Consultation had taken place with Members and thanks were expressed to those that had responded, noting the response rate had again been low.

Mr Quirk also outlined the factors which had been taken into account, summarised in paragraph 1.2 of the report by the Panel in reaching its recommendations, namely an increase across the board of 1.5% to Members' basic allowance and Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA's).

This proposal if accepted would increase the Members' basic allowance in real terms by an extra amount of £1.77 per week per Member.

Acknowledging that Members had rejected their increase the previous years and whilst also recognising the reasons for this, Members were reminded of the importance of keeping remuneration at level to avoid a one off large increase should remuneration fall below comparable rates. Remuneration was there to ensure no one was prevented from being Councillor due to out of pocket expenses.

Debate ensued and a Member, whilst acknowledging the report was a fair and reasonable one, referencing the ongoing staff pay award settlement, considered the timing was unfortunate.

He outlined the current position between staff, unions and Government and as such felt taking an increase whilst staff were still awaiting their award for last year did not feel appropriate. Referencing staff for the asset they were concern was expressed at the lack of wage increase in a world of every increasing costs. It was questioned whether consideration of this matter should be deferred as he was of belief staff pay should be more of a priority than that of elected Members.

In respect of mileage rates, and given the huge rise in fuel prices, Members' rate had remained static for a many years. Some considered that those Members who did not live close to Gainsborough, as the administrative capital, were financially penalised.

In response, Mr Quirk, indicated that Treasury Guidance was used. 45p per mile was the maximum the Council could allow without evoking taxation rules. As such any rise would be lost to tax and would not be to the benefit of the Councillor.

Dependent Carers Allowance was raised and in reference to the living wage increase it was asked whether this could be considered by the Panel in future years.

Several Members spoke of their discomfort at staff not receiving their pay rise due to ongoing union negotiations. It was also acknowledged that the allowance did not currently cover all expenses, with those who worked often having to take unremunerated leave from their day jobs, but Councillors did not undertake their roles for the pay and they could not control when staff received any award, however an increase of some level was likely and as such the recommendations as written were proposed.

Members reminded one another that if the proposal was supported a Councillor could individually decline the increase, or not claim their travel, for example. The allowance was essential whilst the need was variable and it was in a Members gift to claim or not, as outlined, in accordance with their preferences.

The Remuneration Panel were thanked for their work by Members across the Chamber and across the political parties. Mr Quirk was congratulated for having engaged Members in the process.

Mr Quirk in turn thanked Members and the Officers of the Council who supported the Remuneration Panel's work; Alan Robinson, James O'Shaughnessy and Susan Norman.

There were concerns given the comments made through the debate and a Member reminded the Chamber that the Unions were the only bodies who could negotiate direct with the Government around staff remuneration. The importance of their existence, even to non-union members, was outlined and the alternative scenario was shared.

Having being moved and seconded it was: -

**RESOLVED** that the new rates, an increase of 1.5% to the individual Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA's), as detailed in the attached Appendix, for the Civic Year 2022/2023 be approved.

**Note:** Councillor Cotton requested that his abstention against the above vote be recorded in the minutes.

### **63 ADOPTION OF THE CORRINGHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

Members gave consideration to a report which sought approval to adopt (make) the Corringham Neighbourhood Plan as part of the West Lindsey Development Plan, following

the plan's successful referendum, held on 2 December 2021.

The Local Ward Member presented the report and in doing so, acknowledged the enormous amount of time and effort, Corringham Parish Council and its residents had put into producing the Plan. He outlined the difficulties encountered at the outset of the process, and resulting impacts, personally congratulating the Group for their determination to continue and reaching this final stage. He welcomed how West Lindsey and the parishes within his community had embraced the Localism Act and the opportunity it provided communities to shape development within their area. Once made the Plan's existence would require the Planning Committee to take into consideration the content of the Plan when determining application in the parish.

In seconding the report, the Chairman of the Planning Committee welcomed and encouraged the development of Local Plans. With current planning legislation, it was incredibly useful to have local input from local communities to ensure West Lindsey and local communities developed and prospered in an appropriate way.

In the wider context, the adoption of the Plan would mean that West Lindsey would now have 22 adopted Plans, with 19 in preparation and two being reviewed.

The planning status and "weight" given to Neighbourhood Plans, once made, when determining planning applications was considerable and as such some Members commented on the disappointing referendum turnouts often seen. It was so important that as a District we somehow engendered in local communities how significant and important these documents were and tried to encourage greater interest.

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

**RESOLVED** that the Corringham Neighbour Plan be adopted and made, in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012.

A round of applause, in the Group's absence followed the resolution, with the Chairman again offering congratulations to them in their absence.

**Note:** Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan and Councillor Tom Regis left the meeting following consideration of this item.

#### **64 COLLECTION FUND - COUNCIL TAX SURPLUS 2021/22 & COUNCIL TAX BASE 2022-23.**

The Section 151 Officer presented the report and advised that the Council was required to set its Council Tax Base and declare an estimate of its Council Tax Surplus which should be taken into account when setting the Council Tax for the following year.

The Council Tax Base for the year 2022/23 would be £31,038.46

The Council Tax Surplus of £ £1,470,700 had been calculated in accordance with statutory guidance with West Lindsey District Council's share being £225,500. This amount would be

built into the 2022/23 Budget prior to setting the Council Tax.

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

**RESOLVED** that

- (a) the estimated surplus of £225,500 be accepted and declared as accruing in the Council's Collection Fund at 31 March 2022 relating to an estimated Council Tax surplus;
- (b) the Council uses its element of the Collection Fund surplus/deficit in calculating the level of Council Tax in 2022/23; and
- (c) in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulation 1992 (as amended) the amount calculated by the Council, as its Council Tax Base for the whole of the District area for 2022/23 be approved and set at £31,038.46, as detailed in the report and appendices.

**65 RECOMMENDATION FROM CORPORATE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - MID YEAR TREASURY REPORT 2021-22**

Councillor Anne Welburn in her capacity as Chairman of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee, presented the report which sought approval of the Mid Year Treasury Report 2021/22.

The report had been presented to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee, where it had been fully considered and debated and stood referred to Council for approval

Members were advised there had been no breach of prudential indicators and the mid year review had been undertaken, taking into account changes to the Capital Programme and forecasts of cash flow requirements including investing and borrowing estimates.

The report provided an update of the treasury management prudential indicators, as required in the prudential code and Local Government Act and sets revised indicators for the remainder of the year. In presenting the report the Chairman highlighted key revisions, the reasons for revisions and positions mid year: -

Covid 19 continued to have an adverse effect on the economy and interest rates remained low at 0.1%.

The Capital Financing Requirement, reflected the Council's borrowing need for 2021/22, and had reduced from £41.340m to £40.088m due to a voluntary charge to reduce borrowing against our investment properties.

A voluntary revenue provision of £374,000 would be made this year and the £707,000 provided for last year was not included in the original indicator, set in advance of the year end.

In addition, there had been small slippage on some capital schemes funded by borrowing.



The council was currently holding around £20m of investments on a regularly monthly basis, this was in the main due to additional grants from Government, however the councils cashflow had been revised and by year end balances were expected to be around £17m.

This revision had established that the Councils external borrowing would likely be £25m as such the anticipated external debt had been revised and reduced down accordingly. Internal borrowing was likely to be circa £15.088m at year end, resulting in total borrowing of £40.088m.

Table 4.2 of the report set out how these revisions impacted the cost of council tax and financing costs in relation to the net revenue stream.

Reference Section 1.4 and the investment returns stated at £154,000 a Member sought indication what this was in percentage terms against the investment. Whilst the Section 151 Officer indicated the figure to be in the region of just over 1%, she did not have the exact figure to hand. However, such information was reported to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee on a quarterly basis with the next report being due in February 2022.

Having been moved and seconded it was

**RESOLVED** that recommendation from the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee be accepted and as such the Mid-Year Treasury Management Report and changes to Prudential Indicators be approved.

## **66 RECOMMENDATION FROM CORPORATE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2022/23**

Councillor Anne Welburn as Chairman of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee, was pleased to present the report to Council which sought approval of the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2022/23, on recommendation from the Corporate Policy Resources Committee

The scheme had not been amended significantly since 2019/20 due to the implementation of Universal Credit and the subsequent pandemic. Data available showed that it had been an effective scheme and that the collection rate for Council Tax Support claimants last year was just over 95%. The high collection rate had been aided by the introduction of discretionary hardship relief to assist council tax payers during the pandemic and was funded by central Government for 2020/21 and 2021/22.

Covid19 continued to cause considerable financial hardship to many of the District's residents with the uplift of Universal Credit ending and the impending fuel increases expected in April yet to be felt within the council tax collection rates.

Option 1 within the report had been supported by the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee at their meeting in December 2021 and as such was recommended to Full Council for approval and adoption from 1 April 2022.

Councillor Welburn concluded her introduction by moving the recommendation, which was

duly seconded.

Thanks were expressed to all the Staff within the Revenues and Benefits Service and it was acknowledged their collection rate sat within the top quartile of all local authorities, something Members considered should be openly praised.

On being put to the vote it was:-

**RESOLVED** that the Recommendation from the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee be accepted and Option 1 of the report be adopted as the Local Council Tax Support Scheme for West Lindsey District Council for 2022/23.

## **67 RECOMMENDATION FROM GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE - OPTING-IN TO PUBLIC SECTOR AUDIT APPOINTMENTS LTD**

Councillor John McNeill, as Chairman of the Governance and Audit Committee, was pleased to present the report to Council which recommended that West Lindsey District Council accept the invitation of opting-in to the Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) sector led option for the appointment of our external auditors for the period 2023/2024 to 2027/2028.

This report had been considered by the Governance and Audit Committee at its meeting on 11 January 2022 and stood recommended to Council.

The report detailed the advantages and disadvantages relating to the decision.

Whilst it was ultimately for the Council to determine how it appoints its external auditor, the Governance and Audit Committee had been of the view that accepting the invitation to opt into the PSSA scheme was the most appropriate route to ensure a quality auditor and to achieve value for money.

The Government incorporated the PSAA in the 2018/2019 financial year to be the appointing person for Local Government and Police body's external auditors. As such it would be the PSAA who would appoint the auditors, set the fees and monitor quality and compliance, if the recommendation was accepted.

The current 5-year contract arranged through the PSAA with external auditors, Mazars, would end following the conclusion of the audit of the statement of accounts for 2022/2023. Overall, the Council could be assured that it had received a good level of service under the current contract.

In concluding his introduction, The Chairman of the Governance Audit Committee brought to Members' attention the changes made, nationally, in regulations and how the concomitant effect on resources and costs had significantly impacted the delivery of local authority audits within the statutory timelines, with costs increasing by around 25%. However, the Government had recently announced several measures to improve the situation, in addition to providing additional funding to support the increased costs to local authorities of these regulatory changes.

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

**RESOLVED** that the Recommendation from the Governance and Audit Committee be accepted and as such the invitation of opting in to the PSAA sector led option for the appointment of external auditors for the period 2023/24 to 2027/28 be accepted.

The meeting concluded at 8.51 pm.

Chairman

# Minute Item 62

## Appendix One: Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA): Recommended Rates

<b>Allowance</b>	<b>Rate 2021/2022</b>	<b>Proposed Rate 2022/2023</b>
Basic Allowance	£6,150	£6,242
SRA – Leader of Council	£12,425	£12,611
SRA – Deputy Leader/s (in the event of two or more being nominated, the payment to be shared)	£4,505	£4,573
SRA – Chair of Council	£3,980	£4,040
SRA – Vice-Chair of Council	£1,370	£1,391
Civic allowance for the Chairman of Council	£1,610	£1,634
Civic allowance for the Vice Chairman Of Council	£1,370	£1,391
SRA – Committee Chairs (excluding Licensing Cttee and Regulatory Cttee)	£3,105	£3,152
SRA – Regulatory Chair	£1,555	£1,578
SRA – Licensing Chair	£1,555	£1,578
SRA – Committee Vice-Chairs (excluding Licensing Cttee and Regulatory Cttee)	£1,470	£1,492
SRA – Regulatory Vice-Chair	£735	£746
SRA – Licensing Vice-Chair	£735	£746
SRA – Leader of the Opposition (in the event of the Council being a ‘hung’ Council, the Leaders of the two largest groups	£4,505	£4,573

be paid the same special responsibility allowance as for the Leader of the Opposition)

SRA – Deputy Leader of the Opposition	£820	£832
SRA – Minority Group Leaders (per group member, and including the Group Leader)	£100	£102
Independent Members: Governance & Audit and Standards Committees – A payment of £60.00 for the first four hours of attendance at a meeting/event and a second payment for attendance in excess of four hours. The first four hours would commence from the start time of the meeting (To be paid when not chairing a meeting).	£60	No change
Dependent Carer’s Allowance	£10	No Change