

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Prosperous Communities Committee held in the Council Chamber - The Guildhall on 2 November 2021 commencing at 6.30 pm.

Present: Councillor Owen Bierley (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs Tracey Coulson (Vice-Chairman) and
Councillor John McNeill (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Stephen Bunney
Councillor Christopher Darcel
Councillor Michael Devine
Councillor Mrs Jessie Milne
Councillor Jim Snee
Councillor Mrs Mandy Snee
Councillor David Dobbie
Councillor Jane Ellis
Councillor Roger Patterson

In Attendance:
Sally Grindrod-Smith Assistant Director of Planning and Regeneration
Ady Selby Assistant Director of Commercial and Operational Services
Grant White Enterprising Communities Manager
David Kirkup
Darren Mellors Performance & Programme Manager
Andy Gray Housing and Enforcement Manager
Sue Leversedge Business Support Team Leader
Emma Redwood Assistant Director People and Democratic Services
Katie Storr Democratic Services & Elections Team Manager
Ele Snow Senior Democratic and Civic Officer

Apologies: Councillor Steve England
Councillor Tom Regis
Councillor Trevor Young

Membership: Councillor D. Dobbie sat as substitute for Councillor T. Young
Councillor J. Ellis sat as substitute for Councillor S. England
Councillor R. Patterson sat as substitute for Councillor T. Regis

34 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

35 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Prosperous Communities Committee held on 14 September 2021 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

36 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE

With no comments or questions, the contents of the Matters Arising schedule were duly **NOTED**.

37 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors R. Patterson and S. Bunney declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to agenda item 6b (Platinum Jubilee Community Fund) as they were Members of the Platinum Jubilee working group.

Councillor O. Bierley declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to agenda item 6b (Platinum Jubilee Community Fund) as he was a Member of the Community Grants Panel.

Councillors M. Snee and J. Snee declared a non-pecuniary personal interest in relation to agenda item 6b (Platinum Jubilee Community Fund) as a family member worked for the team responsible for community grants.

38 DECISION / DELEGATION PROTOCOLS NATIONALLY SIGNIFICANT INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS (NSIP)

The first report of the evening was introduced by the Assistant Director of Planning and Regeneration regarding the decision and delegation protocols for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects. She explained that the Council had recently been made aware of three Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) where West Lindsey District Council would perform the role of 'Host Authority' in the Development Consent Order (DCO) process. It was explained that NSIPs were considered by the Planning Inspectorate for ultimate decision by the relevant Secretary of State, in this case, the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

The Committee heard that the three NSIPs all proposed large scale solar farm development. The scale of the proposal was measured in megawatts, with anything above 50 megawatts being an NSIP. All three proposals were significantly above this 50-megawatt scale, meaning they sat outside of the realms of the Town and Country Planning Act. Timescales were still being firmed up by the developers with early indications that they would enter the statutory stage of public consultation by mid 2022 with a view to submitting the DCO application late 2022.

The Assistant Director of Planning and Regeneration stated there were six stages of the NSIP process and the role of the host authority – as set out in the 2008 Planning Act - was clearly defined. Although not the ultimate decision maker, the local authority had the opportunity to provide an important local perspective, and was expected to respond to the

Planning Inspectorate within tight timescales. Officers had contacted the Planning Inspectorate directly and they had offered to facilitate a workshop session with Officers and Members to ensure the Council maximised the input into the process.

One of the early tasks for Local Authorities, as set out in the PINS guidance, was to establish the delegations and decision-making process for each stage, that being the purpose of the paper presented at this stage.

Members were directed to Appendix 1 of the report, which set out the full list of documents that the local authority must prepare / agree a response to, at what stage of the process these were required and the proposed decision route. It was suggested that Prosperous Communities Committee take the decision on the Local Impact Report and the Written Representations to the examination, with the Case Officer presenting a recommended position, informed by specialists and the outcome of public engagement. It was emphasised that, where the proposed route of decision was Officer delegation, this would be in consultation with the Chair of the Committee. An important part of the process would be ongoing briefings with Members, to ensure that Members were able to fully engage in the process. It was also highlighted that, as there was a number of DCOs to be dealt with, should there be a requirement to review the process, this would be subject to a further paper to the Committee.

The Chairman emphasised the importance of engaging with the process and thanked everyone involved to date for their time and effort. Whilst it was recognised that the decision would not be made by the council, it was acknowledged that involvement in the process was still necessary and relevant. Members expressed their dissatisfaction that the decision would not be made locally, however, there was acceptance that this was the case and, in recognition of the need to maximise involvement in the process, the recommendation was moved and seconded. On taking the vote it was

RESOLVED that the decision and delegation protocols when acting in the role of “host authority” for a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project, as detailed in Appendix 1, be **APPROVED** and as such, delegate the following responsibilities to the Assistant Director of Planning and Regeneration at this time:

- Preparation and sign off of Planning Performance Agreement
- Preparation and sign off of S106 Agreement
- Statement of Community Consultation (SOCC) response
- Draft Preliminary Environmental Impact Report response (draft Environmental Statement)
- Environmental Statement (submission version) – ongoing dialogue
- Adequacy of Consultation Response (AoC)

39 WEST LINDSEY PLATINUM JUBILEE COMMUNITY FUND

The Committee was asked to consider a report with the purpose of approving the launch of the West Lindsey Platinum Jubilee Community Fund. It was explained that £500k was approved for the Community Grant Scheme for the five-year period from 2018/2019 to 2022/2023. This fund was delegated to the Prosperous Communities Committee to approve appropriate grant schemes and expenditure. As at 1 October 2021 there was a balance

remaining of £201k on the Community Grants fund. Of this balance, it was proposed to allocate £20k (the balance remaining would therefore be £181k) to the West Lindsey Platinum Jubilee Community Fund, which would launch immediately after all committee approvals had been made and run until June 2022. Spend against this allocation would be monitored to ensure the approved amount was not exceeded.

Note: Councillors D. Dobbie and S. Bunney declared a personal interest in that they would likely be applying to the fund in their roles as Town Councillors and therefore they both left the meeting at 6.57pm.

Members of the Committee welcomed the launch of the Platinum Jubilee Fund. It was suggested that funds would not be used, for example, for the burning of beacons given the environmental impact, and it was also confirmed that a parallel scheme for providing Members with a sapling to be planted for The Queen's Green Canopy was to be funded separately.

With thanks to all involved and having been moved and seconded, it was

RESOLVED that the use of £20k of the Communities Grant Fund to deliver the West Lindsey Platinum Jubilee Community Fund be approved under delegated powers.

Note: Councillors D. Dobbie and S. Bunney returned to the meeting at 7.01pm.

40 FREE PARKING FOR CHRISTMAS MARKETS

Members gave consideration to a report in relation to providing free parking in council car parks to support Christmas events in both Gainsborough and Market Rasen. It was explained that the council operated pay and display car parks in Gainsborough and Market Rasen with parking fees applying Monday to Saturday 8am to 6pm. The council was holding a Christmas Market in Gainsborough on Saturday 11 December and Sunday 12 December and would include stalls in Marshalls Yard, Market Street and the market place. Market Rasen Town Council was due to hold its Christmas event on the evening of Friday 3 December and on Saturday 4 December. This was also Small Business Saturday. It was recommended that charges in council car parks be waived in Market Rasen on Saturday 4 December and in Gainsborough on Saturday 11 December. It was also explained that there would be a car parking strategy presented to the Committee in coming months which would consider options for a recurring arrangement to be in place.

Committee Members were supportive of the proposal and felt it provided encouragement to local traders as well as being a further incentive for people to attend such events. It was suggested that, in future, further consideration could be given to the use of public transport in order to encourage reduced use of multiple vehicles and thus support climate change priorities, however, it was acknowledged that public transport in the district was not always a feasible alternative.

Having been moved and seconded it was unanimously

RESOLVED that parking charges in council car parks be waived in Market Rasen on Saturday 4 December and in Gainsborough on Saturday 11 December in support of

the Christmas events taking place on those dates.

41 PROGRESS AND DELIVERY QUARTER 2, 2021-22

The Committee heard from the Performance and Programmes Manager with the report containing Progress & Delivery performance information for Quarter 2 2021/22, which covered the months of July through to September. Where Covid-19 had impacted performance, this was identified and explained within the narrative of the report.

Members heard that as well as the discussion of performance information for Quarter 2, it was also recommended to delete the measure EN04 “percentage of licensed properties in the South West Ward” as the selective licensing scheme ended in July 2021 meaning it was no longer possible to collect data for this measure. It would, however, be replaced for the next financial year.

As an exception report, those measures that had performed above or below agreed tolerances for two consecutive periods would be discussed with a pause at the end of each portfolio to allow for any questions to be asked.

Within the quarter two report, 57% measures had exceeded their target, 19% were within tolerance and 24% were performing below agreed target. In addition, 69% of measures had exceeded their target for two quarters or more whilst the remaining 31% had been below target for two quarters or more.

Prior to commencing the read through of the report, a Member of the Committee commented that it was important for the impact of covid-19 to be recognised, whilst also ensuring that it was not used as a ‘catch-all’ for any under-performance. This was agreed, with recognition given through the report for those areas where the impact had been greatest.

Corporate Health

There had been a slight decrease in customer satisfaction compared to the same period last year however performance was still within agreed tolerances. There had been a reduction in calls volume and the performance of answering calls within 21 seconds. A review was to be undertaken to establish the cause of this.

Finance & Property Services

Performance was returned as green as rental portfolio voids had performed better than target

Homes & Communities

There were five performance measures that had performed better than target for at least two consecutive periods. Conversely, four measures had performed worse than target for two consecutive periods; these measures related to Home Choices and Homes, Health & Wellbeing. For Home Choices the measures below tolerance for two consecutive periods were regarding number of households and the number of nights in B&B accommodation. A plan had been introduced to reduce B&B stay and produce consistent exit plans for persons within temporary accommodation. It was anticipated that increased monitoring of cases should help to reduce B&B stay, and the team were also working with their partner Framework to reduce complex cases holding up spaces in the leased accommodation. It

was expected to see the impact of this plan in next quarter's P&D report.

For Homes, Health & Wellbeing; two measures had performed worse than target for two consecutive periods and these measures included average number of days from DFG referral to completion and long-term empties brought back into use. The number of days taken to complete Disabled Facilities Grant applications was steadily decreasing. A report taken to Overview and Scrutiny committee in September highlighted the issues currently being faced when delivering DFG's which included the availability of both contractors and materials. It was agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny to undertake an internal review of the DFG processes to highlight any areas where timescales could be improved. This is work was scheduled to be undertaken during November and December.

The overall number of long-term empty homes remained low and equated to just 1% of the district's housing stock. The focus for empty homes work remained the Viable Housing Solution, which was looking at a specific area within Gainsborough. Complaints in regards to the worst empty properties were still being dealt with reactively using the Council's existing powers. Compulsory Purchase Orders in regards to specific empty properties were in the process of being pursued. It was not believed that at this stage any further interventions are needed to address this.

A Member of the Committee enquired as to whether the target regarding long-term empty properties to be brought back into use was realistic or whether it was set too high? The Performance and Programme Manager did not have the information to hand but confirmed he would find out. Likewise, in response to a question as to whether the Council worked with ACIS in regards to DFGs, he confirmed he would clarify that information and share with Members after the meeting.

Operational and Commercial Services

There were six performance measures that had performed better than agreed targets for at least two consecutive quarters. On the flip side; there were four measures whose performance was below target for two consecutive quarters. The first of which was Leisure Facilities usages for the Gainsborough centre. Restrictions had now been lifted and both centres were fully open. SLM were working hard to build up the centres, increase the membership and develop more activities for all age groups. SLM were also working to develop a Social Wellbeing Programme to incorporate a range of suitable activities for the referral scheme.

In regards to Markets, quarter two saw traders being able to fully return to the market. Officers were currently working on a Market Traders Grant scheme to help support traders on the general market and farmers market following the impact of the pandemic.

There was significant discussion regarding the lack of outreach services within leisure facilities. It was described that the request for outreach work had been very clear and it was disappointing that this had not yet occurred. It was explained that the contract manager was working closely with SLM regarding this and it was very much a focus of the leisure facilities portfolio. The impact of the pandemic was recognised, however, it was felt that there had been sufficient time passed for plans to have been actioned and again, there was disappointment voiced that this was not yet happening.

There was support from Members regarding the number of litter picks supported by the

Council, with several Members commenting the involvement in their communities. Additionally, the Operational Services response to fly-tipping was commended.

Democratic Services

There were no measures where performance was below or above target for two consecutive periods. Apologies were given as there was an error within this section of the report. The performance for attendance at member training events (KPI DS02) should have read as green and not red.

Planning & Regeneration

There were four measures which had performed better than target for at least two consecutive periods, all of which relate to the Councils Development Management service. There had been no measures that had performed below target for at least two consecutive periods.

Change Management and Regulatory Services

Nine measures had performed above their targets for two consecutive periods and there were four that had performed below their targets. Of these four; NNDR Collection rate had been below target for the first half of the year due to the award of Emergency Relief Payments as detailed in the quarter one P&D report. This was beginning to show signs of improvement as instalments become due and were either paid or recovery action was able to be taken to secure payment. The Council continued to work with businesses to ensure they received all the reliefs to which they were entitled.

The number of Planning Enforcement reports received continued to exceed the Council's ability to respond. Additional resources were in place and the number of cases opened this year did exceed the number closed, which had resulted in some of the time delays for closure of cases and time taken to provide an initial response. A review of longer-term cases had been undertaken. Temporary agency support had also been brought in to assist

The number of food hygiene inspections was gradually increasing as the volume of covid related complaints and responsibilities reduced. There was still a general resource challenge in relation to meeting the target number of inspections in the Food Standards Agency recovery plan and steps were being taken to ensure that additional resources were in place to achieve this. Staff vacancies within Environmental Protection and subsequent issues recruiting into these vacancies had resulted in issues within the service. These vacancies were going out to advert shortly.

A Member of the Committee sought clarification on the details of the environmental protection requests, to what they were related. It was explained that they related to the statutory environmental protection powers and covered complaints such as noise, odour, pollution and water quality. The number of requests had increased significantly since pre-pandemic levels and continued on that trend. It was highlighted that it was not a service concern, however the volume of requests was highlighted as being significantly more than the Council would expect to receive.

Having reached the conclusion of the report, the Committee had the opportunity to ask any further questions. A Member of the Committee wished to highlight the outstanding performance of the Planning Department, especially given it was a service that could come against frequent criticism. The outcome of the appeals often went in the favour of the

Council and was testament to the work undertaken by the team.

Having been moved and seconded, the Chairman took the vote and it was

RESOLVED that

- a) the performance of the Council's services had been assessed through agreed performance measures and areas where improvements should be made, having regard to the remedial measures set out in the report, be indicated; and
- b) the deletion of key performance indicator EN04 "% of licensed properties in the Gainsborough South-West Ward" be approved, as the cessation of the Selective Licensing Scheme in July 2021 means it is no longer possible to collect data for this performance measure. EN04 to be replaced with a new measure to monitor wider activity relating to Selective Licensing as part of the annual review of the Council's Progress and Delivery measures that is currently underway.

42 MEMBERSHIP OF KEEP BRITAIN TODAY AND IMPLEMENTATION OF DEFRA VOLUNTARY CODE OF CONDUCT

The Committee gave consideration a report which sought to provide a response to the Full Council Motion requesting consideration be given to becoming a member of Keep Britain Tidy and implementing the DEFRA Voluntary Code of Conduct. Members were informed that the Voluntary Code of Conduct enabled a framework and agreement to be put in place between authorities and businesses that contributed to litter generated by fast food or food on the go. The framework was entirely voluntary and no business could be mandated to sign up to it. It was suggested that Officers further investigated the resource required to implement the DEFRA Voluntary Code of Conduct for Fast Food Outlets, alongside other work to redefine the way the Council approached environmental crimes. The costs and implications of membership of Keep Britain Tidy were set out in the report and it was explained that, at this stage, it was suggested that the Council did not become members of Keep Britain Tidy but continued to support their campaigns across the district.

Members supported the suggested approach, however, in recognition of the impact of the Keep Britain Tidy symbol, Members enquired as to whether the council could develop their own communications or branding to help share the message. Members also highlighted that often, littering was not the fault of fast food outlets, who often provided litter bins on or near their premises, rather it was customers who chose to litter, for example throwing empty food packaging out of car windows as they drove. It was noted that there was an increasing emphasis on producers to reduce packaging and improve recyclability of packaging.

With widespread support, and having been moved and seconded, it was unanimously

RESOLVED that

- a) further consideration be given as to whether to implement the DEFRA

Voluntary Code of Conduct as part of the broader review of resources in relation to environmental crime; and

- b) this review of the above be presented back to the Prosperous Communities Committee before the end of quarter 2 of the 2022/2023 financial year; and
- c) the Council does not become members of Keep Britain Today at this time, but continue to support the campaigns they deliver and encourage other bodies to join.

43 SELECTIVE LICENSING - FUTURE OPTIONS AND PROPOSALS

The Committee gave consideration to a report from the Housing and Enforcement Manager seeking approval, based on the feasibility information, to consult on future proposals for Selective Licensing in West Lindsey. He explained that there were a number of appendices in relation to this item, with the main justification report attached at appendix 1, this being the report that would be used in any consultation, subject to approval. He highlighted that item 8a on the agenda was an exempt appendix relating to the phase 2 and 3 procurement. He also emphasised that the Committee were being asked to approve that consultation was undertaken on the proposals, not to confirm any final scheme. A further committee decision would be required for this, following on from any consultation.

Members were advised that Section 3 of the main report provided the overall findings of the feasibility work and set out the preference to explore option 1 as the preferred approach. Section 5 set out the financial proposals for the level of fee and advised that approval for the additional revenue to carry out phases 2 and 3 of the work would require approval from the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee. Section 8 set out how it was intended to carry out the consultation to ensure that the legislative requirements were met.

The Committee commended the work that been undertaken, both in relation to the previous scheme and also in preparing for subsequent schemes. Members recognised the importance of engaging with landlords, whilst recognising that any scheme would likely be seen as an additional fee for them. It was accepted that there had been opposition to the original scheme and that there were elements that could and would be improved in the future. It was also acknowledged that the work to date had provided a clear oversight of the needs of the district, and, in some cases highlighted surprising results.

Note: Councillor M. Devine briefly left the meeting and returned at 8.08pm

The Committee was also keen to note that there were some complex issues to be addressed and it would overlap with other areas of the council's work. Any future scheme would play an important role in improving conditions across the district.

The Chairman reiterated the purpose at this stage was to approve consultation on future options, and, having had a proposer and seconder, he took the vote. With thanks once again extended to the Housing and Enforcement Manager and his team it was

RESOLVED that

- a) the supporting evidence, financial information and risks in relation to the Selective Licensing proposals, be considered and noted; and
- b) it be noted that, as per the report, alternative options had been considered in regards to improving the Private Rented Sector within the District; and
- c) the preferred option for consultation to be presented to Prosperous Communities Committee is option 1; an initial designation for Gainsborough South West Ward, followed by a further designation for four additional wards; Gainsborough North, Hemswell Cliff, Wold View and Market Rasen; and
- d) the proposal for a consultation exercise as required by Section 80(9) of the Housing Act 2004 for Selective Licensing to consider the preferred option and proposals, draft selective licensing conditions and draft selective licensing policy be approved; and
- e) the specific details of the consultation (exact start dates and methods), be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair of the Prosperous Communities Committee; and
- f) the report be referred to Corporate Policy and Resources Committee to seek a decision in relation to the financial commitment of £126, 921 needed to deliver phases 2 and 3 of the scheme.

44 OPERATIONAL SERVICES SEPARATE PAPER AND CARD COLLECTIONS

The Committee gave consideration to a report from the Assistant Director of Commercial and Operational Services regarding progress with the introduction of a twin stream recycling collection service in Lincolnshire and proposing a timescale for roll out in West Lindsey. It was explained that this was a county wide project led by Lincolnshire Waste Partnership, with links to the objectives of the Joint Municipal Waste Strategy for Lincolnshire and would deliver a number of environmental benefits. Members heard that full roll out had taken place in Boston in April and was currently underway in North Kesteven, following successful trials. West Lindsey could potentially be rolling out the scheme in the spring of 2022, which Officers felt was a good timeframe as problems associated with the initial roll out would have been ironed out. If approved, it would result in the introduction of a new 240ltr purple lidded bin for the separate collection of paper and card and this bin would be collected on a 4 weekly cycle (black, blue, black & purple). This would not affect the garden waste service.

It was highlighted that there were significant environmental benefits associated with introducing this scheme, including collecting a better quality and higher quantity product, no increase in the carbon impact of collections as the methodology would remain the same and it also would achieve a reduction in the carbon impact of Material Recycling Facilities, as this step would no longer be needed. Members were advised that this initiative was about recovering a valuable resource and to help deal with contamination. The current recycling mix had over a 30% contamination rate and this contamination impacted most heavily on paper and card by reducing its value and quality. Boston was already reporting benefits as, since implementation, their contamination rate had dropped from 35% to 20%. In the first

week of collection in North Kesteven, they collected over 400 tonnes of paper and card that could be put back into the paper stream.

As the disposal authority, Lincolnshire County Council were funding the scheme (comms, additional resources such as boots on ground talking to residents), and they were also supplying the bins and any replacements until 2024.

Potential issues were summarised as follows:

- This would be a major service change and would have implications for most residents in terms of housing an extra bin and changing their recycling behaviours. Operational Services were experienced in delivering major change including the triple bin scheme, introducing a subscription based garden waste service and moving to a new depot. It was, however, important to work closely with Lincolnshire County Council, especially considering the lessons learnt from the roll out at other councils, in order that it happen as smoothly as possible in West Lindsey
- The scheme could not be implemented in the South West Ward of Gainsborough as the mills could not currently handle bags, however, the Lincolnshire Waste Partnership was working to find a solution.
- Finally, a hard line was being taken on contaminated bins in order to set expectations and behaviours early on, however this could lead to negative feedback from residents as bins could be rejected.

Despite these potential difficulties, it was explained to the Committee that the recommendation was to introduce a twin stream recycling collection service in areas of the district which received a wheeled bin collection service, as per option two within the report.

The Chairman thanked Officers for their work on this proposal and invited comments from the Committee. There was recognition of the potential complaints regarding multiple bins, the need for storage space and collections being seen to be reduced, however, Members were keen to emphasise the importance of maximising recycling opportunities and highlighted the success of previous changes, particularly the triple bin scheme. It was agreed that district wide communications needed to be the priority and engagement with residents from the outset would have a great impact on the success of the scheme.

With support from Members, and having been moved and seconded, it was unanimously

RESOLVED that a twin stream recycling collection service, including separate collections of paper and card, in areas of the district which receive a wheeled bin collection service, as per option two of the report, be introduced.

45 REVIEW OF BULKY WASTE CHARGES

Members gave consideration to a report regarding a review of the current charge for bulky waste collections and seeking to understand the potential impact of free or reduced price collections on incidents of fly-tipping. The Assistant Director of Commercial and Operational Services explained that Officers had been asked to look at whether changing the charging regime for bulky waste would help reduce levels of fly tipping. He summarised that the report considered why a charge was originally introduced a number of years ago, including the

introduction of a user pays ethos and supporting local charities. These reasons were still valid when considering whether to reintroduce free or subsidised collections, however it was increasingly necessary to consider the negative environmental impacts, including additional fleet required, mileage travelled but also a reduction in reuse and recycling within the district.

It was explained that the report looked at both the local and national context, with the vast majority of authorities charging for the service and most locally charging on a par with West Lindsey. It was highlighted that Lincoln City provided free bulky waste collections to pensioners, those entitled to benefit payments and those people with disabilities, however no one outside of those groups could access bulky waste collection services, either free or paid for.

Further detail within the report highlighted levels of flytipping, particularly the dramatic rise last year, which was in line with national trends. In addition, a 2019 BBC report summarised at appendix 1 found no link between flytipping and charging for waste services. Members were informed that, within the BBC report, there was a case study in which one authority reverted to free bulky waste collections but did not benefit from a reduction in flytipping.

With regard to the options set out by Officers, it was explained to the Committee that it was difficult to see any benefit to offering a reduction in cost or making collections free, other than it being popular with residents. Environmentally, there were no benefits as it would mean people would dispose of more material, more miles would be travelled by more vehicles and there would be an impact on charitable organisations. Financially, any increase in demand would probably result in needing another vehicle and staff. It would mean a move away from the 'user pays' ethos and would lose income. Introducing free or subsidised collections was not considered to fit in with the environmental aspirations of either the council or Lincolnshire Waste Partnership. For these reasons, it was suggested to the Committee that the best option was to continue with the current charging regime including an in year inflationary rise.

Members were appreciative of the work undertaken by Officers and supported the ethos of encouraging reusing and recycling. It was noted that the origin of the report had been to ascertain any link between the cost of bulky waste collections and rates of flytipping, the evidence presented demonstrated there was no link. With this summary, the recommendation was moved and seconded and it was unanimously

RESOLVED that option four of the report (to continue with the current pricing schedule, plus inflation, for bulky waste collections) be recommended to the Corporate Policy & Resources Committee for approval.

46 GREEN GARDEN WASTE CHARGES 2022/23

The Committee heard from the Assistant Director of Commercial and Operational Services regarding options for the subscription charge for the Garden Waste Service for 2022/23 and 2023/24. It was summarised that, a subscription based garden waste model was introduced in 2018 and since then the service had continued to grow with over 28,000 subscriptions being achieved this year. The charge for the service had remained at £35 per bin per year throughout the three years of operation. West Lindsey provided eighteen collections per year, the winter suspension having been introduced a number of years ago as very little

material was being collected during the winter months. Members heard that there were few queries about extra collections and consultation exercises had highlighted that the majority of residents did not want to pay more for extra collections. In addition to this, residents had voiced concerns that the charge did not become a 'stealth tax' with small increases each year. It was for this reason that it was proposed the price be fixed for two years.

It was explained to the Committee that whilst the subscription costs had stayed the same, the cost of delivering the service had risen due to increases in pay for operational staff and vehicle costs, including vehicle purchase, maintenance, fuel and tyres. There were also increased costs resulting from the move to the new depot at Caenby Corner. The options to consider were to leave the subscription charge at £35, or to increase it to £38, £39 or £40. If the charge was not increased, this would lead to a pressure of circa £177k in the next financial year. Having considered predicted costs of the service over the coming two years, and in consideration of the Government proposal to make garden waste collections free for all through its Environment Bill, the suggestion was to increase charges to £39 per bin per annum, aiming for cost neutrality.

Members discussed the increase of new housing developments and whether these affected running costs. It was explained that an increased number of bins would lead to needing more lorries to undertake the collections which then also needed more operatives to staff the lorries. The aim of the service was to be cost neutral, which the suggested increase would achieve. It was also noted that, as much as the collection service was cost neutral for West Lindsey District Council, the same was said for Lincolnshire County Council in terms of disposing of the collected garden waste.

Having been moved and seconded, the Chairman took the vote and it was

RESOLVED that an increase in the subscription for receipt of the Garden Waste collection service, to £39 per bin per year for the 2022/23 financial year, and £39 per bin per year for the 2023/24 financial year, be recommended to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee for approval.

47 PROPOSED FEES AND CHARGES 2022/2023

Members gave consideration to a report detailing the proposed fees and charges to be implemented from the 1 April 2022. Members were advised that the appendices to the report provided service specific detail around performance, future demand and the rationale behind the proposed fee for next year. Consideration had been given to total cost recovery, benchmarking data, and team manager knowledge of the market when proposing fees, in line with the fees, charges and concessions policy. In addition, during this years' budget consultation exercise, nearly two thirds of respondents felt that the council should only increase fees by inflation this year, to then review again next year. It was confirmed that, in the vast majority of cases, this was the increase that had been applied. The percentage would appear higher than inflation in the schedules where the fee had been rounded up to the nearest pound or 50p. Inflation had been applied as at June's RPI rate of 3.9% for 2022/23, then 2% thereafter. Where no increase had been proposed, or an increase above inflation, the reasoning for this was contained within the report. In the majority of cases, the non-statutory fees had 2% inflation already built into the MTFP from 2022/23, therefore the impact of an inflationary increase was minimal. The budget implications included in the

report for information, reflected both the impact of proposed amendments to fees, and the forecast demand over the period of the MTFP.

The net impact of the Fees and Charges review for the Prosperous Communities Committee was an increase in income of £1,600 in 22/23, , rising to £107,700 in 26/27. The significant increase in the fifth year related to forecast demand for planning fee applications.

Of the 59% of fees which were non-statutory – those with significant budget implications were:

- Car parking fees – where no amendment was proposed at this time, pending the strategy due later in the civic year
- Building control – it was proposed to keep the hourly rate at the same level currently charged, as this brought West Lindsey District Council in line with other local authorities
- Land charges – inflation had been applied at 3.9%
- Planning pre-application advice – inflation had been applied at 3.9%

Members were advised that there had been an amendment to the narrative within the fees schedule for Cemeteries (included both in Appendix 2 and the new fee listed at 3.8) in relation to the interment of children. It had been amended to read ‘Single grave (3 - 17years)’ and a line had been added to state that there would be no charge up to 3 years.

In response to a prior query regarding the section 17 paragraph which stated the belief that charges for the bulky waste service may impact on fly tipping, it was noted that this appeared to be out of date based on the findings of the separate bulky waste report presented to the Committee earlier in the meeting and that reference would be removed.

It was noted that Members were asked to consider the proposed fees and charges, and to make recommendation to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee for approval.

A Member of the Committee enquired as to whether there was any conflict of interest as a Town Councillor, considering the Town Council owned cemeteries. It was confirmed that as he was no more affected than any other individual, there was no declarable interest.

The Chairman thanked the Business Support Team Leader for her detailed summary of the report and, having been moved and seconded it was

RESOLVED that the proposed fees and charges for 2022/2023 be recommended to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee for approval.

48 WORKPLAN

Members gave consideration to the Committee Work Plan and, with no comments, questions, or requirement for a vote, the Work Plan was **DULY NOTED**.

The meeting concluded at 8.59 pm.

Chairman