

# Public Document Pack

West Lindsey District Council - 7 March 2022

## WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Council held in the Council Chamber - The Guildhall on 7 March 2022 at 7.00 pm.

### Present:

Councillor Mrs Angela Lawrence (Vice-Chairman) (In the Chair)

|                                |                                   |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Councillor Owen Bierley        | Councillor Matthew Boles          |
| Councillor Stephen Bunney      | Councillor Liz Clews              |
| Councillor David Cotton        | 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 Lesley Rollings | Councillor Jim Snee               |
| Councillor Mrs Mandy Snee      | Councillor Jeff Summers           |
| Councillor Robert Waller       | Councillor Mrs Anne Welburn       |
| Councillor Mrs Angela White    | Councillor Trevor Young           |

### In Attendance:

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| Ian Knowles       | Chief Executive   |
| 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:** The Reverend J Foster-Smith

**Also Present:** 1 member of the public – Ms Bailey

### Apologies

Councillor Steve England  
Councillor Mrs Jackie Brockway  
Councillor Mrs Tracey Coulson  
Councillor Christopher Darcel  
Councillor Timothy Davies  
Councillor Cherie Hill  
Councillor Mrs Diana Rodgers

## **68 CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME**

The Vice Chairman (who was taking the Chair for the meeting, and is referred to as Chairman from hereon in) welcomed all Members and Officers to the meeting. Good wishes were extended to the Chairman of the Council in his absence, and a warm welcome to Ms Bailey, who would be posing a question to Council during the Public Question Time Section.

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, but this was a matter of personal choice.

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.

## **69 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

(a) Minutes of the Meeting of Full Council held on 24 January 2022

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Meeting of Full Council held on 24 January 2022 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

## **70 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 setting of Council Tax, which was part of the Medium Term Financial Plan and Executive Business Plan report, as this was an area in which all Councillors were granted an exemption by the relevant legislation.

Councillor David Cotton declared a personal interest in the Medium Term Financial Plan and Executive Business Plan report, given its mention of fees and charges in relation to cemeteries.

## **71 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.

At the request of the Chairman of the Governance and Audit, the Monitoring Officer provided an update in respect of the action entitled "New Code - Adoption by Parish Councils" Communications had now been issued to all Parish Councils both directly and via the Parish News. Virtual information drop in sessions for Parish Councillors and Clerks were being held on 31 March and 5 and 6 April. To date the Monitoring Officer was not aware any parishes had adopted the new code, noting parishes had been advised they should seek to adopt the new code by 30 June 2022.

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

## **72 ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **Chairman**

In the absence of the Chairman of Council, the Vice- Chairman indicated that engagements had been limited although it had been both an honour and pleasure and a humbling experience to attend a service at All Saints' Parish Church in Gainsborough in a community show of support for the people of Ukraine.

The Vice Chairman also took the opportunity to promote West Lindsey's Annual Flag Raising for Commonwealth Day on 14th March at 10.00am outside the Guildhall, Councillors and public were welcome to attend. Reference was also made to the Annual Churches Festival which would be taking place during the week and which she would be in attendance. The Festival was always an amazing event and residents and visitors alike were encouraged to get involved.

### **Leader**

The Leader made the following address to Council: -

"Thank you, Chairman,

As previously reported the ten upper-tier Councils in Lincolnshire have been working together in order to respond to the opportunities for devolved decision-making made available through the Government's ambitious Levelling Up White Paper, published on Wednesday, 2nd February. This signifies a resetting of the relationship between central and Local Government, giving 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 historic Lincolnshire. Anything less would, undoubtedly, be a missed opportunity to build a better future.

The Proposed Submission version of the new Central Lincolnshire Local Plan was approved by members of the Joint Strategic Planning Committee at a meeting on Monday, 28th February and will now undergo an eight-week formal public consultation period (Regulation 19). This is expected to open during week commencing Monday, 14th March and close in week commencing Monday, 9th May. Following that the document (and any representations received) will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in preparation for an Examination in Public in the summer.

The Lincolnshire Outbreak Engagement Board met for the final time on Wednesday, 2nd March, albeit with the proviso that it could be readily reconvened if necessary. This decision responds not only to falling infection rates and a reduction in hospitalisation here, but also to the national transition to 'Living with Covid' and is due in large part to the outstanding success of the NHS

and partner organisations in delivering the various vaccination programmes as well as the support and understanding of residents. The Lincolnshire Help line will close on Thursday, 31st March and lateral flow testing kits will no longer be available without charge after that date.

Preparations are well under way for the introduction of the separate collection of paper and card in West Lindsey, an environmental and financial imperative. Deliveries of the new purple-lidded bins commenced today and will be completed by the end of March. Collections will begin in April, as detailed on the calendars previously delivered to householders. Information packs have also been posted to every home to assist in verifying the items accepted in each recycling bin. The response to these arrangements has been overwhelmingly positive and highly encouraging!

Thank you again Chairman.”

### **Chief Executive**

The Chief Executive addressed Council and advised the Chief Officer Employment Committee had met on 23 February and following a robust and intensive recruitment process had made an appointment to the Chief Officer Post – Director of Corporate Services/Section 151. Emma Foy had provided a provisional start date of 30 May 2022. Emma was an experienced s151 officer and would be a great addition to the team. He looked forward to introducing Emma to wider membership in due course.

The previous week interviews held also been held for the post of Assistant Director – People and Democratic Services. The new appointed Director had been involved in the recruitment day and the Chief Executive was pleased to advise that Emma Redwood had been successful in that process. Congratulations were expressed to both Emma’s on their successes.

The Chief Executive had also attended the service in Gainsborough in support of the Ukrainian people. With regards the emergency issues created by the Invasion of Ukraine, the seven Districts and the County Council were working through the existing Resettlement Partnership led by North Kesteven to offer support where possible to the people of Ukraine.

As referenced by the Leader the Local Outbreak Engagement Board was being paused, in addition it had also been agreed that the Strategic Control Group of the Lincolnshire Resilience Forum could be paused for the moment. The Group remained on standby in-case there was a change in the evolution of the Covid 19 and could be re-established at short notice if necessary.

Finally, on 25 February a follow up session with the Peer Team that visited the Council in January 2020 had been held. The Peer Team had met with the senior management team and the Chairmen and Vice Chairmen of Committees to reflect on progress against the 10 recommendations. The initial feedback had been positive and the Authority would receive a follow up written report of the findings by the 18 March, which would subsequently be presented to Full Council for consideration.

This concluded announcements for the meeting.

### **73 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

The Chairman advised the meeting that one question had been received in accordance with the Public Question Time at Council Scheme. This had been circulated separately to all Members and published on the website.

Before inviting Ms Bailey to pose her question, in accordance with the requirements of the Public Question Time Scheme, the Chairman advised the meeting that a number of public questions, 4 in total, had been rejected. The questions had been rejected, as they all directly related to an item on the agenda - (Motion 2) and that this fact would be recorded in the minutes, again a requirement of the adopted Scheme.

Ms Bailey was again welcomed and invited to pose her question to Council as follows: -

“My question relates to the Scheme currently in place for Members of public to ask a question at a Full Council meeting. At most meetings anything on the agenda should be discussed. However this Scheme, Policy you have in place does not allow this. Can you tell me why please? And how is this fair and practicable?”

The Chairman thanked Ms Bailey for her question and responded directly from the Chair, as follows: -

“The Council has a number of adopted schemes to allow residents to participate in our formal Council and Committee Meetings.

Public Question Time at Council  
Public Participation at Committees  
Public Participation in respect of Planning applications

Each of the schemes differs slightly, but as a suite they do ensure residents can submit questions to our Meetings.

Only the Public Question Time at Council Scheme includes the limitation you raise in the question, and I understand Officers will consider the reasons and merits of this limitation in the Annual Constitution Review, which will be brought to Council in May.

Whilst your original question was rejected for this meeting, I understand Officers have directed yourself and any person who could not submit a question to this meeting, to attend next week’s Prosperous Communities Committee. There you will have the opportunity to put your questions to the Committee directly responsible for Selective Licensing and the Committee who will ultimately decide whether a new Scheme should be introduced in 2023.

The questions rejected from this meeting have also been forwarded to those currently collating responses to the on-going consultation in respect of Selective Licensing.

Thank you”

Ms Bailey, having heard the response, indicated she did not wish to pose a supplementary question.

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

The Chairman advised the meeting that four questions pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No.9 had been submitted to the meeting. These had been circulated to all Members, separately to the agenda and published on the website.

The Chairman invited, Councillor David Cotton, Ward Member for Saxilby, to put his question to the Leader.

Prior to stating his question he indicated he realised only today a settlement had been reached but he considered the matter and issues were still pertinent and should be brought into the public domain, and as such continued with his question as follows: -

“Mr. Chairman, I am sure that no one would disagree that this Council’s best asset are the staff, Officers and the DSO operatives who work for us, often unsung; but would be missed if not there, or the functions they perform were not undertaken. I am sure my joint question recipients also would fully agree.

Many people, I am sure, would be surprised to learn that the Local Government pay rise for April 2021 has yet to be implemented. This is largely due to a dispute between the Unions and the employers. As I understand it, and without too much emphasis on any political ramifications, on my part, it is understood the Unions were holding out for a 10% increase and the Employers were offering 1%. I believe the gap has narrowed slightly with the Unions looking for 7% and the Employers looking for 1.75%. I do not believe 10%, or indeed 7% is sustainable, though personally, I would pay more than that for the quality of work we have from our staff.

The pay rise will be back dated to April 2021 when it is finally (if ever) settled. This has taken nearly a year and the pay rise for April 2022 is only five or six weeks away.

Furthermore, I understand that the Unions, UNITE, UNISON and the GMB have all balloted; or are in the process of balloting members over strike action. Both UNISON and UNITE have failed to meet the majority needed to legally strike and the GMB have, or had, yet to publish its results.

Meanwhile we are in a period where inflation is at around 6% and predicted to rise to at least 7% and perhaps higher. We have seen unprecedented rises in energy costs for fuel both domestic and transport. We are told there are households having to decide on food or heating but not both and it is predicted that something like 40% of households are in fuel poverty, and that includes some households where there are two wage earners in a home.

Not so many years ago our staff here were largely union members and most were members of UNISON and a few of the JMB. Now, I believe, the membership of the unions is likely to be well below 50% of the staff, and accept that senior Officers will be members of their relevant professional bodies. I also accept that while non union staff are not directly in this “fight”, they do benefit from any potential work the unions undertake to improve wages and conditions.

It is also fair to say that we as a Council pay a living wage, rather than standard flat rate and some years ago, I and another Councillor successfully pushed for some lower pay tiers within the Council to be scrapped and those staff raised up the spinal column to new levels.

We have now moved the depot to a central location, long overdue with a first-class facility, but that means some of our staff on the lowest pay scales have to travel to work in a vehicle whereas quite a few walked or cycled to each depot in Market Rasen and Gainsborough.

There has already be some concern about refuse freighter HGV drivers potentially leaving with the rather lucrative market for such drivers being high. We hear of some firms paying up to £40,000 in “golden hello” payments for such drivers. To lose our drivers at this time would leave us in a recruitment drive we would be unlikely to fulfil, and frankly if I had the skills necessary, I would certainly think about moving if the benefits were that high.

Given the whole state of this, and the parlous state of the economy globally, could my three question recipients say if there are ways we, as a Council, can help ease the burden on our staff, especially the lower paid and those in single parent families or with dependent children?

My concern in this was mis-understood in our last meeting over the question of members allowances, but I would not dwell on that, but wish to focus on the staff we have and retaining them; but also doing what we can as an “Investor in People” to do just that and invest in our staff.

It is unlikely the pay award will be less than the 1% offered by the employers at the start of this process, and so could we unilaterally offer 1% now?

Are there other measures we can take to help where we can?

Are there mechanisms in place whereby a member of staff can speak to senior staff confidentially about money struggles or worries and get help and advice?

Is it possible to pay wage advances, albeit with conditions, which would be better alternatives to high commercial borrowing or credit card balances in cases where an employee has specific issues or cannot get loans or credit cards?

I freely admit that, as Chair of the JSCC, I know the answers to some of this but wanted the whole issue in the public domain and minuted as a Council record.

Thank you  
Rev. Cllr. David J. Cotton J.P. ADipR”

The Leader thanked Councillor Cotton, and echoed the sentiments expressed regarding the staff and them being a valuable asset. Given the nature and subject of the question, he requested the Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service, respond. The following response was given: -

“The Council are part of the collective bargaining mechanism for pay awards, through the National Joint Council, made up of Employers and Unions (Unison, Unite and GMB)

The unions asked for a 10% pay increase for all staff for the pay period April 2021 to March 2022, however this was rejected by the Employers side, after much negotiation and unions balloting their members, the final pay award has been agreed this week at 1.75% which will be backdated to April 2021 and paid to staff in March 2022 payroll.

We did seek advice regarding paying the pay award before final agreement was reached but were advised that we would be acting outside of the national bargaining mechanism which could raise issues for the Council.

Are there other measures we can take to help where we can - We have an Employee Assistance Programme which offers support to our staff on a multitude of issues, including mental wellbeing, legal advice and a wealth of resources around financial help, we will ensure that we are sharing these with colleagues so that they can access the advice if they haven't done already. We will also signpost to the other organisations that we are aware of such as Citizens Advice. We have also have a relationship with Lincs Credit Union and have worked with them in the past to ensure staff understand how they can access their support, we will share these contacts again.

Members of the senior management team are available for discussions, however this may not be the avenue that staff would feel comfortable accessing, we will ensure that our managers are also equipped with the knowledge of the resources we have available should a member of staff talk to them.

We do not offer pay advances, however through Joint Staff Consultative Committee I would ask that the subject of financial wellbeing be discussed to determine if there are further opportunities to support our staff.”

Having heard the response and with the permission of the Chairman, Councillor Cotton posed the following supplementary question

“While the original question I raised with the Leader had on the face of it, largely been surpassed by the eventual final paid award agreed by the Unions, and acceptance of a pay award of 1.75% with the award back-dated to April 2021, that is not the full story.

The increase in National Insurance is to be 1.25% and given that it is linked, the

real award is more in the region half of 1% with inflation currently at 5% and rising, the money worries with the cost of living and of course the tragic events in Ukraine adding to rises in many commodities.

We are also not many weeks away from the start of negotiation for the 2022/23 pay award which is due in April.

On the basis of the small actual accrued award for 2021/22 and the likely protracted process for the 2022/23 pay award; would the Leader, in agreeing with me that our staff are our best asset, undertake to extend to staff the assistance of the Council and offer confidential advice with money worries and concerns when any of the staff are struggling, especially where there are vulnerable dependents and single parents.”

The Chairman thanked Councillor Cotton, and given the Head of Paid Service’s response to the original question and the assurance given, no further response was required.

The Chairman then invited the second questioner, Councillor Jim Snee, Ward Member for Gainsborough North Ward to put his question to the meeting, as follows: -

“Persistent incidents of anti-social behaviour is a common issue, and in my opinion now affect, the majority of Wards within the district.

Could the Chairman please inform members how many Community Triggers this authority has dealt with during the past two years, and a breakdown of those incidents.

Councillor Jim Snee”

The Leader of the Council responded as follows : -

“Thank you Chairman and thank you for your question Councillor Snee.

Since the start of 2020 the Council has received four Community Trigger requests. Three of these were considered and investigated and one was deemed to not meet the threshold. The requests were received relating to cases in Market Rasen (2), Dunholme and Brookenby.

For those that may not be aware, the Community Trigger is a process that allows members of the public to ask their local authority or community safety partnership to review responses to incidents of anti-social behaviour. It has been designed to make sure agencies such as the Police, local councils and housing providers work together to try to resolve complaints of anti-social behaviour. An individual can use the Community Trigger if they (or others) have reported an incident three or more times within a six-month period and feels it has not been dealt with effectively. Requests for this can be made via the Council’s website.

When received, community trigger requests are reviewed and subject to meeting the threshold are considered by a group of appropriate Officers. The Officers are normally representatives from across multiple agencies that are part of the local

Anti-Social Behaviour Risk Assessment Conference (ASBRAC) meetings. A revised process to add more independence to the Community Trigger has been developed across the County via the Safer Lincolnshire Partnership and is due to be implemented at a later point in 2022.

Thank you again for your question Councillor Snee and thank you Chairman.”

No supplementary question was posed and the third questioner, Councillor Bunney, Ward Member for the Market Rasen Ward, was invited to put his question, as follows: -

“What plans do WLDC have to work alongside local housing associations and other charities to provide accommodation and other support for potential refugees from the Ukraine. There are a number of empty buildings in the district – including Rasen House, formerly The Grange, that can ‘easily’ be adapted for both short term and long term residences.

Councillor Stephen Bunney “

The Leader of the Council responded as follows: -

“Thank you Chairman and thank you for your question Cllr Bunney.

The emerging humanitarian crisis resulting from the invasion of Ukraine has led to a number of initiatives within the United Kingdom to support the people of Ukraine. The Government launched the Ukrainian Family Scheme on Friday, 4th March, which allows British nationals and people settled in the UK to bring family members to the UK. A humanitarian sponsorship pathway is also to be launched which will open up a route to the UK for Ukrainians who may not have family ties but are able to match with individuals, charities, businesses and community groups.

In light of these announcements council leaders across Lincolnshire have sponsored joint action to address the challenges and a Lincolnshire Resilience Forum (LRF) co-ordinating group has been set up with a series of work streams established to support the emerging needs including emotional support for those already in this country and donations and resettlement for refugees who arrive in Lincolnshire. A co-ordination meeting was held on Thursday, 3rd March to consider actions in relation to humanitarian aid to Ukrainian communities and refugees.

West Lindsey is a member of the Lincolnshire Refugee Resettlement Partnership that is in turn a member of the East Midland Migration Partnership. This well established partnership has been identified as the group to focus on the accommodation side of resettlement and in preparation for actions coming out of the coordination meeting weekly partnership meetings have been planned into calendars to ensure that collectively organisations across Lincolnshire are prepared to react as announcements are made. Officers at West Lindsey will liaise with registered provider partners to enable the provision of accommodation should it be required in our district.

Some work will also be needed on the co-ordination of support provision and Officers will keep Members informed on the detail of this as it emerges.

The resettlement of refugees is a complex process and doesn't always relate simplistically to the availability of property. Consideration has to be given to location, community cohesion and available support. It is due to this that when a property is made available the process of matching families to the accommodation is led by the Home Office.

Officers work proactively with landlords and owners to bring empty properties back into use but there can be any number of constraints to do so. Market Rasen House is an example of one such property where the current designation is one of supported housing and planning constraints due to access are likely to prevent a change of use to self contained flats.

Many residents are already turning to us as their District Council to ask how they can support the response. Whilst organisations are setting up drop off points for donations we await advice on the co-ordinated Lincolnshire response.

Mrs Di Krochmal, Assistant Director for Homes and Communities, is our Lead Officer for refugee resettlement and any queries you may have can be directed to her.

Thank you again for your question Cllr Bunney and thank you Chairman."

On hearing the response and with permission of the Chairman, Councillor Bunney indicated he was pleased to hear that the District Council were looking to do things within West Lindsey, he considered it extremely important at times of international crisis that small groups worked together and that those small commitments spread, gained momentum and inspired leaders on national and international stages. He spoke of local family connections and links to the country of Ukraine across West Lindsey and hoped we could open up our District to refugees who may settle on family basis or near family basis. It was acknowledged that the District through its partnership arrangement had assisted with refugee settlement historically, but with families often placed in larger conurbations outside of the District where services allowed integration more easily. However, on this occasion he considered the District had quite a large community with connections to the Ukraine and this should be taken into consideration. Lincolnshire had a good history in supporting refugees and it was hoped that we could be as open and friendly as possible across the District and that this needed to continue to be the case.

The Chairman invited the fourth and final questioner, Councillor John McNeill, Ward Member for Market Rasen to put his question to the meeting as follows: -

"We are very fortunate in West Lindsey to have immutable decisions made on planning applications, whether by Officers of the Council or by the Planning Committee. As West Lindsey Conservatives promised in our manifesto we have ensured that Parish and Town Councils have the opportunity to "Call-In" planning applications to the Planning Committee for determination, just like District Councillors.

However, one area of continued frustration for many, not just Parish and Town Councillors, but the people who live and work in West Lindsey, is the way that the conditions applied to planning applications are enforced once the development begins (or is permitted to continue where retrospective permission has been sought).

Can the Leader confirm how the conditions on planning developments are enforced and monitored, as well as reported to Members of this Council? How are changes, if any, to the conditions applied to planning developments managed and approved, and how are these made visible to Members of this Council?

Can he confirm how many conditions on Planning developments are currently outstanding and of those how many are overdue for implementation? Has any assessment been made of the overdue conditions as to how likely (or otherwise) these will be complied with, and if so, can he share the detail with Members? If no assessment has been made, how can the Planning Enforcement Team be said to be operating in the public interest, especially when there is clear, yet I accept anecdotal, evidence that this is important to many people, not just some Members of this Council?

Councillor John McNeill”

The Leader of the Council responded as follows

“Thank you Chairman and thank you for your question Councillor McNeill.

Conditions are enforced and monitored in line with the Local Enforcement Plan for Planning Enforcement. Complaints from residents will initiate investigation by Officers and in some cases, where conditions are placed on permissions they are proactively monitored (i.e. pre-commencement conditions). As a matter of course, provision is not made to monitor all conditions.

When conditions are permitted, an applicant has the right to appeal against the conditions, typically within six months.

As soon as any permission is approved, the applicant can also apply directly to WLDC to amend or vary the conditions (a ‘s73 application’). The Council can only consider the matter of the planning conditions. If granted, a new planning permission would be formed, and it follows the same process as a planning application. Consultation and publicity is the same, including publication on the weekly list, and so has the same visibility to Members of the Council.

There is no practical way of determining how many planning developments have outstanding or overdue conditions. Planning permissions usually give 3 years to commence development (or otherwise expire). Planning conditions also have different triggers before they are engaged (pre-commencement; during construction; post construction). This would require monitoring every extant permission (i.e. every permission granted in the last 3 years (upwards of 2,500); and all those developments that have commenced and are still under

construction) and monitoring the stage of development it has reached.

The onus is fully on the developer to comply with the conditions in order that their development remains 'authorised'. Where the Council become aware of any non-compliance, it is dealt with in line with the Councils Local Enforcement Plan for Planning Enforcement. Any breach of condition is assessed on its merit and when investigated Officers seek to ensure that the permitted party meets the requirements set out in their permission.

In the year ending September 2021, planning permission was granted for 846 applications, given the three-year commencement timescale, there could be over 2,500 active applications at any one time for developments of varying scales and degree. This does not include other application types such as Advertisement or Listed Building Consents. This does not include any earlier permissions (granted more than three years ago) where development is still under construction. Nearly all planning permissions will have some form of condition(s) attached.

Planning law allows the local planning authority up to ten years after a breach of condition commenced, to take action. Consequently, if public concerns arise, there is a significant window in which this can be brought to the attention of the local planning authority.

Thank you again for your question Councillor McNeill and thank you Chairman.”

Having heard the response and with the permission of the Chairman, Councillor McNeill posed the following supplementary question.

“Please could the Leader advise when the Local Enforcement Plan was last reviewed or updated? In your answer you (Leader) refer to there being no practical way of knowing how many conditions there are outstanding or overdue. What does he mean by no practical way? Also, what assurance can be provided that planning conditions are not made that are impossible for applicants to fulfil, and that Officers only impose achievable conditions. Is there any external assurance on that?”

The Chairman of the Council indicated that that Leader would need to speak with relevant Officers further and she would ensure Councillor McNeill was provided with further information outside of the meeting.

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

The Chairman advised the meeting that two motions pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No.10 had been submitted to the meeting, these were as set out in the agenda.

Councillor Bunney, was invited to put his motion to the meeting, as follows:

### **Walking and Cycling to School – Road Safety Measures**

West Lindsey District Council supports the campaigns of Government, Education

and Health Authorities to promote pupils walking and cycling to and from school. This daily activity instils good life style habits with our young people as well as improving their health, including obesity, and wellbeing. It also has a potential to improve the climate and environmental issues faced by our planet.

The Council also recognises that for such schemes to be successfully taken up the pupils and their parents/carers must feel they can carry out the activity in a safe environment. Unfortunately, many of our area's schools suffer from a lack of adequate pavements and safety barriers, inadequate parking spaces, traffic travelling at fast speeds and air pollution from passing motor vehicles making them risky and unsafe for pedestrians. In rural villages and back street locations the narrowness of the roads frequently heightens the problem. Where schools do have safety zones and other speed reduction schemes outside their premises they are mainly advisory and not mandatory and so are frequently ignored.

The Council require the Leader and Chief Executive Officer to write to Cllr Martin Hill OBE as Leader of Lincolnshire County Council and to Councillor Mrs Patricia Bradwell OBE Executive Member for Children Services and Cllr Richard Davies Executive Member for Highways to request, as a matter of urgency they help to bring about an increase in pupils undertaking active travel to and from school by providing outside and in the immediate vicinity of all schools in the District:

- adequate pavements and associated infrastructure
- a **mandatory** speed limit of 20mph, in line with the '20 is Plenty Campaign'
- parking free zones outside the school
- help in identifying and providing suitable parent car parking in areas away from the school – which will allow park and stride schemes to operate.

I so move.

Councillor. Stephen Bunney”

With the motion duly seconded, lengthy debate ensued. Whilst supportive of the motions principles and acknowledging that such behaviours recognised in the motion should be encouraged. However, it was also acknowledged that the rural locations of some of the District communities did see a reliance on cars and motor vehicles. Several Members spoke of issues within their own towns and villages, where simple rules of the road were ignored, but were of the view that greater enforcement from Police and traffic wardens was required. Greater education was required, some Members therefore questioned the effectiveness of the Motion, given the District's limited responsibilities and the County Council being under no mandate to respond.

Clarity was sought from the motion proposer regarding the meaning on “immediate vicinity” with the response being 200 metres outside the school.

Making reference to a previous motion, a request to write to the County Council, and the non-response to-date it was again questioned why this motion would produce any different response.

Other Members spoke of the “20 is Plenty campaign”, currently championed by a number of Councillors across the Chamber, and the effectiveness this had had in other towns and

cities. Positive effects on cycling had also been achieved. The wider aims of the 20 is plenty campaign were outlined. Members considered speeding traffic was a significant issue across the District with rural routes often appearing as race tracks, resulting in a net effect of people not walking or cycling to school. Those Members considered the District did have a role to challenge the current situation and encourage those responsible to take action. This was something the community was concerned about. The stark contrast between the approach in Nottinghamshire just across the river compared to West Lindsey and Lincolnshire was notable. Some Members were of the view the County Council needed to be made to listen. Some considered simply debating the matter in Chamber brought the issues into the public domain and the Council should be encouraging other partners to be applying similar pressure to those could help alleviate. Personal examples were given as to where changes could be made to areas Councillors were aware had an issue.

Again, acknowledging the issues existed, were prevalent across the whole of Lincolnshire, and would vary from school to school, village to village, the approach was questioned. The need for greater education was a shared view, however there were examples of communities not wanting reduced speed-limits. Any work in this area needed to be in the spirit of co-operation. It was commented on the number of dual-hatters in the Chamber, those which served on both the District and County Council, it was suggested those Members should be representing this issue on behalf of the District and trying to lobbying from within the organisation they were elected to.

There was some general discussion regarding reducing speed limits and the effectiveness of this was without real enforcement, noting those who traditionally speed, would speed regardless of the limit in place. Supporters of the 20 is plenty campaign disagreed noting the differences seen as a result.

In bringing the debate to a close, the motion submitted clarified his intention was to ensure this matter was brought to the attention of the County Council, to acknowledge that this was a problem across the District, and that priority action should be taken to address the issues which were the cause of complaint and concern for many communities.

On being put to the vote, the **MOTION AS SUBMITTED** was declared **CARRIED** and as a result it was

**RESOLVED** that the Leader and Chief Executive Officer write to Councillor Martin Hill OBE as Leader of Lincolnshire County Council and to Councillor Mrs Patricia Bradwell OBE Executive Member for Children Services and Councillor Richard Davies Executive Member for Highways to request, as a matter of urgency they help to bring about an increase in pupils undertaking active travel to and from school by providing outside and in the immediate vicinity of all schools in the District:

- adequate pavements and associated infrastructure
- a **mandatory** speed limit of 20mph, in line with the '20 is Plenty Campaign'
- parking free zones outside the school
- help in identifying and providing suitable parent car parking in areas away from the school – which will allow park and stride schemes to operate.

The Chairman invited Councillor Young, as lead submitter, to put his motion to Council as follows: -

### **Selective Licensing**

“In England the private housing sector accounts for 4.4 million or 19% of households compared with 4.0 million or 17% households in the social rented sector. Therefore private landlords clearly play an important role in supporting local authorities meeting local housing demand.

WLDC introduced a Selective Licensing Scheme of Private Landlords in parts of the Gainsborough South West Ward in 2016 and the authority is currently carrying out a consultation process with a view of extending the scheme to other areas of the district in 2023.

Whilst we welcome the consultation it has to be recognised that an online process has limitations regarding the current challenges faced by the private rented sector in our urban and rural areas.

Clearly there are many advantages for the authority building improved partnerships with the private rented sector, including meeting our statutory requirements regarding homelessness, employment, domestic violence, mental health etc. They also support the authority meeting the housing needs of many individuals who have exhausted their options regarding social housing.

Our citizens deserve good housing standards, the selective licensing scheme can improve the quality of accommodation however it has had limited success in many other areas such as anti- social behaviour, community safety and crime levels.

It is therefore essential before we extend the selective licensing scheme we gain a far better understanding of how many of these other issues can be addressed, Therefore we ‘move’

1. The consultation process is halted and reformulated to address the limitations of the online consultation process including a district wide meeting between elected Members and the private landlords of the designated areas.
2. The key findings are considered and implemented into the new selective licensing scheme.
3. A report is produced and presented to the following Prosperous Communities Committee prior to the new licensing scheme being implemented.

We so Move

Councillor Trevor Young  
Gainsborough South-West Ward

Councillor Stephen Bunney  
Market Rasen Ward

Councillor Paul Howitt Cowan  
Hemswell Ward

Councillor Tom Regis  
Wold View Ward

With the motion duly seconded debate ensued. The Deputy Leader indicated her support for items 2 and 3 of the motion, noting that such actions were already part of the project plan and decision-making process. Early into the debate the following amendment

“that the word halted be removed from recommendation 1 and replaced with extended”.

The rationale being that this would allow the current consultation to be extended to include some face to face meetings and provide residents opportunity to fully give their views. A consultation process was important as it gave residents the opportunity to inform the Council of what they really thought, and the results of that consultation would help promote develop and shape further how Selective Licensing was dealt with in the future. The lead motion submitted indicated he was not willing to accept that amendment and as such the amendment was duly seconded and would require a vote later in the proceedings.

Further debate ensued as to the merits or otherwise of the amendment. The Leader whilst welcoming the motion, was supportive of the amendment offering his reasoning. The consultation was half way through its designated process. The consultation had been designed at a time when the Omicron was still rife and ongoing restrictions were unclear. At the time therefore, he considered the logical thing to have done was to arrange for on-line, remote events, simply for certainty. The consultation was running over 12 weeks and would close on 11 April, he considered consultation was currently performing effectively, with 296 responses to-date. The consultation process had been discussed at at least two meetings of the Prosperous Communities Committee and the decision taken had allowed enough flexibility to make amendments to the consultation process, and events, only recently further engagement events had been incorporated. Clarifying timescales relating to the broader scheme any new scheme was never intended to be introduced before 2023, one of the main reasons being that if proposals were to be taken forward by this Council they would need approval by the Secretary of State before anything could be introduced. All things considered, the safeguards in place, the Leader was therefore of the belief the safest and fairest thing for all parties concerned was to continue with the current consultation, whilst extending it also, as suggested.

Some Members considered the methodology in any consultation was critical to ensuring the right data was collected and used to inform decisions. Occasionally methodologies were incorrect and when that was the case, stopping proceedings was considered more appropriate. The acceptance of including face to face meetings was welcomed however some Members were of the view that the issue was fundamentally more than that. It was not suggested that Selective Licensing should not be looked at, everyone having the right to live in a decent standard of accommodation, but the Scheme did need to provide confidence that the end product worked, as such ensuring the right methodology was critical. As such halting the process was considered more appropriate.

Further Members spoke in support of the amendment, although there were concerns that the current approach penalised good landlords. There were concerns that halting a consultation mid process was undemocratic and unfair to those who had engaged to-date. As a whole Members were supportive of the inclusion of additional face to face opportunities, acknowledging why the original approach had been adopted, but recognising that those restrictions no longer applied. Re-introducing face to face contact was welcomed as were the views of the landlords, however some felt this should not be to detriment to those who had already expressed views, halting the consultation would do just that.

Some Members felt it had become apparent that the current process was not working, landlords should be front and centre of the proposals and not feeling side-lined as they currently did. Consultation should drive decisions not be designed to generate the pre-conceived solution. As such halting was the preference for some, to allow the whole scheme to be reconsidered, dismissing the suggesting that it was undemocratic.

Information was sought from the Monitoring Officer, as to whether undertaking face to face meetings only for those Groups referenced in the motions was challengeable from a robust consultation view. It was confirmed that if the motion as submitted was carried face to face meetings would need to be looked at for other stakeholder groups too, referencing the original decision which would permit such.

It was also referenced that since the adoption of the Climate and Sustainability Strategy, it was general policy to avoid face to face meetings in favour of virtual and questioned how the request fitted alongside that Policy requirement. The benefits of face to face did not appear to have been made strongly.

It was suggested, by one of the motion movers, that the current scheme and current consultation lacked integrity. Methodology was key and views were expressed that this had not been undertaken to a good enough standard. Perceived failings were outlined including the lack of impact assessments on rents, as such halting the process was deemed appropriate.

Arising from an earlier question posed the Head of Paid Service indicated that face to face meetings would result in a greater need of travel and increase the carbon footprint.

Clarity was sought and provided regarding the amendment. And in line with earlier comments if the amendment was passed, the extension of face to face meeting would be made to all stakeholder groups, not just private landlords. The Head of Paid Service, placed on record that no one group had been excluded from the current consultation and a number of both residents and tenants had engaged in the process. Over 300 responses had been received to-date suggesting it was not poorly formatted

With original motion submitter indicating he would not be accepting the amendment, did believe the whole process need to be halted and reconfigured, indicating he would save his full of right of reply for any substantive motion.

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

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

**For:** - Councillors Bierley, Devine, Ellis, Grimble, Lawrence, McCartney, McNeill, Milne, Morris, Patterson, Summers, Waller and Welburn (13)

**Against:** - Councillors Boles, Bunney, Clews, Cotton, Dobbie, Howitt-Cowan, Oliver, Panter, Rainsforth, Regis, Rollings, M Snee, J Snee, White, and Young (15)

**Abstentions:** - Councillor Fleetwood (1),

With a total of 13 votes in favour, 15 votes against and 1 abstention, the **AMENDMENT** was declared **LOST**.

Further debate ensued and Members spoke of the need to engage all stakeholders, recognising the substantive motion was likely to be passed, and the process would go back to beginning, the four motion submitters, were urged by other Members in the Chamber to engage with Officers from the outset to avoid the same issues. This sentiment was echoed by others

Clarity was sought as to if the motion as submitted was carried, how quickly would the decision be implemented, with the Chief Executive confirming if the motion was passed work would begin the following day to halt the consultation. Leaflets had been printed for inclusion in Council Tax Bills for example, and the halting of the consultation did bring with it some costs. It would also need to be determined, what would happen to the 300 plus responses received to-date and it was likely if the consultation was fundamentally re-formatted it was likely those people would be asked to re-submit.

Members sought indication as to the cost of the leaflet and did acknowledge it would be a shame if those consultation responses already submitted were lost and there was a risk of consultation fatigue.

The leaflet had cost in the region of £1500, the on-line survey could be switched off relatively easily with little costs. However, money had been spent to- date on designing the process and input to date but an accurate figure was not available immediately be could be in the thousands.

Members questioned whether the costs to date have been funded from the licence fee paid by those under the previous Scheme. It was confirmed this was not the case, fees paid under the previous scheme covered the cost of that scheme.

It was suggested that any money lost was as a result of an ill-conceived process.

The motion submitter used his right reply to reply and made the following statement: -

“Firstly Chairman, having a first class honours degree in housing and being a member of the chartered institute of housing until recently, I consider myself well-experienced to talk about Housing Policy

I along with the other Members who submitted this Motion would be more than willing to work with Offices in terms of a revised scheme. It was interesting Chairman, that only this week Councillor Martin Hill stated the importance of

private landlords and the role they would play in settling refugees reference the current situation in the Ukraine. Back in 2015/16 when the previous Chief Executive spoke of selective licensing in parts of the South West Ward, her vision was about making that world a better place where people wanted to live and enjoyed living, rather than being forced to live in a low demand area. Tackling high levels of anti-social behaviour and high levels of crime and a good neighbour scheme benefiting the whole of the community should have been the main focus of delivery. Unfortunately, when the previous Chief Executive left the organisation, the way the selective licensing scheme was implemented by our Officers focused on none of the original priorities.

Selective Licensing should be a short term intervention which addresses specific problems in specific areas and it should be reviewed regularly and have measurable outcomes. When there is a clear focus on how the scheme should be implemented, it should deliver specific benefits for all stakeholders such as landlords, their tenants, their families, statutory services and particularly owner occupiers and local businesses. Selective licensing should form stronger working partnerships between the local authority and private landlords to ensure the key objectives are delivered. In the past five years in the South West Ward we have had a licensing scheme, in a select area of the ward, sadly incidents of anti-social behaviour have increased and crime levels have also increased, drug dealing from properties is prolific, together with the impact of street lights in this area being switched off, it has resulted in this feeling an unsafe place to live.

However, on reviewing the Five-Year scheme which has been in place, West Lindsey Officers claim that the Scheme has been a huge success. How can this be? Nothing has changed. The partnership between the Authority and private landlords has not happened, there is a clear inconsistency in how landlords are licensed. There has been no engagement with tenants and there has been huge criticism of the large licence fee and how it has been used. There has been a lack of landlords support for dealing with anti-social behaviour especially early presentation of waste and drug dealing from properties, there has been a lack of enforcement in the area. There have been deliberate attempts by Officers to keep Members at arm's length, criticism from other agencies about how the Scheme has been implemented. There has been no tracking of problem tenants and they keep reappearing when they have been evicted from licensed properties reappearing in other properties. The poor landlords and the poor tenants simply not being addressed. If there is an extension of the South West Ward scheme, there is a clear need to change the way it is implemented as it has simply not delivered.

Regarding the rollout of the licensing scheme in other parts of the District, we first need to understand what we are trying to achieve. It is totally unrealistic to take a blanket approach to identify whole wards. Consideration also needs to be given to the rurality of the District and what an important role some private landlords play in supporting and investing in our rural areas. Government Guidance on selective licensing, clearly advocates the need for active engagement with both landlords and tenants and clearly this should be done prior to any area being identified. The use of algorithms, as is the case in West Lindsey should be discouraged as they are unreliable and should not be used as

a replacement for true meaningful engagement. Only when we fully understand what we need to deliver regarding the private housing sector, should we begin to consider how we consult in those areas and it has to be more than just an online consultation.

I also want to make it clear that there is no political reason why we have tabled tonight's motion. It is about doing the right thing and ensuring there is a selective licensing scheme in areas where there is a genuine reason and that any scheme is fit for purpose. Finally, if it takes another further 12-months to engage with our residents then this is what we should do. I call upon members to do the right thing this evening and support the motion. Let's get this right."

A further 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 Devine, Dobbie, Howitt-Cowan, Oliver, Panter, Rainsforth, Regis, Rollings, J Snee, M Snee, White and Young (16),

**Against**: - Councillors Bierley, Ellis, Grimble, Lawrence, McCartney, McNeill, Milne, Morris, Patterson, Summers, Waller and Welburn (12)

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

With a total of 16 votes in favour, 12 votes against and 1 abstention, the **MOTION AS SUBMITTED** was declared **CARRIED** and as such it was **RESOLVED** that: -

- (a) the consultation process be halted and reformulated to address the limitations of the online consultation process including a district wide meeting between elected Members and the private landlords of the designated areas.
- (b) the key findings be considered and implemented into the new selective licensing scheme;
- (c) a report be produced and presented to the following Prosperous Communities Committee prior to the new licensing scheme being implemented.

**Note**: -

The meeting was adjourned for a short comfort break following consideration of the above item, with the meeting resuming at 9.11 pm

The following Councillors did not return to the Chamber following the adjournment, Councillors Howitt-Cowan, Regis and Waller.

**76 EXECUTIVE BUSINESS PLAN 2022/23 TO 2024/25, MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2022/23 TO 2026/27, COUNCIL TAX AND REVENUE BUDGET 2022/23 AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2022/23 TO 2026/27**

Members gave consideration to a report which presented the Executive Business Plan 2022/23 and the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2022/23 – 2026/27 presented by the Section 151 Officer. These documents were central to the Council's financial and strategic planning for the period 2022/23 to the 2026/27 and also included the Council Tax requirement for 2022/2023.

The Executive Business Plan, provided the context in which the Authority was working, with both national and local factors and detailed the work to be carried out over the next 3 years to support delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan Objectives.

The Medium Term Financial Plan, explained the Authority's financial strategies over the medium term, and the budget forecasts to support sustainable service delivery and funding for initiatives to deliver the Corporate plan through revenue and capital investment.

The Treasury Management Strategy, brought these elements together to enable management of the Authority's cash flows through investment and borrowing and ensured that Capital Investment decisions were both affordable and sustainable.

Members were advised the overall capital financing requirement was £38.2m and that this would reduce over the medium term as minimum revenue provision (principal repayments were made).

By the end of 2022/23 the external borrowing was forecast to be £26.5m with internal borrowing of £11.74m.

Members were also advised that there had been a change to the MRP policy, which would result in a charge to reduce prudential borrowing against investment assets. This change had been made in anticipation of a change in legislation in this regard.

The Budget for 2022/23 had been based on a Council tax increase of £5 which continued the Council's long-term aim of being non-reliant on Government funding. The average West Lindsey District Council Tax for 2022/23 would be £227.74 reflecting a 2.24% increase, with the overall average Council Tax (including Lincolnshire County Council, the Police Crime Commissioner and Parish Precepts totaling £2,011.40, an overall 4.45% increase.

Whilst the Government had provided a 1 year financial settlement, additional funding in the form of a £208,000 Services Grant and an additional year of New Homes Bonus totaling £841,000 would be earmarked for future investment.

The 1 year settlement meant ongoing uncertainty remained in relation to future funding levels. Both the Fairer Funding and Business Rate Retention Scheme reviews were awaiting finalisation as part of the Government's overall review of Local Government funding.

Assurance was given that the Council would remain proactive in delivering its Financial Strategy over the medium term, with the aim of long term sustainability. This would be achieved through good financial management, investment for growth of its tax base, service reviews, investment in technology and a commercial approach to delivering services.

Financial gains from the 2022/23 had been achieved as result of the Council being allowed to retain a further year of business rates growth and it had also benefitted from a further year of New Homes Bonus, this had enabled the Authority to increase its reserves to support delivery of the corporate strategies (£1.175m).

£0.562m had been earmarked for investment in technology, property assets and change management. The capital investment programme totalled some £33m over the medium term, £17m of which was currently in delivery with business cases and approval required for the remaining projects. The significant programme had been enabled by £22m of grant funding of which £10m has been awarded from the Levelling Up Fund for our Thriving Gainsborough Project, which would provide beneficial outcomes for the wider District. £6m of earmarked reserves would be utilised, along with £4m of capital receipts and £2m of borrowing to deliver the programme.

The Chief Finance Officer's opinion on the robustness of the estimates within the Budget, the adequacy of the reserves to support ambitions and to provide contingencies for future financial risks and sustainability was contained with the report.

The Governance and Audit Committee had scrutinised the Treasury Management Strategy and both the Prosperous Communities Committee and the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee have considered and recommended their budgets and fees and charges as contained within the report.

The Leader made the following address

“As Leader of the Council I am pleased to present our Executive Business Plan and Medium Term Financial Plan, along with the Budget for 2022/23, all of which contribute to achieving our vision of making West Lindsey a great place to be where people, businesses and communities can thrive and reach their potential.

The Financial Strategy supports our ongoing aim to be non-reliant on Government funding.

The 2022/23 budget has been set to ensure we continue to provide award-winning services, whilst investing for the future through the delivery of the capital programme.

The 2022/23 settlement has enabled us to build up our reserves to support delivery of our corporate strategies and we now have available:

- £250,000.00 for Culture
- £500,000.00 for Environmental and Climate Change
- £250,000.00 for Communities at Risk
- £6,000,000.00 for Investment for Growth
- £250,000.00 for cost of change

A further £250,000.00 has been allocated for investment in technology and £250,000.00 to support the Asset Management Plan, with £62,000.00 to

support change management.

The 2022/23 Budget supports delivery of our Corporate Plan objectives, protects our award-winning services, improves our customers' experience, delivers efficiencies and will continue to deliver value for money for the residents of West Lindsey.

I therefore commend these measures to Council and am delighted to propose the recommendations”.

Thank you Chairman.”

Debate ensued and Members' posed a number of questions to the Section 151 Officer. Given some Members' understanding that the West Lindsey Leisure Centre Swimming Pool in Gainsborough was either reaching or had reached, the end of its anticipated life expectancy, information was sought as to what, if any, plans there were to renovate or rebuild the swimming pool in Gainsborough? Whether estimates of the cost of these works had been made, noting that there did not appear to be reference in the Mid-Term Financial Plans.

In response the Section 151 Officer advised that the last condition survey of the building had concluded the building was still fit for purpose and had longevity, with no significant issues. Officers however were conscious that it was an ageing building, with facilities likely to require refurbishment. Work was required to determine to what extent works were required in order to ascertain any future investment need, which would be built into future asset management plans so they could be costed.

Arising from the Environment Act of last year, DEFRA was currently undertaking consultation regarding the conversion of waste vehicles to more environmentally sustainable models, with the likely implementation date for any change-over date being March 2025, general consensus at a recent meeting that that was not a flexible date. Confirmation was sought as to whether any estimates of that cost to the Authority had been undertaken and incorporated into the MTFP. Again in response the Section 151 Officer advise Members that no costs had been built into the MTFP at this time. However the Action Plan arising from the Council's Climate and Sustainability Strategy did include a figure of approximately £6m, as the required amount to convert the current fleet. The funding of which, would be difficult and exploration was currently underway as to ways the Climate and Sustainability Strategy could be financed.

Reference the internal audit plan due for consideration at a forthcoming Governance and Audit Committee, it was noted there had been an 18% rise in the fees charged by internal auditors, whilst noting the fee had not risen in 5 years, this had however seen the number of audit days applied reduced from 185 days to 166 for next financial year. The likely impact being that some of areas of interest for the Governance and Audit Committee may not be included within the Plan. It was requested whether the budget could be amended to include an additional 20 audit days at a cost of around £6k?

In response the Section 151 Officer advised the Council did hold a general fund working balance. As such if additional audit days were deemed necessary they could be funded via

such means, with the ongoing base budget reassessed for future years' requirements.

Finally mention was made to the global economic impacts arising from the Russian invasion of Ukraine, not only consumer commodities but on investments. Information was sought as to what if any assessment of such impacts had been undertaken.

Members were advised that the Lincolnshire Treasury Management advisors would be providing updates to Councils regularly. A review of the Council's own investments, including those on Money Market Funds, had been undertaken to ascertain whether those investments had any Russian links. Based on public information available the Council did appear to have any such investments, however formal confirmation was awaited from the Authority's Financial Institutions. Interest rates were expected to fluctuate over the medium term and the impact of this could not currently be estimated. The Council did hold reserves for such fluctuations should projected returns not be reached.

Having had the recommendations, as set out in the report, moved and seconded, they were put to the vote. In accordance with required legislation for voting on the Council's budget, a recorded vote was taken.

Votes were cast as set out below:

**For:** - Councillors Bierley, Devine, Ellis, Fleetwood, Grimble, Lawrence, McCartney, McNeill, Milne, Morris, Panter, Patterson, Summers and Welburn(14)

**Against:** - Councillor Cotton, (1)

**Abstain:** - Councillors Boles, Bunney, Clews, Dobbie, Oliver, Rainsforth, Rollings, Snee J, Snee M, White and Young (11)

With the majority of Councillors voting for the proposals, the recommendations were declared **CARRIED** and on that basis it was:-

**RESOLVED** that: -

- (a) Members recognise the external environment and the severity of the financial challenges being faced as detailed in the Financial Strategy
- (b) the Statement of the Chief Finance Officer on the Robustness of Estimates and Adequacy of Reserves. (MTFP 2.10) be accepted;
- (c) the Medium Term Financial Plan 2022/23 to 2026/27 be approved with an awareness of the associated Risks (Appendix 2);
- (d) a Mid-Year Review of the Medium Term Financial Plan be submitted to Council during 2022/23;
- (e) a £5 increase in the Council Tax to £227.74 (Average Band D equivalent) (Appendix 8-12) be approved;
- (f) the Revenue Budget 2022/23 (MTFP 3.2) be approved;

- (g) the Movement in Reserves (MTFP 2.8) be approved;
- (h) the Fees and Charges 2022/23 as detailed in Appendix 3 be set;
- (i) the Capital Investment Strategy (Appendix 4) be adopted;
- (j) the Capital Programme 2022/23 to 2026/27 and proposed financing (Appendix 5 and 6) be approved;
- (k) the Treasury Management Strategy 2022/23 be approved and the Treasury Investment Strategy, the Borrowing Strategy and the Treasury and Borrowing Prudential Indicators (Appendix 7) be adopted;
- (l) the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy as contained in the Treasury Management Strategy (Appendix 7) be approved; and
- (m) the 2022/23 Pay Policy Statement (Appendix 13) and Human Resources Statement 2022/23 (Appendix 14) be approved.

The meeting concluded at 9.36 pm.

Chairman