

Public Document Pack

West Lindsey District Council - 23 January 2023

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Council held in the Council Chamber - The Guildhall on 23 January 2023 at 7.00 pm.

Present: Councillor Mrs Angela Lawrence (Chairman)
Councillor Roger Patterson (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Owen Bierley	Councillor Matthew Boles
Councillor Mrs Jackie Brockway	Councillor Stephen Bunney
Councillor Liz Clews	Councillor David Cotton
Councillor Mrs Tracey Coulson	Councillor Christopher Darcel
Councillor Michael Devine	Councillor David Dobbie
Councillor Jane Ellis	Councillor Ian Fleetwood
Councillor Cherie Hill	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 Mrs Judy Rainsforth	Councillor Jeff Summers
Councillor Robert Waller	Councillor Mrs Anne Welburn
Councillor Mrs Angela White	Councillor Trevor Young

In Attendance:

Ian Knowles	Chief Executive
Emma Foy	Director of Corporate Services and Section 151
Emma Redwood	Assistant Director - People and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer)
Peter Davy	Financial Services Manager (Deputy Section 151 Officer)
Katie Storr	Democratic Services & Elections Team Manager (Deputy Monitoring Officer)

Also in Attendance: Mr R Quirke, Chairman of the Independent Remuneration Panel,

Apologies

Councillor Timothy Davies
Councillor Mrs Caralyne Grimble
Councillor Mrs Diana Rodgers
Councillor Mrs Lesley Rollings
Councillor Jim Snee
Councillor Mrs Mandy Snee

118 CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed Members and Officers to the meeting.

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

119 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING - 5 SEPTEMBER 2022

Before approval of the Minutes, the Chairman brought to the attention of Members an administrative matter, relating to a discrepancy in the membership of the Prosperous Communities Committee, following Council's consideration of the matter in September.

Members were advised that Councillors affected had received apologies, attendance records had been amended accordingly and the fact had been minuted at the Prosperous Communities Meeting. The Chairman confirmed the minutes originally supplied to Members and published were correct and did not require amending as a result of the discrepancy.

On that basis have being proposed and seconded, it was:-

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of Full Council held on 5 September 2022 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

120 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

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

121 MATTERS ARISING

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

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

122 ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman

The Chairman started her announcements by wishing the Chamber a Happy New Year! Noting that since Council last met the Nation had lost a Queen and gained a King!

Referencing the loss of the Sovereign, the Chairman advised she had been required to attend the Official Proclamation in front of Lincoln Cathedral before delivering the Proclamation back to the District to be announced in Gainsborough outside of the Council Offices. She remarked on what a moving and historic event it had been.

In October, the Chairman had attended at the Lincoln College Graduation Ceremony again held at Lincoln Cathedral. Graduation ceremonies were always special to see.

The Chairman advised Members that she had been invited to form part of a Panel, to determine receipts for Lincolnshire Care Awards in coming months.

November had seen Armistice and Remembrance Events held across the District. The Chairman had had the pleasure of attending both the Services and Parades held in the Market Place Gainsborough and at Caistor.

A wonderful evening had been had during November attending the "Illuminate Walls" along the Gainsborough Riverside leading to the Old Hall where there had been the most magnificent Fire Display. She congratulated all those involved in what had been something quite spectacular.

And, in the run-up to Christmas the Chairman had undertaken Christmas visits to the Arts Centre, the Council's Crematorium and Depot and of the course the Guildhall. Ending the day with a visit to see the terrific Wizard of Oz at the Trinity Arts Centre.

Leader

The Leader made the following address to Council: -

"Good evening colleagues, I hope everyone had the opportunity to spend some time away from their desks over the Christmas and New Year period and have resumed their duties refreshed and ready for what will undoubtedly be an especially busy period for us individually and collectively.

In November, I was privileged to attend the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership's Annual Conference and AGM at the Epic Centre, which proved to be most inspiring in setting out the vision for our historic county and the work already underway toward achieving that ambition. West Lindsey's Director of Planning, Regeneration and Communities gave a timely update in relation to the RAF Scampton opportunity area and joined a Q&A Panel and a new Agricultural Growth Zone that will greatly support innovation in that sector in our District was announced.

It is most pleasing to report that our Operational Services teams were nominated in no fewer than four categories in the 2022 Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) Awards, which were held in December. The nominations were for, in Street Cleansing, the Best Performer and the **Most Improved Performer** and in Waste Collection, for the **Best Performer** and the Most Improved Performer, with West Lindsey winning the two categories.

Colleagues will be aware that work to demolish the Lindsey Centre in Gainsborough town centre commenced shortly before Christmas. This will enable the construction of a new multi-screen cinema and associated retail units and is the most visible of the many changes and improvements currently being made in the area. Others include the opening of the first buildings refurbished through the Townscape Heritage Initiative and the installation of new way finding signs.

Hearing sessions in the Examination in Public of the new Central Lincolnshire Local Plan ended on Friday, 16th December, as scheduled. In response to the Inspector's Post Hearing Letter the Central Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee has prepared a schedule of Recommended Main Modifications to the Plan. This was published on Friday, 13th January and will remain open for consultation until 23:59 on Friday, 24 February. For further information please visit: <https://central-lincs.inconsult.uk/CLLP.Main.Modifications/consultationHome>

Our annual Strategic Away Day will take place in the picturesque setting of Riseholme Park this Friday, with a most impressive line-up of guest speakers and including presentations on the future of food and agricultural productivity and the development of the Agricultural Growth Zone in West Lindsey. Then, next month, our newly formed Further Education Task Force will begin its work. The response and support from invitees and partners in the sector has been incredible, fully reflecting the importance of this initiative for the future not only of our young people, but also in ensuring that 'Team West Lindsey' can maximise and secure its full economic potential.

Finally, Chairman, whilst I believe this to be an especially exciting time with unparalleled opportunities available to our District, I do fully recognise that we can always achieve our best, working in partnership with others. Accordingly, I'd like to place on record my deep appreciation for the commitment and dedication of all the individuals and organisations working on behalf of their communities, bringing so much to the quality of life we collectively benefit from and enjoy"

Chief Executive

The Chief Executive addressed Council and advised of recent Conference speeches he had given, promoting the work of the organisation across the sector; one being the recent Local Government Conference, where the Chief Executive had spoken regarding streamlining and digital transformation in Local Government, reflecting on the Authority's work with its Together 24 Project and new ICT systems.

The Chief Executive had also, in October, presented at a Conference the Authority's development of its new remote application for Bulky Waste, with both presentations being well received.

The Chief Executive paid recognition to and congratulated the Council's Building Control Team Manager, Mr Phil Westmorland who had been a finalist for the Jim King Leadership Awards at the recent annual Local Authority Building Control Conference.

Thanks, were publicly expressed to the Finance Team with the Authority's Annual Accounts for 2021/22 having been approved by the 30 November deadline. It was recognised that many other authorities had not been able to meet that deadline, and as such recognition was given to all those involved.

Referencing Levelling-Up Funding, Members' attention was drawn to the publication of a case study. 'A Thriving Gainsborough' which had been published on the Government Website, alongside the round two bids, which had seen more funding awarded to Lincolnshire.

Members were advised agreements with Government for the delivery of the Levelling Up Parks Fund and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund had now been signed. Full business cases were due for consideration at Corporate Policy and Resources Committee the following week, ahead of spend, commencing in earnest.

The Council had successfully delivered the Council Tax Energy Rebate scheme that closed 30 November 2022. A total of 37,023 households had received funding. Under the Mandatory Scheme, with each council tax payee receiving £150, a total payment of £5,553,450 had been made, payments under the Discretionary Scheme – had totalled £169,704.

And finally, referencing the demolition of the former Lindsey Centre, as the Leader had, the Chief Executive highlighted that a 'time slip' video was available on the Invest Gainsborough website for those wanting to watch the demolition take place.

With the permission of the Chairman, Councillor David Cotton addressed the Chamber and advised that this would be his last Council meeting. Sharing openly with Members the reasons for this. He spoke of the family nature which existed within Lindsey, how he would miss the friendships formed over many years and bid the Chamber a final goodbye.

In responding numerous Members from across the Chamber including the Leader, Deputy, Leader of the Opposition and fellow Committee Members paid tribute to Councillor Cotton. They shared their experiences of working along-side him and spoke of his characteristics which had made him a valued Member in the Chamber. His experience, support and dedication would be missed.

With Members bidding Councillor Cotton, all the very best for the future, Announcements were concluded.

123 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

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

124 QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO. 9

The Chairman advised the meeting that no questions, pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No.9, had been received.

125 MOTIONS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO. 10

The Chairman advised the meeting that motions, pursuant to Council Procedure No.10 had been received.

126 RECOMMENDATION FROM THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL - MEMBERS ALLOWANCE SCHEME 23/24

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

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

Mr Quirk also outlined the factors which had been taken into account, summarised in paragraph 1.2 of the report by the Panel in reaching its recommendations, namely an increase across the board of 3% to Members' basic allowance and Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA's).

This proposal if accepted would increase the Members' basic allowance in real terms by an extra amount of £3.60 per week per Member.

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

Other matters which had been investigated by the Panel this year, had included revisions to the Carers' Allowance and the possibility of a Bicycle Purchase Scheme for Members. The latter would be investigated further during 23/24, the former, it was being proposed be increased, but that this increase should always be at a level of £1 above the National Living Wage.

Regarding Mileage Allowance, Members noted that 45p per mile was the maximum the Council could allow without evoking taxation rules. As such any rise, past this level would be lost to tax and would not be to the benefit of the Councillor. However changes to the passenger rate had been proposed by the Panel, with a flat rate of 5p per passenger, again linking to the wider Council agenda of reducing carbon emissions, car sharing was to be encouraged wherever possible and feasible.

Several Members welcomed the possibility of Bicycle Purchase Scheme being investigated, and spoke of how it not only linked to the Councils wider sustainability and carbon reduction objectives, but also to the Health and Well-being agenda.

In response to questions, it was confirmed the Carers Allowance did not only apply to the

care of young children, but was an allowance towards the costs for the care of any dependents. It was also clarified that it was not intended to cover the whole cost. If costs incurred were less than the rate, the Member would only be reimbursed the amount they had paid.

The Remuneration Panel were thanked for their work by Members across the Chamber and across the political parties.

Mr Quirk in turn thanked Members and the Officers of the Council who supported the Remuneration Panel's work; Emma Redwood and Susan Norman.

Having been moved and seconded it was: -

RESOLVED that: -

(a) the new rates for the Civic Year 2023/2024 namely : -

- An increase of 3% to the individual Basic Allowance and all Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA's).
- An increase to the mileage passenger supplement to 0.05p per mile, for each passenger.
- The Carer's Allowance to be tied to the National Living Wage (NLW) (currently £10.42) plus £1.00.

as detailed in the attached Appendix, be approved; and

(b) the potential for a Bicycle Purchase Scheme for Elected Members be further investigated by Officers for consideration by the Remuneration Panel in 23/24.

127 COLLECTION FUND - COUNCIL TAX SURPLUS 2022/23 & COUNCIL TAX BASE 2023-24.

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

The Council Tax Base for the year 2022/23 would be 31,696.76.

The S151 Officer summarised how the calculation was undertaken and how the collection rate affected the calculation. West Lindsey's collection rate was above the national average and this impacted positively.

The Council Tax Surplus of £ £1,923,600 had been calculated in accordance with statutory guidance. The Surplus had to be shared between Lincolnshire County Council, The Police and Crime Commissioner and West Lindsey District Council, with West Lindsey's share being £289,700.

This amount would be built into the 2023/24 Budget prior to setting the Council Tax.

Members noted that West Lindsey District Council received a slightly higher proportion of the surplus, than the Police and Crime Commissioner, despite the Police and Crime Commissioner element of the Council Tax being higher than West Lindsey's. This was due to the fact that West Lindsey District Council's precept total, for the surplus calculation, included that precepted for by its parishes.

Testament was paid to all those working in the Revenues department for the work they undertook.

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

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the estimated surplus of £289,700 be accepted and declared as accruing in the Council's Collection Fund at 31 March 2023 relating to an estimated Council Tax surplus;
- (b) the Council uses its element of the Collection Fund surplus/deficit in calculating the level of Council Tax in 2023/24; and
- (c) in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulation 1992 (as amended) the amount calculated by the Council, as its Council Tax Base for the whole of the District area for 2023/24 be approved and set at 31,696.76 as detailed in the report and appendices.

128 RECOMMENDATION FROM CORPORATE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2023/24

The Chairman of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee presented the report to Council, which sought approval of the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2023/24, on recommendation from the Corporate Policy Resources Committee.

Members noted the Scheme has not been amended significantly since 2019/20 due to the implementation of Universal Credit and the subsequent pandemic.

Data available showed that it has been an effective scheme and that the collection rate for the previous year was 98%. Members noted this was "top quartile" performance and current indications were that similar collection rates would be achieved for the current financial year.

Given the on-going recovery from the Covid pandemic and being in the midst of a cost of living crisis, it was considered any significant changes to the Scheme for 2023/24 would likely have a negative impact on the collection rate.

As such, Option 1 within the report, had been supported by the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee at their meeting in November 2022, and as such was recommended to Full Council for approval and adoption from 1 April 2023.

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

duly seconded.

On being put to the vote it was:-

RESOLVED that the Recommendation from the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee be accepted and Option 1 of the report, that being: -

To apply any new legislative requirements and the uprating of the non-dependent charges, applicable amounts, and household allowances and deductions, used in the calculation of the reduction in accordance with the Department for Works and Pensions (DWP) annual 'Upratings'.

be adopted as the Local Council Tax Support Scheme for West Lindsey District Council for 2023/24.

129 RECOMMENDATION FROM CORPORATE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - MID-YEAR TREASURY MANAGEMENT REPORT 2022-23

The Chairman of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee, presented the report which sought approval of the Mid-Year Treasury Report 2022/23.

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

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

The report provided an update of the treasury management prudential indicators, as required in the prudential code and Local Government Act and set revised indicators for the remainder of the year. The table at paragraph 4.3 of the report set out how these revisions and their impact on the cost of council tax and financing costs, in relation to the net revenue stream.

Members noted the key revision as the Capital Financing Requirement, this reflected the Council's borrowing need for 2022/23, and had increased from £38.241m to £39.068m due to a change in the opening balance of the Capital Financing Requirement, after closing the accounts for 2021/22.

The Council was currently holding around £20m of investments on a regularly monthly basis at the mid-year point, this was in the main due to additional grants from Government, however the Council's cashflow had been revised and by year end balances were expected to be lower.

The report also indicated that the Council's external borrowing may need to increase in the short term to smooth peaks and troughs in cashflow.

Finally, the report gave an update on the wider economy and interest rate forecasts,

provided by the Council's external Treasury advisors Link Asset Services.

Debate ensued and a question was raised in relation to the table on page 77 of the reports pack, headed Prudential indicator for Capital Expenditure. Members noted that there appeared to large difference between the original and revised estimate, particularly in respect of "Our People" and "Our Places". Members sought indication as to the reasons for this and whether this should be cause for concern.

In responding, the Section 151 Officer advised Members that in respect of "Our Place" this was due to delays and delivery on the LUF programme, but undertook to provide greater detail to all Members outside of the meeting in coming weeks.

Responding to comments around whether asset disposal should be considered given the nature of financial markets, the Section 151 Officer, reminded Members that, some assets generated an income which could be used for revenue reasons and allowed for a balanced budget. If an asset was sold, whilst it would generate a one-off capital receipt, accounting regulations would only allow for that money to be used for capital expenditure going forward. As such it was balancing act, ensuring the Council had access to the right types of fund at any one time.

Having been moved and seconded it was

RESOLVED that the recommendation from the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee be accepted and as such the Mid-Year Treasury Management Report and changes to Prudential Indicators be approved, as detailed at Section 4.3 of the report.

130 APPOINTMENT OF INTERIM MONITORING OFFICER

Members gave consideration to a report which sought the re-designation of the statutory position of Monitoring Officer, under the provisions of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, with effect from 28 February, the date on which the current post holder would leave the organisation.

Given the time which needed to be allowed for permanent recruitment to such a role, and the fact that the Council could not lawfully be without the Statutory Officer, an interim position had been created.

In presenting the report, the Chief Executive paid tribute to the current Monitoring Officer for her support to him and the wider Council over her 13-year career with the organisation. He also shared with Members some of the attributes and previous experience the Interim Officer held, noting that it was intended the interim arrangement would be in place until around July.

Members across the Chamber paid tribute to the outgoing Monitoring Officer, speaking of her professionalism, integrity and of the difficult and often sensitive nature of the role, thanking her for the supportive way she had undertaken her duties. Well wishes for future endeavours were expressed by many.

On being put to the vote it was **RESOLVED** that: -

- (a) In accordance with the terms of Part I, 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (as amended) and all subsequent related legislation, Jeanette McGarry be appointed as the Council's Interim Monitoring Officer, from the 28th February 2023 until a permanent Officer is recruited and approved by Council; and
- (b) the Constitution be amended, as necessary, to reflect this revised appointment.

The meeting concluded at 7.58 pm.

Chairman

Appendix: Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA): Recommended Rates

Allowance	Current Rate 2022/2023	Proposed Rate 2023/2024
Basic Allowance	£6,242	£6,429
SRA – Leader of Council	£12,611	£12,989
SRA – Deputy Leader/s (in the event of two or more being nominated, the payment to be shared)	£4,573	£4,710
SRA – Chair of Council	£4,040	£4,161
SRA – Vice-Chair of Council	£1,391	£1,433
Civic allowance for the Chairman of Council	£1,634	£1,683
Civic allowance for the Vice Chairman Of Council	£447	£460
SRA – Committee Chairs (excluding Licensing Cttee and Regulatory Cttee)	£3,152	£3,247
SRA – Regulatory Chair	£1,578	£1,625
SRA – Licensing Chair	£1,578	£1,625
SRA – Committee Vice-Chairs (excluding Licensing Cttee and Regulatory Cttee)	£1,492	£1,537
SRA – Regulatory Vice-Chair	£746	£768
SRA – Licensing Vice-Chair	£746	£768
SRA – Leader of the Opposition (in the event of the Council being a ‘hung’ Council, the Leaders of the two largest groups be paid the same special responsibility	£4,573	£4,710

allowance as for the Leader of the Opposition)

SRA – Deputy Leader of the Opposition	£832	£857
SRA – Minority Group Leaders (per group member, and including the Group Leader)	£102	£105
Independent Members: Governance & Audit and Standards Committees – A payment of £60.00 for the first four hours of attendance at a meeting/event and a second payment for attendance in excess of four hours. The first four hours would commence from the start time of the meeting (To be paid when not chairing a meeting).	£60	No change
Dependent Carer’s Allowance	£10	NLW (£10.42) + £1
Car Allowance (per mile) (the mileage rate to be increased or decreased in accordance with any changes to the tax efficient rate authorised by the HMRC).	0.45p	No change
Passenger supplement – first passenger supplement of 0.031p and additional passenger of 0.021p	£0.031 £0.021	£0.05 £0.05
Motorcycle allowance per mile	£0.25	No change
Bicycle allowance per mile	£0.21	No change
Subsistence		
Absence of more than four hours but no more than eight hours – only the cost of one meal can be reimbursed up to a maximum of £15		
Absence of more than eight hours but no more than 12 hours – only the cost of two meals can be reimbursed up to a maximum of £25		
Absence of more than 12 hours but no more than 16 hours- only the cost of three meals can be reimbursed up to a maximum of £33		
Absence of more than 16 hours but not including an overnight stay – only the cost of four meals can be reimbursed up to a maximum of £40		

Overnight

Overnight (London or LGA)

£83

No change

£208

No change