

MEETING OF FULL COUNCIL – 27 January 2025.

AGENDA ITEM 7

QUESTIONS RECEIVED PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO. 9

1) *Question to the Chairman of Planning Committee, from Councillor Lesley Rollings – Local Ward Member for Scotter and Blyton*

“The unfinished housing development at Hemswell Cliff (Wellington Way,) raises significant concerns regarding urban planning and residents' welfare. As the demand for housing continues to grow, it is imperative that West Lindsey District Council prioritises the completion of these projects and ensures they are delivered in a safe and proper manner.

The developer on this site went into administration, leaving footpaths and roads unfinished. This has caused severe damage to several vehicles and left some residents injured through contact with dangerous extruding drain covers and kerbing, which causes particular problems in darkness. Also, thousands of tonnes of building material has been dumped adjacent to nearby residents properties which can only be described as an environmental disaster.

Despite efforts in recent months by the WLDC enforcement team, the developer now trading under a different business name has failed to keep to their promise of finishing the site and removing the tonnes of building material. The large mound has become overgrown, with building debris dangerously jutting out, causing a particular danger to anyone who might climb on it - particularly children.

Unfinished developments often become eyesores that negatively impact local aesthetics and property values. The implications extend beyond mere economics - they affect community morale and cohesion. Residents deserve a vibrant living environment that reflects their aspirations for growth and stability. Therefore, it is crucial for West Lindsey District Council to provide transparency regarding the reasons behind these delays and outline a concrete plan for moving forward.

Addressing the unfinished housing development at Hemswell Cliff is not just an administrative duty but a moral obligation towards fostering sustainable communities. The council must take decisive action to resume construction efforts and effectively communicate with stakeholders about progress and challenges.

Could the Chairman of Planning please explain why the WLDC enforcement team have not taken firmer action against the developer and outline what legal action can be taken to protect the interests of the local community and restore this site to a safe condition.

Thank you”

**2) Question to the Chairman of the Council, from Councillor Lesley Rollings
– Local Ward Member for Scotter and Blyton**

“In recent weeks the residents of Scotter have yet again been subject to a serious flood incident that involved many properties on Lindholme and Riverside, causing considerable upset and stress. Since 2007 the maintenance of the river running through Scotter and downstream of the village and the maintenance and the operation of the penstock gates at the outlet onto the River Trent has quite frankly been a disgrace.

Members of the Scunthorpe and Gainsborough Water Management board, managed to secure an agreement with the EA that enabled them to carry out maintenance – de-silting and de-weeding, which residents and indeed the Parish Council hoped would improve flow through the village and allow water to get out into the River Trent at low tide, keeping levels as low as possible in preparation for intense rain events. When the Water Management board contractors arrived to begin work, the EA (with astounding promptness) arrived and threatened the contractors with legal action, should they clear more than the centre metre of the river.

The river as it runs into Scotter is a mess – decades of overgrown trees, reeds, bushes etc causing the river to leave its natural course and run through the back gardens onto Lindholme BEFORE the river bursts its bank. The river running through and downstream of Scotter is a mess. It is clear where it originally ran and it is clear where the EA’s re-wilding is slowing the water flow down and decreasing the depth and width of the river.

The Parish Council had earmarked funding as a contribution to enable the work to be completed, but the EA said that they would fund the work and the Parish Council re-allocated the funding to another large community project in the village, only to be disappointed that maintenance had not improved.

The EA had said that in the winter months the gates at the Susworth outlet should *all* be open to keep water levels as low as possible to help get rid of as much water as possible, in preparation for heavy rainfall. But the weekend before the latest flood event, one of the gates was CLOSED causing water to back up in the river. We later found out that the gate was damaged and they were afraid to open it.

The EA promised to automate the opening of the gates, but this has never happened.

There is clearly an issue of conflict between the environmentalists at the EA who want to re-wild the river, protect water voles and those who want to prevent property flooding. However, the river is now so silted up that in drought conditions, the river dries up, killing fish and river creatures.

At every turn, residents who have lived alongside the river without being flooded for decades are now told that the catastrophes are caused by climate change and that we have to accept that some properties will be lost to flooding, when in the case of Scotter, poor maintenance and ridiculous working practices of maintenance teams is largely the cause of the problem.

The residents of Lindholme and Riverside have had enough. They pay council tax but now own houses that they cannot sell and that are worth a fraction of the value of their original Council Tax valuation.

During the flood events, the County Council and the EA are nowhere to be seen, with the District Council left supplying sandbags. We need the County Council, as the lead flood authority to be more actively involved to ensure that all the small improvements and changes that can be made to the river, *are* made.

Chairman in your capacity and through your role on the Lincolnshire County Council Flood group are there any actions you could take to assist in bringing this matter to the attention of those lead authorities these being EA and LCC.

Thank you”