

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Council held in the Council Chamber - The Guildhall on 3 March 2025 at 7.00 pm.

Present: Councillor Stephen Bunney (Chairman)
Councillor Matthew Boles (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Emma Bailey	Councillor John Barrett
Councillor Owen Bierley	Councillor Trevor Bridgwood
Councillor Mrs Jackie Brockway	Councillor Liz Clews
Councillor Frazer Brown	Councillor Karen Carless
Councillor Christopher Darcel	Councillor David Dobbie
Councillor Jacob Flear	Councillor Ian Fleetwood
Councillor Paul Key	Councillor Mrs Angela Lawrence
Councillor Paul Lee	Councillor Peter Morris
Councillor Lynda Mullally	Councillor Maureen Palmer
Councillor Roger Patterson	Councillor Roger Pilgrim
Councillor Mrs Diana Rodgers	Councillor Mrs Lesley Rollings
Councillor Tom Smith	Councillor Jim Snee
Councillor Mrs Mandy Snee	Councillor Paul Swift
Councillor Baptiste Velan	Councillor Moira Westley
Councillor Trevor Young	

In Attendance:

Ian Knowles	Chief Executive
Peter Davy	Financial Services Manager (Deputy Section 151 Officer)
Lisa Langdon	Assistant Director People and Democratic (Monitoring Officer)
Katie Storr	Democratic Services & Elections Team Manager

Apologies

Councillor Eve Bennett
Councillor Adam Duguid
Councillor Sabastian Hague
Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan
Councillor Jeanette McGhee

64 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Having been proposed and seconded, on being put to the vote it was:

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of Full Council held on 27 January 2025 be confirmed, approved and signed as a correct record.

65 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at this point in the meeting.

66 MATTERS ARISING

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

With no comments or questions and with no requirement to vote, the matters arising were **DULY NOTED**.

67 ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman

The Chairman addressed Council, summarised as follows:

The pendant for the full civic regalia was collected from Birmingham, and for the first time, the Chairman realised there was an inscription on the back which read: ‘This medallion was presented to the Council by Councillor Gordon F Fox in the year of his chairmanship 1974 to 1975’. An interesting note on times past.

Since the previous meeting, the Chairman had undertaken several engagements, including speaking at a U3A meeting in Market Rasen about his role as a Councillor and the responsibilities across Town, District and County Council. He commented on the benefits of talks, highlighting that many residents were unaware of the tiers of local government and where responsibilities differed.

The Chairman highlighted the fifth anniversary of the crematorium, praising the celebrations whilst regretting his unavailability to attend, however he had visited the Operational Services Depot at Caenby Corner for the arrival of the first liveried food waste collection vehicle. He reminded Councillors that the team at the Depot were available to attend local events to raise awareness and answer questions regarding the anticipated roll out of food waste collections.

The Chairman had also attended the Illuminate Festival, including exhibitions at the Old Hall, praising the success of the event and the involvement of the local community. Another engagement took place in Nettleham, celebrating the awarding of the Freedom of the Parish to Pearl Wheatley, who was also celebrating her birthday at the same time.

Special mention was given to West Lindsey based businesses, the Bridleway Bed and Breakfast, and Ashleigh Farm Caravan and Glamping, winners at the Destination Lincolnshire Tourism Excellence Awards, which the Chairman had attended alongside the Leader, Deputy Leader and Council Officers. He praised all those businesses who had been finalists, recognising the value they brought to their local communities and the wider district, whether that be by providing employment, services, or welcoming visitors into the area thereby helping grow the local economy.

In concluding his announcements, the Chairman reiterated the diversity of engagements, and invited the Leader to speak.

Leader

The Leader made the following address to Council:

“Thank you, Chairman. Welcome Members and Officers to this evening's meeting. I've just got two announcements this evening. Firstly RAF Scampton. Last week myself and the Deputy Leader met with Minister Angela Eagle regarding RAF Scampton. As Members will be aware, for the last two years the authorities have been fighting the government to protect that site and deliver our £300million development. I must say the meeting was very productive. We're very optimistic that the Labour government will make an announcement very shortly regarding the decision to transfer the site to us. It was an extremely positive meeting, and we were really optimistic in terms of finally trying to get that one over the line.

Local Government Reorganisation: there's been several meetings since the last Full Council meeting on LGR, work is ongoing and we will be arranging an Extraordinary Full Council meeting in the next couple of weeks to debate the issue

That's all for this evening, thank you.”

The Chairman thanked the Leader, and, on seeing an indication to speak from the floor, invited the Leader of the Opposition to speak.

Councillor I. Fleetwood commented on the previous and ongoing involvement of Sir Edward Leigh, MP, in discussions regarding the Scampton site, alongside the previous administration at West Lindsey District Council. He requested that when such meetings with Ministers occur, briefing notes or updates be shared with Council in a timely manner.

The Leader of the Council highlighted the short notice with which the meeting had been arranged, and took on board the request for information to be shared when and where it was possible to do so.

The Chairman thanked them for their comments and invited the Head of Paid Service to speak.

Chief Executive

The Chief Executive thanked the Chairman and opened by explaining that, in relation to a legal case brought by Thurrock Council against APSE members, there had been a stay of procedures agreed by the courts and no further action was required at this time. Members would be kept updated in due course.

He echoed the comments regarding the Destination Lincolnshire Awards, and added his congratulations to the West Lindsey based businesses. He also highlighted that council teams had been nominated for the Pride of Place award, for the Gainsborough Arts

Heritage; the Culture Award for the Trinity Arts Centre; and the Event Festival of the Year, for the Go Festival. Whilst not winning was disappointing, it had been appreciated to be recognised.

Additionally, the Local Land Charges team had been shortlisted in the 2025 Land Data Awards in two categories: Customer Satisfaction Award for Local Authority Searches and the Best Performing National Land Information Service Level 2, Local Land Charges Department, with the Chief Executive highlighting their success at being recognised at a national level.

In thanking the Chief Executive for his announcements, and before moving on with business, the Chairman added that he had received a response from the relevant minister regarding the Council's concerns about health and safety around battery storage, which had also been forwarded to Councillor Bridgwood who had raised the issue initially.

68 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

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

69 QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO. 9

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

He invited Councillor I. Fleetwood, Local Ward Member for Bardney, to put his question to the Leader, as follows:

“At the last Full Council Meeting the Leader responded to my motion regarding keeping balances owned by the District Council within the realms of those tax payers who had been resident in the District – This was voted down which is a major disservice to the many residents who have contributed to make West Lindsey what it currently stands for!

Even worse than this, the Leader maintained that the previous Administration had invested outside of the District and his Deputy Leader maintained that there had been no social contribution or benefit to the rate payers of the District. I maintain the Leader has misled everybody because if the investment portfolio is checked anybody can see that approximately a third of the total investment (about £6.5 million pounds) has been invested within the District Council boundary creating opportunities that they both failed to recognise!

Would the Leader and Deputy Leader please apologise to the Council and residents of the District?”

The Chairman thanked Councillor Fleetwood for his question and invited Councillor Trevor Young, as Leader of the Council, to respond, with the response being as follows:

“Councillor Fleetwood, thank you for your question. The simple answer to your question is no, I will not apologise. The issue of whether a council should be allowed to invest out of their area is a contentious issue, and the rules have now changed not allowing councils to invest out of area, following numerous poor financial decisions being made by councils, which has led to many facing bankruptcy.

During the years of Conservative governments’ underfunding of local authorities, councils were forced into having to look into investments to raise revenue, or simply withdraw or reduce services. With the uncertainty of returns on investments, should councils be allowed to play Russian roulette with hard-earned council tax money being invested out of their areas? Councils have lost millions up and down the country and the potential risk involved was clearly recognised by the government when the rules have now been changed. Out of area investments based on financial returns are extremely risky and the fact is that the asset value of some of the investments made by this previous administration will be far lower than the original purchase price.

The Liberal Democrat Group do not oppose commercial investments, but they have to deliver social return, support local growth, economic development and local employment. South Yorkshire must be delighted by the way that West Lindsey has purchased a hotel in Keighley, a knicker factory in Sheffield, a gym in Sheffield and a car sales room in Doncaster, protecting many of their local jobs whilst the numbers of jobless in West Lindsey is at an all-time high. Supporting their local economies by tens of thousands of pounds and creating thousands of pounds of extra revenue through their local authorities creating less burden on the council tax by collecting rates, etc. So Chairman, I won't apologise and we stick in terms of what our position is around commercial investments. Thank you.”

Councillor Fleetwood, with permission of the Chairman, made further supplementary comments during which it was noted that he thought all of the investments, wherever they were taken, were checked for validity and proven to be the best investments available to the council at the time. He commented they were proven opportunities to keep the rates of council tax to a low, and to maintain the balances of the council correct. He stated that, to his knowledge, none of the investments had failed.

The Chairman thanked both Councillors for their comments, noting the usual process was not to debate following a question. With that in mind, he invited Councillor E. Bailey, Local Ward Member for Lea, to pose her question to the Leader of the Council, which was as follows:

“Can the Leader of the council outline the efforts he and officers have made to lobby the Government for further funding for the Internal Drainage Boards to finance essential repairs and to undertake infrastructure changes to build up resilience measures to help mitigate further flooding. The current arrangements place unreasonable strains on the finances of District Councils and Council Payers. Can the Leader also undertake that he and the Chief Executive will continue to lobby DEFRA and The Treasury to ensure equitable funding for the IDBs.

Thank you”

The Chairman thanked Councillor Bailey for her question and invited Councillor Trevor Young, as Leader of the Council, to respond, with the response being as follows:

“Thank you, Chairman. Councillor Bailey, thank you for your question. Really important question. The Council is a member of the LGA special interest group on the Internal Drainage Boards whose objective is to seek a revised approach to the government to the funding mechanism for the Internal Drainage Boards that removes the need for a direct Council subsidisation. The group is made up of a majority of authorities which are affected by drainage board levies. Regular meetings have taken place with officers who have attended, and also an event took place at the House of Commons to raise awareness. Our local MP is very supportive and has been lobbying where possible. The group has been successful in securing £3million in 2023-24 and £3million in 2024-25, and £5million has been promised for 2025-26, which is shared amongst the affected councils depending on the level of levy raised year to year. The group recognises that the important role of drainage boards undertake and the work they do, but it is seeking a longer term solution to funding, and the council is also responding to funding consultations for the government, highlighting the impact on the budget of the drainage board levies.

Whilst your question, Councillor Bailey, specifically relates to internal drainage boards, it is clear that in West Lindsey there are many instances and concerns around the maintenance of watercourses by the Environment Agency, and in relation to this I can tell you that the Deputy Leader has a planned meeting next week with the MP to explore ways that we can better challenge the Environment Agency to ensure higher standards of maintenance on the watercourses and the reduce of flood risk in our communities. Thank you.”

The Chairman thanked the Leader for his response, and on confirming with Councillor Bailey that she had no supplementary questions, invited her to pose her next question to Councillor L. Rollings, Chairman of the Prosperous Communities Committee, which was as follows:

“Can the Chairman of the Prosperous Communities Committee explain how WLDC are ensuring that the NSIP developers in our area are fulfilling their obligations and recommendations to work with the communities to ensure that their proposed projects do not create further problems (Such as road damage etc), and how they are planning to provide benefits to our local area, such as discount on electricity or funding community projects. Can she also explain that procedures are in place to ensure that any jobs created will be for local people and whom will be responsible for enforcing these agreements?

Is she able to assure us that all the NSIP developments currently being given consent by The Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero have undertaken to provide community and social gain. What timescales have been agreed and what are the arrangements for ensuring that the promises are delivered?

Thank you”

The Chairman thanked Councillor Bailey for her question and invited Councillor Rollings, to respond, with the response being as follows:

“Yes, thank you, Councillor Bailey. A really important question with an awful lot to it, and I think it demonstrates the level of concern there is amongst a whole range of community groups and people in our communities that are very concerned with the way that these NSIPs are moving forward. There are three development consent orders for nationally significant solar development in West Lindsey in place with others in progress. The development consent order is a grant, basically grants planning permission by the government, bypasses the local authority.

All three consents have a requirement to set up a community liaison group of which the terms of reference must be submitted to West Lindsey District Council for approval. The community liaison group is required to be in place for the entirety of the development and at this early stage, post -consent, no details have been submitted for consideration. In terms of wider matters, such as community projects and job creation, this is not something that is controlled through the planning process. However, officers have been researching options for the development of a community benefits policy, which will be the subject of reports at Prosperous Communities Committee later this year. So thank you once again, Councillor Bailey, for this.

We know that this is something you've taken a very keen interest in on the Council, and we know that these huge solar developments are a cause of great concern. I was only talking to a farmer today who was saying, ‘what happens when the farmers have gone, when these solar farms come into being? Who will look after our countryside?’ It is a big concern. There is an awful lot to do still and I hope my answer has given you some reassurance, and with your position as Vice Chair on the Committee as well, I hope this is something that you will be able to take a keen lead on for the authority going forward. Thank you.”

With permission of the Chairman, Councillor Bailey posed a supplementary question, enquiring whether there was any information regarding the time frames involved for council approval of the community liaison groups, or when the information was required to be submitted ahead of development starting. By way of response, Councillor Rollings explained there had not yet been any government-led direction as to how or when that process would work, with the Chief Executive invited to add further detail. He advised Members that it was still considered to be the early stages of the NSIPs, however on receipt of any updated information, Members would be advised accordingly.

With further comments being indicated from the floor, the Chairman reiterated the usual practice of question and response, and brought the discussion to a close, thanking all for their input, and moving on to the next item of business.

70 MOTIONS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO. 10

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

As the mover of the first motion, Councillor Boles was invited to read aloud his motion to the meeting, as follows:

Motion 1 – Back West Lindsey – Stop a Mega-Council

“This Council Notes:

1. The Government’s English Devolution announcement in December 2024, which included reference to supporting local government reorganisation.
2. The proposals being considered by some counties to merge existing district councils into large, county-wide unitary authorities, as seen recently in North Yorkshire.
3. The significant concerns of residents, businesses and the third sector across Lincolnshire regarding the negative impact a mega-council would have on local democracy, accountability, and the effective delivery of public services.
4. The financial situation of mega-councils created in recent years such as Somerset and North Northamptonshire have not improved post-unitarisation. The financial crisis in local government has not been solved by unitarisation.

This Council Believes:

1. Decisions affecting West Lindsey should be taken in West Lindsey.
2. In its 50 years of existence West Lindsey has been a successful council responding to the needs of its community. This level of localised action would be lost in mega-council, one county unitary.
3. Whilst the current two-tier system presents some challenges, the solution does not lie in the creation of vast and remote mega-councils that would diminish local voices and accountability.
4. If unitarisation is to be implemented in Lincolnshire, it should be based on smaller, more localised areas that are aligned with existing communities and their identities, rather than a single, county-wide mega-council.
5. That any restructuring of local government in Lincolnshire must be driven by the genuine needs and preferences of local communities, and should not be a top-down imposition that disregards local concerns.

This Council Resolves:

1. To reject the creation of a large, county-wide mega-council for Lincolnshire.
2. To call upon the Leader of the Council to write to all Council Leaders in Greater Lincolnshire and the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to inform them of West Lindsey’s wish to remain West Lindsey, and request that they abandon any plans for a county-wide mega-council.
3. We instruct officers to ensure that the continuing identity of West Lindsey District as a major contributor to Central Lincolnshire is at the forefront of any thinking and planning that they undertake from now on

I so move
Councillor Matthew Boles”

With the motion duly seconded, debate ensued, with Members voicing their support for, or opposition to, unitary councils.

As a point of information, a Member highlighted that the proposals in Lincolnshire under Local Government Reorganisation was not for one sole ‘mega-council’, rather for there to be authorities with around 500,000 residents, which meant dividing the approximately 1.1 million residents in Greater Lincolnshire. Concern was raised that, even if the Council did not support the proposals, it was important for the district to be represented in order to have a voice as far as was possible.

Attention was drawn to the success of West Lindsey District Council, both in managing the finances and supporting local communities as they needed to be supported. Concern was expressed that the larger a unitary council, the lower the focus on individual communities. Members stated this being particularly relevant in an area so rural as Lincolnshire.

There was recognition that some councils were failing financially, and the move to larger, unitary councils may afford some financial benefits to those areas, however this was countered with the costs involved with creating new unitary authorities, with Members voicing the thought that areas across the country should be able to decide what would best benefit them, rather than the government prescribing the same approach regardless of situation.

Members raised concerns regarding the potential impact on local democracy, with fewer seats available leading to Elected Members having to represent much larger areas, and the sense that it would lead to a loss of local representation. Members who had been liaising with their Wards reiterated the sentiment that residents welcomed being able to name their representative and knowing they stood for their specific area. It was felt this would be lost in a larger authority with fewer Members. Additionally, it was highlighted that the demands on Councillor time would radically increase, not least because of travel time across a much larger ‘patch’. This led to concerns that a much smaller pool of people would be able to commit to being a Councillor, with, for example, those working full time and / or with families, being unable to stand for election.

In supporting the motion, and voicing support for the current system and specifically the success of West Lindsey District Council, a Member proposed a recorded vote. With no seconder, the proposal fell.

Members expressed ongoing consternation that the communication between all authorities, from Lincolnshire County Council to the districts and boroughs, was seen to be one-sided, with the smaller authorities having a sense of being ‘told’ what was to happen, rather than being consulted with. It was felt that the best outcome for Lincolnshire would come from clear representation from all borough and district councils.

In bringing the debate to a close, the Chairman highlighted the importance of communication across all parties, including within the Council as well as involving staff. On putting the motion to the vote it was

RESOLVED that

- a) the creation of a large, county-wide mega-council for Lincolnshire be rejected; and
- b) the Leader of the Council be called upon to write to all Council Leaders in Greater Lincolnshire and the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to inform them of West Lindsey's wish to remain West Lindsey, and request that they abandon any plans for a county-wide mega-council; and
- c) officers be instructed to ensure that the continuing identity of West Lindsey District as a major contributor to Central Lincolnshire be at the forefront of any thinking and planning that they undertake from now on.

71 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2025/26 TO 2029/30 THE BUDGET 2025/26 CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2025/26 TO 2029/30

Members gave consideration to a report which presented the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2025/26 onwards, alongside the 2025/26 Budget and the Capital Programme from 2025/26 to 2029/30.

The Leader made the following budget speech to Council in presenting the report:

"This report sets out the medium-term financial plan for 2025-26 onwards. The purpose of the medium-term financial plan is to set out robust overall framework for the Council's financial strategy and spending plans over the next five years in support of delivering the corporate plan. The report sets out the revised financial plans with the financial analysis for changes in government funding, the economic environment, local engagement and the priorities of the council. The plan reflects the revisions to previous estimates and covers the period of 2025-26 to 2029-30. The medium-term financial analysis includes the budget for 2025-26 for approval. A balanced budget for 2025-26 is proposed without the requirement to support it with funds from the general fund balance.

The final local government finance settlement was delivered in February, which announced a further five years new homes bonus in 2025-26, which will be put into the growth reserve. The reset of the business rates and the wider review of the local government funding were not announced, and they are now expected during 2025. It is likely that these will result in a reduced funding for the council.

The referendum limit for council tax has been set for district councils at up to 3% or £5 whichever is the higher. For 2025-26, the West Lindsey part of council tax is increased by 2.98%. This equates to a rise of £7.21 for a Band D property. The 2025-26 budget totals £21.155 million and is fully funded and represents a balanced budget.

The capital programme totals £13.79 million over a medium-term financial plan and is fully funded. During 2025-26, plans will be developed and expanded in the capital programme to deliver the priorities on leisure and wellbeing and improve access to health services whilst

addressing inequalities. As and when these plans are developed, these will be shared with Members at the earliest opportunities.

Also included in the medium-term financial plan are the risk register, at appendix 2, and the Pay Policy Statement and Human Resources Statement in appendices 13 and 14 respectively.

Our engagement with the peer challenge review process in January highlighted that it would be beneficial for us to have a greater level of direction and clarity on our priorities in the Executive Business Plan in order that these progress and can be quickly achieved in terms of delivering our priorities. It would not have made sense to present one plan only to present a refreshed version in a few weeks' time. So common sense has prevailed, and this will be presented to Members in June and it will include:

1. an extension of the work around health and wellbeing through high level work with partners to facilitate improved GP provision across Gainsborough and the district.
2. to improve opportunities for increased access to leisure and preventative help opportunities through a refurbishment of the West Lindsey Leisure Centre, and improvements to Market Rasen Leisure Centre, and improved access to a green space and woodland on both Leisure Centre sites, and in Gainsborough and Market Rasen, and to include improved swim and changing facilities and the provision of an indoor bowls area.
3. to consolidate the work around the excellent cinema and heritage projects in Gainsborough through the provision of further grant funding opportunities to support property owners and businesses to enable them to deliver high quality retail and hospitality opportunities and attract new businesses in the town.
4. we will be continuing with the community grants programme, a scheme that has enabled communities across the district to access funding to improve their local facilities and increase social activity in their areas.
5. to bring Gainsborough in line with Market Rasen, we'll be introducing two hours free car parking to support businesses in the town.

I, therefore, Chairman, move the paper and the recommendations.”

The Leader of the Opposition, in responding, raised concerns regarding the delay of the Executive Business Plan. He recognised the comments of the Leader in relation to the peer review, however suggested that the delay with the Plan could lead to a lack of detail coming forward which could impact the finances related to project delivery. He welcomed the budget paper as a true and accurate reflection of current finances, a balanced budget, and future estimates, but questioned whether it would remain so when considered alongside the Executive Business Plan.

By right of reply, the Leader reiterated the purpose of the peer review being to improve, to listen, and to learn, and that a key recommendation had been relating to the Executive Business Plan. He accepted the timing had not been ideal, however offered assurance to the Leader of the Opposition and all present that the work on the Plan was being undertaken

in a timely manner and would be an improved version, taking on board the feedback received from the peer review and subsequent discussions.

Having had the recommendations contained within the report seconded as written, the Chairman opened the debate.

Members of the Committee praised the work which went into the preparation of the budget, MTFP and associated workstreams, recognising the efforts of Officers at a time of local and national change and uncertainty. Further concerns were raised regarding the delayed Executive Business Plan, however the explanations provided by the Leader were appreciated.

Members voiced support for continued funding for community projects which benefitted the district as a whole, recognising that the support offered to local communities created opportunities for grass root involvement. In accepting that the rate of Council Tax was increasing, Members highlighted the lack of clarity regarding funding from Central Government, and reiterated previously voiced concerns that Lincolnshire had been, and continued to be, chronically underfunded. In view of this, the funding streams available to local communities was evermore important.

Councillor L. Rollings, as Deputy Leader, reiterated the importance of community funding, noting that a map had been developed showing the spread of funding across the district. With regard to the projects underway in the market towns, she highlighted the ongoing challenges of retaining retail outlets in town centres, stating a desire for a renewed focus on attracting retailers to the towns and supporting the improvement works underway, for example the development in Gainsborough. With regard to health and wellbeing, she noted the disparity in access to services, and recognised the interaction between activity levels and wellness. She highlighted work which was already underway and the desire for the council to work with other sectors in order to improve service provision in the district, including ways of using the leisure centres to improve access. The co-ordinated use of green spaces, for example for walking clubs or simply as an accessible space, was also seen as a way to connect people across the district with options for improving health and wellbeing. It was anticipated that the availability of grant funding for the communities would further support these efforts, by enabling local people manage their own areas and activities.

The Chairman, in summarising the debate and bringing it to a close, highlighted the need for Members to support and champion their communities, whether that be by supporting with funding requests, or spreading the word of community events. He thanked Members for their comments and, having had the recommendations proposed and seconded, highlighted it was to be a recorded vote as per regulations.

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

For: Councillors Bailey, Barrett, Bierley, Boles, Bridgwood, Brockway, Brown, Bunney, Carless, Clews, Darcel, Dobbie, Flear, Fleetwood, Key, Lawrence, Lee, Morris, Mullally, Palmer, Patterson, Pilgrim, Rodgers, Rollings, Smith, J. Snee, M. Snee, Swift, Velan, Westley, and Young (31)

Against: Nil (0)

Abstentions: Nil (0)

With a total of 31 votes in favour, no votes against and no abstentions it was

RESOLVED that

- a) the external environment and the financial challenges which the Council could face in the medium to longer term depending on the outcome of future government policy be recognised; and
- b) the Statement of the Interim Director of Finance and Assets (Section 151 Officer) on the Robustness of Estimates and Adequacy of Reserves at paragraph 1.10 be **ACCEPTED**; and
- c) the Medium-Term Financial Plan 2025/26 to 2029/30 be **APPROVED** and Members be aware of the risks associated with it as detailed at appendix 2; and
- d) the formal Council Tax resolution as detailed in Appendix 8, this proposes a Band D equivalent amount of £248.76, be **APPROVED**; and
- e) the Revenue budget 2025/26 detailed at paragraph 1.4 be **APPROVED**; and
- f) the movement in earmarked reserves detailed at paragraph 1.6 be **APPROVED**; and
- g) the level of fees and charges for 2025/26 as detailed at appendix 3 be **APPROVED**; and
- h) the Capital Investment Strategy at Appendix 4 be **APPROVED**; and
- i) the capital Programme 2025/26 – 2029/30 and financing as detailed at Appendices 5 and 6 be **APPROVED**; and
- j) the Treasury Management Strategy 2025/26 be **APPROVED** and the Treasury Investment Strategy, the Borrowing Strategy and the Treasury and Borrowing Prudential Indicators detailed at Appendix 7 be **ADOPTED**; and
- k) the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy as contained in the Treasury Management Strategy at Appendix 7 be **APPROVED**; and
- l) the 2025/26 Pay Policy Statement at appendix 13 be **APPROVED**; and
- m) delegation be given to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee to approve any change to an existing Fees and Charges required during the year, which are required after the budget is set.

72 RECOMMENDATION FROM THE GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE - CONSTITUTION REVIEW - OUTCOME OF THE LEGAL HEALTH CHECK OF THE CONSTITUTION AND ARISING RECOMMENDATIONS

The Chairman, in his capacity as Chairman of the Governance and Audit Committee, introduced the report regarding the outcome of the legal health check of the Constitution and the arising recommendations. He noted that the recommendations were divided up into three sections and detailed at section 2.1 of the report. The required amendments which stood recommended to Full Council were detailed at Appendix 1. He highlighted that these amendments were acquired by law and were categorised as class 'A', that being, they should be made as soon as possible as they related to legal requirements.

The Chairman noted that the report also set out the next steps, however those matters would be the subject of further reports in the future. He confirmed the report had been considered by the relevant committees and therefore moved the recommendations from the Chair. The motion was duly seconded and the Chairman invited comments from the floor.

Councillor D. Dobbie, as Vice Chairman of the Governance and Audit Committee, expressed his support for the recommendations, stating the Constitution was a living document and as such required updating and amending. He voiced his support for a review of the retention period for council recordings of public meetings, noting that members of the public could hold their own recordings indefinitely. He reiterated his support for the recommended amendments, with others echoing his comments.

With no further comments, the Chairman took the vote and it was unanimously

RESOLVED that the recommendation from the Governance and Audit Committee be accepted, and in doing so:

- a) the position in relation to the ongoing work relating to Constitutional amendments be received and **NOTED**; and
- b) the position in relation to the external health check work which had been carried out be received and **NOTED**; and
- c) the Constitution amendments as outlined in Appendix 1 and shown in Appendices 1 a-e, as recommend by Governance and Audit Committee at its meeting on 21 January 2025, be **APPROVED**.

73 COMBINED AUTHORITY (MAYORAL ELECTIONS) - APPOINTMENT OF LOCAL RETURNING OFFICER

The Chairman introduced the final item of the evening, explaining that the Combined Authority Mayoral elections, taking place on 1 May 2025, required the appointment of a local Returning Officer.

With full details provided within the report, the Chairman moved the recommendation and, having been seconded and with no indications to speak, took the vote. It was unanimously

RESOLVED that the arrangement to appoint Mr Ian Knowles, Chief Executive as the Local Returning Officer for the Greater Lincolnshire Mayoral election on 1 May 2025 be confirmed.

The meeting concluded at 8.31 pm.

Chairman