

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Council held in the The Council Chamber - The Guildhall on 12 November 2018 at 7.00 pm.

Present: Councillor Mrs Pat Mewis (Chairman)
Councillor Steve England (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Owen Bierley	Councillor Matthew Boles
Councillor David Bond	Councillor David Cotton
Councillor Michael Devine	Councillor Ian Fleetwood
Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan	Councillor Stuart Kinch
Councillor Mrs Angela Lawrence	Councillor Mrs Jessie Milne
Councillor Giles McNeill	Councillor John McNeill
Councillor Richard Oaks	Councillor Mrs Maureen Palmer
Councillor Malcolm Parish	Councillor Roger Patterson
Councillor Mrs Judy Rainsforth	Councillor Mrs Diana Rodgers
Councillor Mrs Lesley Rollings	Councillor Thomas Smith
Councillor Lewis Strange	Councillor Jeff Summers
Councillor Robert Waller	Councillor Mrs Anne Welburn
Councillor Trevor Young	

In Attendance:

Mark Sturgess	Executive Director of Operations and Head of Paid Service
Eve Fawcett-Moralee	Executive Director of Economic and Commercial Growth
Ian Knowles	Executive Director of Resources and S151 Officer
Alan Robinson	Strategic Lead Governance and People/Monitoring Officer
Katie Coughlan	Senior Democratic & Civic Officer
Karen Whitfield	Communities & Commercial Programme Manager
James O'Shaughnessy	Corporate Policy Manager & Deputy Monitoring Officer

Also Present: 18 Members of the Public
1 Member of the Press
Mr Peter Morley
Mrs June Clarke

Apologies

Councillor Bruce Allison
Councillor Mrs Gillian Bardsley
Councillor Mrs Sheila Bibb
Councillor Mrs Jackie Brockway
Councillor Christopher Darcel
Councillor Tom Regis
Councillor Reg Shore
Councillor Mrs Angela White

27 CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed all Members to the meeting.

Welcomes were also extended to the Officers, Members of the Public and Press who were in attendance.

28 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

(a) Minutes of Meeting held on 2 July 2018

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting held on 2 July 2018 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

29 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Stuart Kinch declared a personal non-pecuniary interest at this stage of the meeting, in respect of agenda item 6 – Receipt of a Petition Entitled “Save Gainsborough Town Centre”, as he owned a share of a business located within the Town Centre area.

30 MATTERS ARISING

The Monitoring Officer noted that all items due for completion were showing black, as having been completed.

The two remaining green items, were not yet due for completion but were on track to be completed within their respective due dates.

RESOLVED that the Matters Arising be noted.

31 TO RECEIVE A PETITION ENTITLED "MARKET RASEN NEEDS A SWIMMING POOL NOT A DRY LEISURE FACILITY"

“West Lindsey District Council was presented with a Petition on Monday 13 August 2018.

The Petition was entitled “Market Rasen Needs a Swimming Pool Not a Dry Leisure Facility” and contained over 2000 signatures.

The Petition went on to state “West Lindsey District Council have secured a site on Gainsborough Road, between Market Rasen Primary School and the Limes Country Hotel, to build a dry leisure facility. We the residents of Market Rasen hereby sign to say we are opposing these plans and want the land to be used to provide a much needed swimming pool which will benefit people of all ages and disabilities”.

The Chairman advised that the matter would now be debated, in accordance with the agreed

Petition Scheme and therefore she welcomed Lead Petitioner, June Clark to the meeting and invited her to make her five minute address to Members.

Mrs Clark made the following Statement to Council: -

“I am presenting this petition on behalf of the Market Rasen Action Group and the residents of Market Rasen and surrounding towns and villages. I am not representing Market Rasen Town Council in any capacity.

The petition was started when a press release in the Market Rasen Mail, from West Lindsey District Council, informed us that Market Rasen was to get a multi million pound dry leisure facility. Residents were understandably very upset that there had been no consultation about this new facility and the fact that there was no mention of a swimming pool.

As there had been no consultation, Market Rasen residents were not aware that the current facilities at the De Aston Centre would be closing. Although we agree that dry facilities are needed, a swimming pool is seen as a higher priority.

The Leader of West Lindsey District Council and one of its Officers attended a Market Rasen Town Council meeting. When answering questions from Market Rasen Action Group and the public, the Leader admitted that no consultation had been undertaken. We were told that we either accepted what was on offer, or we would lose the money all together. A wonderful demonstration of democracy in action.

Several years ago, extensive surveys and consultation took place and led to a proposal to build a swimming pool in Market Rasen. This was agreed in 2008 at a West Lindsey meeting. Political changes that followed, meant that the proposal was shelved.

The recent presentation of what Market Rasen is getting, showed no provision for a swimming pool, just a vague 'well, we could fit one in this space, if necessary'.

Market Rasen Action Group and the residents of Market Rasen would like answers to the following:

Why was no public consultation done on the new dry facility before the release of the plans?

How many people currently use the De Aston facilities?

If the premise centres on the fact that swimming pools lose money, why is Gainsborough' s kept open?

If the suggestion that sports facilities being managed across the District will result in an overall profit, does this mean that Market Rasen residents will be subsidising the loss making Gainsborough pool?

Are the Council aware, that residents from Market Rasen, Caistor etc travel to pools in Brigg, Lincoln, Wragby, Grimsby and Louth, but not to Gainsborough, thus losing revenue to other Districts?

Are the Council aware that the lack of adequate public transport means that very many residents can't travel to Brigg, Wragby, Louth, Lincoln, Grimsby or Gainsborough to access swimming even if they wanted to?

Where is the commitment to the health and well-being of local residents who are unable to use dry facilities?

Where is the commitment to ensuring that people of all ages learn to swim?

Will West Lindsey District Council carry out an in-depth feasibility study and full and meaningful consultation on providing Market Rasen with a pool, including consideration of a smaller, more cost effective pool? We would respectfully ask that a Councillor, here tonight, tables this proposal and that it is voted on.

Why does West Lindsey District Council appear to never listen to what Market Rasen residents want, but instead decide for us?

When will Market Rasen finally get a Swimming Pool?

Finally, Market Rasen Action Group and local residents would like to remind West Lindsey District Council that West Lindsey consists of far more than just Gainsborough. We, in the forgotten lands, also pay our Council Tax and we are concerned that the proposed dry facilities will fail if a pool is not included, from the start, to attract people.”

The Chairman thanked Mrs Clark for her statement. Before opening the matter for debate, Members were reminded of the three options available to them when considering Petitions. These being: -

- Take the action the petitioners have requested
- Not take the action requested for the reasons put forward during debate
- Or commission further investigation into the matter.

Debate ensued with the Leader of the Council making the initial response.

“Thank you for your work on the petition and for attending this evening.

As a Council we understand that some of the residents in Market Rasen are disappointed that our current plans do not include the provision of a pool at the outset.

We have arrived at our current proposals as a result of independent feasibility studies which have demonstrated that, should a pool be provided in Market Rasen, this would require a significant subsidy in terms of running costs. In the

current financial climate this is not a position this Council can support. As a District Council we have to provide services for a wide range of residents across the whole of our district in a way that provides value for money for all our tax payers.

The proposed dry leisure facility has been made possible by the Council re-working its leisure contract to include the development. The new leisure contract which began on the 1st June 2018 is based upon a key set of outputs and outcomes agreed by our Prosperous Communities Committee, the key principle being for the leisure service to be cost neutral and not require a subsidy.

I think it is important here to stress that the Council are not ruling out a pool development in Market Rasen in the future. The site acquired is large enough to accommodate future expansion, and the building has been designed in such a way that a pool can be added at a later date should this prove viable.

The proposed centre in Market Rasen will provide a wide range of activities for all ages and provide opportunities for residents to participate in our healthy and active programme. Once built, the centre will be managed by the Council's partners Everyone Active.

The Council have consulted widely on the plans as part of the public consultation strategy. I, myself, attended the public engagement session in September and was pleased to hear the positive comments. It was obvious there is significant support for the proposed development.

Conversely some have the view we don't spend the same in Market Rasen as we do in Gainsborough. That of course is correct and will not change due to the size of population. However, we now have a stronger working relationship with Market Rasen Town Council. Strong relationships and partnership working is essential for success.

In summary, the dry leisure facility proposed is a significant investment into Market Rasen built upon a solid evidence base. Furthermore this is being delivered in a cost neutral way to West Lindsey residents. Having seen the plans we are genuinely excited and proud to be able to provide such a high class facility for Market Rasen.

This project marks the largest ever single investment in the town and I as Leader of the Council and near resident recognise how an increased population and improvements to infrastructure is the only thing which will increase the towns offer and prosperity for the future.

Therefore, I cannot support your requested action and I will move that this Council takes no further action in respect of this petition but strategically plan for the improvements which I have outlined.

I therefore move no further action be taken."

Debate ensued with Members of the Opposition making reference to the Scheme

commissioned in 2008. The scheme had been supported by research and had been financed but following a change in administration subsequently shelved. Concern was expressed that yet again communities were approaching the Council feeling like they had not been consulted with and not been listened to. There was a view that far too much focus was being placed on financial figures and delivering schemes at a cost neutral basis, with little consideration given to the wider outcomes of social return, area prosperity and health. The suggestion that this would be looked at in the future was disputed, with the Opposition noting that no commitment to such a project had been made within the Medium Term Financial Plan. There were calls for the petition to be supported and for the previous consultation undertaken to be re-visited.

In responding, Members of the Administration strongly refuted the simplistic re-collection of previous events. It was noted that Local Authorities over the last 10 years had had their spending power cut by up to 75% as a result of the significant cuts to Government Grant Funding. There had been an economy collapse in 2008 and the building of a pool would have resulted in a 3-4% rise in Council Tax for all residents year on year. Members of the Administration were vehement in their commitment to further investment in Market Rasen, however only when the time was right, and only when schemes were truly viable. The Administration's commitment to social return had been demonstrated in number of other projects and suggestions to the contrary were dismissed.

The Leader's earlier proposal to reject the action requested by the petitioners was seconded.

It was moved and seconded that any vote taken on the matter be by way of recorded vote.

Having been proposed and seconded earlier in the meeting, the motion was then put to a recorded vote, having had the earlier request for such also duly seconded.

Votes were cast as set out below:

For: - Cllrs, Bierley, England, Fleetwood, Howitt-Cowan, Kinch, Lawrence, G McNeill, J McNeill, Mewis, Milne, Palmer, Parish, Patterson, Rodgers, Smith, Strange, Summers, Waller, and Welburn

Against: - Cllrs Boles, Bond, Cotton, Rainsforth, Rollings and Young

Abstain: - Cllrs Devine and Oaks.

With the majority of Councillors voting in favour of the motion (19), the motion was declared **CARRIED** and therefore it was **RESOLVED** that the request of the petitioners be rejected.

Mrs Clark, as Lead Petitioner, was advised that she would be sent written notice of the decision and also a copy of this would be displayed on the Authority's website.

Note: The majority of petitioners left the meeting following consideration of the above item and prior to the next agenda item being discussed.

32 TO RECEIVE A PETITION ENTITLED " SAVE GAINSBOROUGH TOWN CENTRE"

West Lindsey District Council was presented with a Petition on 15 October 2018

The Petition was entitled "Save Gainsborough Town Centre" and contained over 1175 signatures at that date.

The Petition asked that: -

"the WLDC Conservative controlled Council to urgently improve the Town Centre"

The Chairman advised that the matter would now be debated, in accordance with the agreed Petition Scheme and therefore she welcomed Lead Petitioner, Councillor Trevor Young, to the meeting and invited him to make his five minute address to Members.

Councillor Young made the following Statement to Council: -

"The Liberal Democrat Group present this petition urgently requesting this council to improve the town centre, and to provide the necessary investment and resource to protect the existing businesses from further decline.

We call upon this council for this to be debated in this chamber this evening and an urgent paper to be prepared to the next relevant policy committee.

It is recognised that economic downturn in high street shopping is a national issue, however the Liberal Democrats firmly believe that in those towns where there is little effort to address the issue, they will suffer the worst.

- Currently in the Gainsborough Town Centre there are 1 in 5 shops empty, more than any other town in Lincolnshire.
- In the past year 13 businesses have been forced to close in the town centre, one every month?
- There is a risk of more retail closures in the next six months.
- The Gainsborough Market once recognised as one of the best in the county has almost disappeared.
- Trinity Street – which is the main gateway into the town now has 1 in 3 shops empty, which is hardly a good advertisement for a town looking to achieve growth and external investment.

The Liberal Democrat Group also surveyed all the town centre businesses and retailers.

- 84% reported that this Council does not offer enough support / advice / information to their business
- 76 % of businesses stated that Customer Numbers have massively decreased over the past Year.
- 74% of businesses think that the decline in the town centre is having a negative impact on their weekly trade.
- 92% of businesses feel that the Closure of Oldrids Store in the Town Centre has had a detrimental impact on trade
- 96% of businesses feel that the council could offer far more daily / weekly

assistance.

- 100% of businesses feel that far more could be done with the market square with short term car parking in the market square being the number one priority.

Whilst it is agreed that there are many challenges regarding Town Centres competing with online shopping etc – It is a Myth that all Town Centres are Dying!

Retford, Newark, Worksop, Brigg and Boston all have vibrant town centres and markets, so what are they doing different to Gainsborough.

This council has a reputation of taking far too long to address issues, we have witnessed the creeping effect of the decline in the Retail Shops and the Market yet have failed to react in a timely manner.

The current administration's strategic plan regarding growth and regeneration is all based on medium to long term strategies, this petition is not against any of the current proposals and we hope that they all come to fruition, however there is an urgent need to start discussing the economic recovery plan for the town."

The Chairman thanked Councillor Young for his statement. Before opening the matter for debate, Members were reminded of three options available to them when considering Petitions. These being: -

- Take the action the petitioners have requested
- Not take the action requested for the reasons put forward during debate
- Or commission further investigation into the matter.

Debate ensued with the Leader of the Council making the initial response.

"Thank you Councillor Young for your petition inquiring what the administration is doing in regard to saving Gainsborough Town Centre. Due to the fact we are doing more than ever before I am pleased to list the following as an outline of our strategy and success to date:

- our aim is to Increase the population of the town from the current 21,000 to circa 30,000 through our Growth and Housing Agenda's – this is critical to the towns commercial viability. Increasing footfall is critical to achieving any level of success.
- We have plans to regenerate the historic town centre guided by our Heritage Master Plan and in partnership with the Town Council's Neighbourhood Plan. This will be very ably supported by the creation of a partnership with Muse.
- To this end secure the £1.8m grants funds we have been awarded from the Lottery to repair and restore the Market Place, Silver and Lord Street's
- We have already established support for town centre businesses through the Shop Front and Gainsborough Growth fund, and I am delighted to inform you that the GLLEP has agreed to fund our Living Over the Shop scheme.

- Using MSRL our joint venture company to refurbish 3 shops and create 3 new flats – WLDC's investment share was £400k
- Working with LCC to improve the appearance and use of the Market Place – and hopefully Beaumont street too.
- We are having a review of Gainsborough market at the next Prosperous Communities committee. You attended the member consultation last week.
- The Opening of Travelodge on the 20th of October with £1.4m investment from our reserves and the refurbishment of the Roseway car park. We now have a beautiful street scene and a hotel destined to increase the local GVA.
- We will continue the impetus of the regeneration of Market Street and the Roseway Quarter to draw/entice shoppers from Marshall's Yard into the historic town centre.
- We will Continue to work with the Lincolnshire Co-op to redevelop the Lindsey centre – this will provide a new anchor store and additional town centre car parking.
- And, redevelop the former Guildhall site into a 3 screen cinema with food and drink outlets – this is at the pre planning stage.
- Enhancement of Whittons Gardens and riverside walk will be implemented with the cinema scheme
- still to come is the drawdown of our £4m grant award for Gainsborough from the GLLEP

I will now ask the Director of Economic and Commercial Growth to say as much as she is able to with reference to other projects which are being worked up, whilst understanding we are in open session which means sensitive commercial detail cannot be revealed

The Director of Economic and Commercial Growth then addressed the meeting and provided updates in respect of the following projects, all aimed at improving the prosperity of the Town as a whole: -

- Stage 2 of the development partnership
- Riverside Gate Way and marina
- Japan Road
- Northern SUE
- Southern SUE
- Somerby Park / NNDR growth policy
- Place Board
- Trinity Street

The work being undertaken directly with Traders and the promotion of grants to assist them was outlined in detail. It was imperative the Council worked on initiatives to encourage footfall back into the market place and the Director of Economic and Commercial Growth gave assurance that there was market interest in the town. Growing the town's size was key to securing further investment and interest.

The Leader thanked the Director of Economic and Commercial Growth before concluding his address as follows: -

“As has been illustrated, we have and are very busy on a vast number of fronts. Recently the Town Council, who have embarked upon producing a Neighbourhood Plan has agreed to work with us on our regeneration projects and ambitions. We have already created an opportunity for businesses in the town centre to apply for funding specifically for a shop front face lift.

The success of the town centre regeneration initiative is very much dependent upon all incumbents of the town centre and the town council working with us. Especially the property owners. We cannot do it alone !

During this four year term of office, we have as an administration, and supported professionally by our officer team and staff, created an extensive range of opportunities for the district. We have won EU and UK bids to the value of £10m to help unlock sites for development, creating viability.

We are making unprecedented investments in other places such as Market Rasen with the proposed building of a dry surface leisure facility.

After several years of attempting to work with other agencies, a project for Caistor is looking promising.

We are enablers of investment and growth, long may it continue.

I move, no further action be taken.”

In the ensuing debate the majority of Members were in agreement that the Council had worked hard over recent years to make improvements to the Town. A Partnership approach was the only way to proceed with all involved having to take responsibility for their role. It was accepted that there was still a lot to do and number of keys areas which needed to be focussed on.

It was suggested by some that to constantly talk down the Town was not of assistance.

The Leader’s earlier proposal to reject the action requested by the petitioners was seconded.

It was moved and seconded that any vote taken on the matter be by way of recorded vote.

Having been proposed and seconded earlier in the meeting, the motion was then put to a recorded vote, having had the earlier request for such also duly seconded.

Votes were cast as set out below:

For: - Cllrs, Bierley, England, Fleetwood, Howitt-Cowan, Kinch, Lawrence, G McNeill, J McNeill, Mewis, Milne, Palmer, Parish, Patterson, Rodgers, Smith, Strange, Summers, Waller, and Welburn.

Against: - Cllrs Boles, Bond, Cotton, Devine, Oaks, Rainsforth, Rollings and Young

Abstain: - None

With the majority of Councillors voting in favour of the motion (19), the motion was declared **CARRIED** and therefore it was **RESOLVED** that the request of the petitioners be rejected and no further additional action be undertaken at this time.

Councillor Young, as Lead Petitioner, was advised that he would be sent written notice of the decision and also a copy of this would be displayed on the Authority's website.

33 ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman

The Chairman addressed Council advising it had been a very busy, but enjoyable period, with the up and coming weeks leading into Christmas looking even busier.

Over recent months she had had the pleasure of attending a number of Events, Award Ceremonies, Business visits and Official openings, making note of the following: -

- * attendance at three Graduation Ceremonies, in July it was Riseholme College of Further Education Awards in the Epic Centre, In September, the University of Lincoln's International Business School ceremony and the Lincoln College Graduation both held at the Cathedral. It had been a great pleasure to see these hard working young people receive a whole variety of qualifications in their chosen fields and not all academic.
- * attendance at the Family Fun Day at the Trinity Arts centre in July, joined by fellow Members, for an action packed day organised in partnership with Lincolnshire County Council. It had been a fabulous day that had really brought the Community together, which the Chairman hoped to see become an annual event.
- * 'turf cutting' at two new Lace Housing developments, one at Ingham and the other at Nettleham. Lace was a 'not for profit' company and their schemes were designed to enable older people to remain within their communities and maintain links with family and friends, enjoying quality facilities and services, the developments were making a welcome addition to the housing across our District.
- * There had been exciting times in Gainsborough with the opening of the fully refurbished Everyone Active Leisure Centre with Olympic medallist Colin Jackson in September and just this month the eagerly anticipated brand new Travelodge. The Chairman had had the pleasure of being part of the opening of both these establishments which demonstrated the Council's commitment to continuous investment in the area.
- * The Chairman was keen to engage with Businesses and indicated she had a planned programme of visits in order to learn more about the enterprises that she considered to be the life blood of the District. During the period she had joined the Leader for a visit to the Riverside Enterprise Park in Saxilby, touring two businesses and hearing how the Council's development had helped business to establish and grow. She had also visited a micro-Brewery, near Fiskerton, awarded funding through the Lindsey Action

Zone, to expand in order to meet demand.

The Chairman had also hosted a number of events herself here at the Guildhall including a Flag Raising Event for Merchant Navy Day, for which she expressed thanks to those Councillors who had attended and a Bake off Style fundraising event to help raise funds for the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust.

The Chairman had also had the pleasure of hosting her annual Civic Service in her local church, St Peter's in the village of Scotter in September. She thanked her Chaplain the Reverend Swannack for his poignant service, those Councillors who had attended to support her and the Eau Valley Singers who performed both during the Service and at the reception which had proceeded.

The Chairman concluded her announcements by making reference to two up and coming events, these being the Annual Carol Service being held on 10 December, at Gainsborough's All Saints' Church, to which all Councillors were welcome, and the launch of the Annual Community Awards.

Promotional information and Nominations Packs for the Awards were available for Councillors to collect at the conclusion of the meeting.

ii) Leader of Council

The Leader addressed Council and advised the new Lincolnshire Pension structure continued to move in a positive direction.

At the last Leaders and Chief Executive's meeting, discussions were largely focussed around Lincolnshire growth via the LEP, planning for growth and strengthening partnerships. This was seen by many as a viable alternative to Devolution.

The Humber Strategy review continued and the Leader expressed his thoughts on the Environment Agency's Plans to establish flood areas within the reaches of the Ouse and Humber and his fears for the future should alternative action not be taken.

The Leader had attended the Annual DCN Conference. Presentations and discussion had centred around housing, homelessness and town centres.

Members of the Scampton advisory group had taken a tour of RAF Scampton on the 30th October. This had allowed those present to appreciate the scale of the site and some of the issues which would have to be resolved before a handover took place.

On the 9th November the Leader had meet with Julian Chafer, a senior person within the Defence infrastructure Organisation along with Sir Edward Leigh, the Chief Executive of LCC and the Leader of LCC. An excellent paper on the opportunities for developing the site had been produced by Oliver FitchE-Taylor the Planning Manager. With an equally detailed MOU presented by Eve Fawcett-Moralee.

Discussion had centred around Master Planning, the need to have Scampton included in the CLLP review next year as well as Heritage, minerals safeguarding and the One Public

Estate.

iii) Head of Paid Service

The Head of Paid Service addressed Council on behalf of the Management Team during which the following points were made: -

- * Emergency Planning Awareness training had been arranged for all Members on Tuesday, 27 November, with details having been given to Members in an earlier email. The session would be facilitated by Emergency Planning and Business Continuity colleagues and was specifically tailored for elected Members and their role in their local community. The session would focus on the approach to be taken in the event of severe Winter weather and address the lessons learnt from previous incidents – both local and national. Recent incidents had demonstrated a need for a co-ordinated approach to the incident from the local council concerned and therefore all Members were urged to make every effort to attend the training, if at all possible.
- * The Local Government Association local partnership had reviewed the Council's housing programme on behalf of Homes England. They were very complimentary about our approach and gave us substantial assurance in our handling of the programme.
- * In terms of our Projects –the construction of the crematorium had started on site with completion scheduled for this time next year. This was considered great news as it would then start to provide a facility for local people and a contribution to Council finances. Thanks were expressed to those staff who have kept this project on target.

In conclusion the Head of Paid Service made reference to the Members Bulletin, encouraging all Members to access its content, as a number of updates were now published through this forum.

34 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Monitoring Officer advised the meeting that three questions had been received under the Public Question Time Scheme from Mr Peter Morley, who was in attendance to put his questions direct to the meeting.

The Chairman welcomed Mr Morley to the meeting, and invited him to put his three questions to the meeting.

Mr Morley's questions were as follows: -

“Question 1

On the 19th June the Finance Officer presented the Financial Statement to the Governance and Audit Committee for approval prior to external audit. He said **“The first 23 pages are a narrative report, I ask you to read it and tell us if it works what we are trying to say with the narrative report is, this is all**

you need to read because we are conscious of the fact that not everybody wants to go through all the numbers and statements etc. and so we are trying to get to a succinct document that says this is what West Lindsey is all about. He then goes on to say **“Over the year we have made a small surplus on service of £150.000 and along with additional Business rates we ended with a surplus of £432.000.** This surplus was in fact against a projected Budget set at the beginning of the year for part of the annual outgoings and is in actuality nothing more than a paper exercise.

In actual fact, overall for the year, income was £44.113m and expenditure was £45.701m which means there was a deficit of £1.588m, yet again in the Narrative report, the Finance Officer proudly proclaims **“We have once again shown good financial stewardship and delivered a small profit”**

At best this is misrepresentation of the facts and I ask that this Council provide a suitable explanation.

Question 2

Councillor Summers, in his introduction to the Financial Statement explained about the changes at senior level and how cost savings had been made but I will now ask him in light of these assumed savings why has the overall figure on the ‘Employee, Benefits, Expenses bill risen by £1.1M when equivalent full time staff numbers have reduced by 16 from the previous year.

Question 3

Again this is a question for Councillor Summers to answer, can you please explain the following; published figures in the narrative report state that in 2016/17 the Council had £18.88m of investments but at the end of 2017/18 this figure is now £15.316m and as almost £2.5m was spent on the Keighley Hotel this year it appears that almost £6m has disappeared from the Investment portfolio. I have further questions that require answers but will hold these over to the next meeting.”

The Chairman thanked Mr Morley for his questions and asked the Leader of the Council to respond.

As the first question made reference to the Executive Director of Resources, at the request of the Leader, he responded to Mr Morley’s first question as follows: -

“The table on page 15 shows the net position that is funded by tax payers and government grant. The table on page 26 ‘The Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Account shows the position when generally accepted accounting practice is applied to the accounts of the Local Authority. However, the accounting adjustments are reversed under a statutory override which ensures the taxpayer does not pay for the accounting adjustments which are of a non cash nature. Therefore it is appropriate to declare a surplus has been achieved for the benefit of the tax payer.

With regards my comments on the narrative report, it is my aspiration that the narrative report becomes a clear and reliable representation of the performance of the local authority both in financial and non-financial terms. Thus providing tax payers and other stakeholders with an overview of this Authority's activities within a given financial year.

As the nature of Mr Morley's questions indicates the Financial Statements are not easy to understand and can be interpreted in different ways.

I thank Mr Morley for working through the financial statements in such detail and raising his concerns with regards to the variation in interpretation."

The Leader of the Council thanked Mr Knowles for his response before proceeding to answer Mr Morley's further two questions as follows

"With regard to question 2, Employee Benefits includes recognition of the implications of the reporting standard known as IAS 19 which requires that the Authority's pension liability is calculated on an annual basis using assumptions agreed by actuaries.

This standard requires that the employee benefits includes an amount for 'post employment benefits' which for this year amounts to £933k. This is not a cash transaction and as mentioned above is not expected to be funded by the tax payer on a year on year basis but provides an indication for comparison purposes.

This amount will vary from year to year and is outside the control of the local authority. The remainder of this variance is made up of exit packages, establishment changes, employer turnover and the impact of employee increments, pay award and national insurance and pension contribution changes.

The change in budgeted full time equivalent staff can be seen on page 18 of the Narrative Report and shows a reduction year on year of 17 employees.

"With regard to question 3, the figures Mr Morley refers to (page 17 of the Narrative Report) relate to the level of investments that were with banks and other institutions at the year end. I accept this could have been better explained and we will consider that in next year's report. The Balance Sheet on page 27 of the report shows the total assets of the Authority have increased from £43m in March 2017 to £51m in March 2018 reflecting the good financial stewardship I referred to when presenting the accounts to Council.

I would like to thank Mr Morley for his questions and we will use this feedback to make further improvements to the financial statements in future."

The Chairman thanked Mr Morley for his attendance and indicated he would receive a copy of the responses to his questions, provided verbally at the meeting, in writing, in due course.

35 QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO. 9

Councillor Trevor Young had submitted the following question, under Council Procedure Rule No. 9 to the meeting: -

1) *Question to Cllr Jeff Summers, Leader of the Council, from Councillor Trevor Young*

“Could the Leader of the Council explain to the people of the District why it is that this council has not met for one full quarter of the year? By doing so he will also explain to the councillors why this is the case and why it seems unimportant for the council to meet in a timely manner and take council for the affairs and wellbeing of the District and its citizens?”

It is accepted that there are no meetings in August as has long been the case except for the planning committee. But a glance at the Council meeting calendar shows that at least one Full Council was cancelled, supposedly for lack of business and there has been no Full Council Meeting in October.

Could it be that the Leader and his administration are just tardy when it comes to meetings thinking that they have a majority and so debate and consideration don't matter anymore?

Or perhaps the Leader and his administration are frightened of that very debate and questions that might arise either as direct questions or through the movement of business through the council.

While we accept there is no point in meeting for meeting sake the electorate who vote for us and pay our allowances surely have a right to expect the council to meet as a full council on a regular basis and to debate the policy which the administration want to enact during their tenure of office.

Time was when the council will deal with all business and its right that some business is enacted through committees.

However, there are times when a policy or change affects the whole district and thus every elected member and the people they serve. This can be seen in the move to charge for green waste for example or the letting of contracts for leisure services provision across the district.

The Market Provision is being discussed and worked through and the way markets are provisioned. This is causing some disquiet among the Leaders own members and it could be that bringing these policies and strategies to full council will show the cracks in the administration and allow the people to see where the current control of the council is failing the people who ought to expect more.

I invite the Leader therefore to answer the question and respond where in doing so hope that this council will not have a further period of one quarter of a year when it fails to meet.”

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Jeff Summers, responded as follows: -

“Thank you for your question Councillor Young.
You are correct to say that September’s scheduled full council was cancelled. It was cancelled by the Head of Paid service as there was insufficient business to be conducted to warrant a meeting. This is in accordance with the Head of Paid Services delegations as detailed in Part IV of the constitution.

The Council has an effective Scheme of Delegation which allows for a vast majority of decisions to be made at the two Policy Committees, Corporate Policy and Resources and Prosperous Communities Committee. As you know both Committees are politically balanced and give members from all parties the opportunity to debate the decisions made. In addition to the committee membership, all members are welcome to attend both policy committees to listen, learn and with the chairman’s consent, ask questions.

Unnecessary, potentially, poorly attended council meetings where repetitive business formed the agenda would neither enhance the Council’s business nor use our resources efficiently.

This Council’s constitution will always inform our decisions, assisted by the need not to waste our resources both human and financial.

You mention Tardy. Of the sixteen years I have sat on this Council, representing everyone in the district I can assure all, we now operate a system of fourth option governance (where all members are involved as much as they want to be) which allows all members to be part of the decision making process.

The political make up of our council is determined by our electorate, every four years!

I am so pleased you mentioned green waste in your question. The changes were consulted upon, a decision to charge was made, Why? (Because we felt it unfair for non-users of the service to pay, many of them residents in your own ward) the consultation resulting in a resounding yes from residents by significantly subscribing to our valued service, way above expectations.

Whereever possible our council will provide equitable physical, financial and social solutions for the future.

Another very important point you raise is Gainsborough markets. We held a workshop on this subject only the other evening, at which you were present. There are many issues around markets and high street trading. First and foremost a stall holder / high street shop must provide what the customer is looking for, at a competitive price. Commercial strain is not a new phenomenon.

With the introduction of out of town retail parks, supermarkets, designer

outlets and more importantly, internet sales and next day delivery. We cannot shoulder this pressure alone. You as a market trader must be well aware of the issues.

By the way have you declared an interest?

Thank you.”

Having heard the response, Councillor Young requested opportunity to pose a supplementary question.

The Chairman, using her discretion as granted by the Constitution, declined the request.

36 MOTIONS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO. 10

The Chairman advised the meeting that no Motions, under Council Procedure Rule No.10, had been received.

37 REVISED COUNCIL VISION AND VALUES

The Council’s Vision, Mission and Values have been under review since the start of 2018. The review had included full engagement with staff and Members through a variety of techniques.

Members therefore gave consideration to a report which set out the review process which had been undertaken and the arising revised vision and set of values which it was being proposed be adopted by the Council. It was also noted that the strap line “the Entrepreneurial Council” would be removed, in a phased approach.

Members noted that consideration of a revised mission for the Council would take place once the vision had been adopted and as part of the 2019/22 revised Corporate Plan.

In response to comments the Head of Paid Service outlined the reasons for removing the strapline emphasising the importance of a clear vision, understood by all.

Members were supportive of its removal citing a number of reasons for such and whilst it may have been appropriate at its time of adoption the Council had moved on.

Members considered it important that the values once adopted needed to filter into the culture and behaviour of the organisation.

In response to a suggestion that the wording of the vision should be left with some flexibility, the Head of Paid Service expressed caution to do so. The vision had been developed with staff and members and was considered to represent the essence of all the work which had been undertaken and was in accordance with the comments which had been made throughout.

RESOLVED that

- (a) the following vision for the Council, be endorsed and adopted:
“WEST LINDSEY IS A GREAT PLACE TO BE WHERE PEOPLE, BUSINESSES AND COMMUNITIES THRIVE AND CAN REACH THEIR POTENTIAL”;
- (b) the following revisions to the Council’s values be endorsed and adopted
1. To put the customer at the centre of everything we do
 2. To act as one council
 3. To be business smart, to act on evidence and take advantage of opportunities, thinking creatively and getting things done
 4. To communicate effectively with all stakeholders
 5. To have integrity in everything we do; and
- (c) the strapline “The Entrepreneurial Council” no longer be used.

38 RECOMMENDATION FROM LICENSING COMMITTEE - REVIEW OF THE GAMBLING POLICY

The Chairman of the Licensing Committee outlined the report and recommended it for Council approval.

The review of the Gambling Policy was a ‘business as usual’ process for the licensing team, and in essence the team had to follow a statutory process in carrying out any ‘review’ of policy.

Therefore the licensing authority was legally obliged to:

- Prepare
- Consult
- Determine, and
- Publish its Statement of Principles (Policy) every three years or sooner if necessary

This was a mandatory requirement as set out in Section 349 of the Gambling Act 2005.

A review of the policy had taken place and the persons and bodies consulted was kept deliberately wide in order for a comprehensive consultation exercise to be undertaken with anyone who may be affected or otherwise may have an interest in the policy.

The consultation generated three responses being received which in turn resulted in a minor change to the draft policy.

The ‘trained’ Members of the Licensing Committee had considered the review of the policy at their meeting held on 18 September 2018 in detail and resolved that the amended draft policy be approved and **RECOMMENDED to Council** for formal adoption.

Only Council could formally adopt this Policy, it is not a decision that could be delegated to a Committee or Sub-Committee. Once approved by Council, the Licensing Authority must

then publish the policy, along with a Statutory Notice regarding the implementation date, also.

The recommendations in the report were then moved, seconded and voted upon without discussion.

RESOLVED that the recommendation from the Licensing Committee be accepted and the amended draft policy referred to as 'The Gambling Policy (Statement of Principles)' be approved and adopted. The revised document to be published in accordance with the relevant regulations and become effective from January 2019

39 AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION - ANIMAL WELFARE REGULATIONS AND MEETING CANCELLATION DELEGATIONS

Members gave consideration to a report, presented by the Chairman of the Governance and Audit Committee, which sought agreement to a number of minor amendments to the Constitution.

These related to the introduction of the New Animal Welfare Regulations and also amendments to permit consideration being given to cancelling meetings during significant National Events or Emergencies.

The recommendations were moved and seconded.

Prior to being put to the vote a Member brought to the attention of the meeting two typographical errors within the proposed amended pages.

Officers undertook to amend these prior to re-publication and on that basis it was: -

RESOLVED that the amendments to the Constitution as set out in Appendices A and B be approved.

The meeting concluded at 8.58 pm.

Chairman