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NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON

17th March, 2022

Present: Councillor Hasthorpe (in the Chair)
Councillors Aisthorpe, Astbury, Batson, Beasant, Boyd, Brasted, Brookes, Callison, Cracknell, Croft, Freeston, Furneaux, Goodwin, Green, Harness, Hudson, Jackson, Lindley, Mickleburgh, Parkinson, Patrick, Pettigrew, Procter, Reynolds, Sandford, Shepherd, Sheridan, Shreeve, Silvester, Smith, K. Swinburn, S. Swinburn, Westcott and Wilson.

Officers in Attendance:

- Rob Walsh (Chief Executive)
- Simon Jones (Assistant Director Law, Governance and Assets - Monitoring Officer)
- Sharon Wroot (Executive Director for Environment, Economy and Resources)
- Paul Windley (Democratic and Scrutiny Team Manager)

The proceedings were opened with a round of applause in tribute to the bravery of the people of Ukraine during the current conflict in their country. This was followed by prayers by Reverend Mary Vickers, the Mayor's Chaplain.

NEL.60 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor noted that this was his final Council meeting in the Chair and thanked Members for their support during his Mayoral year. He looked forward to remembering this final meeting with pleasure.

NEL.61 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from this meeting were received from Councillors Abel, Cairns, Dawkins, Hogan, Robinson and Rodwell.

NEL.62 MINUTES

RESOLVED - The minutes of the meeting of North East Lincolnshire Council held on 26th January 2022 were approved as a correct record, subject to the amendment of item NEL.49 to include Councillor Hasthorpe in the recorded vote as being in favour of the motion.

NEL.63 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Procter declared a personal interest in NEL.69 upon a question being asked on minute SPTVE.51 of the Tourism and the Visitor Economy Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 27th January 2022, as the employee of a business on the Central Promenade, Cleethorpes.

NEL.64 THE LEADER'S STATEMENT

The Council received a statement from the Leader of the Council.

The Leader opened his statement by making reference to the conflict in Ukraine and the appalling suffering of its people at the hands of Russian aggressors.

Turning to local issues, the Leader welcomed the cross-party involvement on the Children's Services Oversight Group, established to provide more robust challenge and support for Children's Services. The governance of the improvement agenda would be developed further over the coming weeks, taking into account the views of the Department for Education appointed Commissioner, whose report was due to be finalised by the end of this month. Noting that 15th March marked World Social Work Day, the Leader thanked our social workers for the tremendous job they did in often complex and difficult circumstances.

The Leader commented on the Council's role in supporting the Government's recently announced 'Living with Covid' plan. This involved demonstrating leadership on the public health and health protection front and working with our partners across the health and care system. He felt that our stronger economy and stronger communities focus was vital to ensuring that our Borough recovered from the impact of the pandemic, in order that residents, communities and businesses could thrive and prosper.

The Leader referred to his administration's successes with waste and recycling. North East Lincolnshire's recycling rate had increased from 31% in 2017/18 to just under 40% in 2021. He felt that this increase was the result of a number of initiatives taken by the administration, the main one being the successful and popular introduction of the new recycling bins. He also referred to the recently launched "Clear it!" scheme, which engaged community groups in clearing alleyways or open spaces of waste and fly-tipping. This scheme was improving our environment whilst encouraging community involvement, self-reliance and responsibility. Operation Gateway, introduced in June 2020, was another successful environmental scheme aimed at improving the main route into Cleethorpes. To date, owners had upgraded 130 buildings along this key artery,

making a noticeable difference. Added to this, the Leader noted that the number of empty homes blighting the area had seen a reduction of no less than 288 in the past year.

On regeneration activities, it was noted that the Cleethorpes Masterplan had been formally adopted by Cabinet and it provided a framework with identified deliverable projects that would help Cleethorpes become more attractive to a wider population, alongside recommendations for infrastructure development to support the projects. It was formulated following extensive public consultation and had been very positively received. Grant funding opportunities were now being identified to help deliver the plan. The Leader added that last week had seen the official launch of the fantastic Luminations, which were already proving to be a tourist attraction in their own right.

With regard to Grimsby town centre, it was announced last week that 1.6-acres of town centre development land had been purchased by this Council. This was a strategic regeneration acquisition and contracts had now been exchanged on this derelict area of land. Further plans would need to be developed and funding opportunities identified but the Leader suggested that it would be an ideal location for a new transport hub, to once again provide Grimsby with a proper bus station and complimenting other town centre regeneration projects.

The Leader reported that, whilst Greater Lincolnshire was not included as part of the first tranche to be engaged by the Government in devolution discussions as part of its Levelling Up agenda, the ambition for devolution remained strong. The Leader was engaged with his fellow Council Leaders as they continued to shape the asks and powers to be sought from Government. In the meantime, collaboration continued to be extended across Greater Lincolnshire with the recent commencement of a pilot to share a Director of Public Health across the three upper-tier councils.

The Leader referred to a further three Cabinet listening events that had been held in the last month, one in each of our main towns. These had proved to be just as successful as the two held back in 2019 prior to the pandemic. He commented that it was great to meet and talk to many members of the public face to face and they were able to discuss the area's challenges and opportunities as well as bring their views and ideas to the table. He felt that this showed that his administration was listening to the voters, delivering on its manifesto commitments and carving out an exciting strategy for the future of North East Lincolnshire.

The Leader concluded by noting that details of special urgency decisions taken in accordance with the Constitution as well as an update on the implementation of Motions previously resolved at preceding Council meetings would be circulated to all Members by Democratic Services.

NEL.65 QUESTION TIME

A question was submitted by Mr John Grimmer to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport, in accordance with the Council's procedures. Mr Grimmer attended the meeting and put the question, as set out below:

“This question relates to the absence of a Local Access Forum for North East Lincolnshire and is being asked on behalf of Friends of the Freshney Valley. Local Access Forums advise decision making organisations such as local authorities about making improvements to public access for outdoor recreation and sustainable travel.

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act of 2000 requires that ‘The appointing authority for any area shall in accordance with regulations establish for that area, or for each part of it, an advisory body to be known as a local access forum.’

North Lincolnshire, Mid-Lincolnshire and South Lincolnshire all have such Local Access Forums.

It appears that North East Lincolnshire does not have a Local Access Forum. Does the council agree that there is a requirement to have such a forum in place and commit to establishing one in 2022?”

Councillor S. Swinburn, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport responded that North East Lincolnshire Council was part of the Lincolnshire Joint Local Access Forum with Lincolnshire County Council and had been since 2019. Previously the council was part of the Mid-Lincolnshire Access Forum since its formation in 2006. Councillor Cairns is the North East Lincolnshire Councillor representative on the forum. Councillor Swinburn added that North East Lincolnshire Council was committed to improving public access to the countryside and, in conjunction with Lincolnshire County Council, had established a Local (Countryside) Access Forum. The Forum comprised a wide range of people representing users of rights of way, farmers and landowners; and other interests such as tourism, health, nature conservation, transport, social exclusion and disability. Forum members act in a voluntary capacity and the Forum meets approximately four times per year.

NEL.66 NOTICE OF MOTION 1

The Council considered a Notice of Motion, proposed by Councillor Jackson and seconded by Councillor Lindley, submitted in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders as set out below:

This Council is appalled by the shocking events in Ukraine and the devastating effects on her people. We welcome the generous support being offered by our local community to the people of Ukraine. As a Council, we pledge to do all we can to facilitate and enable further support across North East Lincolnshire, including for those families who have been forced to flee their homeland.

Following a debate, and with the consent of Council, the motion was voted on by show of hands and it was unanimously:

RESOLVED – That this Council pledges to do all it can to facilitate and enable further support across North East Lincolnshire, including for those families who have been forced to flee their homeland.

NEL.67 NOTICE OF MOTION 2

The Council considered a Notice of Motion, proposed by Councillor Patrick and seconded by Councillor Wilson, submitted in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders as set out below:

In the November of 2021, the findings of an Ofsted review of the children's services of North East Lincolnshire Council were made public, the conclusion was that the council's rating had crashed from an overall 'good' rating to an inadequate, the report going on to damn the council and corporate leadership in the strongest possible terms.

Examples of failure included the reference to the fact that "Not all senior leaders and council members understand the depth of the failings, either to hold each other to account, or to prioritise the needs of children in corporate decision making."

The portfolio holder himself has time and time again failed to demonstrate a grasp of the challenges at hand, often showing a lack of understanding the services that sit within his portfolio, and more crucially, any decisive strategic insight into what he must do to start to turn around this failure of the most vulnerable children and families in our Borough.

Despite the overt objective evidence that the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services finds himself in an untenable position, the Leader of the Council has seen fit to keep him in post, an affront to the families that have been failed in the worst possible terms.

This Council finds it no longer has confidence in the current Leader, Councillor Jackson, and the wider Cabinet he leads.

Following a debate, a recorded vote was held in accordance with the requirements of the Council's Standing Orders. The votes cast were recorded as follows:

For the motion

Councillors Goodwin, Green, Mickleburgh, Patrick, Sheridan, and Wilson (6 votes)

Against the motion

Councillors Astbury, Batson, Boyd, Brasted, Brookes, Callison, Cracknell, Croft, Freeston, Furneaux, Harness, Hasthorpe, Hudson, Jackson, Lindley, Parkinson, Pettigrew, Procter, Reynolds, Sandford, Shepherd, Shreeve, Silvester, Smith, K. Swinburn, S. Swinburn and Westcott (27 votes)

Abstained

Councillors Aisthorpe and Beasant (2 votes)

The motion was therefore declared lost.

NEL.68 QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

The Mayor invited Councillor Wilson to present the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport the question having been submitted on notice in accordance with Council's Standing Orders.

“Why was the bring to site(recycling) located at the West Marsh Community Centre taken away as this site was well used and also brought residents to the community centre as part of an overall package?”

Councillor S Swinburn, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport responded that it was not the case that the site was well used. The site was mainly used by the community centre as it was on their land with a closed access gate, and it was therefore classed as trade waste.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Wilson enquired about the tonnage rates for collections since the COVID restrictions were lifted.

Councillor S Swinburn provided statistics for collections from August 2020 to December 2021 detailing the number of collections and the average usage of paper bins and co-mingled bins. He noted that the current recycling rates in North East Lincolnshire were the highest ever and he felt that residents were accepting of the new service. He added that the community recycling centre at Gilbey Road was only 1.3 miles away from the West Marsh Community Centre.

The Chair invited Councillor Wilson to present the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Social Care, the question having been submitted on notice in accordance with Council's Standing Orders.

“Can the portfolio holder outline the main reasons why life expectancy in the West Marsh is lower than in other parts of the borough?”

Councillor Cracknell, Portfolio Holder for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Social Care responded that health inequalities were the unfair and avoidable differences in health and life expectancy between different groups in society. She noted that the West Marsh ward was among the most deprived areas in the country and that

North East Lincolnshire had a much higher rate of premature mortality, mainly as a result of respiratory and cardio-vascular diseases as well as cancer. Alcohol was also a major cause and alcohol-related ill health was clearly associated with socio-economic deprivation. People in deprived areas were more likely to spend a greater part of their lives in poor health and less likely to present for and consume care. Therefore, they were more likely to require emergency hospital treatment. The factors that most significantly determined our health were the social determinants of health; the conditions into which we were born, grow, live, work and age. Sadly there was also evidence that deprived individuals were disproportionately affected by COVID.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Wilson asked how the average life age of people expected to be well could be improved.

Councillor Cracknell responded by highlighting local actions including the appointment of a specialist nurse to tackle alcohol dependency, the recommissioning of wellness checks for those aged between 45 and 74, social prescribing aimed at altering lifestyle habits and initiatives around drug usage and prevention, which were working really well.

The Chair invited Councillor Wilson to present the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Children and Education the question having been submitted on notice in accordance with Council's Standing Orders.

"How many children in the West Marsh are classed as children in need and children in need of protection?"

Councillor Lindley, Portfolio Holder for Children and Education responded that there were 55 children in the West Marsh ward with a children in need plan and a further 47 who were open to assessment. Of the child population of just under 2000 in the West Marsh ward, 6.7% were open to assessment under children in need.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Wilson asked how the portfolio holder would try to get to the root cause of children in need issues.

Councillor Lindley acknowledged that the West Marsh ward was one of the most deprived areas in North East Lincolnshire and added that there were further challenges with the current economic situation and the impact of COVID. However, a children's services improvement plan was in place, which would address a lot of the issues around child protection, and contribute towards reducing the number of children in need.

The Chair invited Councillor Wilson to present the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, Housing and Tourism the question having been submitted on notice in accordance with Council's Standing Orders.

“Can the portfolio holder outline to this Council what positive steps are being taken to stop the hollowing out of Grimsby town centre in the face of ever increasing housing developments on the outskirts of Grimsby and Cleethorpes?”

Councillor Procter, Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, Housing and Tourism responded that housing developers (subject to appropriate governance, compliance and planning regulations) were free to build in any part of this borough, including in and around the town centre. The Local Plan managed housing developments across the entire borough over a prolonged period of time ensuring the right mix, tenure and quantity of housing was delivered in the right locations. Housing developers tend to develop sites where they see greatest demand or need. As part of the Grimsby Town Master Plan there were numerous initiatives and large-scale schemes being progressed to regenerate and re-configure large parts of the town centre. One such scheme was Garth Lane, where plans were being worked up to repopulate the town centre with a housing scheme, located in the West Marsh ward.

The development of Garth Lane would therefore support, compliment and maximise recent investments including the On Side Youth Zone, pedestrian crossing improvements on Frederick Ward Way, the creation of the new footbridge over the River Freshney and the delivery of high quality public realm around the waterfront. Alongside the works delivered or underway at Garth Lane, North East Lincolnshire was embarking on what was perhaps the largest regeneration journey witnessed in a generation, with the Town Deal, Future High Street Fund, the Freeport, Heritage Action Zone and other investments collectively bringing about a significant planned transformation for our area. Grimsby Town Centre sat at the very heart of the ambitious plans. These large investment projects should reconnect many residents of North East Lincolnshire to the town centre and attract new and addition footfall from inside (and outside) of the borough. This in turn, should create a place where people choose to live and work, increasing demand for housing and accommodation.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Wilson asked if the portfolio holder was aware of any government funding to bring predominantly old houses in the ward up to standard so that residents could remain in the area.

Councillor Procter responded that the council was already receiving funding from Homes England aimed at particularly bringing empty properties back into use. He noted that over 300 properties had been brought back into use across the Borough.

The Chair invited Councillor Wilson to present the following question to the Leader of the Council, the question having been submitted on notice in accordance with Council's Standing Orders.

“In the recent publication from our Council, discover our new future, most of the articles on Grimsby are based in the West Marsh yet there isn't a mention of the ward councillors. Does the publication show a political bias towards the Conservatives just weeks before an election?”

Councillor Jackson, Leader of the Council responded that it did not.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Wilson asked whether the publication was a waste of Council resources.

Councillor Jackson responded Council resources were not used as the production and distribution was all achieved via sponsorship.

The Chair invited Councillor Green to present the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport, the question having been submitted on notice in accordance with Council's Standing Orders.

"I note we have been advised of a programme of carriage patching works due to be undertaken in selected areas of the borough but no programme for road marking schemes and I have serious concerns about the disappearance of some of road markings, our zebra crossings in many areas have practically disappeared and it cannot be long before some hapless pedestrian is run over on one and suffers serious trauma. It won't save the council much money by neglecting these areas if we are then sued because the motorist did not realise there was a crossing there. I would like to ask Councillor Swinburn on behalf of my residents when we can again look forward to a proper maintenance programme of our streets and roads?"

Councillor S Swinburn, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport responded that providing an assurance that there was a programme of road marking works across the borough. Road marking work was routinely undertaken in the spring and summer months starting in April and continued through to autumn. The council did not, as a rule, undertake road marking work for reactive maintenance through the late autumn and winter months due to the inclement weather during this period, which can create issues with its application due to the wet and cold weather. The road marking programme for 2022 was currently being finalised with the first week of works programmed to start week commencing 25th April 2022. This programme was reviewed regularly through this period to ensure any additional locations were included and prioritised accordingly within the forward programme. The road marking company used, was booked for one week a month up until mid-autumn specifically for work in North East Lincolnshire. There were a number of zebra crossings identified in the programme, so if councillors had any particular sites of concern then they were invited to contact Councillor Swinburn. The road marking maintenance programme was managed as part of the general maintenance revenue budget. For carriageway schemes within the Local Transport Plan programme or larger capital projects, the renewal of road markings would always be done as part of these projects and all lining in the vicinity of the works would be looked at and included for renewal as part of the scheme where required.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Green noted two examples of residents who had requested road markings and asked how long they would have to wait.

Councillor S Swinburn asked Councillor Green to pass on the details and he would look into it and arrange for an urgent reply.

The Chair invited Councillor Green to present the following question to the Leader of the Council, the question having been submitted on notice in accordance with Council's Standing Orders.

"We have all seen the desperate situation unfolding in the Ukraine and our hearts go out to the families fleeing such atrocities being undertaken by Russian troops. Could I ask Councillor Jackson what support this council is showing to Ukrainian families who are arriving in the UK with nothing and in desperate need of help?"

Councillor Jackson, Leader of the Council responded that he shared Councillor Green's concerns and referred to the comments he had made during the earlier motion on this subject, including the provision of regularly updated information on the Council's website and assistance with the Government's 'Homes for Ukraine' scheme.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Green asked what measures were being put in place in advance of families arriving in the area to meet their desperate need for education and housing.

Councillor Jackson responded that the Government was providing £350 per month for each refugee and £10,500 towards the support for a child's education. He added that the council would be doing all it could to coordinate support being offered within communities.

The Chair invited Councillor Patrick to present the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Children and Education the question having been submitted on notice in accordance with Council's Standing Orders.

"What lessons does the portfolio holder feel he has learnt as an individual since the damning findings of last November's Ofsted report?"

Councillor Lindley, Portfolio Holder for Children and Education responded that what he had learnt as an individual would remain personal to himself. However, in terms of corporate lessons learnt, he felt that the strength of measures that had been put in place were responses to the lessons that had been learnt.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Patrick asked whether the portfolio holder realised that beyond the admirable work of officers, he was not bringing anything to the table.

Councillor Lindley responded that it had been demonstrated at this meeting that there was confidence in himself and the Cabinet. He had accepted the findings of the inspection and it was time to move forward. He felt that this was a matter of corporate responsibility and not about individuals.

The Chair invited Councillor Patrick to present the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport the question having been submitted on notice in accordance with Council's Standing Orders.

“Does the portfolio holder share my view that the recent court ruling between the Greater Manchester combined authority and bus companies provide our area with a massive opportunity to better organise the local public transport network around the needs of our residents and economy rather than distant shareholders?”

Councillor S Swinburn, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport responded that when the Government launched the National Bus Strategy in March 2021 (which provided all Local Transport Authorities with the opportunity to continue with the existing Voluntary Bus Quality Partnership, move to the Enhanced Bus Quality Partnership or go down the franchising route), the majority of authorities, including North East Lincolnshire, agreed to progress with the Enhanced Bus Quality Partnership in the first instance. He added that this was based on officer and third party specialist independent advice. The franchising route was discounted at that stage because of the requirement to satisfy the Secretary of State that the council had the capability and resources to deliver and be able to coordinate the bus network, contract bus companies to run the services, monitor performance, set fares and have associated governance in place. He noted that the council had no experience of delivering such activities. He added that it would be possible to consider the franchising route at a future date.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Patrick asked whether the ability to run our own services provided a good opportunity to review the number of bus services in the Borough.

Councillor S Swinburn responded that a bid had been submitted for a Bus Service Improvement Plan and he felt that the enhanced partnership should deliver the service improvements required.

At this point, the Mayor moved that the Council's Standing Orders governing the length of meetings be suspended to permit this meeting to continue beyond 10.00 p.m. This was seconded by Councillor Beasant. Upon a show of hands, the motion was carried and it was:

RESOLVED - That the Council's Standing Orders governing the length of meetings be suspended to permit this meeting to continue beyond 10.00 p.m.

The Chair invited Councillor Patrick to present the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Resources and Assets, the question having been submitted on notice in accordance with Council's Standing Orders.

“The Portfolio Holder will be familiar with his own aggressive borrowing strategy, as local taxpayer debt continues to reach ever higher eye watering levels, will he give his commitment that any future significant borrowing outside of the current plans and strategy will be subject to a public consultation that in turn would need to show meaningful public support for the said borrowing to commence?”

Councillor Shreeve, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Resources and Assets responded that he did not have an aggressive borrowing strategy. Member scrutiny and public engagement were embedded into the Council's budget setting processes. These covered both revenue and capital spending plans. A public budget consultation ran from 16 December 2021 to 27th January 2022. Budget plans were also shared and presented to town and parish council representatives, the local business community and the voluntary sector.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Patrick asked if the portfolio holder could provide an example of a level of debt that he would consider would require too much borrowing.

Councillor Shreeve responded that the council's Treasury Management Strategy sets out the council's policy to remain with its prudential limits and borrowing would continue to be within those limits.

The Chair invited Councillor Patrick to present the following question to the Leader of the Council the question having been submitted on notice in accordance with Council's Standing Orders.

“How convinced is the Leader that the residents of North East Lincolnshire have full confidence and support in the future of the town deal, when for example looking at the accelerating decline of Grimsby town centre?”

Councillor Jackson, Leader of the Council, responded that his administration remained wholly committed to the principles of the Town Deal. He acknowledged that Grimsby town centre had challenges as did many town centres and high streets up and down the country. Those challenges were felt prior to the pandemic and had accelerated since. That was why the Town Deal, Grimsby Town Centre Masterplan, £21.9m Towns Fund and £17.3m Future High Streets Fund were so important. The Masterplan was supported by wide-ranging public and stakeholder engagement, so he believed residents did have confidence. St James Square had already been redeveloped and had seen a variety of events held there as part of the commitment to culture and the arts. The Garth Lane feature bridge and public realm had been well received and the council had been able to assist Onside in securing £2.7m from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to help bring forward the Youth Zone in the long-derelict West Havens Maltings. Moreover, the council was supporting Efactor to acquire and refurbish St James House into business units and conference facilities as one of the six Towns Fund projects. The council continued to engage on bringing forward the Future High Streets Fund project, had approved the first Activation and Community Engagement fund application to Our Big Picture and, having completed the remaining Towns Fund business cases, expected to see further works commence in the forthcoming financial year. He added that market testing with several urban developers provided further confidence in the aspirations for Garth Lane.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Patrick asked whether there was a meaningful plan to counter the associated problems arising from the Freshney Place shopping centre having fallen into receivership.

Councillor Jackson responded that there was activity taking place behind the scenes but due to the commercial sensitivities involved he was not at liberty to comment any further at this stage.

NEL.69 MINUTES OF THE CABINET AND COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL

The Council received the minutes of decisions taken under delegated powers at the following meetings:

- Cabinet – 1st December, 19th January and 16th February
- Portfolio Holder Environment and Transport – 29th November
- Portfolio Holder Finance, Resources and Assets – 24th January
- Budget Scrutiny – 24th and 25th January
- Scrutiny Panel Children and Lifelong Learning – 13th January
- Scrutiny Panel Communities – 31st January
- Scrutiny Panel Economy – 4th January
- Scrutiny Panel Health and Adult Social Care – 24th November, 2nd February
- Scrutiny Panel Tourism and Visitor Economy – 27th January
- Place Board (operating as the Health and Wellbeing Board) – 22nd November, 21st February
- Audit and Governance Committee – 11th November, 20th January
- Planning Committee – 1st December and 5th January
- Licensing and Community Protection Committee – 9th February
- Licensing Sub Committee – 14th December, 1st February
- Standards Referrals Panel – 8th February
- Appointments Committee – 2nd December, 10th January and 17th January

The Mayor advised that a number of questions on notice had been received on the above minutes. They would be dealt with in the order in which they appeared in the minute book; each questioner would be permitted one supplementary question and there would be no debate on the questions asked or the answers given.

- (1) A question on notice was submitted by Councillor Mickleburgh to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport in accordance with the Council's Constitution as follows:

Cabinet – 1st December 2021 Minute CB.89 (Procurement of Real Time Bus Information)

How can Real Time Information be supplied to bus users without the problem of scheduled services disappearing from monitors once their timetabled departure time has passed? Passengers don't know if their bus will come or not, or if the service has been withdrawn that day for whatever reason.

Councillor S Swinburn responded that he understood the frustration but referred Councillor Mickleburgh to an app provided by Stagecoach which gave passengers real time information on bus services.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Mickleburgh noted that not everyone had access to an app and asked whether simple information on delays or cancellations could be displayed on the monitors provided.

Councillor Swinburn agreed to report this back to Stagecoach.

- (2) A question on notice was submitted by Councillor Patrick to the Leader of the Council in accordance with the Council's Constitution as follows:

Cabinet – 1st December 2021 Minute CB.92 (North East Lincolnshire Carbon Roadmap)

Currently the council has a plan to become carbon neutral by 2040, however, many organisations that report on this topic suggest that bodies like our council need to be carbon neutral by 2030 if not before, it's time for the Leader to admit, this arbitrary target is a sop, isn't it?

Councillor Jackson responded that it was not.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Patrick asked, if the 2040 target was not met, whether Councillor Jackson would be in attendance to explain why.

Councillor Jackson responded that it was open to speculation as to whether he would still be a Member of the Council at that time.

- (3) A question on notice was submitted by Councillor Patrick to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport in accordance with the Council's Constitution as follows:

Cabinet – 1st December 2021 Minute CB.94 (Grant Street Car Park Redevelopment Project)

Can the portfolio holder offer any clear objective evidence beyond wishful thinking that this car park, if built, might be fully utilised?

Councillor Swinburn responded that he had no clear evidence.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Patrick enquired why a programme of better signage was not undertaken to establish such evidence before deciding on whether to build the car park.

Councillor Swinburn responded that he expected the new car park to be used to its full potential when the correct signage was in place.

- (4) A question on notice was submitted by Councillor Wilson to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport in accordance with the Council's Constitution as follows:

Cabinet – 1st December 2021 Minute CB.94 (Grant Street Car Park Redevelopment Project)

What will be the total cost of the loan required for this project, including all interest paid over the full-term?

Councillor Swinburn responded that the total cost of the project was £3.393m with assumed borrowing of £3.15m but he was unable to comment on interest costs.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Wilson enquired what the life expectancy was for the new car park.

Councillor Swinburn responded that it was expected to last for 50 years.

- (5) A question on notice was submitted by Councillor Wilson to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport in accordance with the Council's Constitution as follows:

Cabinet – 1st December 2021 Minute CB.94 (Grant Street Car Park Redevelopment Project)

What will be the annual maintenance costs for this car park after completion?

Councillor Swinburn responded that this would be in line with other fees and charges relevant to the applicable departments but he agreed to consult with officers and provide the detail in writing.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Wilson asked if the portfolio holder could expand on why the project would provide value for money.

Councillor Swinburn responded that he would provide this within his written response.

- (6) A question on notice was submitted by Councillor Wilson to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport in accordance with the Council's Constitution as follows:

Cabinet – 1st December 2021 Minute CB.94 (Grant Street Car Park Redevelopment Project)

How have you calculated the need for extra spaces required in this car park?

Councillor Swinburn responded that he had not personally calculated the need but Members would be aware that parking spaces around that area were few and far between. Its locality close to the sea front was primary to consideration of measures to ease congestion and would also assist with controlled parking zone arrangements.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Wilson enquired whether the portfolio holder could guarantee that the car park would be full, given that there had clearly been no calculation of the need for additional spaces.

Councillor Swinburn responded that he was unable to provide any guarantee.

- (7) A question on notice was submitted by Councillor Wilson to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport in accordance with the Council's Constitution as follows:

Cabinet – 1st December 2021 Minute CB.94 (Grant Street Car Park Redevelopment Project)

What consideration have you given to where the existing customers will park during construction?

Councillor Swinburn responded that construction was due to take place out of season so there would be adequate parking for residents and businesses.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Wilson enquired whether any consideration had been given to taking out bus and lorry parking spaces from the existing car park, thus saving money.

Councillor Swinburn believed that this had been taken into account.

- (8) A question on notice was submitted by Councillor Wilson to the Leader of the Council in accordance with the Council's Constitution as follows:

Cabinet – 19th January 2022 Minute CB.110 (Towns Fund Programme – St James House)

Has the Council borrowed the £956000 mentioned in this minute?

Councillor Jackson confirmed that this would be funded from borrowing.

- (9) A question on notice was submitted by Councillor Wilson to the Leader of the Council in accordance with the Council's Constitution as follows:

Cabinet – 19th January 2022 Minute CB.110 (Towns Fund Programme – St James House)

What guarantees are in place to make this loan secure, considering all circumstances including any ceasing of trade by the loanee.

Councillor Jackson responded the question of guarantees was part of the information taken in exempt session when reaching the decision and therefore he was restricted in what he could reveal in the open part of this meeting but he confirmed that Cabinet were satisfied with the guarantees to be put in place and he offered to make Councillor Wilson aware of those arrangements on a confidential basis.

- (10) A question on notice was submitted by Councillor Wilson to the Leader of the Council in accordance with the Council's Constitution as follows:

Cabinet – 19th January 2022 Minute CB.110 (Towns Fund Programme – St James House)

What will the loan fund?

Councillor Jackson confirmed that it would go towards the cost of redeveloping St James House into business and conference facilities.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Wilson enquired whether the council would own the building.

Councillor Jackson responded that Efactor was buying the building.

- (11) A question on notice was submitted by Councillor Wilson to the Chair of the Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel in accordance with the Council's Constitution as follows:

Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel – 13th January 2022 Minute SPCLL.48 (Ofsted Inspection of Children's Services)

In paragraph 4 the portfolio holder states that he doesn't consider himself as a corporate leader, does the Chair of this panel consider Councillor Lindley as a corporate leader?

Councillor Freeston, Chair of the Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel, responded that as Councillor Lindley was part of the leadership of this council then he could be seen as a leader.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Wilson enquired whether the Chair agreed that when the Ofsted inspection report referred to corporate leaders having a lack of knowledge towards children's services this referred to the portfolio holder.

Councillor Freeston responded that as no-one was named in the report then it was difficult to apportion blame with any certainty.

- (12) A question on notice was submitted by Councillor Wilson to the Chair of the Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel in accordance with the Council's Constitution as follows:

Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel – 13th January 2022 Minute SPCLL.48 (Ofsted Inspection of Children's Services)

Has the Chair ever recommended that the overall caseloads be scrutinised digging deep into the reasons and therefore the causes of the reasons why so many children in our area need support, drawing conclusions from such an investigation and making recommendations to Cabinet as a way of reducing caseloads overall?

Councillor Freeston responded that the panel had established a working group that intended to examine a whole host of factors and he confirmed that caseloads were discussed as part of that.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Wilson enquired whether the Chair would commit to looking at the causes of children coming into care and make recommendations as appropriate.

Councillor Freeston responded that he would.

- (13) A question on notice was submitted by Councillor Patrick to the Chair of the Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel in accordance with the Council's Constitution as follows:

Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel – 13th January 2022 Minute
SPCLL.48 (Ofsted Inspection of Children's Services)

What was your first thoughts upon reading the damning Ofsted report mentioned in the minutes?

Councillor Freeston responded that his first concern was how the council would ensure that any children considered to be in danger were immediately taken out of danger.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Patrick enquired whether at any point did the Chair consider how accountable the portfolio holder was with regard to the concerns raised in the report.

Councillor Freeston responded that he considered the accountability of everyone, including himself.

- (14) A question on notice was submitted by Councillor Patrick to the Chair of the Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel in accordance with the Council's Constitution as follows:

Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel – 13th January 2022 Minute
SPCLL.48 (Ofsted Inspection of Children's Services)

How surprised were you by the findings of the report?

Councillor Freeston responded that he was surprised as he had been reassured at scrutiny panel meetings that things were heading in the right direction.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Patrick enquired whether, as the Chair of the panel, Councillor Freeston did not feel any shame that scrutiny was not conducted in such a way that the outcomes reported in this report could not be foreseen.

Councillor Freeston responded that he did not.

- (15) A question on notice was submitted by Councillor Patrick to the Chair of the Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel in accordance with the Council's Constitution as follows:

Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel – 13th January 2022 Minute
SPCLL.48 (Ofsted Inspection of Children’s Services)

Does the Chair agree that the comment in these minutes came from a member of the panel who’s sober straight talking no nonsense will be missed by the panel in future?

Assuming that Councillor Patrick was referring to former Councillor Rudd, Councillor Freeston responded that he did agree and he felt genuine regret at her recent resignation as an Elected Member. However, he added that the other Members on the panel would be able to continue her sterling work.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Patrick enquired whether he agreed that Councillor Rudd would be missed by this Council as a whole.

Councillor Freeston responded that he could not speak for everyone.

- (16) A question on notice was submitted by Councillor Green to the Chair of the Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel in accordance with the Council’s Constitution as follows:

Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel – 13th January 2022 Minute
SPCLL.49 (Mental Capacity Act 2005)

The Mental Capacity Act 2005 amendments contain important changes to the deprivation of liberty safeguards particularly for young people, the implementation of these safeguards have been delayed and I would like to know if anything is being used in the interim period to ensure that our young people have their rights and liberty protected.

Councillor Freeston referred Councillor Green to the minutes of this meeting and those of the relevant Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel meeting, which he felt provided the information required.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Green sought an assurance that young people’s well-being would be prioritised.

Councillor Freeston provided an assurance that any considerations necessary were being taken into account and this would continue to be scrutinised.

- (17) A question on notice was submitted by Councillor Mickleburgh to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport in accordance with the Council’s Constitution as follows:

Communities Scrutiny Panel – 31st January 2022 Minute SPC.46 (Tracking the Recommendations of Scrutiny)

I understand that Lincolnshire Housing Partnership are to hold a Skip-It event themselves on the Grange Estate on March 31st. Does this mean the council won’t be having any more Skip-Its in South ward?

Councillor Swinburn responded that the skip it events had been put on hold as a result of the COVID pandemic on the advice of public health but they would resume as soon as it was safe to do so. He was pleased that Lincolnshire Housing Partnership had grasped the initiative to keep the Borough clean and chosen to run their own scheme.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Mickleburgh enquired why it was safe for Lincolnshire Housing Partnership to hold such an event but not the council.

Councillor Swinburn confirmed that the council had followed the advice of public health colleagues.

- (18) A question on notice was submitted by Councillor Wilson to the Chair of the Communities Scrutiny Panel in accordance with the Council's Constitution as follows:

Communities Scrutiny Panel – 31st January 2022 Minute SPC.47 (Anti Social Behaviour - North East Lincolnshire Youth Justice Model)

Can the Chair explain to this council why diversion activities were not discussed as part of the scrutiny of anti-social behaviour in this minute?

Councillor Silvester, Chair of the Communities Scrutiny Panel, responded that this was discussed at length although he added that Councillor Wilson may not have been made aware of this as there were no members of his group in attendance at the meeting.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Wilson enquired what recommendations came out of that discussion.

Councillor Silvester responded that there had been issues with COVID but a youth engagement alliance had been established to look at diversionary activities.

- (19) A question on notice was submitted by Councillor Wilson to the Chair of the Communities Scrutiny Panel in accordance with the Council's Constitution as follows:

Communities Scrutiny Panel – 31st January 2022 Minute SPC.47 (Anti Social Behaviour - North East Lincolnshire Youth Justice Model)

How long a delay has been incurred in the development of the horizon youth zone?

Councillor Silvester responded that it had been delayed by 12 months for various reasons, including the impact of the COVID pandemic.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Wilson asked if the panel had enquired whether there would be any further delays.

Councillor Silvester confirmed that it had and added that it was expected that works on the site would commence in August 2022.

- (20) A question on notice was submitted by Councillor Wilson to the Chair of the Communities Scrutiny Panel in accordance with the Council's Constitution as follows:

Communities Scrutiny Panel – 31st January 2022 Minute SPC.47 (Anti Social Behaviour - North East Lincolnshire Youth Justice Model)

Can the Chair explain to this council how concerned the panel is about county lines activity?

Councillor Silvester responded that it was very concerned but added that this was very much an operational police issue and one that had a wider impact than just North East Lincolnshire.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Wilson asked what recommendations had been put forward by the panel given its concerns.

Councillor Silvester reiterated that this was an operational police matter but the panel had asked for it to be added to its work programme for next year.

- (21) A question on notice was submitted by Councillor Green to the Chair of the Communities Scrutiny Panel in accordance with the Council's Constitution as follows:

Communities Scrutiny Panel – 31st January 2022 Minute SPC.48 (Domestic Abuse)

A service gap was identified that there were currently no programmes in place to work with non-convicted self-referring perpetrators of domestic abuse. I would like to know if there are currently any plans to introduce a programme to address this lack of provision as this is an important area of work?

Councillor Silvester responded that the panel had made recommendations to the various partnerships involved and this would continue to be monitored by the panel.

- (22) A question on notice was submitted by Councillor Wilson to the Chair of the Communities Scrutiny Panel in accordance with the Council's Constitution as follows:

Communities Scrutiny Panel – 31st January 2022 Minute SPC.48 (Domestic Abuse)

Could the Chair outline the overall numbers of domestic abuse victims and compare this to our statistical neighbouring authorities so that this council can appreciate the level of such abuse within our authority?

Councillor Silvester responded that it was made clear at the panel meeting that overall numbers of domestic abuse victims could not be determined as many cases were unreported. However, there were over 5300 incidents logged by the police. Unfortunately, comparisons with neighbouring activities were not possible as this was confidential information retained by the police and, in any case, demographics were different.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Wilson enquired whether the Chair understood the term 'statistical neighbouring authorities'.

Councillor Silvester confirmed that he did but he reiterated that the police would not make the information available as it remained confidential.

- (23) A question on notice was submitted by Councillor Goodwin to the Chair of the Communities Scrutiny Panel in accordance with the Council's Constitution as follows:

Communities Scrutiny Panel – 31st January 2022 Minute SPC.49 (Kerbside Recycling)

It was said in the minutes that there was a wide variety of reasons why residents were not recycling, in wards with a low uptake of recycling what should the council be doing to address this problem?

Councillor Silvester responded that the council was taking steps to address this problem through education and discussing recycling options with residents.

- (24) A question on notice was submitted by Councillor Wilson to the Chair of the Communities Scrutiny Panel in accordance with the Council's Constitution as follows:

Communities Scrutiny Panel – 31st January 2022 Minute SPC.49 (Kerbside Recycling)

Could the Chair explain to this council why his panel are overlooking problems with recycling in areas such as East and West Marsh when scrutinising recycling?

Councillor Silvester responded that the panel had scrutinised recycling in all areas of the Borough so none had been overlooked. He added that recycling rates in West Marsh were the best they had ever been.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Wilson asked what recommendations the panel had made on this matter.

Councillor Silvester responded that no recommendations were made as this item was an update on kerbside recycling.

- (25) A question on notice was submitted by Councillor Wilson to the Chair of the Economy Scrutiny Panel in accordance with the Council's Constitution as follows:

Economy Scrutiny Panel – 4th January 2022 Minute SPE.56 (Regeneration Partnership Performance Report)

Does the Chair believe that the allocation of financial resources are adequate to make a significant difference to North East Lincolnshire in respect to getting empty homes back into use?

Councillor Furneaux, Chair of the Economy Scrutiny Panel, responded that the allocation of financial resources currently in place had been shown to be adequate to bring back into use the 40 homes per annum set as the target within the regeneration partnership performance indicators. This target is expected to be exceeded within the current Municipal Year and he was certain that there was a commitment to being as many empty homes as possible back into use. He added that this would continue to be monitored by the panel.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Wilson asked whether the Chair would commit to looking at the process of getting empty homes back into use, including looking at costs and making any recommendations to make best financial use of any resources available.

Councillor Furneaux confirmed that the empty homes strategy was part of the panel's work programme and the panel had received an expansive update at a recent meeting that he was happy to provide to Councillor Wilson.

- (26) A question on notice was submitted by Councillor Patrick to the Chair of the Tourism and Visitor Economy Scrutiny Panel in accordance with the Council's Constitution as follows:

Tourism and Visitor Economy Scrutiny Panel – 27th January 2022 Minute SPTVE.51 (Question Time)

By now thousands of residents and visitors to Cleethorpes will have seen the security fencing around the hole in the ground of the corner of Central Promenade and Sea Road, how much has this eyesore cost taxpayers?

Councillor Brookes, Chair of the Tourism and Visitor Economy Scrutiny Panel, responded that he was not aware of an eyesore but he was aware of some delightful displays that had been put up to provide information to residents and visitors to Cleethorpes. The cost of this had been met from a grant to the authority.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Patrick asked if the Chair was aware that it had cost £1m to demolish the building on the site and there were ongoing costs associated with loss of revenue and business rates.

Councillor Brookes did not understand the point Councillor Patrick was making but offered to provide a response if Councillor Patrick put his request in writing.

- (27) A question on notice was submitted by Councillor Patrick to the Deputy Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee in accordance with the Council's Constitution as follows:

Audit and Governance Committee – 20th January 2022 Minute AC.54
(Partnership Working)

The decision that the new Tory administration made to immediately throw opposition members off the partnership board was the first step in a campaign to suppress openness and scrutiny of the administration, that has brought this council to many dark and depressing places in recent history, wasn't it?

Councillor Harness, Deputy Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee, responded that it wasn't.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Patrick asked the Deputy Chair to speculate as to why the Leader of the Council was happy to sit on this board as an opposition group leader but then, upon becoming the Leader, suddenly decided that this should no longer happen.

Councillor Harness responded that it wasn't for him to speculate on such matters.

RESOLVED –

1. That the minutes of the following meetings of Cabinet and the Committees of the Council be approved and adopted, as submitted:
 - Cabinet – 1st December, 19th January and 16th February
 - Portfolio Holder Environment and Transport – 29th November
 - Portfolio Holder Finance, Resources and Assets – 24th January
 - Budget Scrutiny – 24th and 25th January
 - Scrutiny Panel Children and Lifelong Learning – 13th January
 - Scrutiny Panel Communities – 31st January
 - Scrutiny Panel Economy – 4th January
 - Scrutiny Panel Health and Adult Social Care – 24th November, 2nd February
 - Scrutiny Panel Tourism and Visitor Economy – 27th January
 - Place Board (operating as the Health and Wellbeing Board) – 22nd November, 21st February
 - Audit and Governance Committee – 11th November, 20th January
 - Planning Committee – 1st December and 5th January
 - Licensing and Community Protection Committee – 9th February
 - Licensing Sub Committee – 14th December, 1st February
 - Standards Referrals Panel – 8th February
 - Appointments Committee – 2nd December, 10th January and 17th January
2. That Councillor S Swinburn provide a written response to Councillor Wilson's question on minute CB.94 of the Cabinet meeting held on 1st December 2021 regarding the annual maintenance costs for the proposed Grant Street car park and how this would provide value for money.

NEL.70

REVIEW OF PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES – SECOND CONSULTATION STAGE

Council considered a report from the Chief Executive and Returning Officer on the second consultation stage of the Boundary Commission for England review of the future arrangements for parliamentary constituencies across the country, including North East Lincolnshire.

This report was referred to Council by the Licensing and Community Protection Committee at its meeting on 15th March 2022. The committee recommended that the Council's original decision be endorsed, namely to support the Boundary Commission for England's proposed amendments to Parliamentary constituency boundaries as they affect North East Lincolnshire, i.e. the proposed new Great Grimsby and Cleethorpes Borough Constituency and the South Humber County Constituency, though we wish to see the latter renamed the Northern Lincolnshire County Constituency. This recommendation was moved by Councillor Jackson and seconded by Councillor Shreeve.

Councillor Patrick moved an amendment to the recommendations to exchange Scartho and Haverstoe wards within the constituencies proposed by the Boundary Commission. This was seconded by Councillor Mickleburgh but defeated on a show of hands.

Following a debate on the substantive motion, the Mayor put the matter to a vote and upon a show of hands it was:

RESOLVED - That, following consideration of the responses to the second consultation stage of the Review of Parliamentary Constituencies, the original decision of Council on 29th July 2021 be reaffirmed, namely to support the Boundary Commission for England's proposed amendments to Parliamentary constituency boundaries as they affect North East Lincolnshire, i.e. the proposed new Great Grimsby and Cleethorpes Borough Constituency and the South Humber County Constituency, though the Council wishes to see the latter renamed the Northern Lincolnshire County Constituency.

NEL.71

PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2022 - 2023

Council considered a report from the Leader of the Council presenting the Pay Policy Statement for 2022 – 2023 prior to Full Council consideration. This report was referred to Council by Cabinet at its meeting on 16th February, 2022.

RESOLVED – That the Pay Policy Statement for 2022 – 2023 be approved.

NEL.72 DISPENSATION – SECTION 85 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Council considered a report from the Chief Executive recommending the provision of a special dispensation under Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972.

RESOLVED – That, in accordance with Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972, a special dispensation be granted for Councillor Brian Robinson for health reasons.

NEL.73 AMENDMENTS TO PLACES ON COMMITTEES AND PANELS OF THE COUNCIL

Council considered a report from the Monitoring Officer advising of proposed changes to places on Committees and Panels.

RESOLVED – That Councillor Boyd be appointed as a full member of the Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel, the Communities Scrutiny Panel, the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel and the Licensing and Community Protection Committee.

There being no further business, the Mayor declared the meeting closed at 10.58 p.m.