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**NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON**

**26<sup>th</sup> January, 2022**

**Present:** Councillor Hasthorpe (in the Chair)  
Councillors Abel, Aisthorpe, Astbury, Batson, Beasant, Brasted, Brookes, Cairns, Callison, Cracknell, Croft, Dawkins, Freeston, Furneaux, Green, Harness, Hudson, Jackson, Lindley, Mickleburgh, Parkinson, Patrick, Pettigrew, Procter, Reynolds, Rodwell, Sandford, Shepherd, Sheridan, Shreeve, 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 prayers by Reverend Mary Vickers, the Mayor's Chaplain.

**NEL.38 COUNCILLOR DEBBIE WOODWARD**

Members stood to observe a minute's silence as a mark of respect for Councillor Woodward, who passed away on 3<sup>rd</sup> December, 2021.

This was followed by tributes from Councillors Jackson, Sandford, Westcott, Furneaux and Patrick.

**NEL.39 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor welcomed those present to the meeting and gave his thanks to everyone who had supported him with his recent 'Mayor's Do' which had raised

£2100 for the Mayor's Charities. He announced that this year's Civic Sunday would take place on 10<sup>th</sup> April.

The Mayor moved the suspension of Standing Order 19.1 for this particular meeting to allow Members to remain seated when speaking. This was seconded by Councillor Beasant and agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED - That the Council's Standing Order 19.1 be suspended for this particular meeting to permit Members to remain seating when speaking.

#### **NEL.40 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence from this meeting were received from Councillors Goodwin, Hogan, Robinson, Rudd and Silvester.

#### **NEL.41 MINUTES**

RESOLVED - The minutes of the meeting of North East Lincolnshire Council held on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2021 were approved as a correct record.

#### **NEL.42 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Procter declared a personal interest in item NEL.51 (Minutes of the Tourism and Visitor Economy Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2021) as an employee of a business situated in the vicinity of the Sea Road development. A question on the minutes had been submitted on notice.

#### **NEL.43 QUESTION TIME**

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

*"The Council has had its bid for £36m from the Levelling-Up Fund to build a new road to the West of Grimsby rejected. Depending on which council document one reads, this is planned to be either a relief road, a link road, an access road or an integral part of the development of the Grimsby West strategic housing site, dependant it seems, upon whom will pay for it. A housing development access road is clearly outside of the Levelling-Up Fund criteria and whilst it is understandable that the council would try to talk up its green credentials at the time of the bid being submitted in order to improve its chance of success, there is no evidence to support the claims made. It is evident from enquiries made that the bid was approved and submitted by Cabinet without any community leaders, including the council chamber being formally consulted. This is a clear breach of the Levelling-Up Fund Prospectus. Whilst the Cabinet's genuine view that the proposal was in the best long-term interests of the borough is unquestionable, and there were tight time margins, it is clear that the bid for funding which would lead on to a green-field housing development of unprecedented scale was a*

*mistake. Can the council kindly give assurances that the Levelling-Up Fund will not be approached again to fund construction of this road?*

*Furthermore, it is evident that a common criteria to many successful levelling-up fund bids was strong community engagement and support. Can the public be assured that for future bids there will be prior consultation and engagement with community leaders including all councillors, and local bodies such as the civic society and parish councils as appropriate? This will help ensure that any bids submitted are best placed to carry popular support and the whole community can unite behind the council and endorse those bids. Such bids might, for example, include the creation of more protected green space that would benefit the environment and well-being of both residents and wildlife for generations to come and increase the attractiveness of this area as a place to work and live.”*

Councillor S. Swinburn, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport, responded that the Levelling Up Prospectus allowed grant fund applications for three themes, these being transport investments, regeneration and culture. The prospectus was explicit with its requirements for bids valued between £20M-£50M and bids would be accepted for larger transport schemes, by exception, such as investments in the road network. North East Lincolnshire Council’s bid delivered on the criteria within the prospectus and also delivered on a number of strategic policies. This included the Local Plan, the Economic Strategy and the council’s commitment for carbon neutrality. The bid not only considered how to mitigate and improve “green credentials” on the Grimsby West site but also the wider impact and benefits outside the site boundary. This included sustainable methods of transport and reduced journey times. The required approvals for any Levelling Up Fund submissions included Members of Parliament, as democratically-elected representatives of the area, to back one bid that they saw as a priority. All bids should have the approval of the relevant authority responsible for delivering them and the bidding authorities were encouraged to collaborate with neighbouring authorities on cross boundary schemes, submitting joint proposals across their local areas where appropriate. Councillor Swinburn was happy that these criteria were all met and the link road was unanimously approved, by full Council as part of the Local Plan in 2018. He gave an assurance that any future bids submitted would be in line with the prospectus and its criteria, and this would include appropriate engagement, subject to bid criteria and timescales. He added that the Levelling Up prospectus would be updated ahead of the next funding round. Until this was published, the Council did not have guidance on the Government’s priorities for the next round of bidding, so was unable to commit to any specific scheme or schemes, at this time. According to the 2021 prospectus, the council still had the opportunity to bid for a £50m transportation project and two other £20m bids, so it had not lost anything in submitting a bid in Round 1. In fact, the council was due to receive formal feedback from the Department for Transport on its Levelling Up bid and would certainly use this opportunity to inform future bids. Councillor Swinburn concluded by confirming that the council would not be resubmitting a bid for the Western Relief Road.

A question was submitted from Mrs Downes for the Leader of the Council, in accordance with the Council's procedures. Mrs Downes attended the meeting and put the question, as set out below:

*"A recent council survey shows that the vast majority of local residents want biodiversity to improve and think that green infrastructure is key to tackling climate change. Over 81% of respondents felt that it was either extremely important or very important to them that the council acts to improve biodiversity within the borough. Additionally, 90% believed that green infrastructure should be a key method to help us tackle climate change. According to North East Lincolnshire Council's Natural Assets Plan, "Many of the ways to tackle climate change rely on fixes using our natural world, called nature-based solutions." The need to not only protect but also enhance North East Lincolnshire's green spaces (both managed and privately owned) to meet the Natural Asset Plan is clear and the public have been strong in their support for these commitments. At a recent joint scrutiny review of the above plan, it was stated by council officers that these visions for North East Lincolnshire were indeed at odds with the Local Plan, namely due to developments like Grimsby West which intend to concrete over one of the most biodiverse green spaces in the borough, but were needed as "no one wants to live in Grimsby Town centre". The Council Leader was quoted recently as commenting that "For us to grow as a borough, and meet our identified housing delivery targets, we need to see schemes of this nature, which will provide a balance of new developments and the protection and enhancement of our green areas. We remain confident that the Grimsby West scheme would achieve this ambition and the expected growth we need to achieve as a borough". Could the Council Leader explain how planning to build a 50mph road and 3,500 houses on a green-field site space is compatible with prioritizing, protecting, enhancing or benefitting the environment? How can these two plans legitimately go hand in hand if the council really are serious about looking after the natural assets of the borough and attracting people to live in the centre of Grimsby?"*

Councillor Jackson, Leader of the Council, responded that the housing development was a private scheme, located on private land. Both the road and the housing were both unanimously approved in the Local Plan in 2018, after extensive public consultation and engagement. The Local Plan identified a range of housing sites and developments across the borough, and the Town Centre Masterplan also established the concept of residential living in the heart of the town, supported by external funding. It was important that a range of housing was provided, enabling us to meet ongoing and changing need. In terms of the comment attributed to council officers, according to officers present, this was in response to a question asking why we allow our Local Plan to include green field sites and not just direct all development to brown field sites instead. The question or answer never commented on this being at odds with the Natural Asset Plan. The minutes read:

"The concern was raised by a member that we should be using more brownfields sites across the borough and reduce the number of greenfield sites for development. Mr King confirmed that there were not enough brownfield sites to meet our needs and it was about where people want to live. If we only identified

sites in the town centre and people could choose to live elsewhere and we would not get the benefits of people living within the borough and the consequence that the town centre and resort would suffer. Members referred to the levelling up funding and queried if it was an opportunity to improve the areas, we already have by using the brownfield sites first. Mr King explained that the government were already providing funding and we had to provide housing where people wanted to live.”

The minutes of a recent joint scrutiny meeting do also include the following:

“Members queried if there was conflict between the natural asset plan and the local plan. Mr King confirmed there was a need to protect specific areas of land whilst also providing areas for new developments. He explained it was about how we looked to develop the sites and in a different way whilst protecting habitats and delivering green spaces”

The proposed footprint for the Grimsby West development consisted of agricultural land of very low biodiversity value due to previous intensive use. In fact, most of our brown field sites will have higher biodiversity value than agricultural land. This has been confirmed by council officers. Assuming this agricultural land has a high biodiversity content is incorrect. This has been confirmed by the council’s Ecology Officer. As and when a planning application was submitted, the Ecology Officer, as well as many other statutory bodies would further scrutinise all plans to ensure that any areas of high biodiversity value in proximity of the Grimsby West development, such as the chalk stream or any other significant habitat, assessed independently, will not be negatively affected by the proposed development. This had been made clear on many occasions already. From a biodiversity angle, the development had the potential both to improve the biodiversity of the land and also to provide essential funding to enhance the green spaces surrounding the development and enable, under the housing scheme, the development of a new country park, improving the overall biodiversity of the area. The council wanted to achieve a balanced equilibrium, delivering appropriate economic growth through improved infrastructure and aspirational housing for this borough. This included improving access to education, health and employment, as well as enhancing existing green, natural and recreational sites via the council’s Natural Assets Policy, benefiting and promoting our natural habitats and wildlife, protecting and preserving them for many years to come, for future generations to enjoy. The Leader concluded by noting that the council was about to commence a review of the Local Plan and looked forward to extensive public engagement and comment.

## **NEL.44 THE LEADER’S STATEMENT**

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

With cautious optimism, the Leader hoped that we were through the worst of the impact of the Omicron COVID variant. He paid tribute to local NHS colleagues, primary care, the CCG, council staff and the many volunteers for the effort going

in to support the continuing vaccine programme. The vaccine remained the single most important line of defence and he urged anyone who had yet to get vaccinated, to do so. With the seemingly improving position, he hoped the council could move forward, with our partners, to focus on recovery across our local economy and in our communities.

The Leader updated Council on the position follow receipt of the 2022/23 local government financial settlement. He commented that balancing opportunity, aspiration and challenge would continue to be demanding but it was important to remain focused on our enabling and facilitating role, supporting local economic growth and working closely with our partners to ensure recovery and maximise the significant economic opportunities coming to fruition in this region.

The Leader commented that it was clear from the recent Ofsted inspection that the improvement journey for children's services was always going to be a long and challenging one. His administration remained focused on improvement and better outcomes for children and families in this Borough and it was important that councillors, officers and partners worked collectively on the challenges being faced. The Department for Education Commissioner had commenced his work and the Leader committed to working on a cross party basis to ensure that all councillors were appropriately engaged in the improvement arrangements. That included ensuring that scrutiny plays its part constructively and effectively.

On the carbon reduction agenda, North East Lincolnshire was leading the way on offshore wind and renewable energy, playing its part in the development of the Humber Freeport, supporting major projects like Zero Carbon Humber and facilitating the establishment and growth of leading-edge local businesses in the sector. As the Humber region was still a major carbon producer, the Leader felt it right and proper that we should collectively play a leading part in reversing that trend. The challenges and opportunities were set out in the carbon roadmap this would continue to be given the impetus required to support sustainable and clean growth in our Borough.

The publication of the Government's much anticipated Levelling Up White Paper was to set out the Government's approach to the next phase of devolution, in the form of county deals. This Council gave full backing to Greater Lincolnshire devolution back in 2016 which, for various reasons, did not proceed to a positive conclusion. This Council was now a full and exclusive member of the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership, while also remaining fully committed to the Humber economic opportunities. The ambition of this Administration was to maximise strategic collaboration opportunities on a Greater Lincolnshire footprint. Discussions about a suite of possible County Deal asks are underway and once the detail of the White Paper was known, it was the Leader's intention to bring a report to Cabinet and Scrutiny for consideration.

The Leader provided positive news on housing, with strong interest and feedback being received from local developers on the Council's proposed contractual arrangements and approach in delivering housing on the Western and Mathew Humberston sites. These brownfield sites would deliver around 500 homes and

work was due to commence on site this year. The 2022/23 council tax base was set to include over 800 additional band D equivalent properties. This was the highest year-on-year increase he could recall since being a member of this authority and was also reflected in the additional £800k of new homes bonus awarded as part of the financial settlement.

The Leader provided an update on the South Humber Industrial Investment Programme (with enquiries remaining buoyant) and the Humber Freeport. The Freeport was due to submit its full business case by the first deadline of 31 January for subsequent approval later in the spring. Approval would be a precondition to the release of seed capital funding; the funding of business rate relief to local authorities so they can pass on these benefits to tax site occupants; and the ability to use recycled rates to fund schemes across the region.

The Leader reported on good news for the Port of Immingham with the announcement last week of a £100 million deal between Associated British Ports and Stena Line to construct a new terminal. This was designed to meet the demands of increasing trade volumes between the port and the EU post Brexit, and it was great news for the local economy and local jobs.

The Leader provided an update on arrangements to deliver transformation in Grimsby Town Centre. There was recent good news about the future use of St James' House as a business hub and the administration was also in the process of making a strategic land acquisition, the long-term ambition being for development of a town centre transport hub.

Engagement with the Cleethorpes Masterplan public consultation had been very encouraging, with the numerous responses currently being analysed and the plan drafted. The Leader detailed the benefits of the recently approved development of a two-storey car park at Grant Street which would enhance the resort and its tourism offering.

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 had been circulated to all Members by Democratic Services.

## **NEL.45 YOUNG PEOPLE'S UPDATE**

The Council received an update from Brandon Lees, the Speaker for Youth Action, on current issues affecting children and young people.

Brandon reported on the annual 'Your Voice Your Vote' consultation that gave children and young people the opportunity to highlight the key issue they would like to see improve. Eight thousand votes were cast; an increase on the previous year. The top issue was 'feeling safe on the streets' and a number of events were being planned to identify actions to bring improvement. Over the last couple of years, the focus had been on mental health and Brandon provided an update on

actions take, including a loneliness and isolation project that was about to be launched.

It was noted that local creating connections work had recently received a national award for creativity and this would be the subject of an event to be held in the Spring.

Youth Action had also been working with the Corporate Parenting Board to review the 'Corporate Parenting Promise'. It continued to be involved in the Young Reporters project, which had been recognised nationally for its work. There was also a young advisors inspection team reporting to the local safeguarding board.

Youth Action would always look to ensure that young voices were heard and Brandon thanked Council for the opportunity to provide this update.

## **NEL.46 GOVERNANCE OF THE CHILDREN'S SERVICES IMPROVEMENT AGENDA AND FURTHER CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS**

The Council received a report from the Chief Executive setting out proposals for councillor oversight of the children's services improvement agenda and further constitutional matters.

RESOLVED –

1. That a Children's Services Oversight Group be established, with the membership and terms of reference as set out in the report now submitted.
2. That a review of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny arrangements be commissioned on the basis set out in this report and that authority be delegated to the Assistant Chief Executive to consult with the political group leaders to confirm those councillors (limited to 5) who will lead the review.
3. That the membership of the Executive and Scrutiny Liaison Board be extended to include a councillor from each of the Opposition Groups.

## **NEL.47 CALCULATION OF THE COUNCIL TAX BASE FOR 2022/23**

Council considered report from the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance, Resources and Assets on the setting of the Council Tax Base for 2022/23 and outlining the proposed Council Tax Support Scheme for the forthcoming year. This report was referred to Council by Cabinet at its meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> December, 2021.



RESOLVED –

1. That the proposed Council Tax Support Scheme for 2022/2023, which maintains the discount of 65% for all eligible working age customers, be approved.
2. That the Council Tax Base for the Council and other precepting bodies in 2022/23 be set at 45,206.9 Band D equivalents (as detailed in Appendix A of the report now submitted).

## **NEL.48 EXTERNAL AUDIT APPOINTMENT PROCESS**

Council considered a report from the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance, Resources and Assets on the reprocurement of an external audit provider at the end of the current 5-year contract.

RESOLVED - That the Council opt into the arrangements allowing the PSAA to appoint the Council's external auditor.

## **NEL.49 NOTICE OF MOTION**

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

*The future of UK industry sits in a precarious position, with challenges and opportunities from Brexit and the ongoing difficulties that Covid presents with no clear end in sight.*

*These challenges are no less acutely felt within North east Lincolnshire, but a clear ambition to develop our community as a thriving attractive destination to visit and live remains as strong as ever.*

*Historically, our area has thrived with every great leap forward in transport infrastructure, from the development of the railway and docks, to the crucial A180 and other road links.*

*Countless parts of the United Kingdom have seen billion-pound infrastructure projects come to fruition, as well as others in the pipeline, heavily backed by local authorities that voice clear decisive leadership that delivers for their area.*

*One crucial example of transport infrastructure is electrification of rail links, which has been commonplace along some lines for many decades, however, branch lines such as the Doncaster to Cleethorpes line have yet to receive their much-needed upgrade to remain sustainable into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.*

*This council believes that if rail links are to have a future in North East Lincolnshire, they must receive the vital infrastructure upgrades that other areas have seen and are looking at in coming years.*

*We charge our Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport to declare he will work relentlessly for the award of a far reaching multi-million pound rail infrastructure enhancement for our passenger and freight links, including but not limited to electrification of the network.*

*We ask that the portfolio holder actively works with our MPs where possible, and regularly updates the Economy Scrutiny Panel as to progress being made in this important matter.*

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 Abel, Aisthorpe, Astbury, Batson, Beasant, Brasted, Brookes, Cairns, Callison, Cracknell, Croft, Dawkins, Freeston, Furneaux, Green, Harness, Hasthorpe, Hudson, Jackson, Lindley, Mickleburgh, Parkinson, Patrick, Pettigrew, Procter, Reynolds, Rodwell, Sandford, Shepherd, Sheridan, Shreeve, Smith, K. Swinburn, S. Swinburn, Westcott and Wilson (36 votes)

The motion was therefore carried unanimously and it was

RESOLVED –

1. That the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport be charged with declaring that he will work relentlessly for the award of a far reaching multi-million pound rail infrastructure enhancement for the Borough's passenger and freight links, including but not limited to electrification of the network.
2. That the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport actively works with our MPs where possible, and regularly updates the Economy Scrutiny Panel as to progress being made in this important matter.

## **NEL.50 QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

The Mayor invited Councillor Rodwell to present the following question to the Chair of the Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel, the question having been submitted on notice in accordance with Council's Standing Orders.

*“How do we know that vulnerable children who have been discharged/step down from children services in our area are not currently at risk?”*

Councillor Freeston, Chair of the Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel responded that when a case is considered for closure or step down, a meeting should be held with the network of family members, professionals and other agencies supporting the family to agree that the safety plan that is in place is working to keep the children and family safe and supported. When all agree this is the case, consideration would be made around the ongoing networks that are

required to keep the children safe and supported, which can come in the form of step down to locality family hubs, step down to early help provision or closure to universal support. The latter would involve professionals such as health visitors, schools and GPs. Advice, guidance and consultation was always available from the Children's Integrated Front Door if anyone was worried about a child's safety.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Rodwell asked if the Chair felt confident that children were not at risk.

Councillor Freeston responded that he was confident that social workers in our Borough were working as hard as they possibly could. He hoped and expected that processes were in place to keep children safe.

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

*“Do you monitor the level of pollution around the Memorial Hall, Grimsby Road, Cleethorpes at peak tourist event times, if so what are they?”*

Councillor Shepherd, Portfolio Holder for Safer and Stronger Communities, responded that the council currently undertook non-automatic monitoring of nitrogen dioxide at thirty four sites using diffusion tubes. Air quality levels at the Memorial Hall were not currently being monitored. The nearest diffusion tubes were located at the junction of Park Street/Cleethorpes Road; the junction of Victor Street/Cleethorpes Road; Riby Square/ Cleethorpes Road; Love Lane Corner; and Hewitt's Circus. Councillor Shepherd offered to circulate data from these sites to Councillor Rodwell. The diffusion tubes can be relocated to another area of interest once sufficient data has been collected at the current site. Councillor Shepherd added that most levels of air pollution were caused by standing traffic and the administration were working to improve traffic flow in the vicinity of the Memorial Hall. A multi-storey car park in Grant Street was currently being considered, making parking easier and quicker, thus reducing the cause of some pollution.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Rodwell asked if the area could be monitored as she was very concerned about the welfare of residents.

Councillor Shepherd shared her concerns and he agreed to raise the possibility of placing a diffusion tube in the vicinity once one became available. However, he felt that the new car park would help to reduce pollution levels.

At this point in the proceedings, the Mayor briefly adjourned the meeting. On reconvening the meeting, 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 Rodwell 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.

*“With the shortage of carers in North East Lincolnshire is everyone getting the level of care that they require?”*

Councillor Cracknell, Portfolio Holder for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Social Care, responded that, in order to minimise shortages, the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) were working with providers and prioritising those patients with more complex needs. They were working with families, individuals and social workers where there may be scope to deliver packages flexibly, in line with the neighbourhood teams model. The CCG had also commissioned a winter pressures team which was providing assistance.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Rodwell asked for an assurance that no-one was being put at risk due to the staff shortages.

Councillor Cracknell gave an assurance that those with the most complex needs were being prioritised and ways of resolving other matters were also being explored.

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 have been asked about a number of issues regarding the maintenance of Grimsby Road – the gateway to Cleethorpes and where the council were currently reputed to be supporting residents to promote the appearance of their properties to improve the view visitors to the town get when approaching the seafront. Last winter much of the footpath along Grimsby Road was flooded. Not only was this detrimental to many of the small businesses along there, it was inconvenient, messy and gave a very poor impression to everyone. This year I have asked a number of times for the pavement gutters to be cleared to ensure this does not happen again. Many of them currently have vegetation growing out of them and are completely clogged up. The gutters have been inspected by council officers who agree they need clearing and this was the council's responsibility but who could not locate the equipment to do it. I find it quite shocking that the council was unable to support those small businesses, particularly following the poor opportunities these shops and businesses had faced lately and I was incredulous that this equipment had been apparently misplaced. The trees along the road are poorly maintained. Council officers again agreed attention was needed at a time when the trees were almost touching buildings and giving residents fears regarding possible subsidence and reduced daylight in their premises. Not only that but when a charity wanted to improve the appearance of the road and pay for trees to be planted along the*

*road, they were told the council would charge them £5,000 for each tree they would like to plant. When I asked for information from officers about how this charge can be justified and for some kind of explanation about the costs I was not given an answer. Can I ask how all this fits in with the aims of the council to improve the appearance of the gateway to Cleethorpes?"*

Councillor Swinburn, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Housing, responded that, having spoken to the managers of the services mentioned in this question, it was not felt that it correctly reflected the extensive work they carry out in this area. The area was a Zone 1 which meant it was swept daily, litter picked twice a day and also all street litter bins emptied. Additional cleansing was also in place following Grimsby Town home games. The street cleansing supervisor had checked on cleanliness levels and reported no concerns. Councillor Swinburn had further asked the team to provide an update on recent reports received in relation to a blocked drain and tree outside one of the shops. The Council work with Anglian water to keep rain water drainage in good condition across the borough. The Council had a gully vehicle which was used for routine gully cleansing. Every gully along Cleethorpes Road, is regularly maintained so long as it was accessible, which was sometimes difficult due to parked vehicles. However, more complicated drainage issues or damaged drains were outside the Council's expertise and required referral to Anglian Water. He confirmed that there was a report of blocked drains in this location in November, 2021 and it was visited the same day and cleared with a gully vehicle. This was successful for most of the drains, apart from one of the pavement drains. This was identified as a split channel, damaged by tree roots, requiring additional maintenance outside the scope of the Council services and was reported for engineering action. Councillor Swinburn noted that all trees were regularly inspected for safety and any pruning works identified as required, these were programmed in to be completed during the winter season, in line with good practice. No records had been found of a conversation about the cost of trees. However, on a general note, a high level of inspection and maintenance was required to ensure the safety of street trees over their life, particularly along busy traffic routes. Therefore, the council did need to carefully consider where tree planting took place to reduce risk of future problems.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Green enquired what was being done about blocked pavement gullies.

Councillor Swinburn responded that, as reported above, these had been looked at and reported for further investigation.

The Chair 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.

*"Would the portfolio holder make funds available to resurface Macaulay Street?"*

Councillor Swinburn responded that the Highway and Transport team review a number of proposed improvements work across the highway network and

pedestrian walkways, which inform on the development of the Local Transport Plan (LTP). Those schemes included on the LTP are based on a number of criteria, such as condition, safety and accessibility. When assessing Macaulay Street, this was undertaken with consideration that it was part of our unclassified network and, for the purpose of condition surveys, Macaulay Street was split into four sections:

- Boulevard Avenue to End – in good condition and not currently on the plan for improvements
- Wharton Street to Boulevard Avenue – this section was starting to deteriorate. It was surface dressed in 2014 and there was evidence of some localised areas of failures which required infrequent reactive patch repair but nothing that would require escalation over other priorities (estimated cost - to resurface this section to a depth of 100mm would cost circa £70K).
- Wharton Street to Haycroft Street (pedestrianised) – in good condition and not currently on the plan for improvements.
- Littlefield Lane to Haycroft Street – would benefit from improvements due to the steep camber and numerous historical utility excavations, however, it is currently 122<sup>nd</sup> on the forward plan for carriageway resurfacing/reconstruction (estimated cost - because of the existing profiles a plane and resurface scheme was the only option with an estimated cost for resurfacing this section being circa £160k).

Macaulay Street was not included in the 2022 LTP due to there being higher priorities for improvement and other demands on the network. Councillor Swinburn provided examples of areas which were a higher priority.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Wilson enquired how the scoring system worked with regard to cycling and the dangers caused by ridges.

Councillor Swinburn responded that he did not know the criteria but reviews were conducted on a regular basis and he was confident that any further deterioration would be reported back.

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.

*“Could the portfolio holder update this Council on all delays encountered with the SHIP scheme, including length of delays?”*

Councillor Procter, Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, Housing and Tourism responded by summarising the delays to individual projects. He noted that 2021 had been a busy year for the SHIP programme, with progress being made in many areas. In terms of strategic mitigation, the Cress Marsh site was completed on time in December 2018 and had attracted over 100 different species of birds and wildlife. This 100 acre site had won a national planning award for innovation in 2020 and continued to attract interest from all around the UK. The mitigation strategy has worked well with 60% of Cress Marsh already

used up to offset industrial development including Velocys who said of the process *“if we did something new, we would choose South Humber over any location due to the mitigation and service received from North East Lincolnshire Council.”* Cress Marsh was an inland site and the next site to be constructed was an important coastal site – Novartis Ings. This was a 50ac site and was named after Novartis who donated the land to the Council in 2021. Construction work started on this site in spring 2022. When Novartis was complete, half of the 300ac mitigation target would be constructed with two coastal sites remaining. These would be constructed dependant on mitigation requirements and SHIIP income. The Humber Link Road was completed in March 2021 and had been very well received by local companies and hauliers. Despite COVID, the 2.5km road was completed under budget and in line with the revised timescale. The road and utilities infrastructure for the Pioneer Business Park were completed in March 2021. The A1173 road improvements included the new roundabout to access Phase 1A of the development and the southern access road leads to the myenergi site. Despite being constructed right in the middle of the COVID restrictions, the whole project was within the revised timescale and well within budget. The first myenergi building of 15,000sqft was handed over in March 2021, and they had recently acquired adjacent land to build a 45,000sqft manufacturing unit which would start construction in April 2022. Despite concerns over increasing construction costs and availability of supplies, enquiries for investment and expansion on the remainder of Phase 1A continued to be strong, with several companies in advanced negotiations for plots on the north side of the park. Councillor Procter concluded by detailing a number of significant investments which were in the pipeline.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Wilson enquired whether delays had caused any impact on inward investment to North East Lincolnshire.

Councillor Procter responded that there had been no delay to commitments but COVID had caused a volatile situation, with construction delayed and there was a level of catch up still taking place.

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.

*“What is the difference in life expectancy of residents in the West Marsh compared with the life expectancy of residents in wards with the highest (in years please)?”*

Councillor Cracknell responded that the difference for males was 7.9 years (with West Marsh being 74.0 years and Scartho being 81.9 years) and the difference for females was 5.3 years (with West Marsh being 80.9 years and Haverstoe being 86.2 years).

In a supplementary question, Councillor Wilson asked whether the portfolio holder agreed that this required drastic action.

Councillor Cracknell agreed that the figures were stark. The NHS had set a target to increase life expectancy by five years by 2035. Currently in terms of the Humber Coast and Vale area, there was an NHS initiative targeting the key areas of inequalities in health and requiring an action plan to address those inequalities. Those key areas were early cancer diagnosis, severe mental illness, hypertension, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and maternity.

The Chair invited Councillor Sheridan 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.

*“Could the portfolio holder update this council on the progress of the landlords licencing scheme for parts of the West Marsh?”*

Councillor Procter responded that the council had made a commitment within its Housing Strategy to explore options to designate eligible parts of the borough as licensed areas, under Part 3 of the Housing Act 2004. On government consultation was paused because of the COVID pandemic. Subject to COVID restrictions being lifted and available resource, the council should hopefully revisit licensing during 2022 but it needs to be in a position where it can properly consult and engage with stakeholders. Officers were currently assessing the requirements and resource needed to deliver selective licensing. In addition, the Council were reviewing the option of considering joint working with Decent and Safe Homes (DASH). DASH was an arms-length organisation run through Derby City Council who could deliver an accreditation scheme across the borough. They currently operate a successful landlord accreditation scheme in many local authority areas including Lincoln, East and West Lindsey, Boston and South Kesteven. Once officers had concluded their investigations, further updates would be provided.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Sheridan enquired whether the DASH initiative would be rolled out across the Borough.

Councillor Procter responded that he would want to explore a Borough-wide option.

The Chair invited Councillor Patrick 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.

*“Allegations that there was some form of social event that took place at Downing Street couldn't have come at a worse time in the fight against COVID, this will likely have a massive impact in the confidence of the sincerity in both national and local government in this battle. What steps will the portfolio holder take locally to counter this crisis in public faith in us as community leaders?”*

Councillor Cracknell responded that this administration had demonstrated time and time again its ability to maintain contact with residents during the COVID



crisis. It has always observed the restrictions that had been in force and she thanked everyone for their efforts in doing the same.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Patrick asked if the portfolio holder shared his view that all elected officials who had been caught flouting the rules had lost all moral authority.

Councillor Cracknell responded that she could only speak in her role as a local leading official and she was confident that nothing had been done at a local level to undermine our role as local leaders. She added that there were many examples where they were able to demonstrate that the public had considerable faith in us and that we had done all we could to protect our residents.

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.

*“Given that the portfolio holder has let our children’s services go radically under-resourced for the entirety of his tenure, isn’t it time for him to accept his part in the unforgivable failings in the recent Ofsted report?”*

Councillor Shreeve, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Assets and Resources, responded that during the period 2019/20 to 2021/22 budget envelopes had increased by £14m. The majority of this additional funding had gone into children’s services. Sadly, despite this and for a number of reasons, the number of children in care had increased, as had the use of agency staff. These resulting costs had been supported by additional funding, bringing the total investment to over £34m. Despite the pressures he was happy that he had been able to support this additional funding and children’s services.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Patrick noted that the Ofsted inspection report had commented on the dilution of the role of a project team due to under resourcing and asked if the portfolio holder accepted that comment.

Councillor Shreeve accepted the comment without exception but noted that there would always be some elements better resourced than others. In general terms, he was confident that whatever the cost to the authority, it had risen to the challenge and provided the necessary resource for children’s services.

## **NEL.51 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 – 8<sup>th</sup> September, 6<sup>th</sup> October, 20<sup>th</sup> October and 3<sup>rd</sup> November
- Portfolio Holder Environment and Transport – 13<sup>th</sup> September and 4<sup>th</sup> October
- Scrutiny Panel Children and Lifelong Learning – 9<sup>th</sup> September and 4<sup>th</sup> November

- Scrutiny Panel Communities – 16<sup>th</sup> September and 11<sup>th</sup> November
- Scrutiny Panel Economy – 31<sup>st</sup> August, 12<sup>th</sup> October and 26<sup>th</sup> October
- Scrutiny Panel Health and Adult Social Care – 29<sup>th</sup> September
- Scrutiny Panel Tourism and Visitor Economy – 23<sup>rd</sup> September and 18<sup>th</sup> November
- Joint Scrutiny Panel Economy; and Tourism and Visitor Economy – 31<sup>st</sup> August
- Joint Scrutiny Panel Communities; Economy; and Tourism and Visitor Economy – 9<sup>th</sup> November
- Crime and Disorder Committee – 28<sup>th</sup> October
- Place Board (operating as the Health and Wellbeing Board) – 6<sup>th</sup> September
- Audit and Governance Committee – 29<sup>th</sup> September
- Planning Committee – 11<sup>th</sup> August, 8<sup>th</sup> September, 6<sup>th</sup> October and 3<sup>rd</sup> November
- Standards and Adjudication Committee – 22<sup>nd</sup> September
- Standards Referrals Panel – 1<sup>st</sup> September, 19<sup>th</sup> October and 25<sup>th</sup> November

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 had been received; 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 Patrick to the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, Housing and Tourism in accordance with the Council's Constitution as follows:

Cabinet – 6<sup>th</sup> October 2021 Minute CB.67 (Local Plan Review)

*Can the portfolio holder reassure members that if as a consequence of the local plan review, our housing target is reduced, that when considering which housing sites that will have first priority to be scaled down or removed, there will have no greater consideration than the wishes of residents?*

Councillor Procter responded that the Local Plan was currently under review and consultation was still underway and it was too early to speculate on any housing sites.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Patrick enquired whether the ongoing protests regarding the Grimsby West development would weigh heavily when considering housing sites as part of the review.

Councillor Procter responded that the residents views on all housing developments would be subject to consultation and considered as part of the planning process.

- (2) 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 – 6<sup>th</sup> October 2021 Minute CB.70 (Local Authority Capability Fund)

*Could you give further clarification on what the active travel schemes will involve?*

Councillor Swinburn responded that the Active Travel Fund allocation would allow the council to explore projects such as investigations into cycle routes, the use of electric scooters, electric vehicle charging points, encouraging access to public transport, provision of cycle storage and better walking provision.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Aisthorpe asked whether cycle lanes should be considered at development stage in the same way as roads and footpaths and whether areas with low numbers of cycle lanes would be looked at.

Councillor Swinburn agreed on both issues.

- (3) A question on notice was submitted by Councillor Green to the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Resources and Assets in accordance with the Council's Constitution as follows:

Cabinet – 6<sup>th</sup> October 2021 Minute CB.70 (Local Authority Capability Fund)

*Councillor Shreeve notes that steps should be taken to encourage the learning of the basic rules of cycling. Will this opportunity to encourage cycling safety be used to explain that cyclists do not have right of way on pavements or could the council take steps to introduce cycle paths as there are many areas of town where pedestrians are feeling unsafe due to the numbers of cyclists who feel unsafe on the road?*

Councillor Shreeve responded that he continued to believe that cyclists should be aware of the basic rules of cycling. He agreed to make further enquiries on current availability of such educational schemes and report back to Councillor Green. He felt that cycle ways should be separate from cars and pedestrians where possible.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Green enquired what was being done to protect residents.

Councillor Shreeve suggested Councillor Swinburn, as Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport, would be best placed to answer this and he agreed to ask him to provide a written response to Councillor Green.

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

Portfolio Holder Environment and Transport – 4<sup>th</sup> October 2021 Minute PH.ETE.24 (Highway Winter Service Review)

*Please can the portfolio holder elaborate on the question about rock salt? What adverse environmental impact does the current rock salt have?*

Councillor Swinburn responded that there was an alternative type of rock salt that was more environmentally friendly but it had less impact on the highway as it was

sprayed with a sticky substance that causes issues when it is laid on the highway. From benchmarking that had been undertaken it appeared that many authorities used the same salt as us and it was readily available. He felt that the salt used by the council was the most cost effective at present.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Sheridan what difference the alternative made in terms of its impact on the environment.

Councillor Swinburn reiterated that due to the way it was sprayed, the alternative did not provide value for money and nor was it environmentally adequate.

- (5) A question on notice was submitted by Councillor Sheridan 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 – 9th September 2021 Minute  
SPCLL.20 (Methodology of Children's Services Overspend)

*The meeting resolved to have a working group to look into detail at the council's agency employment within children's services. Given the recent Ofsted inspection can the Chair explain how far into this working group process the scrutiny panel is given that the time that has elapsed?*

Councillor Freeston responded that the working group had held an initial meeting and a further meeting was planned on 24<sup>th</sup> February.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Sheridan asked why there had only been one meeting since the working group was agreed in September.

Councillor Freeston responded that this was due to a combination of factors, such as collation of information, officer availability and awaiting publication of the Ofsted inspection report.

- (6) 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 – 9th September 2021 Minute  
SPCLL.23 (North East Lincolnshire offer to care leavers who attend university)

*Can the Chair explain what clear evidence he has as to the impact in terms of the wellbeing and outcomes for our care leavers the motion he proposed could have had if it been successful and then accepted by Cabinet and enacted?*

Councillor Freeston felt that it wasn't possible to comment on something that did not come to fruition.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Patrick asked the Chair why the proposal was not seconded, including by members of his own political group.

Councillor Freeston suggested that this was a question that he would need to direct to panel members but he acknowledged that there was clearly no appetite to take the proposal forward.

- (7) 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 – 9th September 2021 Minute SPCLL.23 (North East Lincolnshire offer to care leavers who attend university)

*Can the Chair clarify this minute as to whether the panel was inquiring about further or higher education when talking about the £35 for children in care, as it is very confusing for anyone reading these minutes.*

Councillor Freeston confirmed that minute and discussion related to higher education.

- (8) 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 – 9th September 2021 Minute SPCLL.23 (North East Lincolnshire offer to care leavers who attend university)

*Typically, how many children in care go to new university each year?*

Councillor Freeston responded that this was not something that was routinely collected but there were currently three young care leavers attending university and three were expected to start in September 2022.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Wilson enquired, given those numbers, why he proposed to take that money off them.

Councillor Freeston responded that he made the proposal but it would have been for Cabinet to consider whether it was appropriate.

- (9) 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 – 9th September 2021 Minute SPCLL.23 (North East Lincolnshire offer to care leavers who attend university)

*In percentage terms how many children (not in care) go to university each year compared to children in care who go to university each year (for the 2020 cohort)?*

Councillor Freeston responded that this was not something that was routinely collected for the general population but 8 out of 140 care leavers went into some

form of higher education. This was equivalent to 6% and was increase on the previous year.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Wilson enquired whether the Chair was aware that outcomes for children in care were generally much worse than for those who were not.

Councillor Freeston responded that he was aware but he thought it short-sighted to assume that the reasons were just financial.

- (10) A question on notice was submitted by Councillor Rodwell 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 – 9th September 2021 Minute SPCLL.23 (North East Lincolnshire offer to care leavers who attend university)

*Can I just check the chair, who is Cllr Freeston, proposed to recommend to Cabinet that the £35 care leavers receive a week be removed from care leavers who go to university?*

Councillor Freeston confirmed that he did make that proposal.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Rodwell enquired whether he thought it right to take away such funding when so few people in care were going to university.

Councillor Freeston responded that in hindsight he misunderstood the appetite of the panel to take such a proposal forward.

- (11) 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 – 9th September 2021 Minute SPCLL.26 (Urgent Business - 16-21 support accommodation)

*When members were first notified by democratic services that this item would not be coming back to the next scrutiny panel as agreed at this meeting, was this done so with the agreement of the chair?*

Councillor Freeston confirmed that it was.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Patrick sought confirmation that the Chair had been consulted when the panel was first informed that the item had been withdrawn.

Councillor Freeston confirmed that he had.

- (12) A question on notice was submitted by Councillor Rodwell 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 – 4<sup>th</sup> November 2021 Minute SPCLL.31 (Autism spectrum conditions diagnosis pathway)

*Does the chair of the children and lifelong scrutiny panel agree with me that the comments I made about ensuring all parents and children should be giving feedback at the beginning, middle and end of the autism spectrum conditions diagnosis pathway, as these comments seem to be missing from the minutes?*

Councillor Freeston responded that he did agree and he recommended that Councillor Rodwell contact Democratic Services if she felt that the minutes needed to be amended.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Rodwell enquired why her comments were missing from the minutes.

Councillor Freeston responded that a lot was said during the course of the meeting and he could not recall every comment made. He again advised Councillor Rodwell to contact Democratic Services if she felt the minutes needed to be amended.

- (13) A question on notice was submitted by Councillor Patrick to the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Resources and Assets, in accordance with the Council's Constitution as follows:

Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel – 4<sup>th</sup> November 2021 Minute SPCLL.35 (Quarter Two Finance Monitoring Report)

*Could the portfolio holder for finance give council his assessment of the current state of financial challenges we are facing as a local authority as outlined in this report?*

Councillor Shreeve responded that the report submitted to the panel outlined the financial challenges being faced by the council, and these continued to be COVID and social care budgets.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Patrick enquired about the dependency on central government for one-off funding and what would happen in the future if this was no longer available.

Councillor Shreeve responded that projecting and forecasting for the future was very difficult and a government white paper that may address this issue was expected. He reminded Councillor Patrick that the council held contingency reserves.

- (14) 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 – 4th November 2021 Minute  
SPCLL.37 (NEETs Update)

*Can I ask the Chair, did the panel inquire about children that are looked after?*

Councillor Freeston responded that the panel considered this item with all children in mind.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Wilson asked the Chair if he could provide an overview of the issues affecting children that are looked after in relation to young people not being in employment, education or training (NEETs).

Councillor Freeston agreed to provide a written response and to invite Councillor Wilson to the next panel meeting when this issue was discussed.

- (15) 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 – 11th November 2021 Minute SPC.23 (Digital Inclusion)

*Could the Chair update this council on how many residents are digitally excluded here in North East Lincolnshire?*

In the absence the Chair and a Deputy Chair of the Communities Scrutiny Panel, the Mayor agreed to arrange for a written response to be provided to Councillor Wilson.

- (16) A question on notice was submitted by Councillor Aisthorpe to the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Resources and Assets, in accordance with the Council's Constitution as follows:

Communities Scrutiny Panel – 11<sup>th</sup> November 2021 Minute SPC.34 (Quarter 2 Finance Monitoring Report)

*Does Councillor Shreeve stand by his statement that he does not expect a repeat of COVID?*

Councillor Shreeve responded by confirming that he said that he did not expect a repeat of the lockdown measures. He felt that COVID would continue to be with us for the foreseeable future but he hoped to see a progressive weakening of the virus. He added that the best defence continued to be the vaccination programme.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Aisthorpe asked if the portfolio holder agreed that, if there was a further significant variant, it would completely wipe out all the council's reserves.



Councillor Shreeve felt that further mutations were impossible to predict but if we went back to the level of the first wave then he was confident that government support would be forthcoming.

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

Communities Scrutiny Panel – 11<sup>th</sup> November 2021 Minute SPC.36 (Crime Statistics for North East Lincolnshire)

*What measures have been put in place to stop drug spiking before it occurs?*

In the absence of the Chair of the Communities Scrutiny Panel, Councillor Shepherd offered to provide a response. Councillor Shepherd noted that drug spiking was a term used by those manufacturing drugs and, as it was an illegal activity, the authority could not put measures in place. On drink spiking, this was currently being discussed by the night time economy group and it was a high priority for the police. He noted that it was often difficult to establish the facts with such cases but they were working in partnership to introduce preventative measures. Thankfully, incidents within the Borough were not that frequent at present.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Rodwell asked how victims were being given the opportunity to come forward.

Councillor Shepherd responded that it was important to collate information, which would then be passed on to licence holders so that evidence could be sought. If there was evidence then the police would visit the premises and access CCTV to actively pursue the perpetrators.

- (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 – 11<sup>th</sup> November 2021 Minute SPC.36 (Crime Statistics for North East Lincolnshire)

*Could the Chair explain to this council how satisfied he was with the answer to the questions on open drug dealing on the streets of this borough?*

In the absence the Chair and a Deputy Chair of the Communities Scrutiny Panel, the Mayor agreed to arrange for a written response to be provided to Councillor Wilson.

- (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 – 11<sup>th</sup> November 2021 Minute SPC.36 (Crime Statistics for North East Lincolnshire)

*What action is being taken regarding cycle theft?*

In the absence the Chair and a Deputy Chair of the Communities Scrutiny Panel, the Mayor agreed to arrange for a written response to be provided to Councillor Wilson.

- (20) 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:

Economy Scrutiny Panel – 31<sup>st</sup> August 2021 Minute SPE.21 (Question Time)

*How would the portfolio holder describe the damage done to this council's reputation as a result of the failure of the bid relating to the Grimsby West development, especially as we are in theory a top priority area for the levelling up fund and yet we were left empty handed?*

Councillor Swinburn did not believe the council had suffered any damage to its reputation. He felt it was a strong bid but it was a competitive process. He added that the amount of funding that the council had received recently was testament to the way the administration had responded to the challenges faced.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Patrick asked why the bid failed.

Councillor Swinburn responded that the council was still awaiting confirmation of the reasons why the bid was not successful. He noted that a third of the successful bids related to regeneration bids and the administration would be putting in future bids for regeneration and culture projects.

- (21) 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 – 31<sup>st</sup> August 2021 Minute SPE.26 (Regeneration Partnership Performance Report Quarter 1)

*Could the Chair put figures to the paragraph regarding empty home targets; rate of increase in empty homes and rate of increase in return to use of empty homes?*

Councillor Furneaux, Chair of the Economy Scrutiny Panel, responded that the target for 40 and 43 homes were brought back into use in 2020/21. He agreed to provide a written response on the rate of increase and further agreed to include a copy of a response provided to the panel regarding how long houses had to be empty to be included within the housing supply figures.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Wilson asked whether the Chair felt that this target was reasonable given the number of empty homes in the Borough.

Councillor Furneaux responded that this had been questioned by the panel and a report on empty homes was due to be considered.

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

Economy Scrutiny Panel – 12<sup>th</sup> October 2021 Minute SPE.31 (Bus Service Improvement)

*What is the problem with DVLA processing licencing and how long is it taking for them to be processed?*

Councillor Furneaux responded that the matter was outside the remit of the Economy Scrutiny Panel but he suspected that it was COVID related.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Rodwell asked if the Chair would be willing to take the issue up with the local MPs.

Councillor Furneaux suggested that Councillor Rodwell was equally able to raise this with her local MP.

- (23) A question on notice was submitted by Councillor Rodwell to the Chair of the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel, in accordance with the Council's Constitution as follows:

Scrutiny Panel Health and Adult Social Care – 29<sup>th</sup> September 2021 Minute SPH.28 (Winter Planning)

*Do care home and health workers have use of the higher quality face masks now we are dealing with a new variant where there are lots of unknowns to ensure they are protected?*

Councillor Hudson, Chair of the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel, responded that all health care providers could access free personal protective equipment. He added that face covering standards did vary dependent on circumstances.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Rodwell asked if the Chair agreed that care staff should be not put at risk like they were during the first wave of COVID.

Councillor Hudson agreed.

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

Scrutiny Panel Tourism and the Visitor Economy – 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2021 Minute SPTVE.19 (Council Plan)

*Has any further progress been made towards Grimsby getting its bus station back?*

Councillor Brookes, Chair of the Tourism and Visitor Economy Scrutiny Panel, responded that it had and negotiations were ongoing.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Mickleburgh enquired about the timeline.

Councillor Brookes hoped that it would be as soon as possible.

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

Scrutiny Panel Tourism and the Visitor Economy – 18<sup>th</sup> November 2021 Minute SPTVE.36 (Grant Street Car Park)

*How are you going to ensure that residents are not further impacted on by extending the Grant Street car park in terms of traffic and pollution?*

Councillor Brookes responded that he was aware of the need to consult with residents and this was ongoing at present.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Rodwell asked if the Chair agreed that the proposal would move the issues from one part of Cleethorpes to another.

Councillor Brookes did not agree.

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

Scrutiny Panel Tourism and the Visitor Economy – 18<sup>th</sup> November 2021 Minute SPTVE.36 (Grant Street Car Park)

*Could I ask the Chair how many extra car parking spaces would be created in this development?*

Councillor Brookes responded that there would be 268 spaces and there would be spaces for blue badge holders and electric vehicle charging points.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Wilson asked what level of scrutiny had taken place on the need for the car park.

Councillor Brookes responded that the matter had been discussed with the portfolio holder.

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

Scrutiny Panel Tourism and the Visitor Economy – 18<sup>th</sup> November 2021 Minute SPTVE.36 (Grant Street Car Park)

*Could I ask the Chair what would be the source of the funding for this development?*

Councillor Brookes confirmed that the cost of the development would be borne by the council. The total budget estimate for all aspects of the project was £3.393m. The council would be looking to borrow £3.15m, with the remaining budget coming from the Local Transport Plan.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Wilson enquired what the rate of interest would be on the amount borrowed.

Councillor Brookes responded that this would be set out in the project's borrowing plan.

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

Scrutiny Panel Tourism and the Visitor Economy – 18<sup>th</sup> November 2021 Minute SPTVE.36 (Grant Street Car Park)

*Could I ask the Chair what precautions have been planned to deter anti-social behaviour?*

Councillor Brookes responded that there would be CCTV coverage and he anticipated that discussions would be held with the police and community safety to ensure that people were protected.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Wilson enquired whether the Chair was satisfied that anti-social behaviour would be deterred.

Councillor Brookes was assured that every deterrent would be put in place to prevent anti-social behaviour.

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

Scrutiny Panel Tourism and the Visitor Economy – 18<sup>th</sup> November 2021 Minute SPTVE.36 (Grant Street Car Park)

*Could I ask the Chair how often has Grant Street car park been fully utilised in the past year?*

Councillor Brookes responded that the car park had not been fully utilised and occupancy varied between 80% and 90% at peak times.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Wilson enquired whether the project would provide value for money.

Councillor Brookes felt that it would provide value for money because of the new facilities and in providing easy access to the resort.

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

Scrutiny Panel Tourism and the Visitor Economy – 18<sup>th</sup> November 2021 Minute SPTVE.36 (Grant Street Car Park)

*Can I ask how much income is currently being generated through the use of the car park and how much this is being expected to increase?*

Councillor Brookes responded that the estimated income was £169k but the figures for last year had been affected by COVID and were around £25k.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Green asked how that estimate had been arrived at.

Councillor Brookes responded that as per his answer to the previous question from Councillor Wilson, the additional facilities would provide an added incentive to use the car park.

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

Scrutiny Panel Tourism and the Visitor Economy – 18<sup>th</sup> November 2021 Minute SPTVE.38 (Quarter two finance monitoring report)

*Given the concern over the £40K increase in public art spending, can we be given a date when the signage for the cancelled Palm Tree will be removed?*

Councillor Brookes agreed to look into this and report back to Councillor Mickleburgh.

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

Scrutiny Panel Tourism and the Visitor Economy – 18<sup>th</sup> November 2021 Minute SPTVE.40 (Motorhome Aire Update)

*Can I ask what exactly an Aire is and where it is intended to be placed?*

Councillor Brookes responded that an 'aire' was a low-cost area for motor homes to park when in transit from one area to another, providing the opportunity to rest, shop and re-fuel.

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

Scrutiny Panel Tourism and the Visitor Economy – 18<sup>th</sup> November 2021 Minute SPTVE.43 (Sea Road Development)

*I would like to ask why there was such a pressing need to demolish the building which was there before, the old Submarine, a building which many residents*

*where quite fond of, when there were no plans in place to replace it with anything. Also, why there was such a need to take away the flower beds from the middle of the road and replace them with an area which currently results in a large highway area which is difficult to cross and is unattractive?*

Councillor Jackson, Leader of the Council, responded to this question as it covered policy matters. He explained that funding had been obtained from the Local Growth Fund for the demolition of the building and the scheme included the potential construction of a new building. This was very iconic site and the administration was keen for an ambitious scheme including the development of a new building with potential private sector support. It continued to be actively marketed. In terms of highways matters, the aim was to widen footpaths and to improve traffic flow. Councillor Jackson acknowledged the point regarding pedestrians and agreed that this needed to be monitored.

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

Scrutiny Panel Tourism and the Visitor Economy – 18<sup>th</sup> November 2021 Minute SPTVE.43 (Sea Road Development)

*Can the portfolio holder explain the demolition of a building for a regeneration concept of which there has been no interest to develop?*

Councillor Jackson referred to the answer he provided to the previous question.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Sheridan enquired how much money had been lost as a result of the demolition and lack of a replacement building.

Councillor Jackson responded that he did not have that information but he would try to find out and provide a written response to Councillor Sheridan.

- (35) 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:

Joint Communities, Economy and Tourism and Visitor Economy Scrutiny Panel – 9<sup>th</sup> November 2021 Minute JSPECT.4 (Cleethorpes Habitat Management Plan)

*Does the portfolio holder share the willingness that the then Councillor Fenty once did to dig up the Salt Marsh at the risk of a prison sentence?*

Councillor Swinburn did not answer this question as he felt it was not relevant to the minutes.

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

Joint Communities, Economy and Tourism and Visitor Economy Scrutiny Panel – 9<sup>th</sup> November 2021 Minute JSPECT.4 (Cleethorpes Habitat Management Plan)

*Is the chair of the panel happy that resources have been diverted away from digging out the encroaching salt marsh, when clearly this will have an effect on the tourism beach?*

Councillor Brookes responded that he was not happy but appreciated that it was only temporary. He was able to report that the saltmarsh was now well back from the designated line.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Wilson enquired whether this was in breach of the management plan.

The Monitoring Officer intervened at this point to advise that he would investigate this point further.

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

Joint Communities, Economy and Tourism and Visitor Economy Scrutiny Panel – 9<sup>th</sup> November 2021 Minute JSPECT.5 (Natural Asset Plan)

*Could you give an update on the Levelling Up Fund as to whether the Council are attempting a further application and if so, will it be to re-apply for the Western Relief Road?*

Councillor Brookes confirmed that there was no intention to re-apply.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Aisthorpe asked the Chair if he agreed that the second round of funding should be used to address significant deprivation within the Borough.

Councillor Brookes felt that this was not for him to comment.

- (38) A question on notice was submitted by Councillor Patrick to the Portfolio Holder for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Social Care, in accordance with the Council's Constitution as follows:

Health and Wellbeing Board – 6<sup>th</sup> September 2021 Minute HWBB.15 (North East Lincolnshire Credit Union)

*Does the Chair share my view that in an area like North East Lincolnshire with all of our social challenges, a successful credit union is a must have asset within our community?*

Councillor Cracknell, Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board, responded that a compelling business case had been presented and gave her confidence that it would be well used by the community.



At the conclusion of the questions, the minutes of the meetings were moved en bloc by Councillor Jackson, seconded by Councillor Shreeve.

RESOLVED –

1. That the minutes of the following meetings of Cabinet and the Committees of the Council be approved and adopted, as submitted:
  - Cabinet – 8<sup>th</sup> September, 6<sup>th</sup> October, 20<sup>th</sup> October and 3<sup>rd</sup> November
  - Portfolio Holder Environment and Transport – 13<sup>th</sup> September and 4<sup>th</sup> October
  - Scrutiny Panel Children and Lifelong Learning – 9<sup>th</sup> September and 4<sup>th</sup> November
  - Scrutiny Panel Communities – 16<sup>th</sup> September and 11<sup>th</sup> November
  - Scrutiny Panel Economy – 31<sup>st</sup> August, 12<sup>th</sup> October and 26<sup>th</sup> October
  - Scrutiny Panel Health and Adult Social Care – 29<sup>th</sup> September
  - Scrutiny Panel Tourism and Visitor Economy – 23<sup>rd</sup> September and 18<sup>th</sup> November
  - Joint Scrutiny Panel Economy; and Tourism and Visitor Economy – 31<sup>st</sup> August
  - Joint Scrutiny Panel Communities; Economy; and Tourism and Visitor Economy – 9<sup>th</sup> November
  - Crime and Disorder Committee – 28<sup>th</sup> October
  - Place Board (operating as the Health and Wellbeing Board) – 6<sup>th</sup> September
  - Audit and Governance Committee – 29<sup>th</sup> September
  - Planning Committee – 11<sup>th</sup> August, 8<sup>th</sup> September, 6<sup>th</sup> October and 3<sup>rd</sup> November
  - Standards and Adjudication Committee – 22<sup>nd</sup> September
  - Standards Referrals Panel – 1<sup>st</sup> September, 19<sup>th</sup> October and 25<sup>th</sup> November
2. That the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport be requested to provide a written response to Councillor Green's supplementary question on minute CB.70 of the Cabinet meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2021 regarding steps being taken to protect residents from the dangers presented by cyclists.
3. That a written response be provided by Councillor Freeston to Councillor Wilson's question on minute SPCLL.37 of the Scrutiny Panel Children and Lifelong Learning meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2021 requesting an overview of the issues affecting children that are looked after in relation to young people not being in employment, education or training (NEETs).
4. That a written response be provided by Councillor Silvester to Councillor Wilson's question on minute SPC.23 of the Scrutiny Panel Communities meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2021 regarding how many residents were digitally excluded in North East Lincolnshire.

5. That a written response be provided by Councillor Silvester to Councillor Wilson's question on minute SPC.36 of the Scrutiny Panel Communities meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2021 requesting an explanation of how satisfied Councillor Silvester was with the answer to the questions on open drug dealing on the streets of this borough.
6. That a written response be provided by Councillor Silvester to Councillor Wilson's question on minute SPC.36 of the Scrutiny Panel Communities meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2021 regarding what action was being taken regarding cycle theft.
7. That a written response be provided by Councillor Furneaux to Councillor Wilson's question on minute SPE.26 of the Scrutiny Panel Economy meeting held on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2021 regarding rate of increase in empty homes and rate of increase in return to use of empty homes the rate of increase in empty homes and rate of increase in return to use of empty homes.
8. That, with regard to Councillor Mickleburgh's question on minute SPTVE.38 of the Scrutiny Panel Tourism and Visitor Economy meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2021 regarding the removal of signage for the cancelled Palm Tree, Councillor Brookes make further enquiries and report back to Councillor Mickleburgh.
9. That Councillor Brookes be requested to provide a written response to Councillor Sheridan's supplementary question on minute SPTVE.43 of the Scrutiny Panel Tourism and the Visitor Economy meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2021 regarding how much money had been lost as a result of the demolition and lack of a replacement building for the Sea Road development.

There being no further business, the Mayor declared the meeting closed at 11.45 p.m.