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NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON

28th July, 2022

Present:

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

Officers in Attendance:

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

The proceedings were opened with prayers by Reverend Joy Osbourne.

NEL.17 MR TERRY THUROGOOD

Members stood to observe a minute's silence as a mark of respect for Mr Terry Thurogood, former Member and Officer of North East Lincolnshire Council, who passed away on 20th July, 2022.

NEL.18 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor took the opportunity to thank all those who sponsored him to run the recent Great Grimsby 10k, which had raised £800 towards his Mayoral Charities. He updated Council on forthcoming mayoral charity engagements including a coffee morning on 9th September and a cycle to the Humber Bridge and back on 11th September.

NEL.19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from this meeting were received from Councillors McLean and Robinson.

NEL.20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Pettigrew declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in item NEL.29 as he had a business relationship with the applicant for a planning application referred to in a question on notice.

NEL.21 MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings of North East Lincolnshire Council held on 24th February 2022 and 17th March 2022, the Mayor Making meeting of North East Lincolnshire Council held on 19th May 2022 and the Annual Meeting of North East Lincolnshire Council held on 26th May 2022 were approved as a correct record.

NEL.22 QUESTION TIME

There were four questions submitted by members of the public for this meeting, in accordance with the Council's procedures.

The first question was submitted by Mr Hutton to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport. As Mr Hutton was unable to attend the meeting, the Mayor put the question on his behalf, as set out below:

Recent government funding was made available for changing places to be put into local businesses as they applied and even more recently £60,000 was allocated to North East Lincolnshire Council as they requested two such changing places for council properties.

How many businesses were successful locally and where are the council thinking of putting the two they bid for?

The council talk about inclusivity, fairness and equality and things have certainly moved on in the right direction these past few years as they recognise their responsibilities under the various legal acts.

How does the portfolio holder feel and the wider council itself when I inform you that in 2022 you are still actively and openly discriminating against my 11 year old daughter and hundreds like her by preventing her from playing in any of our local parks due to the fact she is in a wheelchair and just when does this council plan on ending this widespread clear discrimination?

I'm sure I should not need to remind you but it's in basic human right legislation that all children have the right to play, yet I don't know of any local park that has a

wheelchair friendly swing or roundabout, let alone is sensory friendly as she is also blind?

Councillor S Swinburn, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport, responded that the council had put forward a bid under the opportunity to provide additional Changing Places facilities. The indication from the funders was, given the scale of the funding allocation, we were only likely to be successful in one or two, and the timescales were tight for the submission. However, we were able to advertise the offer to all public sector partners, including the voluntary and community sector, and we received three applications, therefore our bid consisted of those three. Unfortunately, one bid was rejected as it didn't meet the criteria. The council were successful with the other two. The applications had to be match funded and therefore a bid to the council's Business Development Framework was submitted and this successfully provided the majority of the match funding along with contributions from the individual partners.

The first new changing places facility would be sited at the health and wellbeing centre on Cromwell Road, Grimsby and the second would be at Welholme Works, a local voluntary and community sector hub on Ladysmith Road, Grimsby. The council was now in the process of procuring the facilities and it was expected that they would be completed in the current financial year.

Furthermore, the council continued to engage with colleagues in the regeneration team to advise the inclusion of changing places wherever the opportunities arise through future projects.

Councillor Swinburn noted that the council did not hold information on individual businesses provision.

The council had been successful in bidding for capital funding to upgrade play areas. We were looking at inclusive play equipment for the destination parks in the borough. It was not possible to stipulate what equipment or their location would be at this time until all the tender bids were received, which was due in the next couple of months. The improvement programme which would provide inclusive play equipment in some parks was due for completion within the next 18 months.

The second question was from Mrs Downes for the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport. Mrs Downes attended the meeting and put the question as set out below.

After the Government declined to provide North East Lincolnshire Council with Levelling Up Fund money to build the first section of the Grimsby West Relief Road, they provided feedback as to why the bid failed. The feedback stated that "The main beneficiary of the scheme is the housing development at Grimsby West Urban extension" and also that "The bid could be improved by providing further evidence to demonstrate that the proposals will address existing or anticipated future problems".

After the announcement that the bid had failed, the Council Leader stated that the link road and housing remained a piece of the Local Plan, and the council would explore other funding options.

Given that the population size of North East Lincolnshire has decreased by 1.7%, from around 159,600 in 2011 to 156,900 in 2021, is it not the case that the need for a relief road to benefit a huge housing development to the west of Grimsby is now invalid?

The council has given an assurance that the Levelling Up Fund would not be approached again for funding for the road. Given the feedback received, a bid would most likely be unsuccessful in any event. Will the council now also give an assurance that funding for the road would not be sought from other tax-payer generated sources of money which could be better spent on projects that would be far more effective in levelling up this area and making it an attractive place to work and live?

Councillor Swinburn responded that the Local Plan was currently under review and details of the review, including timescales, would be shared in a formal report due at Cabinet in September, 2022. Once the review had been progressed, the council would be in a strong position to determine the borough's longer term infrastructure requirements. The national planning policy framework defined a local plan as 'the plan for the future development of the local area' with 'future' being the key word. The plan would be designed to meet future needs of the borough, not just the 'here and now' and would take into account a range of social and economic trends and indicators, over a period of time, enabling the Local Plan to be based on hard facts and evidence. The council had been very clear on its regeneration priorities within the second Levelling Up Fund bid, including its plans for investments in the town centre. Therefore, subject to the outcome of the local plan review and its assessment of infrastructure needs, the relief road was not seen as a priority at this time.

The third question was submitted by Mr Bonner to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport. Mr Bonner attended the meeting and put the question as set out below.

Abandoned shopping trolleys are all over the borough. This is fly-tipping, a safety hazard and public nuisance which needs stopping!

The Freshney Valley is a popular local beauty spot blighted by abandoned trolleys. In a recent four-week period more than 20 trolleys were reported or returned to the nearby supermarket.

Many residents complain of fly tipping in alleyways. The council refuses to help clear them and will not allow residents to leave fly-tipped rubbish at the tip. Many alleyways have shopping trollies full of rubbish in them which exacerbates the problem. Trolleys left in the street can also cause damage to cars and property.

The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 empowers the council to seize and remove trolleys abandoned on land and waterways and reclaim the cost of recovery, removal and storage from the owners. The council did this when I was a member some time ago. Unfortunately, this procedure is no longer in use. In my opinion it should be resumed without delay.

The situation would be improved if retailers took sensible precautions to minimise the number of trollies removed from their premises. Trolleys should be fitted with immobilizers so they cannot be taken from the site and secured when the shop is closed. These should be conditions for planning permission for new shops and existing businesses should be encouraged to adopt these measures.

Is the council aware of the problems caused by abandoned shopping trolleys and what steps are they prepared to take to minimize them?

Councillor Swinburn responded that the council was aware of the problem caused by trolleys and would collect them when discovered in our communities. Around two trolleys a week were being collected and brought back to the depot. They were then collected by an organisation called Trolleywise, at no cost to the council. Trolleywise was funded by a group of larger stores to reduce the problems with shopping trolleys being left in communities. The council recognised that it had powers to seize, store and re-charge for shopping trolleys. However, for shopping trolleys belonging to Trolleywise members, we have found that the resolution offered by Trolleywise was more time and cost effective for the council. The council was raising awareness of the free Trolleywise App, which was available for residents to report abandoned trolleys. He urged residents who spot an abandoned trolley to use the app and it would be collected from any location, including footpaths and rivers. Trolleywise member organisations included Aldi, Asda, B&Q, Home Bargains, Iceland, Morrison's, Marks and Spencer, Sainsbury's and Tesco. If residents spot a trolley that was not from one of these stores and was on public land, they could report it online to the council.

The final question was submitted by Mr Nesbitt to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport. Mr Nesbitt attended the meeting and put the question as set out below.

One day in 2018 after school my daughter and I went to Sixhills Street playground. Later she asked me why the playground was so poor. I decided something should be done...the playground cleaned more often; equipment repaired instead of taken away; making the playground as good as others. Since 2018 I have contacted my Ward Councillors, the portfolio holder and my MP about the park and asked for help but nothing has happened.

In October 2021 the headline of an article in the Telegraph referred to "An unusable playground, litter and potholes" in the park. This was despite Councillor Swinburn saying in the Telegraph "North East Lincolnshire Council wants to improve the quality of its play parks to make sure children of all abilities can enjoy

good quality playgrounds across the borough". For four years things have just got worse – no improvements, no new equipment, equipment removed and, when two large holes were reported in the playing area, it took months to repair them.

In February 2021 North East Lincolnshire Council received £800,000 of Government funding "to improve the state of our play parks to make sure children of all abilities can enjoy good quality playgrounds across the borough", but 17 months later our children are still waiting.

Does North East Lincolnshire Council intend to improve its play parks so children of all abilities can enjoy quality playgrounds throughout the borough, and how much longer will children living near Sixhills Street playpark have to wait for a good quality playground?

Councillor S Swinburn, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport responded that he had met Mr Nesbitt on site with officers from the Environmental team and explained the reasons why nothing could be done at that time, principally because the council was in the process of a procurement exercise to secure funding. He noted that play equipment was very expensive, particularly equipment accessible for all ability groups. The council would very much welcome help and assistance from community groups or friends of organisations to secure grant funding for additional future play parks investment. Many of the common grant sources for community assets were not open for applications directly from the local authority. Permission had been obtained to spend the £800k from Cabinet in June 2021 and this was from within the council's budget, not from government funding. All ward councillors and community groups had been consulted on how the money would be best spent. He believed that public consultation had also concluded towards the end of last year. The council was in the process of writing all procurement documents and this had been no mean feat. These documents were currently with legal and although he was not sure of the timeframe, he hoped that this work would be completed in the next two weeks. The next stage would be to go out to procurement, which would take at least a month. Information would need to be gathered to decide what was achievable within the budget envelope. Then there would be a meeting with all ward councillors to discuss the options available, which would also need to be taken through the Communities Scrutiny Panel. A workplan would then be developed for rolling out the upgrades and installations. This was a 2-3 year project and we had only just passed year 1. The council cannot at this moment in time commit to all play areas, as we are not sure the budget envelope would be sufficient.

NEL.23 THE LEADER'S STATEMENT

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

The Leader reported that much had happened since his last statement back in March. He felt that the outcome of the local elections showed that the voters of North East Lincolnshire continued to have confidence in this Conservative

administration. However, there was no room for complacency and there were still many local challenges to address as well as many opportunities to be grasped in moving the area forward. He noted recent announcements about investments, new businesses and job creation in North East Lincolnshire, including Orsted having secured its government subsidy for the massive Hornsea Three offshore wind farm which would generate a further 1200 jobs in long-term operation and maintenance in Grimsby and the wider supply chain. Two sites in North East Lincolnshire had been shortlisted, out of eight in the UK, for a heavy vessels manufacturing facility for Rolls-Royce's small modular nuclear reactor programme. This was exactly the sort of diversification we need within the local economy - high-value, specialist engineering - as well as further enhancing the area's low carbon credentials. The council would continue to engage with Rolls-Royce to land this investment, with assistance from the Greater Lincolnshire LEP. Hilton Seafoods had also unveiled the first phase of a multi-million pound investment at its Grimsby seafood processing plant. However, the Leader warned of the potential impact on our vitally important seafood sector of a 35% tariff that was likely to be imposed on the import of Russian white fish. The Leader further reported that, following extensive engagement with government and local partners, a Border Control Post was now in operation at the Seafood Village on the Port of Grimsby. This is while we waited for the new facility at the Port of Immingham to come online and was in no small part down to the tremendous work of our Assistant Director for Environment, Carolina Borgstrom, who played a major role behind the scenes to get this over the line within very tight timescales. The Leader also provided an update on the development of the Humber Freeport, which would bring £15m seed capital funding for further business investment and job creation in North East Lincolnshire.

The Leader noted the recent unprecedented level of behind-the-scenes co-ordinated Government attention that had been given to North East Lincolnshire. This culminated on 4 July, with a visit to Grimsby by Secretary of State Michael Gove and Levelling Up Minister Neil O'Brien to hear about our levelling-up ambitions, in particular our plans for Grimsby town centre. Mr Gove also hosted a summit for representatives from key private and public sector organisations to discuss local skills challenges. Whilst it was unfortunate that, within two days, neither Mr Gove nor Mr O'Brien were still in post, the new Secretary of State for Levelling-Up, Housing and Communities was instrumental in the original Grimsby Town Deal and knew the area well. The Leader also offered his congratulations to Great Grimsby MP, Lia Nici, for her appointment as a junior levelling-up minister. He felt that this could only help our cause down in Westminster.

The Leader updated Council on the second round of Levelling-Up Fund bidding. Three strong bids had been made for submission: one to incorporate schemes identified in the Cleethorpes' Masterplan as important strategic development locations, one to carry out work to bring leisure activities to Grimsby town centre alongside the previously announced cinema development, and the third was a transport specific bid for a transportation hub in Grimsby town centre alongside the provision of a fleet of zero emission buses and associated infrastructure. He expected these bids would make real, positive change that would benefit our town

centre economy in Grimsby and our local and visitor economy in Cleethorpes for years to come. The council was also in the process of submitting to Government plans for using our £6.2 million allocation of UK Shared Prosperity Fund monies.

Following Council's agreement two weeks ago to purchase Freshney Place, the Leader reported that the transaction was progressing at pace. The icing on the cake was the announcement that the Parkway Entertainment Company were taking on the new multiplex cinema.

The Leader reported that devolution was also a key strand of Government's levelling-up agenda and the ambition for a devolution deal across the Greater Lincolnshire footprint remained strong. A vision document was being drafted to shape the asks and powers we would seek from Government and, in due course, this council would be formally engaged in the process and the debate. Meanwhile, collaboration across Greater Lincolnshire continued, including the recent sharing of a large exhibition space at last month's Lincolnshire Show under the strapline "One Lincolnshire Think Bigger".

The Leader noted that the new Health and Care Act was now in force, with Integrated Care Boards replacing Clinical Commissioning Groups from the 1st July. Councillor Shreeve is the south bank's representative on the new Integrated Care Board. An Integrated Care Partnership for Humber and North Yorkshire was also being formed as the main forum for bringing the NHS and local authorities together at regional level. This was work in progress and our place-based arrangements would continue to evolve as we understood more about the wider development and focus of the Integrated Care Board.

Children's Services had developed and were implementing the actions outlined within the Improvement Plan. Lincolnshire County Council continued to assist us as our Sector Led Improvement Partner, but the Leader clarified that there remained a long way to go. Workforce retention and stability in children's social care remained a significant challenge and one not unique to this council. The Leader was pleased to report that we have recently successfully recruited 33 social workers who were anticipated to start with us by October. A key recommendation in the first Commissioner's report was for an options appraisal to be undertaken with a view to this council entering a strategic partnership with another local authority. The Department for Education had appointed consultants to undertake that work over the coming weeks.

The Leader commented that there was no doubt that the cost of living was becoming a major issue for many of our residents. 91% of eligible households have been paid their £150 energy rebate. The council had also received discretionary funding of £375k which had been incorporated into our existing Household Support Fund Scheme. Whilst it had been a very challenging project, progress had been good thanks to good collaborative working across the council. The administration was exploring what scope there may be for other targeted local support, though clearly resources were limited.

The Leader updated Council, as previously promised, on the situation with Ukrainian refugees. As of today, 49 Ukrainian guests had arrived at 26 properties in the Borough. There were three imminent arrivals with 25 more expected in due course. There were no unaccompanied minors. Two people had been appointed to provide support to refugees and asylum seekers, including Ukrainians, until January, one of whom was a guest under the Homes for Ukraine scheme. The Leader thanked everyone locally who had supported the scheme.

Councillor Jackson reported that, in the last week, two very effective and high-profile enforcement days had been delivered in collaboration with the police and other partners. The first was in Grimsby town centre and the second was out on the roads of the borough. Both resulted in numerous cautions and fines being imposed on those breaching regulations. He felt that this was a clear demonstration of this administration's determination to tackle the "anything goes" culture amongst a small but significant minority who spoil things for the law-abiding majority. The reaction from the public was very positive.

The Leader noted the recent resignation of the Director of Adult Social Services, Bev Compton and extended his thanks and appreciation for her service to the Borough over the last 18 years and, on behalf of all members, wished her every success in her new role.

The Leader offered his congratulations to Grimsby Town Football Club on their promotion back to the football league and wished them good luck for the forthcoming season. He also offered his best wishes to Zac Shaw from Grimsby who was about to compete in the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham.

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.

Councillor Wilson raised a point of order at this point seeking clarification as to why the Leader was not providing an update on special urgency decisions and the implementation of motions within his actual statement to Council. Mr Jones responded that had been custom and practice to deal with this matter in that way but he agreed to consider this further and respond to Councillor Wilson outside of this meeting.

NEL.24 AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22

The Council received a report detailing the activities of the Audit and Governance Committee during the council year and setting out how it had discharged its responsibilities. This report was referred to Council by the Audit and Governance Committee at its meeting on 21st April, 2022.

The Mayor welcomed the independent Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee, Mr. Tim Render, to the meeting and invited him to introduce his report. Standing Orders were suspended for this purpose.

Mr. Render thanked the Mayor and Members for an opportunity to present the annual report. When he reported to Council last year, he pointed out that it was precisely at difficult times such as those experienced during the pandemic that the council needed assurance that it was properly controlling what it did – and that was the bread and butter of the work of the Audit and Governance Committee. While the immediate difficulties of the pandemic were now hopefully in the past, the environment in which the council operated continued to pose challenges. He reminded Members just how big a business the council was and one that became more complex by the year. The committee was the council's eyes and ears, making sure that the rules it set were followed, that the council was protecting public assets, and had effective arrangements for managing resources and securing value for money. He was pleased to confirm that the committee could provide substantial assurance about those arrangements. That conclusion followed the work it had reviewed from internal and external audit, the specific exercises it had carried out in looking at treasury management, the council's accounts, and its work monitoring and reviewing the governance effectiveness of partnerships. The council's internal auditors had continued to map the different ways the council could be assured that it was operating as intended to secure its objectives.

Mr Render summarised the work undertaken by the committee, as set out in the report, and made particular reference to the committee's partnership governance role in relation to the rapidly evolving health and social care agenda, the committee's in-depth review of the council's medium term financial planning process, and the council's arrangements for securing value for money.

In terms of future developments, the committee was due to consider recently issued guidance recommending that principal authorities include two independent members on audit committees, rather than the one as we have now. Any recommended changes would be reported back to Council. Mr Render further noted that the council had agreed to use the national body (PSAA) for the appointment of external auditors which was due to take effect from the 2023/24 financial year.

Mr Render thanked officers for their support of the committee's work. He was, as ever, grateful to members of the Committee who continued to demonstrate enthusiasm in developing a more effective audit function; and tenacity in following through issues. He was especially grateful to Councillor Harness for his support as Deputy Chair and he noted that the Audit Committee was obviously a good training ground for members, as Councillor Harness was the second Deputy Chair with whom he had worked who had since graduated to a Cabinet position. He commended the report to Council.

RESOLVED – That the Audit and Governance Committee annual report for 2021/22 be approved.

NEL.25 INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL – REVIEW OF SCHEME OF ALLOWANCES

The Council considered a report from the Monitoring Officer setting out the findings of the Independent Remuneration Panel's review of the Scheme of Allowances for Elected Members and seeking adoption of a new Scheme.

RESOLVED –

1. That the Opposition Group Leaders Allowance be amended to the levels set out in paragraph 1.6.1 of this report.
2. That a Dependent Carers Allowance be reinstated to the Members Allowance Scheme as set out at paragraph 1.6.2 of this report.
3. That the above changes to the Members Allowance Scheme be effective from the beginning of the 2022/23 Municipal Year and the new scheme be adopted and published as such.

NEL.26 AMENDMENTS TO PLACES ON COMMITTEES, PANELS AND OUTSIDE BODIES OF THE COUNCIL

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

Councillor Patrick moved an amendment to the recommendations set out in the report, to remove recommendation 4 as Councillor Wheatley wished to remain as the Labour Group's representative on the Corporate Parenting Board. Upon a show of hands, the amendment was put to the vote and carried.

RESOLVED –

1. That Councillor Farren replace Councillor Shutt as a substitute member of the Audit and Governance Committee.
2. That Councillor Shutt replace Councillor Farren as a substitute member of the Planning Committee.
3. That Councillor Shutt replace Councillor Goodwin as the Labour Group's representative on the Humber Police and Crime Panel.

NEL.27 NOTICE OF MOTION

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

North East Lincolnshire Council often makes clear it's unwavering support for the seven Nolan Principles of Public Life for its elected members, holding them up as the paragon of moral and ethical ideals in elected office.

Principle number five is the dedication to openness.

'Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.'

This Council will also note that in the past twenty years it has been extremely commonplace that council meetings are televised through the internet, with recordings made available for public scrutiny indefinitely, and that this happens on all tiers of local authority in the UK.

We as a council applaud this welcome, progressive and vital act of transparency and accountability, and feel that we should follow in this example.

Council resolves that as soon as is practicably possible, all full Council meetings, excluding where lawfully necessary, such as closed sessions, will be fully filmed and made available for public scrutiny, with the intention of making all official council meetings available in a similar fashion within the near future.

An amendment to the motion was proposed by Councillor Jackson and seconded by Councillor Furneaux, submitted in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders as set out below:

"Delete the last paragraph and replace with "However, the practicality and cost of this initiative must be fully evaluated before proceeding further, especially considering the Grade II listed status of Grimsby Town Hall and the use of Cleethorpes Town Hall for some council meetings. Therefore, Council resolves that an evaluation report be prepared and brought back to Full Council for consideration as soon as reasonably practicable."

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

For the amendment

Councillors Abel, Aisthorpe, Astbury, Batson, Beasant, Boyd, Brasted, Brookes, Cairns, Callison, Cracknell, Croft, Dawkins, Farren, Freeston, Furneaux, Goodwin,

Green, Harness, Hasthorpe, Holland, Hudson, Jackson, Lindley, Mickleburgh, Parkinson, Patrick, Pettigrew, Reynolds, Sandford, Shepherd, Shreeve, Shutt, Silvester, Smith, K.Swinburn, S.Swinburn, Westcott, Wheatley and Wilson (40 votes).

Against the amendment

None.

The amendment was declared carried and there followed a short debate on the amended substantive motion. With the agreement of Council, the substantive motion was put to the vote by a show of hands and it was unanimously:

RESOLVED – That an evaluation report be prepared and brought back to Full Council for consideration, as soon as reasonably practicable, on the practicality and cost of filming full Council meetings, especially considering the Grade II listed status of Grimsby Town Hall and the use of Cleethorpes Town Hall for some council meetings.

NEL.28 QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

The Chair invited Councillor Dawkins 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.

“Around 6 months ago during an Economy Scrutiny Panel meeting, I asked a question about what we are doing as a council with regards to installing EV (electric vehicle) charge points within the borough. My concern is visitors to the area and, in particular, to the resort would not have anywhere to charge their cars. Since the start of the fuel crisis electric car sales have increased massively in fact this year already we are nearly double the car sales for the whole of last year. Can the portfolio holder give the residents and businesses an update as to when we will see EV charge points arrive into the area?”

Councillor S. Swinburn, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport responded that the council, supported by EQUANS, had submitted an application on the 17th June to the Department for Transport for the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) grant. The application was part of an approach to seek grant funding to enable and unlock the opportunity to install EV charge points. A grant of £606,000 had been sought from the LEVI fund, with EQUANS providing funding of £42,000. This would see a total of 44 charge points and associated infrastructure installed in key locations across the borough. The proposed approach would deliver a revenue generating scheme by selling the use of the EV charger at a competitive rate, which would be re-invested into the service and a possible expansion of the EV network. If successful, and once the internal governance was completed, the scheme was programmed to take 11 weeks to deliver and there would be a 4-week mobilisation period to capture the lead in time for materials etc. If the grant application was not successful, there would be

the opportunity to seek capital funding via the council's Business Development Group route. Councillor Swinburn set out estimated timescales with practical completion of the project due in February 2023.

The Chair invited Councillor Sandford 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.

"Can the Portfolio Holder assure me of the proposed outcomes and the benefits to the residents of the East Marsh of the Safer Streets 4 Project?"

Councillor Shepherd, Portfolio Holder for Safer and Stronger Communities responded that Safer Streets 4 was a fantastic opportunity to repeat the achievements within the West Marsh ward as a result of Safer Streets 2 and he was pleased to see more government money coming into areas that really needed it. There would be a phased implementation plan based on a number of prevention principles including promotion and development of resident groups; community safety champions; social activities to support vulnerable residents; increased restorative justice for young offenders; increased projects for young people; increased CCTV coverage; targeting of known drug dealers; joint patrols with youth workers; investment in youth diversion activities, the refresh of multi-use games areas and target hardening, He set out expected performance measures. The scheme worked extremely well on West Marsh and he urged everyone on the East Marsh, including all community groups, to climb on board. He looked forward to seeing the outcomes and legacy of this project lasting for some considerable time.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Sandford asked the portfolio holder to confirm that all community groups would be able to access the scheme.

Councillor Shepherd responded that the aim was to encourage all community groups to come forward and have dialogue with the council. It was important for the community to support this and he was aware that several groups had already expressed an interest.

The Chair invited Councillor Green 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.

"I would like to ask about the lack of public toilets in Cleethorpes. The Grimsby Telegraph are running articles about it. The situation on Armed Forces Day was embarrassing, tourists were desperate for toilets and the few we have are often in a disgusting state. Traders have approached Sidney Sussex Councillors as they are finding the whole situation difficult to handle. They have to either be prepared to answer no to requests from visitors to use their toilets or be diverted from business tasks to ensure that toilet users are behaving appropriately. There is currently an online petition with almost 2,000 signatures. Council were warned when they closed the Grant Street toilets it was an impossible situation, and I

would like to know on behalf of traders, residents and visitors how much longer we are going to wait for the emergency situation regarding the lack of public toilets in Cleethorpes to be resolved?"

Councillor Harness, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Resources and Assets, responded that the public conveniences were free to use. He reflected on his attendance at the Armed Forces Event and acknowledged that the provision of toilets at the event was inadequate, perhaps as a result of there being more visitors than anticipated. However, it was important that lessons were learnt for future events. The council currently offered four public conveniences across the resort which were managed via a contract with DANFO, who are a multi-award winning, leading operator in managing and servicing public toilets, and do so in many resorts on the East Coast. Since DANFO had been managing the toilets, improvements to the facilities such as the cleaning standards have been made, resulting in the number of complaints significantly reducing. Like many other resorts, we have looked at our toilet provision numerous times over the years. We believe that the year-round provision in place is enough on most days throughout the year, with event organisers often providing additional provision during large scale events as part of their event planning considerations. However, we acknowledge that there may be some times when facilities located elsewhere could be useful. As part of considerations taken previously, the council had looked at other ways to support the offer of public facilities, including a Community Toilet Scheme (a scheme that allows members of the public to use the toilet facilities in a range of approved local businesses and other organisations during their opening hours) as well as charging for facilities to enable the toilet provision to be enhanced. More recently the council has adopted the Cleethorpes Masterplan and there may be further opportunities to consider increased provision as new developments were brought forward. The facilities at Sea Road were due to be renewed as part of the wider Sea Road development. The council was also aware that there were plans to redevelop the privately owned former conveniences on the North Promenade to include a toilet offer.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Green asked for reassurance that there would be no reduction in facilities during the Sea Road redevelopment.

Councillor Harness responded that alternative facilities would need to be looked at should the development proceed.

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 would like to know when North East Lincolnshire Council will join the many other areas in the UK who have banned the use of glyphosates in their towns and villages or have committed to a trial of the safer alternative methods of weed control. Current research has identified many risks and potential risks to both staff, who have little choice but to follow current procedures and to residents who

are exposed daily in our parks and green spaces. Given the current interest our council is showing in developing our green spaces it seems now would be an appropriate time to consider the alternatives.”

Councillor Swinburn responded that the council had trialled alternatives to glyphosate, including vinegar and hot water. However, these were unable to control weeds effectively and resulted in a significant deterioration of weed control on pavements and roads. The council was using substantially diluted Glyphosate compared to average garden use or what we used to operate with historically. This ensured both safety of our staff and members of the public. The council was continuing to look for more sustainable solutions, which could be used at larger scale and without significant impact on quality of street scene and staff resource. If councillors have knowledge of more modern methods that have been successfully introduced by other local authorities we would welcome for them to share this and we will consider additional local trials.

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.

“I understand that the council have a very successful programme to manage empty properties in the area, however, I have been in touch with officers for up to two years regarding a property in Sidney Sussex ward, even supplying the owners name and addresses and very little has happened to improve things for neighbours. I would like to know when things might improve for the neighbours of the property?”

Councillor Jackson, Leader of the Council, responded that generally speaking he felt these issues were effectively dealt with. Officers were aware of the property and the case was ongoing but it was extremely complex due to the legal status of the property. At this stage, he was unable to share the exact details of the case due to confidentiality issues.

Following further communications, from Cllr Green, officers have re-inspected the property and a Section 215 under the Town and Country Planning Act will be served on the property. This process includes serving two formal warning letters, followed by serving of a section 215 notice and then works in default will be actioned, with costs being charged against the property if no action is taken to rectify the issues identified. He set out the Section 215 process timeline.

Ultimately an enforced sale may be the outcome required, but the legal process was not always quick or easy, especially due to the current legal status of this property but officers would continue to seek a long-term solution.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Green asked to be kept up to date with the situation.

Councillor Jackson agreed to do so.

The Chair invited Councillor Wheatley 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.

“Are the government going to continue funding local bus services for the borough in the forthcoming year?”

Councillor Swinburn responded that he hoped so. At the beginning of the pandemic, the Government introduced significant financial support to the bus sector. Through the emergency COVID-19 funding packages, the Government ensured the immediate impacts of the pandemic on bus networks were mitigated, ensuring services were kept running to enable access to jobs, education and healthcare. In the recovery period, the latest packages, the £226.5 million Bus Recovery Grant (BRG), with an original end date of April 2022, supported the sector following the re-opening of the economy and the lifting of social distancing guidelines. The Government also provided a further £29 million uplift to the BRG, to mitigate the impact of Omicron on patronage. As the sector continued to manage the challenges with the ongoing effects of the pandemic and the emergence of new travel patterns, the financial challenges faced by the bus sector continued to remain. An additional £150 million in further financial support had been provided to the local transport sector and this would fund bus operators from April 2022 until October 2022 and was the final COVID-19 support package the Government would provide to the sector. The funding would assist local transport authorities and operators in running services, catering for the needs of the local public and their local areas after the pandemic. Locally the council had supported bus operators by providing concessionary fare reimbursement at pre-COVID19 levels throughout the pandemic, maintained funding for supported bus services and distributed Local Transport Authority Bus Recovery Grant funding to eligible local bus operators. The council would continue to provide bus subsidies and concessionary fare funding and we would monitor if any further financial support was made available by the Government or the Department for Transport.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Wheatley was surprised by this as the Department for Transport had confirmed that external funding would stop at the end of September 2022. She enquired how this would affect services.

Councillor Swinburn confirmed that this would happen in October 2022 and the council was in discussions with Stagecoach to look at a package to extend this into 2023. It is our intention to support the sector to continue to provide services for our residents.

At this point there was short adjournment. When the meeting was reconvened, the Leader of the Council 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 Shreeve. 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 Wheatley 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.

"Could the portfolio holder tell me the average time scale for completion of parking enforcement action?"

Councillor Shepherd responded that the average timescale for completion of parking enforcement action was set out in the Civil Parking Enforcement Procedure, a copy of which can be found on the council's website. It sets out the codes of the different type of contravention and the duration of any observation time prior to issuing a Parking Contravention Notice (PCN). There were a number of steps which the Civil Enforcement Officer went through when completing the PCN process on their handheld device. This included taking photos of the car, locations of tyre valves, recording the vehicle's registration, type and colour etc. There was no set time for this process to be completed and it was subjective to the environment at the time, for instance, if the driver was non cooperative, this would take slightly longer than if the driver was understanding or there was no driver present. In terms of time taken from a fine being issued to payment, this took an average of 28 days, subject to any delays on behalf of the offender or appeals that may arise. However, if the driver paid the fine before 14 days of the PCN being issued, the penalty charge was reduced by 50%.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Wheatley noted that when her account was reactivated on being re-elected to the council there were two cases that remained outstanding. She asked whether this was an effective way to treat our residents.

Councillor Shepherd was not familiar with the issues raised by Councillor Wheatley and asked her to forward the details to him so that he could look into the matter and report back to her.

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.

"Now that Freshney Place almost certainly will be acquired by this council, what direct involvement will the residents and businesses or North East Lincolnshire have in both the strategic decision making and general operations of the centre as part of the new governance arrangements?"

Councillor Jackson responded that the new governance arrangements were yet to be fully clarified and would be the subject of a report to Cabinet within two months of the purchase. The constitutional arrangements of this council include a clear role for scrutiny and encouraged engagement with the public via, for

example, question time facilities. He was committed to ensuring decision making and governance around such a major strategic asset would be fully transparent.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Patrick asked why the Leader appeared to be so afraid of letting members of the public have a say in this matter.

Councillor Jackson responded that he was not frightened of public engagement and involvement but the council was restricted by legislation as to the extent that it can own such an asset and, therefore, it had to be very careful with the governance arrangements. The administration would have influence over the general policy applied but would not get involved in the day to day running of the centre. The intention was to use it as a regeneration asset. He expected the Cabinet report to detail what the council could and could not do in terms of the day to day running of the centre and the strategic involvement of local businesses and the public.

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.

“Does the Deputy Leader share the concerns of mental health charities that the cost of living crisis is harming mental health to the levels that we are likely going to see more struggling people taking their own lives?”

Councillor Shreeve, Portfolio Holder for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Social Care, responded that there was no doubt that there had been a detrimental effect on mental health as a result of the COVID pandemic. There was no evidence at present that the cost of living crisis was adding to this but the fear was that it would. He was aware of large increases in the number of referrals regarding universal credit and debt and he was sure that this would also contribute.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Patrick noted that there had been a significant increase in mental health issues since 2010 and asked if the portfolio holder agreed that the government should have done more to tackle these issue and should be seen to be doing much more in the future.

Councillor Shreeve responded that current Director of Public Health report focused on mental health and there were 12 recommendations on the subject. At a recent meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Board, he challenged the stakeholders present to report back on what they were doing to address those recommendations. Furthermore, in his capacity as a representative on the Integrated Care Partnership Shadow Board, he had had the same conversation and observed that mental health needed to be given a much greater priority.

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.

“As part of the improvement plan for Children’s Services, it was made clear that member oversight and involvement was now more important than ever, and yet by the time the plan comes back for debate in Children’s Scrutiny, it will be nearly six months since this urgent matter was on the agenda, this is a failure of the children and families of this borough yet again, isn’t it?”

Councillor Cracknell, Portfolio Holder for Children and Education, responded that the improvement plan was now a standing item on scrutiny. It was due to be reported to scrutiny last week but due to the Improvement Board being cancelled as a result of the latest Ofsted inspection, there was no exception report available to bring to the panel. The Children’s Services Oversight Group monitored the plan on a monthly basis and the plan had also been included on the agenda for the forthcoming meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Patrick asked for an assurance that the portfolio holder would work with the scrutiny panel chair to ensure members had every opportunity to raise questions on the required improvements.

Councillor Cracknell referred to the explanation that she had given and repeated that this would continue to be a standing item on the agenda for the Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel.

The Chair invited Councillor Patrick 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.

“Does the portfolio holder share my congratulations for Grimsby Pride in their recent local annual event, and offer his best wishes for future pride events in our areas?”

Councillor Shepherd responded that he did.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Patrick referred to a previous motion that he had submitted to Council to offer support to Grimsby Pride that Councillor Shepherd had failed to support and asked if he now wished he had.

Councillor Shepherd responded that he now had the benefit of experience and he embraced all groups and worked extremely closely with them to ensure this event went ahead and he was disappointed that more councillors were not present.

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.

“In the previous three and current financial year, how much extra capital financing has been or will be needed to be made available to meet revised costs within the capital programme?”

Councillor Harness responded that by providing an analysis of capital financial costs associated with capital programme showing that capital financing costs had risen from a total of £8.2m in 2019/20 to £10m in 2021/22. The forecast for the first quarter of 2022/23, including the assumed full spend of the capital programme was £12.5m. He agreed to provide further background commentary if required.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Patrick enquired why borrowing was out of control.

Councillor Harness responded that borrowing was not out of control and within the process there were contingencies built into capital scheme budgets. Projects were kept under constant review and services could not spend in excess of agreed budgets without authority to do so. He further noted that additional funding had been set aside within the council's budget to manage the impact of the ongoing uncertainty associated with rising costs.

The Chair invited Councillor Farren 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.

"In the ward of Sidney Sussex, we have very recently experienced a very high volume of extra waste in Sidney Park. This has been reported by myself and Councillor Green and also by numerous residents. Given this unprecedented hot weather, there are concerns that this will pose a risk to health, especially given that there are more children using the park. The park relies heavily on the goodwill of volunteers, and we feel the lack of adaptability shown by the environmental team regarding the bins in the park could have the potential to disengage some of our volunteers or at the very least affect their morale. We appreciate the work that your team put into other areas of the service, however, this is a serious concern in our park. Please can you explain to us the criteria that is in place to allow the environmental team to work outside of their set procedures?"

Councillor Swinburn responded that the council always tried to be as flexible as possible when needs of a location changed. However, with nearly 1000 litter bins across the Borough, the pressure on the service was really high during warm weather. We were providing the same service to Sidney Park as all other parks across the Borough. With the latest COVID wave we were also battling with high absence so our ability to respond on short notice and divert from planned work was somewhat hampered until local case levels drop again. Like most bins around the borough in similar locations the bins in Sidney Park were emptied twice weekly. The difficulty with these particular bins was that there had been an increase in waste, either presented adjacent to the bin or bags pushed into the bins creating the bin to either fill up or to look like it had not been emptied. There were a number of factors that may be the reason for this. Group litter picks around the park had been taking place without the knowledge of the team, which we don't discourage but the waste collected was presented next to the bin. For

future litter picks I would kindly request that these litter picks be logged via the Clean and Green email address, and this will alert the teams of additional waste to be collected. Secondly the team had also recognised that, since the café had opened in the park, there had been an increase of litter and waste. He was not insinuating that the café was putting the waste in the bin, however checks did need to be made, as with all premises, to ensure they had a duty of care licence to dispose of their waste. Both he and the street cleansing manager were more than happy to meet the group at the park to enable the street cleansing team to support where they can, and in the meantime he had asked for crews when passing this area to empty the bins over and above the schedule.

The Chair invited Councillor Holland 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.

“With reference to the minutes of the Greater Grimsby Board meeting of March 21st of this year at which the council Chief Executive and Council Leader were both present, it is stated that:

‘The Board reported concerns about the viability of further housing in the town centre, the impact on local schools and the suitability of the land at Garth Lane. The Board stressed the importance of community engagement with this project in particular’.

Can the Portfolio Holder kindly reassure members that there are no known impediments to the planned regeneration of the Garth Lane site?”

Councillor Jackson responded that the council was working in partnership with Homes England and were currently preparing an overarching route map to kickstart the residential market in the town centre through a clear vision around high quality placemaking, focusing on a leisure-based and public orientated waterside, improved connections into the centre and Net Zero Carbon and green energy focussed development. Once further, more in-depth studies are completed, which will add to and support existing information and data we hold, the council will be in a good position, in which to plan, mitigate and progress with the site. He assured Cllr Holland that further investigations were also being undertaken with regard to the land itself.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Holland why stressing the importance of community engagement now.

Councillor Jackson responded that there had been consultation on the Grimsby Town Centre Master Plan and this included the possibility of housing in the town centre. The administration had been keen to promote the development of housing in town centre as it was a way of bringing people back into that part of the town and increase footfall into the town centre. He thought the Greater Grimsby Board was expressing a degree of caution to ensure that any issues were being taken into consideration.

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

“A special meeting of the Economy Scrutiny Panel took place on 13th June, with the key agenda item being pre-decision scrutiny of the proposed levelling up fund bids decision by Cabinet. At the commencement of the meeting, the Chair stated that the matter of the proposed purchase of Freshney Place would be ‘off limits’ for this meeting as this would be the topic of a separate meeting. Indeed, I had requested to make comment at this meeting as a member but was stopped when I began to broach this issue. Could the Chair of the Economy Scrutiny Panel detail any pre-decision scrutiny work carried out with respect to the purchase of Freshney Place?”

Councillor Freeston, Chair of the Economy Scrutiny Panel, responded that the acquisitions such as this were commercially and time sensitive and were therefore subject to strict guidance. There was an opportunity for Members to receive a briefing prior to the matter being fully debated at full Council.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Holland asked if the Chair agreed that the only effective scrutiny of the decision came in a quick question and answer session prior to the full Council meeting.

Councillor Freeston did not agree.

The Chair invited Councillor Holland 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.

“The most recent North East Lincolnshire Council Finance Strategy available states that according to the 2018 National Audit Office, the council has seen since 2010:

- *A 53.5% real terms reduction in funding from Central Government*
- *A 35.6% reduction in its overall spending power*
- *Increased demand in a number of areas (looked after children, homeless, adult social care*
- *A 11.7% real terms reduction in Adult and Children's Social Care spend)*
- *A 21.9% real terms reduction in total service spend.*

It goes on to say that the council has continued to deliver a comprehensive range of services and maintain a balanced financial position during this period. However, based on current planning assumptions, this will not be sustainable over the longer term. Would the Portfolio Holder agree that the massive reduction in Central Government funding to one of the most deprived areas of the UK over that period of time has had a direct impact in tackling health and wellbeing issues,

particularly in our poorest wards which have some of the lowest national health indicators right across the board, including obesity levels?”

Councillor Shreeve responded that he did not agree. North East Lincolnshire's situation was similar to many other local authorities across the country. The overall reduction in spending power was not necessarily a bad thing and the council had always achieved a balance position. The council had seen an increase in funding and collection rates had tended to remain on a high level. It had also been less reliant on government grants as local businesses and residents provide a high level of total council funding. He did note that the Office for National Statistics did estimate a decrease in the local population by 2043 and this may have an impact.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Holland noted that North East Lincolnshire had the fourth highest level of obesity in England and asked if the portfolio holder agreed that central government funding that may be received to, for example, assist the building of a cinema in Freshney Place would likely to worsen these worrying statistics given such establishments make their profits from the sale of sugary drinks and snacks.

Councillor Shreeve responded that health inequalities were iniquitous and needed to be eliminated but that was not easy. The council had a hard working wellbeing service working throughout the borough to tackle obesity. Strong community groups were also being developed and these had seen additional funding being received within both Marsh wards. The local government financial model was likely to change and this was likely to have a significant impact on the council's funding. The Fair Funding Review would see the introduction of a new system of funding and he had written to the government pointing out how North East Lincolnshire could be affected.

NEL. 29 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 - 9th March, 16th March, 6th April, 15th June and 22nd June
- Portfolio Holder Environment and Transport - 21st March and 21st June
- Portfolio Holder Safer and Stronger Communities - 21st March
- Scrutiny Panel Children and Lifelong Learning - 10th March
- Scrutiny Panel Communities - 17th March
- Scrutiny Panel Economy - 1st March
- Scrutiny Panel Health and Adult Social Care - 30th March
- Scrutiny Panel Tourism and Visitor Economy - 10th March and 24th March
- Audit and Governance Committee - 21st April
- Planning Committee - 2nd February, 2nd March, 6th April, 27th April and 15th June

- Licensing and Community Protection Committee - 15th March and 21st June
- Standards Referrals Panel - 22nd April and 18th May
- Appointments Committee - 11th April

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 Wheatley to the Portfolio Holder for Children and Education in accordance with the Council's Constitution as follows:

Cabinet – 6th April Minute CB.148 (Department for Education Staying Close Grant)

“Was the grant for the Staying Close project awarded?”

Councillor Cracknell, Portfolio Holder for Children and Education, responded that it had.

- (2) 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:

Cabinet – 15th June Minute CB.8 (2021/22 Outturn Finance Monitoring Report)

“Yet again, another staggering overspend in this council's finances, unable to balance the books, is this administration ready to admit it has lost financial control of this council?”

Councillor Harness, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Resources and Assets responded that it had not and the council continued to operate within the approved Treasury Management Strategy and well within its prudential limits. The 2021/22 outturn report forecast a balanced position against the annual revenue budget while at the same time identifying pressures. The council's long term financial strategy remained focused on financial sustainability through economic and housing growth.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Patrick enquired whether year on year multi-million pound overspends were a sign of council efficiency.

Councillor Harness responded that any organisation had to continue to look at efficiencies and now was a good time to start thinking about this again.

- (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:

Portfolio Holder Environment and Transport – 21st March Minute PH.ETE.33
(Environmental Services Fees and Charges)

“Does the portfolio holder feel that a 10% increase in fees for the bulky waste collection service will make it more or less accessible to residents?”

Councillor S Swinburn, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport, responded that the service would be more accessible due to way the waste services had been changed and residents were more responsible in how they recycled waste.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Patrick enquired whether the portfolio holder supported the Labour Group's position to look at options to provide bulky waste collection free of charge on an annual basis in order to combat fly tipping.

Councillor Swinburn responded that he did not. The bulky waste service was discretionary and provided on the principle of being a cost neutral service. It was not achieving full cost recovery due to increased fuel, staffing and waste disposal costs. Charges had therefore been increased in line with inflation since last review. He reminded Councillor Patrick that he did have the opportunity to call this decision in if he wasn't happy with it.

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

Portfolio Holder Environment and Transport – 21st March Minute PH.ETE.34
(The Borough of North East Lincolnshire Council (Off-Street Parking Places) Order 2022)

“Would the portfolio holder explain how and why an increase to parking tariffs will be of benefit to the residents and visitors to Cleethorpes?”

Councillor S Swinburn responded that there had not been an increase in parking fees since 2012. It would have been better to have incremental increases over that period and this administration intended to do that. The decision was taken to secure the long term funding required to cover costs of maintaining parking assets. These changes had been welcomed by residents

In a supplementary question, Councillor Wheatley enquired if a reduction in the tariffs had been considered in order to stimulate footfall and visitor numbers.

Councillor Swinburn responded that costs had to be covered and he repeated that it would have been better if this had been done on an incremental basis.

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

Portfolio Holder Safer and Stronger Communities – 21st March Minute PH.SSC.6 (Stray Dog Provision)

“Could the portfolio holder explain how this decision will benefit the residents of the borough?”

Councillor Shepherd, Portfolio Holder for Safer and Stronger Communities, responded that, as stated in the minutes, it was important to implement the service changes to keep the public safe.

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

Portfolio Holder Safer and Stronger Communities – 21st March Minute PH.SSC.6 (Stray Dog Provision)

“If a member of the public were to, in an act of kindness, bring a stray dog to Doughty Road Depot, after 3PM Friday, and has to keep the dog for no less than the next sixty six hours or so, but has no practical means to meet the welfare needs or find the support of someone who does, what action would the portfolio holder suggest the member of the public take?”

Councillor Shepherd responded that he would support individuals bringing stray animals to the Doughty Road depot but they were not being accepted out of hours due to ongoing works at the depot. The advice was to seek alternative arrangements by keeping the animal or using local vets and officers would attend the next working day.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Patrick enquired whether animal welfare groups had been consulted and, if so, what was their response.

Councillor Shepherd responded that the council had engaged with several companies who supplied pet care. The consultation itself was of a confidential nature and he wasn't exposed to that level of detail. However, he was happy to provide a written response.

- (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:

Scrutiny Panel Children and Lifelong Learning – 10th March Minute SPCLL.58 (Tracking the Recommendations of Scrutiny)

“Was the proposal to disband the working group on agency workers in children’s services taken so that any recommendations from such a working group could not be scrutinised in a public meeting?”

Councillor Freeston, then Chair of the Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel, responded that it was not.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Wilson asked why the Chair took take the decision to stop the working group.

Councillor Freeston responded that as per the minutes the panel needed to avoid duplication of work and free up officer time to be more productive elsewhere.

- (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:

Scrutiny Panel Children and Lifelong Learning – 10th March Minute SPCLL.59 (Family Hubs Review)

“Can the chair explain to this Council why the children’s hub in Immingham is more important than the five children’s hubs that the scrutiny panel recommended to close?”

Councillor Freeston responded that this was the collective view of the panel and was based on the survey results presented.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Wilson asked whether he could be enlightened on the evidence for this.

Councillor Freeston referred to the survey results and information provided by officers. If he required any assistance with obtaining this information then he was happy to help.

- (9) 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:

Scrutiny Panel Children and Lifelong Learning – 10th March Minute SPCLL.59 (Family Hubs Review)

“At the heart of the review of the family hub provision was the premise that it is the overall borough wide service delivery that was key in outcomes of geographical considerations, with that said, what new information prompted the change in recommendation that advised this resolution?”

Councillor Freeston responded that the panel considered a raft of information including public consultation and geographical location which supported the Immingham hub remaining open.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Patrick enquired whether it was a case of facts being shaped to agree a point of view.

Councillor Freeston did not agree. He felt it was important to listen to feedback and it was felt that the change would benefit residents in need

- (10) 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:

Scrutiny Panel Communities – 17th March Minute SPC.61 (Digital Programme)

“Can I ask the Chair if the panel investigated digital exclusion for school aged children, it is well known that some poorer families do not have broadband and therefore struggle to do homework.”

Councillor Silvester, then Chair of the Communities Scrutiny Panel, responded that the issue was raised and there was a gap in this area due to COVID. A recommendation was made for further work to be undertaken with regard to children and young people and digital exclusion, to include significant engagement with schools.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Wilson enquired whether there was any time limit to this work.

Councillor Silvester responded that there was no time frame but it had been included on the panel’s work programme to monitor.

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

Scrutiny Panel Communities – 17th March Minute SPC.62 (CCTV)

“A member asked as to where the extra capital funding would be sourced from for the extra financing of the CCTV scheme, but the minute is unclear, where will this funding be sourced from?”

Councillor Silvester responded that a report was to be submitted to Cabinet to agree the source of funding.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Patrick assumed that it would be found from borrowing and enquired whether the Chair was concerned about continuous borrowing undertaken by this council.

Councillor Silvester responded that he did not have a view on borrowing on this matter but he noted the importance of the CCTV system for the residents of this borough.

Note – Councillor Freeston left the meeting at this point.

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

Scrutiny Panel Communities – 17th March Minute SPC.62 (CCTV)

“When is the document on final camera locations, which is referred to, going to be shared with new members?”

Councillor Silvester responded that this was an ongoing process and consultation was still underway. Once locations had been decided then there would be further consultation with all Members.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Farren asked the Chair to explain the rationale for the number of cameras each ward would receive.

Councillor Silvester noted that this would not be his decision.

- (13) 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:

Scrutiny Panel Communities – 17th March Minute SPC.63 (Enforcement Review)

“Can the chair explain why the working group didn't arrive at any recommendations?”

Councillor Silvester responded that an extensive list of recommendations put forward by the working group.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Wilson enquired whether the Chair could go over those recommendations to update Council.

Councillor Silvester explained that the working group was held in 2020 and the panel was checking progress against those recommendations. Therefore, the panel had no need to make any recommendations itself.

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

Scrutiny Panel Economy – 1st March Minute SPE.66 (The Borough of North East Lincolnshire Council (Off-Street Parking Places) Order 2022)

“Could the Chair explain why charges were being increased across the borough whilst free parking was being made available to electric vehicles for a 4 hour duration?”

Councillor Furneaux, then Chair of the Economy Scrutiny Panel, responded that the increase was long overdue. The distinction between car charging points and car parking charges was a difficult one to make but it was intended to put a cap on the time allowed in charging bays.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Wheatley enquired how increase to free parking for electric vehicles would affect car parking income.

Councillor Furneaux noted that for the charging points this was a decrease aimed at increasing turnover. With regard to future bays this wasn't part of this discussion, so it was not for him to comment.

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

Scrutiny Panel Economy – 1st March Minute SPE.66 (The Borough of North East Lincolnshire Council (Off-Street Parking Places) Order 2022)

“Could the Chair tell me what was meant by the words ‘the desired effect’ within the minutes?”

Councillor Furneaux responded that those were not his words so it would be inappropriate for him to comment.

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

Scrutiny Panel Economy – 1st March Minute SPE.67 (Local Transport Plan Delivery Plan)

“Can the Chair tell me how many electric car charging points there are in the borough and where they are?”

Councillor Furneaux responded that there were most definitely not enough and he would seek clarification from officers on their location and provide a written response.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Wheatley enquired whether our projected EV charging points meet the needs of the national target by 2030.

Councillor Furneaux responded that he would hope so but it was difficult to predict the future.

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

Scrutiny Panel Economy – 1st March Minute SPE.70 (Regeneration Partnership Performance Report Quarter 4)

“Would the Chair agree with me that the reported decrease usage in car parks is a worrying sign for the prosperity of the area?”

Councillor Furneaux responded that he did not. The reporting period for the report took into account COVID restrictions at that time and expected to see a decrease because of that.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Wheatley asked the Chair to explain with cuts to bus services, increased parking charges and lack of charging points, how our area was being 'levelled up'.

Councillor Furneaux didn't think this related to the question or the answer he had provided.

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

Scrutiny Panel Economy – 1st March Minute SPE.71 (South Humber Industrial Investment Programme)

“Could the Chair update Council as to if the highly anticipated South Humber Industrial Investment Programme is likely to deliver an anticipated level of expected outcomes comparable to when it was first launched by this authority?”

Councillor Furneaux responded that he believed the programme would deliver on its projected income levels. He felt that the scheme would provide a fantastic place for business development. He added that the new Humber

Link Road would also provide easier and quicker access times. He acknowledged that the project had been impacted by COVID.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Patrick referred to the business rate forecast and asked if the Chair agreed that the project was sinking.

Councillor Furneaux note that projected income levels were always being revised. It was difficult to predict the future but this was a fantastic scheme and the more that were involved the better it would become.

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

Scrutiny Panel Economy – 1st March Minute SPE.72 (Empty Homes Update)

“Could the chair let me know how many empty properties are in the borough and at the current rate how long will it take to bring them all back into use?”

Councillor Furneaux responded that as at December 2021 there were 1776 long term empty properties that had been empty longer than 6 months. In terms of how long, it was possible to provide a figure based on the contractual target but this would be too simplistic and not reflective of the current situation.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Wheatley asked if the Chair would agree that the increase in empty homes year on year seemed to indicate getting this task under control was a job for life.

Councillor Furneaux referred to a briefing note provided to the panel which noted that the annual Government report for long-term empty properties had highlighted a fall in the number of empty properties between 2020 and 2021 of 288 properties within North East Lincolnshire.

- (20) A question on notice was submitted by Councillor Wilson 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 – 30th March Minute SPH.63 (Disabled Facilities Grant Fund Spend)

“Can the Chair confirm that the scrutiny panel was unanimously shocked and angry at the length of time taken for assessments, especially for stroke victims, which then delayed much needed adaptations?”

The Mayor noted that as Councillor Hudson, Chair of the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel, had left the meeting, he would arrange for a written response to be provided to this question.

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

Scrutiny Panel Health and Adult Social Care – 30th March Minute SPH.63
(Disabled Facilities Grant Fund Spend)

“Can the portfolio holder outline any actions he or his predecessor have taken to shorten the wait for adaptations since the shocking report on the 30th March?”

Councillor Shreeve responded that this was not an overnight problem and a new policy was being developed with all partners which would be submitted to Cabinet in the near future. It had also been agreed to employ an additional occupational therapist at the Northern Lincolnshire and Goole Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust as well as additional building control officers for major refurbishment work

In a supplementary question, Councillor Wilson enquired whether the portfolio holder could estimate the reduction in waiting times that would result.

Councillor Shreeve responded that he was sure that the rate of improvement would be considered further at scrutiny.

- (22) 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:

Scrutiny Panel Tourism and Visitor Economy – 10th March Minute
SPTVE.62 (Cleethorpes Masterplan)

“Does any of the land identified in this report or the wider masterplan include a site for a taxpayer million-pound demolition of a once enjoyed social venue to be left as an empty eyesore indefinitely?”

Councillor Brookes, Chair of the Tourism and Visitor Economy Scrutiny Panel, responded that it did not.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Patrick enquired whether the Chair shared his sense of shame on seeing this piece of land, given his impeccable record of speaking out on anything detrimental to the resort of Cleethorpes.

Councillor Brookes responded that he did not.

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

Scrutiny Panel Tourism and Visitor Economy – 24th March Minute
SPTVE.71 (Resort Manager's Annual Report)

“Can the Chair update this council with the response given in part 2 of the actions resolved?”

Councillor Brookes, Chair of the Tourism and Visitor Economy Scrutiny Panel, responded that, following a successful discussion with the MP for Cleethorpes and council officers, we were told that it would be reverting back to a near one hour service and this had already started.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Wilson whether he agreed that when officers agreed to provide responses to panel members that this should be included in the tracking report.

Councillor Brookes responded that members needed to be careful in what they were asking so that they received a proper response and it can be recorded properly.

- (24) 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:

Scrutiny Panel Tourism and Visitor Economy – 24th March Minute
SPTVE.72 (RNLI Development Update)

“Can the Chair please outline any costs incurred by the RNLI in this project to North East Lincolnshire Council?”

Councillor Brookes, Chair of the Tourism and Visitor Economy Scrutiny Panel, responded that he was not aware of any.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Patrick asked whether the Chair could quash the rumour that this authority charged the RNLI for the loss of car parking spaces during the construction project.

Councillor Brookes responded that he would liaise with officers and provide a written response.

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

Planning Committee – 15th June Minute P.7 (Tree Preservation Order)

“Does the Chair share my concerns with this application that it was made clear that the applicant did not seek an alternative resolution to removal of a cherished aged tree with the tree officer before proceeding to a planning application to remove a Tree Preservation Order?”

Councillor Pettigrew, having declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in this minute, vacated the Chamber for consideration of this question. In his absence, Councillor Hasthorpe, Deputy Chair of the Planning Committee, responded that he did share those concerns.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Patrick enquired whether Councillor Hasthorpe shared his concern at the precedent this would potentially set.

Councillor Hasthorpe responded that he did.

- (26) A question on notice was submitted by Councillor Wilson to the Chair of the Licensing and Community Protection Committee in accordance with the Council's Constitution as follows:

Licensing and Community Protection Committee – 20th January Minute L.16 (Review of Parliamentary Constituencies)

“Can the Chair confirm that the committee took into consideration the history of Great Grimsby constituency, being one of only two constituencies that remain from the inaugural Parliament of 1215AD, when making their recommendations?”

Councillor Harness, Chair of that Licensing and Community Protection Committee meeting, responded that the simple answer was no but the current Great Grimsby constituency failed the numbers criteria set by the Boundary Commission so it was not presented for consideration.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Wilson enquired why the committee didn't make recommendations that our feedback should take our history into account.

Councillor Harness repeated that it was clear that the numbers criteria wouldn't have been met. He noted that everyone had the opportunity to raise this issue as part of the consultation.

RESOLVED –

1. That the minutes of the following meetings of Cabinet and the Committees of the Council be approved and adopted, as submitted:
 - Cabinet - 9th March, 16th March, 6th April, 15th June and 22nd June 2022
 - Portfolio Holder Environment and Transport - 21st March and 21st June 2022
 - Portfolio Holder Safer and Stronger Communities - 21st March 2022
 - Scrutiny Panel Children and Lifelong Learning - 10th March 2022
 - Scrutiny Panel Communities - 17th March 2022
 - Scrutiny Panel Economy - 1st March 2022
 - Scrutiny Panel Health and Adult Social Care - 30th March 2022
 - Scrutiny Panel Tourism and Visitor Economy - 10th March and 24th March 2022
 - Audit and Governance Committee - 21st April 2022
 - Planning Committee - 2nd February, 2nd March, 6th April, 27th April and 15th June 2022
 - Licensing and Community Protection Committee - 15th March and 21st June 2022
 - Standards Referrals Panel - 22nd April and 18th May 2022
 - Appointments Committee - 11th April 2022
2. That Councillor Shepherd provide a written response to Councillor Patrick's question on minute PH.SSC.6 of the Portfolio Holder Safer and Stronger Communities meeting held on 21st March 2022 regarding which animal welfare groups had been consulted and their response.
3. That Councillor Furneaux provide a written response to Councillor Wheatley's question on minute SPE.67 of the Economy Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 1st March 2022 regarding how many electric car charging points there were in the borough and where they were located.
4. That Councillor Hudson provide a written response to Councillor Wilson's question on minute SPH.63 of the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 30th March 2022 to confirm whether the panel was unanimously shocked and angry at the length of time taken for assessments, especially for stroke victims, which then delayed much needed adaptations.
5. That Councillor Brookes provide a written response to Councillor Patrick's question on minute SPTVE.72 of the Tourism and Visitor Economy Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 24th March 2022 regarding this authority charging the RNLI for the loss of car parking spaces during the construction project.

There been no further business, the Mayor declared the meeting closed at 10.33 p.m.