

Present: Councillor Keith Weaver (*in the Chair*),
Councillor Bill Bilton, Councillor Yvonne Bodger,
Councillor Alan Briggs, Councillor Kathleen Brothwell,
Councillor Chris Burke, Councillor Sue Burke, Councillor
Bob Bushell, Councillor Thomas Dyer, Councillor
Geoff Ellis, Councillor Jim Hanrahan, Councillor
Gary Hewson, Councillor Ronald Hills, Councillor
Jackie Kirk, Councillor Rosanne Kirk, Councillor
Helena Mair, Councillor Adrianna McNulty, Councillor
Laura McWilliams, Councillor Ric Metcalfe, Councillor
Neil Murray, Councillor Donald Nannestad, Councillor
Lucinda Preston, Councillor Christopher Reid, Councillor
Fay Smith, Councillor Edmund Strenziel, Councillor
Ralph Toofany, Councillor Naomi Tweddle, Councillor
Pat Vaughan and Councillor Loraine Woolley

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Biff Bean, Councillor Gill Clayton-Hewson,
Councillor Andy Kerry and Councillor Hilton Spratt

47. Confirmation of Minutes - 22 January 2019

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 22 January 2019 be confirmed.

48. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

49. Receive Any Questions under Council Procedure Rule 11 from Members of the Public and Provide Answers thereon

No questions had been received.

50. Receive Any Questions under Council Procedure Rule 12 from Members and Provide Answers thereon

Councillor Thomas Dyer asked the Leader of the Council the following question:

“Has the Council offered any discretionary business rate relief to encourage businesses to either come to or invest further in Lincoln?”

Councillor Ric Metcalfe, Leader of the Council, responded by saying that the Council had always supported small businesses which he said were the lifeblood of the economy. A number of schemes for relief from business rates could be put in place for small businesses via statutory or discretionary relief, with several hundred small businesses in the city taking advantage of existing discretionary relief.

A further policy relating to discretionary relief for small business was agreed by the Executive in July 2018 which sought to encourage economic growth. It was reported that, to date, no applications for this relief had been received. The Leader queried whether the application process was too complicated or if enough

publicity regarding the relief had been undertaken but confirmed that he would raise this with officers outside of the meeting, adding that it was important for businesses to know what was on offer in relation to business rate relief.

51. Receive Reports under Council Procedure Rule 2 (vi) from Members

(a) Report by Councillor Donald Nannestad - Portfolio Holder for Quality Housing

Councillor Donald Nannestad, Portfolio Holder for Quality Housing, presented his first report under this portfolio having taken over in May 2018. He highlighted that there had been some significant change in the Directorate since then, with the new Director of Housing and Investment commencing their role during October 2018.

Councillor Nannestad reported that housing was changing rapidly and that Council housing was no longer housing of last resort, with many private housing tenants in the city now aspiring to be tenants of the City Council. Over the last twelve months the Council had added to its housing stock with the biggest increase in houses for at least 40 years. He highlighted that next year, 2020, saw the centenary of the first Council housing built in Lincoln which provided an opportunity to celebrate council housing and the important part it had played in the lives of many Lincoln people over the years.

Updates on the following aspects of the Housing and Investment directorate and the services it provided were set out in the report:

- homelessness;
- tenancy management;
- new build and allocations;
- housing improvement programme;
- housing repairs;
- supported housing;
- private sector housing;
- health.

In relation to the new build programme, Councillor Nannestad highlighted that 46 new Council houses on Westwick Drive had been completed, nearly all of which were let in the first day of availability.

He also highlighted that the Executive at its meeting on 25 February 2019 had approved the redevelopment of De Wint Court as an Extra Care facility which was the first of its kind in Lincoln.

Councillor Ronald Hills asked whether the proposal to establish a housing company in order to facilitate the construction of houses for let at market rate was still something that the Council was seeking to pursue. Councillor Nannestad said that it was necessary for him to prioritise upon taking over as Portfolio Holder the key projects and schemes within the directorate. Other projects and schemes, which he felt were more urgent, had taken priority. The principle of a housing company was still open for consideration, but it would need to be able to cover itself financially.

Councillor Christopher Burke congratulated the Portfolio Holder in relation to the team successfully preventing 159 cases of homelessness and relieving 134 cases since the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act. He also welcomed the addition of new Council houses in the city.

Councillor Jim Hanrahan asked whether any consideration had been given to areas of land currently occupied by garages which could be used for housing. Councillor Nannestad confirmed that a number of sites were being looked at for this purpose, however, they tended to be quite small in size with larger sites able to provide better economies of scale.

Councillor Jackie Kirk asked for some further explanation in relation to the £441,750 for 2019/20 that had been secured via a bid for funding from the Government relating to homelessness. Councillor Nannestad confirmed that this funding would be used to support an assessment hub together with two Support Planners, four Support Workers and additional temporary accommodation. The requirement for the bid to be submitted in the first place demonstrated how services had been deprived of money to address issues, particularly the health service.

Councillor Eddie Strengiel asked whether there had been an increase or decrease in the number of people who were ex-military being homeless or sleeping rough. Councillor Nannestad was unable to provide specific figures, however, he reported that ex-military personnel would have access to a range of support through agencies and organisations which other people would not necessarily be able to access. In view of this, they may have sought help or support without needing to contact local authority. In terms of the Council's housing register, ex-military personnel did not have to meet the requirement of a local connection to Lincoln in order to qualify for housing in the city.

Councillor Nannestad reported that a Homelessness Conference would be held on 15 March 2019 involving a range of agencies and organisations in the city.

It was RESOLVED that the report be noted.

(b) Report by Councillor Naomi Tweddle - Chair of the Equality and Diversity Group

Councillor Naomi Tweddle, Chair of the Equality and Diversity Group, presented a report which covered the work of the Group from April 2019 to January 2019.

Councillor Tweddle emphasised how important equality and diversity was and that she was keen to keep the momentum going within the Council. She reported that an arrangement had been confirmed for the use of the People's Partnership in respect of consultation, particularly relating to equality analyses. This ensured that key decisions and new policies fully considered the equality and diversity impacts on residents and individuals. The People's Partnership was an organisation which provided a voice for people that had different protected characteristics under the Equality Act.

In order to avoid the risk of discrimination against any resident when delivering its services, the Council had developed a new corporate equality monitoring form which was available on the authority's intranet. The form was used in part or in full when services needed to find out about the makeup of the community they were serving.

Councillor Tweddle was proud to report that the Council supported Domestic Abuse Awareness Week 2018, which took place between 11 June and 15 June 2018. During the week the Council helped to raise awareness of domestic abuse and the impact this could have on individuals to both staff and residents in the city, from the perspective of men as well as women as victims of abuse. She highlighted that the topic of domestic abuse was also now being incorporated into the Council's Protecting Vulnerable People meeting.

A menopause policy was also being produced by the Council in order to provide clearer guidelines for supporting employees that were going through the menopause. Councillor Tweddle felt that this was an excellent step forward and was something which the Equality and Diversity Group was keen to see be developed.

It was RESOLVED that the report be noted.

(c) Report by Councillor Sue Burke - Sustainability Advocate

Councillor Sue Burke, Sustainability Advocate, presented a report as the first in this role which provided an outline of some of the sustainability work the Council currently undertook.

Councillor Burke was pleased to report that the City Council had sustainability at the centre of its projects and she looked forward to the authority building on this in the future. The Lincoln Project Management Model provided the Council's guiding definition of sustainability, which it stated was about getting the right balance or harmony between economic sustainability, social sustainability and environmental sustainability. The report set out some of the initiatives that the Council was involved with regarding sustainability, which included:

- working in partnership to promote Fair Trade in Lincoln, with the City being initially granted Fairtrade City status in 2013 which it continued to hold;
- working in partnership as a member of the Lincoln Food Partnership which carried out a food hub consultation in July 2018. The food hub was a central facility where food could be collected, stored, processed and distributed to community projects across Lincolnshire as a means to reduce food waste, reduce food poverty and promote a long-term sustainable mode of food citizenship;
- promotion of individual action on the more traditional and sustainable 'green' issues. A key objective was to make homes more energy efficient, which included supporting residents to access Energy Company Obligation funding through energy suppliers;
- promotion of the Low Carbon Lincoln Partnership which signed up to a target to reduce Lincoln's carbon dioxide emissions by 25% by 2020 and 80% by 2050. Carbon dioxide emissions had reduced by 41.3% since 2005 despite the level of growth in the city.

Councillor Burke reported that the Council had reduced its corporate greenhouse gas emissions by 34% since 2008 and would continue to look for opportunities to reduce its emissions and environmental impact further. She looked forward to the Council continuing to make progress towards a carbon free future through its sustainable policies and approaches both as a Council and in partnership.

Councillor Eddie Strengiel asked, in relation to the Council's new build aspirations, whether more sustainable energy sources such as heat pumps which were becoming popular would be used in the future. Councillor Burke agreed to provide a response to this question outside of the meeting after consulting with officers.

Councillor Thomas Dyer said that the Council should be proud of a 41.3% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions since 2005. He asked what more could be done by the Council and other partners to encourage more recycling, especially in order that people knew, for example, what could or could not be recycled and that it was important for this to be publicised. Councillor Dyer also highlighted that there were problem areas in the city where recycling rates were low and asked how this could be improved. Councillor Burke agreed that people did need encouragement but also agreed with the point made that they were confused as to what they could and could not recycle. She did advocate the recycling of more types of plastics than those which could currently be recycled, however, it was acknowledged that there were cost implications associated with this.

Councillor Dyer was complimentary of the Council's approach to using more economical vehicles but asked whether, in the future, the Council could switch to electric vehicles. In addition, he asked what progress generally would be made over the next year with regard to the sustainability agenda. Councillor Burke said that the Council would aspire to use more electric vehicles and additional charging facilities had been placed in the Central Lincoln Car Park to enable more people to use electric vehicles in the city. In terms of progress over the next year, she made the point that addressing the challenges identified within the report would be an ongoing agenda.

Councillor Dyer reported that he had been contacted by a resident who was part of the Plastic Free Lincoln Group which was campaigning to take action against the use of single use plastics. The resident called for the Council to lead by example and remove all single use plastics by the end of the year, requesting that an audit be carried out to identify all sources of single use plastics, together with an action plan setting out timescales and who would be accountable. Councillor Dyer acknowledged that the timescales associated with the request may not be achievable, but asked whether an audit of single use plastics could potentially take place. Councillor Burke was supportive of the reduction in single use plastics although it would not be possible for the Council to remove all single use plastics from its operation by the end of the year. The Council should, however, be educating people about what they could do to reduce the amount of single use plastics they used on a day to day basis. This was an ongoing issue which the Council was aware of, but she acknowledged that more could be done by everyone to reduce this type of waste.

Councillor Gary Hewson reflected on comments made by the Portfolio Holder for Remarkable Place at the meeting of the Performance Scrutiny Committee held on 21 February 2019 in that it was the suppliers and producers of plastics who should take some accountability. It was the Council's responsibility to collect the waste, but any change needed to start with those who produced these plastic products in the first instance. Councillor Sue Burke agreed with these sentiments and said that pressure had to be placed on the producers of plastics in order to make changes, which had already happened nationally in relation to products such as cotton buds.

Councillor Jim Hanrahan supported the work that the Council had undertaken so far, but acknowledged that the authority could only do so much. From the perspective of planning, he was of the opinion that the private sector needed to act on this issue as well in order that more developments were more sustainable in nature.

Councillor Christopher Reid sought some clarity as to where the city was now in respect of carbon dioxide emissions, as the report stated that this had reduced by 41.3% since 2005. Councillor Burke agreed to provide a response to this query outside of the meeting after consulting with officers.

52. To Consider the Following Recommendations of the Executive and Committees of the Council

(a) Council Tax Base 2019/20

It was proposed, seconded and RESOLVED

- (1) That there are no special items as defined in Section 35 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended) applicable to any part or parts of the City of Lincoln local authority area.
- (2) That the Chief Finance Officer's calculation of the Council Tax base for the financial year commencing 1 April 2019 and ending 31 March 2020, as set out in Appendix B of the report, be approved.
- (3) That, in accordance with the Chief Finance Officer's calculation, and pursuant to the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992 (as amended), the Council Tax base for the 2019/20 financial year be approved as 24,299.78.

(b) Council House and Garage Rents 2019/20

It was proposed, seconded and RESOLVED:

- (1) That the basis of rent calculation for charges to individual Council house rents as set out in paragraph 6 of the report, which represents a decrease in the average 52 week council house net rent in 2019/20 of 1% equating to a £0.68 per week loss for social housing rents and £1.08 per week loss for affordable rents per property be approved.
- (2) That a 3% increase in garage rents for 2019/20 in accordance with the proposal in paragraph 6.1 of the report be approved.

53. Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places

It was proposed, seconded and RESOLVED:

- (1) That the proposals for Polling Districts and Polling Places for future elections, as detailed in Appendix B to the report, be approved.
- (2) That the Chief Executive be authorised to make alternative arrangements should any of the proposed Polling Places become unavailable for any future election.