

Present: Councillor Ric Metcalfe (*in the Chair*),
Councillor Donald Nannestad, Councillor Chris Burke,
Councillor Bob Bushell and Councillor Rosanne Kirk

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Neil Murray

72. Confirmation of Minutes - 18 January 2021

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2021 be confirmed.

73. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

74. Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021 - 2026

Purpose of Report

To recommend to the Executive the draft Medium Term Financial Strategy for the period 2021-2026, the budget for 2021/22 and the Capital Strategy 2021-2026 for referral to Council.

Decision

Executive recommended to Council for approval:

- The Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021-2026, and;
- The Capital Strategy 2021-2026

Including the following specific elements:

- A proposed Council Tax increase of 1.9% for 2021/22.
- The Council is member of the Lincolnshire Business Rates Pool in 2021/22.
- The General Fund Revenue Forecast 2021/22-2025/26 as shown in Appendix 1 and the main basis on which this budget has been calculated (as set out in paragraph 4).
- The General Investment Programme 2021/22-2025/26 as shown in Appendix 2, and the main basis on which the programme has been calculated (as set out in paragraph 6).
- The Housing Revenue Account Forecast 2021/22-2025/26 as shown in Appendix 3 and the main basis on which this budget has been calculated (as set out in paragraph 5).
- The Housing Investment Programme 2021/22-2025/26 as shown in Appendix 4, and the main basis on which the programme has been calculated (as set out in paragraph 7).

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None.

Reason for Decision

The financial landscape for local government presented an unprecedented challenge to the Council. The Covid19 pandemic was having immediate effects on the Council's budgets as a result of increases in spending on local services and plummeting income from sales, fees and charges and commercial activities. Beyond the immediate impact the crisis would cast a longer term shadow on the Council's finances. The Government had pumped billions of pounds into the economy to support the response phase of the pandemic and to protect jobs and services. In the medium-term the levels of additional national borrowing and the UK's budget deficit would need to be managed down at the same time as meeting ongoing needs to invest in recovery to achieve the growth required to repay the national deficit. The Government's strategy to address this challenge was not yet known, nor what it would mean for local government funding more generally. Furthermore, there remained potential longstanding impacts on the Council's local income sources if behaviour, working practices and spending patterns in the city continued to change.

Further to consideration of the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021-2026 and the budget and Council Tax proposal for 2021/22 at the meeting of the Executive held on 18 January 2021, the initial draft had been subject to public consultation and scrutiny via the Council's Budget Review Group. In addition, an all member workshop was undertaken during January 2021 to ensure that as large a number of members as possible had the opportunity to fully understand the financial position of the Council.

The minutes of the Budget Review Group's meeting held on 3 February 2021 were appended to the report and it was noted that the Group had supported the Medium Term Financial Strategy in terms of its principles and the process that had been followed to develop it. A small number of responses to the public consultation had been received, which were largely in favour of the budget proposals.

Councillor Ric Metcalfe, on behalf of the Executive, thanked the Chief Finance Officer and her team for the huge amount of work they had done in relation to the Medium Term Financial Strategy and budget.

75. Council Tax 2021/22

Purpose of Report

In light of the report on the Medium Term Financial Strategy, which appeared elsewhere on this agenda, the report set out the City Council's Council Tax requirement and, together with the requirements of the County Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner, allowed Members to make a formal recommendation to Council for the overall levels of Council Tax for 2021/22.

Decision

That Council be recommended to:

- (1) Accept the 4 January 2021 Executive recommendation that the Council Tax Base for 2021/22, as calculated in accordance with The Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012, be 24,372.38.
- (2) Calculate the following amounts for the year 2021/22 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992:
 - a) £116,497,330 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils.
 - b) £109,541,700 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act.
 - c) £6,955,630 being the amount by which the aggregate at 2(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 2(b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act as its Council Tax requirement for the year. (Item R in the formula in Section 31A (4) of the Act).
 - d) £285.39 being the amount at 2(c) above (Item R), all divided by Item T (1 above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish precepts).
 - e) £0 being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act
 - f) £285.39 being the amount at 2(c) above less the amount at 2(e) above, all divided by the amount at 1 above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 33(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year

g) **City of Lincoln Council**

A	B	C	D
£190.26	£221.97	£253.68	£285.39
E	F	G	H
£348.81	£412.23	£475.65	£570.78

being the amounts given by multiplying the amount at 2f) above by the number which, in proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular band divided by the number which in proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in Valuation Band D, calculated

by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different bands.

- (3) That it be noted that for the year 2021/22 Lincolnshire County Council have provisionally stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with the dwelling bandings shown below:

Lincolnshire County Council			
A	B	C	D
£909.44	£1,061.01	£1,212.59	£1,364.16
E	F	G	H
£1,667.31	£1,970.45	£2,273.60	£2,728.32

- (4) That it be noted that for the year 2021/22 Police Crime Commissioner Lincolnshire have provisionally stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with the dwelling bandings shown below:

Police & Crime Commissioner Lincolnshire			
A	B	C	D
£177.54	£207.13	£236.72	£266.31
E	F	G	H
£325.49	£384.67	£443.85	£532.62

- (5) That having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 2g, 3 and 4 above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the following as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2020/21 in accordance with the dwelling bandings shown below

Total Council Tax Charge 2021/22			
A	B	C	D
£1,277.24	£1,490.11	£1,702.99	£1,915.86
E	F	G	H
£2,341.61	£2,767.35	£3,193.10	£3,831.72

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None.

Reason for Decision

In terms of the City Council requirement for 2021/22, the net General Fund budget requirement as set out in the Medium Term Financial Strategy report totalled £978,410 which included a contribution to balances of £477,240.

For 2021/22 a Council Tax increase of 1.90% had been applied, with the Council Tax requirement for 2021/22 noted as £6,955,630. By reference to the Band D level, the 2021/22 Council Tax would rise by £5.31 to £285.39 per annum, with the range of Council Taxes for bandings set out in paragraph 2.4 of the report.

The requirements of Lincolnshire County Council and the Lincolnshire Police and Crime Commissioner were also set out in the body of the report.

76. **Prudential Indicators 2020/21 - 2023/24 and Treasury Management Strategy 2021/22**

Purpose of Report

To provide the Executive with an opportunity to consider the adoption of the 15 statutory prudential indicators and eight local indicators for the period 2020/21 to 2023/24, together with the 2021/22 Treasury Management Strategy prior to reporting to Council for final approval.

Decision

Executive recommended to Council for approval:

- (1) The Prudential Indicators detailed in paragraph 4.1 and Appendix 1 of the report.
- (2) The Treasury Management Strategy, including the treasury management prudential indicators and the Investment Strategy, set out in paragraph 4 and Appendix 3 of the report.
- (3) The revised Minimum Revenue Provision Policy in Appendix 2 of the report.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None.

Reason for Decision

The report set out the operation of the Council's prudential indicators, its treasury function and its likely activities for the forthcoming year which incorporated the following key reporting requirements:

- Prudential and Treasury Indicators – the reporting of the statutory prudential indicators together with local indicators, in accordance with the requirements of the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities and the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice;
- Minimum Revenue Provision Statement – the reporting of the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy which set out how the Council would pay for capital assets through revenue each year (as required by regulation under the Local Government Act 2003);
- Treasury Management Strategy – which set out how the Council's treasury activity would support capital decisions, the day-to-day treasury management and the limitations on activity through treasury prudential indicators. The key indicator was the Authorised Limit, the maximum amount of debt the Council could afford in the short term, but which would not be sustainable in the longer term. This was the Authorised Borrowing Limit required by Section 3 of the Local Government Act 2003 and was in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management and the CIPFA Prudential Code;
- Investment Strategy – this was included within the Treasury Management Strategy and set out the criteria for choosing investment counterparties and limiting exposure to the risk of loss (reported annually in accordance

with the Ministry of Housing, Communities Local Government (MHCLG) Investment Guidance).

The Council adopted the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management (revised December 2017) on 2 March 2010, together with the Treasury Management Policy Statement. The Treasury Management Policy & Practices (TMP's) were updated annually to reflect the Treasury Management Strategy approved by Council and to reflect any changes in staffing structures or working practices of the treasury function as attached at Appendix 4 of the report.

77. Financial Performance - Quarterly Monitoring

Purpose of Report

To present the third quarter's performance on the Council's General Fund, Housing Revenue Account, Housing Repairs Service and Capital Programme, specifically including the financial impact of the Covid19 pandemic.

Decision

Executive:

- (1) Noted the progress on the financial performance for the period October to 31st December 2020 and the projected outturns for 2020/21 and the impact of Covid19 on the Council's financial position.
- (2) Noted the underlying impact of the pressures and underspends identified in paragraphs 3.2 (and Appendix B), 4.3 (and Appendix D) and 5.2 of the report.
- (3) Approved the proposed contributions to earmarked reserves as set out in paragraph 3.13 and 3.14 of the report.
- (4) Approved the proposed transfer between earmarked reserves as set out in paragraph 6.2 of the report.
- (5) Approved the changes to the General Investment Programme and Housing Investment Programme as approved by the Chief Finance Officer and detailed in paragraphs 7.3 and 7.10 respectively of the report.
- (6) Approved the changes to the Housing Investment Programme as detailed in paragraph 7.11 of the report.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None.

Reason for Decision

Covid19 had taken its toll on the financial resilience of the Council as income streams had plummeted and there had been a requirement to incur costs to ensure services were being provided throughout this difficult period and to respond to consequences of the pandemic. The impacts of this were not simply restricted to the current financial year but would have a significant impact over the period of the MTFS and possibly beyond

Despite a financial support package announced by the Government the General Fund and HRA could not absorb the level of budget shortfalls without having to take some measures to reduce some areas of expenditure. These measures, approved at Q1, would allow the Council to be able to continue to deliver its critical services and to ensure its balances remained at an adequate level to provide resilience for future years.

Updates were reported as follows:

General Fund Revenue Account

For 2020/21 the Council's net General Fund revenue budget was set at £12,963,220, including a planned contribution from balances of £286,310 which resulting in an estimated level of general balances at the year-end of £2,522,188, after allowing for the 2019/20 outturn position.

The General Fund summary was currently projecting a forecast underspend of £122,723, (as set out in Appendix A of the report), resulting in general balance at the year-end of £2,645,911, (subject to any final contributions to earmarked reserves). There were a significant number of forecast year-end variations in income and expenditure against the approved budget, primarily as a result of Covid19 along with variances arising from measures taken to address the budget pressures and the financial support provided by Government. Full details of the main variances were provided in Appendix B while the table below sets out the key variances:

	Forecast £'000
Increased expenditure arising as a result of Covid19	610
Income losses as a result of Covid19	6,305
Income Compensation Scheme	(3,048)
Government Grants (Covid19, Rough Sleeping, New Burdens, Test & Trace support and Compliance & Enforcement).	(2,283)
Measures approved at Q1 (budget review, furlough, review of capital, increased TFS)	(1,898)
Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (in addition to Q1)	(84)
2020/21 national pay award implications	110
Covid19 Grant - Contribution to reserves for use in future years (approved at Q2)	622
Net other variances	(458)
Overall forecast budget shortfall/(surplus)	(123)

The key financial challenges the Council was facing in 2020/21 arising as result of Covid19 were detailed at paragraphs, 3.4 – 3.8 of the report.

Financial support received from the Government had been provided and measures had been adopted to address the budget shortfall as detailed at paragraphs 3.9 -3.12 of the report

Included in the forecast outturn underspend of £157,723 was a proposed additional contribution to earmarked reserves in respect of Active Nation Bond Reserve – contribution to a new reserve fund in the sum of £ 83,000 and carry forwards, requested to be transferred into an earmarked reserve to offset

expenditure in the next financial year as detailed at paragraphs 3.13-3.14 of the report

Towards Financial Sustainability Programme

The savings target included in the MTFS for 2020/21 was originally £500,000, this was increased by £50,000 as part of the budget measures approved at quarter one. Progress against this target, based on quarter 3 performance showed that secured savings totalled £559,070. This resulted in an over achievement of the increased target in 2019/20 by £9,070 as summarised at Appendix N of the report.

Housing Revenue Account

For 2020/21 the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) net revenue budget was set at a £75,000 use of balances, resulting in an estimated level of general balances at the year-end of £921,071, after allowing for the 2019/20 outturn position.

The Housing Revenue Account was currently projecting an in-year variance of £772,391 which would increase the General Balances to £1,693,462 at the end of 2020/21.

Although the forecast position was an underspend there were a number of forecast year-end variations in income and expenditure as a result of Covid19 along with variances arising from measures taken to address the budget pressures as are provided in Appendix D of the report.

The key financial challenges that the Council was facing in 2020/21 arising as result of Covid19 were detailed at paragraphs, 4.5 – 4.6 of the report.

The measures taken to ensure the HRA maintained a balanced budget for 2020/21 were similar to those in the General Fund as detailed at paragraph 4.7 of the report

The total of these measures along with other income and expenditure variances in year had resulted in the HRA currently forecasting a budget underspend at the year end. As with the General Fund there were a number of financial assumptions which may change during the course of the next 3 months and could alter the current forecast position. At this point it was therefore proposed that the use of the earmarked reserve to resource the Rent Hardship was reviewed following the final outturn position and in addition that the underspend on repairs and maintenance was considered for allocation, subject to the final outturn position.

Housing Repairs Service

For 2020/21 the Council's Housing Repairs Service net revenue budget was set at zero, reflecting its full cost recovery nature.

At quarter three the Housing Repairs Service was forecasting a surplus of £204,670 in 2020/21, with a summary and details of main variances set out in Appendices E/F of the report. However, as with the General Fund and HRA this forecast was based on a number of assumptions which, due to uncertainties related to Covid19, may change during the next three months. In addition, there

had been a delay in undertaking the internal billing process which provided a further level of uncertainty to the forecast position.

Details of earmarked reserves and their forecast balance as at 31st March 2021 were outlined at paragraphs, 6.1– 6.2 and Appendix G of the report.

General Fund Investment Programme

The original General Investment Programme for 2020/21 in the MTF5 2020-25 amounted to £15.6m which was increased to £16.4m following quarter 4 approvals and year end re-profiles from 2019/20. At quarter 2 the programme was reduced to £11.1m and at quarter 3 the programme was reduced by a further £5.987m to £5.117m, as shown at paragraph 7.2 of the report.

Budget changes/re-profiles approved by the Chief Finance Officer during the third quarter detailed at 7.3-7.5 of the report, resulted in one change requiring Executive approval for the third quarter resulting from notification of additional grant funding, together with a further scheme added to the GIP, having been previously being considered by the Executive pending confirmation of external grant funding: and changes to the Crematorium Scheme, considered elsewhere on the agenda had also been reflected in the General Investment Project above:

The overall spending on the General Investment Programme for the first three quarters of 2020/21 amounted to £0.885m, which was 17.5% of the 2020/21 programme and 17% of the active programme, detailed further at Appendix J.

Although this represented a low percentage of expenditure at this stage of the financial year, works had been constrained by the national lockdowns as well as the diversion of internal resources to focus on the Covid19. The majority of schemes had recommenced either on site or in terms of their development stages; a further £384k had been spent since the end of quarter 3. Further expenditure was expected in quarter 4 on Disabled Facilities Grants, Car Park Ticket Machines, Boultham Park Lake, the Towns Fund, Western Growth Corridor, HAZ Scheme and various capitalised maintenance schemes.

Housing Investment Programme

The original Housing Investment Programme for 2020/21 in the MTF5 2020-25 amounted to £25.640m. This was increased to £28.505m following approvals and year end re-profiles as part of the 2019/20 outturn. As at quarter 2 the budget was revised to £22.3m and has been further adjusted by £2.6m to £19.7m at quarter 3. A summary of the were shown at paragraph 7.9 of the report

The changes that required approval from Executive were detailed at paragraphs 7.11-7.12 of the report.

Expenditure against the HIP budget to the third quarter was £10.206m, representing 52% of the revised programme. A further £1.8m had been spent as at the end of January 2021 as detailed further at Appendix L.

Although this represented a lower percentage than would be expected at this stage of the financial year, works had been constrained by the national lockdowns as well as the diversion of internal resources to focus on Covid19. The majority of schemes had now recommenced either on site or in terms of their

development stages, some schemes had been re-profiled into future years at quarter 3.

Councillor Ric Metcalfe thanked the Council's Chief Finance Officer and her team for their excellent stewardship of the Council's finances, reflecting on what had been a most extremely challenging year under very difficult circumstances. He added that the loss of income to the Council had been significant and, whilst being grateful to the Government for the support it had put in place, highlighted that was on the basis of one-off support and that the Council itself would need to ensure its long term financial sustainability.

Councillor Donald Nannestad reflected on reference in the report to housing repairs and the reduction in the number of repairs carried out. He reported that people had been reluctant throughout the pandemic to allow the Council enter their homes and undertake repairs. As restrictions relaxed in relation to Covid-19 it was anticipated that there would be increases in the number of repairs carried out.

78. Service Delivery During Our Covid-19 Response

Purpose of Report

To present to Executive a summary of how services had performed during the pandemic with a focus on quarter three, as well as an indication of plans for future operation.

Decision

That:

- (1) The achievements, issues and any future concerns raised within the report be noted by Executive.
- (2) Progress on the challenge of tackling COVID-19 pandemic be noted by Portfolio Holders with further recovery plans to be discussed with their Service Leads.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None.

Reason for Decision

City of Lincoln Council, like all other businesses, had made dramatic changes as a result of the lockdown resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic, not only to ensure that the Council kept its critical services functioning but also, like Councils across the country, delivered a community leadership role for the city in this time of crisis.

As a result, the Council was not in a position to produce a performance report for quarter one, and therefore produced a combined report for the first two quarters of 2020/21. This gave an indication, beyond the usual operational measures, of how the whole Council had performed in effectively leading its communities during the emergency response and rising to the challenge of reprioritising its workload to meet different needs.

At the end of quarter three the Council found itself in a third national lockdown and therefore it had been agreed to delay the quarter end performance report and follow the pattern for the first half of the year, producing a combined report for quarters three and four following the end of the financial year.

To ensure the Executive remained informed on service performance, a document had been produced which set out the way in which the Council responded to the Covid-19 pandemic, how services were impacted and how they had performed. The report specifically provided detail in relation to the following:

- key themes, opportunities and challenges that had been identified;
- the introduction of temporary new services;
- those services temporarily closed;
- temporary limits to services;
- fully operational services;
- temporarily enhanced services;
- performance targets for the following year.

Councillor Ric Metcalfe welcomed the production of this report which he said acted as a reminder of how much the Council and its staff had pulled together to respond tremendously in response to the pandemic. He said that the Council's performance during this period was nothing short of magnificent and, on behalf of the Executive, put forward his thanks to the Chief Executive and all City Council staff.

Councillor Christopher Burke echoed these sentiments and referenced the befriending service in particular as something which was set up and operational immediately to support the most vulnerable people in the community.

Councillor Donald Nannestad said that the report and the work the authority had done showed how valuable District Councils were in dealing with such difficult situations at a local level. He praised the tremendous work of officers who had adapted to new ways of working, such as working from home, who had even undertaken roles that they were not necessarily employed for in their usual day-to-day duties, embracing opportunities and demonstrating flexibility.

It was agreed that a joint letter from the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive should be sent to all staff thanking them for their efforts and achievements and that they should be provided with a copy of the report.

79. Living Wage Increase November 2020

Purpose of Report

To recommend the proposed increase to the Living Wage as announced by the Living Wage Foundation in November 2020.

Decision

That the implementation of the latest Living Wage uplift during April 2021 be approved.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None.

Reason for Decision

The Council was committed to maintaining its Living Wage accreditation and in order to do so the authority had six months to implement the Living Wage following the announcement of increase. In November 2020 it was announced that the Living Wage would increase from £9.30 an hour to £9.50 an hour.

The aim of implementing the Living Wage was to ensure that no employees were paid below the Living Wage hourly rate.

80. Pay Policy Statement 2021/22

Purpose of Report

To request that Council approve the attached Pay Policy Statement, drafted in compliance with section 38(1) of the Localism Act 2011.

Decision

That Council be recommended to approve the Pay Policy Statement.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None.

Reason for Decision

The Localism Act 2011 required local authorities to produce pay policy statements which articulated an authority's policies towards a range of issues relating to the pay of its workforce, particularly its senior staff and its lowest paid employees.

The Government also considered that decisions on pay policies should be taken by elected members, as those directly accountable to local communities. The Localism Act 2011 therefore required the Pay Policy Statement and any amendments to be considered by a meeting of full Council.

The Pay Policy Statement met the relevant requirements of the Localism Act 2011, which were to define the Council's policy on:

- the level and elements of remuneration for chief officers;
- the remuneration of the lowest paid employee, and the definition of 'lowest paid employee';
- the relationship between the remuneration of chief officers and other officers;
- specific aspects of chief officers' remuneration, including at appointment, increases, termination and any other payments.

The Act defined remuneration to include pay, charges, fees, allowances, benefits in kind, increase in enhancements of pension entitlements, and termination payments.

81. Mutually Agreed Resignation Scheme - Update on Applications

Purpose of Report

To update Executive on the applications and initial approval of those members of staff who had applied under the Mutually Agreed Resignation Scheme (MARS).

Decision

That the content of the report be noted by Executive.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Consideration was also given to the fact that the Exit Pay Regulations and subsequent LGPS changes, could ultimately see a reduction in redundancy payments to staff, although this option had not been implemented by Government.

Reason for Decision

MARS was a scheme in which the employee, in agreement with the employer, choose to leave their employment early, in return for a settlement payment.

The Council's MARS scheme was available to all employees, and in accordance with the scheme itself, was proactively publicised to staff as an available opportunity, in order to increase the flexibility of the organisation, and to address particular financial circumstances.

On the 9 December 2020 the Council opened up for a limited period, an enhanced version of MARS, to run until the 4 January 2021. This limited, enhanced opportunity saw an increase in the allowance under the existing scheme, from 2 week's pay for every year of service, to 3 week's pay for every year of service.

The Scheme was offered in this way, to try and balance any savings that may subsequently be required under the Towards Financial Sustainability (TOFS) programme and to try and avoid any compulsory redundancies that may follow.

It was agreed that 22 members of staff could be released under the MARS scheme, according to criteria outlined at paragraph 3.4 of the report

Losing staff from the organisation would inevitably see a reduction/change in performance in affected areas. Whilst the above criteria had been used to assess impact on service areas, it would not negate the impact. However, it was considered by CMT to be more appropriate to work with the potential changes in standards of performance at this time, rather than to contemplate compulsory redundancies and changes to standards of performance at a later date.

It was noted that the savings made by those applying under the MARS scheme would have a direct impact on compulsory redundancies identified elsewhere in the TOFS programme, so to that extent opening this enhanced window, had a positive effect.

82. City of Lincoln Council Housing Strategy 2020-25

Purpose of Report

To request the Executive to approve the draft Housing Strategy 2020-25.

Decision

That the draft Housing Strategy 2020-25 be approved.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None.

Reason for Decision

A local authority housing strategy was an overarching cross-tenure document which identified local housing needs and set out how these needs would be met. Housing need was used in its broadest sense, it was not just the need for new affordable housing, but for all things housing including: growth; regeneration; and neighbourhood renewal, to ensure that a local authority had a balanced and sustainable housing market that met the needs of its residents.

The review of the Housing Strategy was initiated in July 2019 with the delivery of Member workshops which sought to provide an update on the emerging housing needs evidence, Lincoln's current housing market, housing stock condition and the opportunities for delivering new homes. This resulted in the Council undertaking further housing needs research. A follow up Members' workshop took place in January 2020 where officers discussed the following themes in more detail to inform the Housing Strategy's priorities over the next five years:

- Maximising the supply of affordable housing;
- Maximising our existing housing assets;
- Estate improvement and resident involvement;
- Allocating council housing to those in greatest need; and
- Enabling sustainable tenancies.

The feedback from the workshop held in January 2020 had shaped the content of the draft Housing Strategy, which also considered empirical information, the existing local policy context, the emerging response to Covid-19 and the current recession.

To complement Vision 2025, Let's deliver quality housing, the objectives of the Housing Strategy for 2020-25 were:

- Providing housing which meets the varied needs of our residents;
- Building Sustainable Communities; and
- Improving Housing standards for all.

The Draft Housing Strategy had been the subject of member and public consultation. In response to specific consultation feedback, the draft Housing Strategy had been amended accordingly:

The Housing Strategy would be monitored on a quarterly basis and would be subject to an annual review to ensure future progress in delivering priorities and allow the Strategy to reflect the changing policy agenda and to respond to meeting housing need.

Councillor Donald Nannestad reported that there had been large elected member involvement in the development of this Strategy, as well as effective engagement with the Tenants' Panel as well. The next stage would be to review the thirty year business plan. Councillor Nannestad placed on record his thanks to the team of officers involved in developing the document.

83. Whitton's Park Play Investment

Purpose of Report

To advise the Executive of community aspirations for the improvement of play facilities in Whitton's Park and to seek authority to invest Section 106 funds in Whitton's Park in order to improve the play opportunities.

Decision

- (1) That the aspirations for play from Long Leys Residents Association (LLRA) be noted by Executive.
- (2) That a spend of £152,413 on play investment in Whitton's Park on a phased basis be approved by Executive.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None.

Reason for Decision

Whitton's Park was a key play site situated on Long Leys Road in Carholme ward. The park had seen significant investment in play equipment in 2007/08.

The council held a Section 106 developer contribution for play of £152,413 that could only be spent in the West End of Lincoln. This contribution must be spent by 29 November 2023 or would have to be returned to the respective developer. After extensive consideration of sites in the area, the only viable option was to enhance play opportunities in Whitton's Park with these funds.

Community representatives from both Long Leys Residents Association (LLRA) and West End Residents Association (VERA) had been consulted on this investment and were supportive. Local residents had also been consulted by LLRA and an aspirational plan for play investment in the park had been produced. They wished to be involved with any investment plan and had offered to engage with the council in this regard.

This investment would see play opportunities in the park greatly enhanced. It was anticipated that it would be prudent to spend roughly £130,000 at this point in time and reserve some of the fund for investment later, but before the critical date.

84. Parking Services - Enforcement Support

Purpose of Report

To seek agreement to the creation of one new post on the structure within Parking Services, that of a Security Patrol Operative.

Decision

That the addition of a post of security officer within Parking Services be approved by Executive.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None.

Reason for Decision

The City Councils' 21 members of parking staff managed what had been a £6 million a year business for the Council, via a high level of transactions and interactions with the public.

This service was one of the most important front facing services of the council, and not only delivered its most substantial income stream, but also welcomed visitors to the city. Via its good work, it was pivotal in supporting the retail and leisure business sectors.

It operated in a highly competitive environment, and so was as streamlined and business focused as any element of the council, whilst still remaining true to council corporate policies, and supportive of its wider strategic aims and objectives

Noting the increased numbers of incidents of Anti-Social Behaviour/nuisance at car park sites it was proposed to add a new post to cover security patrol duties to the Parking Services staffing establishment.

Councillor Ric Metcalfe was of the view that the business case in support of this proposal made sense, reflecting that parking services was such an important service the Council provided and was part of a person's experience in respect of place. It was vital that the City Council's car parks were safe and welcoming places for people to use when visiting the city.

85. Exclusion of the Press and Public

RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business because it was likely that if members of the public were present there would be a disclosure to them of 'exempt information' as defined by Section 100I and Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

These items were considered in private as they were likely to disclose exempt information, as defined in Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. No representations had been received in relation to the proposal to consider these items in private.

86. Lincoln Crematorium - Update on the Proposed Renovation Scheme

Purpose of Report

To consider the future delivery for a reduced scheme to transform Lincoln Crematorium, in recognition of the financial challenges facing the City Council arising from the Covid pandemic.

Decision

That the recommendation contained within the report be approved.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Alternative options considered were set out in the report.

Reason for Decision

The reasons for the decision were set out in the report