

Present: Councillor Sue Burke (*in the Chair*),
Councillor Biff Bean, Councillor Bill Bilton, Councillor
Yvonne Bodger, Councillor Alan Briggs, Councillor
Kathleen Brothwell, Councillor Chris Burke, Councillor
Bob Bushell, Councillor Liz Bushell, Councillor
Thomas Dyer, Councillor Geoff Ellis, Councillor
Gary Hewson, Councillor Ronald Hills, Councillor
Andy Kerry, Councillor Jackie Kirk, Councillor
Rosanne Kirk, Councillor Jane Loffhagen, Councillor
Rebecca Longbottom, Councillor Helena Mair, Councillor
Adrianna McNulty, Councillor Laura McWilliams,
Councillor Ric Metcalfe, Councillor Neil Murray, Councillor
Bill Mara, Councillor Donald Nannestad, Councillor
Lucinda Preston, Councillor Christopher Reid, Councillor
Hilton Spratt, Councillor Edmund Strengiel, Councillor
Ralph Toofany, Councillor Naomi Twedde, Councillor
Pat Vaughan and Councillor Loraine Woolley

Apologies for Absence: None.

79. Mayoral Announcements

The Mayor reported that she had been honoured to join many organisations, charities and community leaders as part of a social media campaign to encourage people to have a covid test.

80. Confirmation of Minutes - 19 January 2021

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2021 be confirmed.

81. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

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

No questions had been received.

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

No questions had been received.

**84. Receive Reports under Council Procedure Rule 2 (vi) from Members
(a) Report by Councillor Rosanne Kirk, Portfolio Holder for Reducing Inequalities**

Councillor Rosanne Kirk, Portfolio Holder for Reducing Inequalities, provided Council with an update on the work of her portfolio.

Councillor Kirk reported that Covid-19 had placed a significant impact on the city and its communities during the past year and took this opportunity to thank council employees and elected members for their ongoing commitment towards reducing inequality in the city throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. She said that, collectively, the support and services provided by the Council to its residents during this time were a great achievement and an achievement the authority should be extremely proud of.

The report set out some specific key achievements that had been accomplished throughout the year and provided details in respect of the following:

- a new bespoke befriending service established by the City Council to support the most vulnerable people in city at the outset of the Covid-19 pandemic;
- a new community helpline, working alongside the befriending service, to provide residents with a point of contact should they require support in obtaining essential items such as food and prescriptions;
- provision of food vouchers for vulnerable families in the school holidays;
- establishment of the Covid-19 crisis fund;
- Lincoln Community Lottery;
- Lincoln Social Responsibility Charter;
- Universal Credit and Welfare Reform;
- Test and Trace Payment Scheme and Winter Grants Scheme;
- welfare and benefits advice;
- housing benefit and council tax support;
- discretionary rate relief policy;
- financial inclusion;
- skills and training, including adult learning and The Network;
- asylum seekers and refugees;
- homelessness and rough sleeping;
- equality and diversity;
- public protection and anti-social behaviour;
- city centre issues and partner collaboration;
- Safer Lincolnshire Partnership;
- protecting vulnerable people;
- response to the Covid-19 pandemic;
- CCTV service;
- World Hello Day;
- Holocaust Memorial Day.

The report was noted.

(b) Report by Councillor Geoff Ellis, Chair of the Audit Committee

Councillor Geoff Ellis, Chair of the Audit Committee, presented a report which summarised the work of the Committee in the municipal year ending 2021 and confirmed that its function was consistent with best practice as well as demonstrating the positive impact of its work.

The report confirmed the purpose of the Audit Committee, its terms of reference and membership for the 2020/21 municipal year, which included an independent non-elected member.

The report provided further information relating to the following:

- the Audit Plan, progress reports and the annual Internal Audit Report;
- counter fraud;
- audit recommendations and agreed actions;
- the Assurance Lincolnshire Partnership;
- audit standards;
- external audit arrangements, reports and conclusions;
- the Regulatory Framework, including risk management, financial statements, the Annual Governance Statement and Code of Corporate Governance;
- treasury management;
- effective challenge;
- the impact of the Audit Committee's work.

Councillor Ellis put on record his personal thanks to Jaclyn Gibson, Chief Finance Officer, and John Scott, Audit Manager, for their hard work and support during what had been a very difficult year.

The report was noted.

(c) Report by Councillor Naomi Tweddle, Design Advocate

Councillor Naomi Tweddle, Design Advocate, provided her annual update in her capacity as advocate for design.

Councillor Tweddle reported that design was an important part of enhancing Lincoln and the Council's Planning Department had been working hard to retain the uniqueness of Lincoln, but also help Lincoln to grow and thrive as a city. The Department was passionate about design and she reported that it worked with developers to get the best design levels possible on all applications.

One of Councillor Tweddle's priorities as the Design Advocate and Chair of the Planning Committee was to improve engagement with local Councillors on large or potentially contentious planning applications. She had decided that a Design Forum would be an excellent way of consulting with local elected members on applications of note within their respective wards. The Design Forum consisted of the Assistant Director of Planning, the Planning Officer for the application, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Planning Committee and the local Councillors for the electoral ward in which the application was proposed. Where the application was close to the boundary of neighbouring wards, Councillors would be invited from all wards impacted.

Councillor Tweddle reported that it had been planned to formally launch this in May 2020, however, this had not been possible due to the increased demands during the Covid-19 pandemic. This would now be launched in May 2021, following the mandatory planning training that took place each year.

The Lincoln Design Awards had been extremely successful and provided an excellent way of celebrating good design for new developments in Lincoln. They also provided an opportunity to showcase exemplar schemes in the city and highlighted what was possible in terms of sensitive and contextual design solutions that could sensitively respond to Lincoln's historic townscape. A decision had been taken to postpone the 2021 awards until the following year due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and associated restrictions.

Councillor Tweddle reported that she wanted to explore the role of design and how this could help achieve the Council's net zero carbon targets and felt that good design could play a pivotal role in this.

The report was noted.

(d) Report by Councillor Adrianna McNulty, Chair of the Ethics and Engagement Committee

Councillor Adrianna McNulty, Chair of the Ethics and Engagement Committee, provided a report on the work of the Committee.

She outlined the principal role of the Ethics and Engagement Committee and placed on record her thanks to members of the Committee, Roger Vine, the Independent Person, and Graham Watts, Democratic and Elections Manager, for their contributions and support.

It was reported that the Committee had considered the following items since the last report to Council:

- The Committee on Standards in Public Life;
- start times and duration of meetings;
- democratic engagement;
- the promotion of the role of members and committees;
- the Member Code of Conduct, including revisions to the City Council's Code of Conduct and the introduction of the Local Government Association Model Code of Member Conduct;
- National Democracy Week;
- Engagement events;
- the Council's Social Media Policy.

It was noted that, since January 2020, three complaints had been received against the City Council's elected members, none of which had required formal investigation or any further action.

(e) Report by Councillor Bill Bilton, Chair of the Policy Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Bill Bilton, Chair of the Policy Scrutiny Committee, provided an update report on the work of the Committee.

Councillor Bilton thanked members and officers for their support and efforts in allowing the Policy Scrutiny Committee to continue its work in acting as a critical friend to the Council. He reported that the Committee had considered the following topics since his last report to Council:

- Vision 2025;
- Allocations Policy;
- Council Motion to Reduce and regulate the use of Fireworks;
- Modern Slavery Charter and Statement Review;
- Lincoln Social Responsibility Charter;
- review of the Trusted Landlord Scheme;
- Public Space Protection Orders;
- Planning White Paper Consultation;
- Draft Housing Strategy 2020-25;

- Built Facilities Strategy;
- Physical Activity Strategy;
- Localised Council Tax Support Scheme 2021/22;
- Temporary Accommodation Strategy;
- Environmental Policy.

Councillor reported that he provided regular update reports into the Policy Scrutiny Committee as the Council's representative on the Lincolnshire Health Scrutiny Committee. He took this opportunity to thank all healthcare workers for their devotion and hard work throughout the last year battling against huge difficulties under incredible pressure.

The report was noted.

(f) Report by Councillor Lucinda Preston, Sustainability Advocate

Councillor Lucinda Preston, Sustainability Advocate, provided an update report to Council in her role as advocate for sustainability.

Councillor Preston highlighted that sustainability cut across a number of Executive Portfolios as well as linking directly to the Vision 2025 strand 'Lets address the challenge of climate change'. She paid tribute to the work of the Council's Executive members who were committed to sustainability and the Councils officers for their excellent work.

The report provided further information in relation to the following aspects of sustainability:

- tackling climate change;
- the Lincoln Climate Commission;
- housing;
- the Local Plan;
- reducing single use plastic;
- waste and recycling;
- improving the urban environment;
- transport;
- food;
- the Lincoln Social Responsibility Charter;
- the sustainability section of the City Council's website.

Councillor Thomas Dyer referred to the Council's review of its car parking strategy and asked whether any environmental impacts would form part of that review, particularly given that the Council was under increasing pressure to deliver a sustainable budget and relied upon car parking as a key income stream. He questioned whether the review would take into account the environmental impact of people driving into the city centre.

Councillor Preston acknowledged the conflict the Council faced between encouraging use of its car parks and aspirations for people to use public transport more regularly from an environmental perspective.

Councillor Dyer, in terms of the Council's Green Strategy, asked whether the Sustainability Advocate believed there was any scope for the Council to have a

healthy soil strategy in place, particularly in respect of the city's parks and green spaces.

Councillor Preston reported, from the perspective of the Planning Committee, that the impact on soil was a regular consideration and so agreed to feed this suggestion back to officers for potential further development.

Councillor Reid asked whether the figures associated with hybrid provision and carbon related to a particular area as opposed to a generalisation.

Councillor Preston did not have this information available but agreed to provide it outside of the meeting.

Councillor Reid was pleased that fuel expenditure and scheduled housing repairs seemed positive. He questioned, however, whether this was as a result of the changes made to the service or attributable to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Councillor Preston reported that this had been set up as a pilot so there were not any comparable figures on performance from previous years. The changes in vehicles more effectively managing their journeys and reducing their mileage would inevitably have a positive impact. This time next year would provide a useful analysis.

Councillor Reid acknowledged that EPCs was an area that would need further consideration but felt that reference to this issues was quite vague in the report and asked for further clarification.

Councillor Preston reported that the Council was making sure homes were more efficient, with a significant amount of consideration taking place in respect of design and what could be achieved.

Councillor Reid reflected on the Council's target of being plastic free by 2022 and asked when this was likely to be achieved.

Councillor Preston reported that the Covid-19 pandemic had significantly impacted a number of aspirations as resources and priorities had been reallocated across the authority. This had meant that it had not been possible for the Council to put in place what it had originally intended in order to support this aspiration. Moving forward, plastic free would be advocated at significant events such as the Christmas Market and further consideration would be given to what the Council could do further over the coming year.

Councillor Reid asked for further information on the statistics associated with those people accessing the sustainability pages on the Council's website.

Councillor Preston did not have this information available but agreed to provide a statistical analysis outside of the meeting.

The report was noted.

(g) Report by Councillor Helena Mair, Children and Young Person's Advocate

Councillor Helena Mair, Children and Young Person's Advocate, provided an update report on her role as advocate for children and young people.

Councillor Mair's report was not necessarily an overview of what had been achieved as a Council over the past year but a reflection of how Covid-19 had affected children and young people across the world, country and the city of Lincoln. Further details in relation to the follow aspects were included in the report:

- poverty;
- education;
- homelessness;
- physical activities;
- mental health.

Councillor Mair took this opportunity to thank the Council's Policy Team, together with the Team responsible for the maintenance of the city's open spaces and parks and Martin Walmsley, Head of the Shared Revenues and Benefits Service.

Councillor Bill Mara shared his experience of working with young people at secondary schools throughout the pandemic and said that many children and young people were excelling, with many of them blossoming as a result of home schooling and these new ways of working. He was concerned that the report portrayed a very negative picture of the impact the pandemic was having on young people's education which he did not necessarily think was a true reflection.

Councillor Mair appreciated these comments and acknowledged that lots of children and young people had benefited from more time at home with their parents and families. However, it was her experience that many families in the city were struggling which needed to be recognised.

The report was noted.

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

(a) Pay Policy Statement 2021/22

It was moved, seconded and RESOLVED that the Pay Policy Statement 2021/22 be approved.

(b) Independent Remuneration Panel - Review of the Members' Allowances Scheme

Councillor Ric Metcalfe proposed the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel, as follows:

- that the Council retains its current Members' Allowances Scheme for 2021/22 and that this be increased in line with any staff increase on an annual basis;
- that a further, comprehensive review of the Members' Allowances Scheme be undertaken in 2022/23.

Councillor Donald Nannestad seconded the proposition.

Councillor Thomas Dyer was disappointed with the report and the fact that his comments, although referred to in the body of the report, had not been reflected in recommendations to Council which specifically referred to what he felt were overinflated Special Responsibility Allowances for certain chairmanships of committees. He welcomed a further comprehensive review which he said all members should participate in, especially those in receipt of a Special Responsibility Allowance. Councillor Dyer called for all members to freeze their remuneration with the Council's funding being committed to service provision no matter how small the amount.

Councillor Dyer proposed an amendment to the motion, to delete the words 'and that this be increased in line with any staff increase on an annual basis' so that the first paragraph of the motion read:

'That the Council retains its current Members' Allowances Scheme for 2021/22'.

Councillor Christopher Reid seconded the amendment.

Councillor Edmund Strengiel supported the amendment and said it was a moral issue as opposed to being political. He said that by supporting the amendment it was demonstrating to the public that members did not wish to take any increases in allowances for the coming year.

Councillor Gary Hewson referred to the County Council which, on a four-year cycle of elections, had traditionally accepted an increase in allowances at the beginning of the respective term of office.

Councillor Jane Loffhagen sought clarification as the motion was seeking to implement the scheme as it currently stood as opposed to recommend any increases to specific allowances.

Councillor Ric Metcalfe outlined that the Members' Allowances Scheme currently in place had a condition, recommended by the previous Independent Remuneration Panel and approved at Council, whereby the Scheme increased at the same rate as City Council employees annually on the basis of inflation. He added, however, that no increases had been made to the scheme until the last couple of years due to a freeze on local government pay increases. Councillor Metcalfe outlined that allowances were an important remuneration for people acting as councillors in order that a person's financial standing did not impact their ability or willingness to stand for Council. The recommendation of the Panel following its review this year was solely to retain the existing Members' Allowances Scheme and that this be increased in line with any annual staff pay increase, should this occur. Councillor Metcalfe was of the view that the amendment had been made solely from a political perspective.

In voting on the amendment, it having been proposed and seconded, the amendment was lost.

Debate reverted to the original motion.

Councillor Christopher Reid reported that, in the event of any increase in members' allowances in 2021/22, members of the Conservative Group would

refuse the increase and request that the balance be donated to the St Barnabas Hospital in Lincoln.

Councillor Hilton Spratt refuted any allegation that this act represented political point scoring.

Councillor Jackie Kirk agreed with Councillor Loffhagen's earlier comment and queried the perception of a recommended increase in allowances when the current scheme and circumstances were being retained.

Councillor Ronald Hills made the point that in retaining the current scheme and circumstances in respect of allowances mirroring any percentage increase in staff pay, members would receive an increase in their allowances.

Councillor Christopher Burke was of the view that comments from opposition members were politically driven in view of the upcoming elections. He reiterated the point that what had been recommended by the Independent Remuneration Panel did not constitute an increase in allowances but was solely ensuring they were in line with inflation in the same way that staff pay was, which had been the same for many years. Councillor Burke agreed with Councillor Metcalfe's earlier comment that adequate members allowances encouraged anyone to become a City Councillor.

Councillor Edmund Strengiel reiterated that this should be a moral consideration and was not political.

Councillor Metcalfe reiterated his earlier comments in respect of what he perceived as electioneering and political point scoring on a subject which he felt, as a principle, should be above party politics. Councillor Metcalfe reminded Council of the existing policy which saw the Members' Allowances Scheme increase in line with any annual staff increase, should any such increase occur which for many years it had not. He acknowledged the suggestion nationally that a further pay freeze on the public sector, which may include local government, may be put in place in which case the current Members' Allowances Scheme would remain in place.

Having been proposed and seconded it was RESOLVED that:

- (1) The Council retains its current Members' Allowances Scheme for 2021/22 and that this be increased in line with any staff increase on an annual basis.
- (2) A further, comprehensive review of the Members' Allowances Scheme be undertaken in 2022/23.