



SUMMONS
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SUMMONS

Council Summons



For the meeting to be held on
Tuesday, 22 February 2022

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CITY OF LINCOLN COUNCIL

Sir/Madam,

You are hereby summoned to attend the meeting of the COUNCIL of the City of Lincoln to be held at **The Brayford Suite, The Alive Church, Newland, Lincoln, LN1 1XG** on Tuesday, 22 February 2022 at 6.30 pm.



Chief Executive and Town Clerk

Angela Andrews

AGENDA

SECTION A	Page(s)
1. Confirmation of Minutes - 18 January 2022	5 - 16
2. Declarations of Interest	
Please note that, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, when declaring interests members must disclose the existence and nature of the interest, and whether it is a disclosable pecuniary interest (DPI) or personal and/or pecuniary.	
3. Receive Any Questions under Council Procedure Rule 11 from Members of the Public and Provide Answers thereon	
4. Receive Any Questions under Council Procedure Rule 12 from Members and Provide Answers thereon	
5. Receive Reports under Council Procedure Rule 2 (vi) from Members	
(a) Councillor Rebecca Longbottom, Chair of Audit Committee	17 - 26
(b) Councillor Patrick Vaughan, Chair of Performance Scrutiny Committee	27 - 30
(c) Equality Journal April 2020 to March 2021 (Councillor Naomi Twedde, Chair of Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel)	31 - 58
6. To Consider the Following Recommendations of the Executive and Committees of the Council	
(a) Vision 2025 - 3-Year Delivery Plan 2022-2025	59 - 84

(b) Council House and Garage Rents 2022/23

85 - 92

7. Independent Remuneration Panel - Review of the Members' Allowances Scheme

93 - 96

Present: Councillor Jackie Kirk (*in the Chair*),
Councillor Biff Bean, Councillor Bill Bilton,
Councillor Alan Briggs, Councillor Chris Burke,
Councillor Sue Burke, Councillor Bob Bushell,
Councillor Liz Bushell, Councillor David Clarkson,
Councillor Thomas Dyer, Councillor Matthew Fido,
Councillor Gary Hewson, Councillor Rosanne Kirk,
Councillor Jane Loffhagen,
Councillor Rebecca Longbottom, Councillor Helena Mair,
Councillor Bill Mara, Councillor Laura McWilliams,
Councillor Ric Metcalfe, Councillor Neil Murray,
Councillor Lucinda Preston, Councillor Christopher Reid,
Councillor Clare Smalley, Councillor Hilton Spratt,
Councillor Mark Storer, Councillor Edmund Strengiel,
Councillor Naomi Twedde, Councillor Pat Vaughan,
Councillor Calum Watt and Councillor Loraine Woolley

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Andy Kerry, Councillor Adrianna McNulty and
Councillor Donald Nannestad

34. Mayoral Announcements

Mayor's Engagements

The Mayor referred to her engagements since the last meeting of the Council, which had included:

- The Lincoln Christmas Market;
- Christmas Carol Services;
- A 100th Birthday Celebrations for a resident; and
- The Australian Breakfast.

35. Confirmation of Minutes - 30 November 2021

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 30 November 2021 be confirmed and signed by the Mayor as a true and accurate record, subject to *Staffordshire Crescent* being amended to *Staverton Crescent* on page 7 of the Agenda Pack.

36. Confirmation of Minutes - 16 December 2021

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 16 December 2021 be confirmed.

37. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Patrick Vaughan declared a personal interest in Minute 7(a) as his granddaughter worked in the finance department and his daughter worked in the welfare team at the City of Lincoln Council.

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

No questions had been submitted by members of the public.

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

Councillor Lucinda Preston to Councillor Neil Murray, Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth

Question

A lot of people have told me how much they enjoyed the Christmas Market. Could you please update us on the Council's view of the 2021 market?

Reply

Councillor Neil Murray stated in reply that the 2021 Market had been a great success despite a number of pressures in the build-up and during the operation of the market, including torrential rain on the Saturday; significant rail disruption; and Covid-19. The Council estimated that around 275,000 people had visited the market over the four days, which it was believed, was the busiest for several years.

Councillor Murray added that the Council had worked closely with Public Health to ensure that its operations had been Covid-19 secure and had delivered a large number of Covid-19 safety messages to visitors in advance such as 'test before you come' and 'please wear a mask'. First-aid and Police incidents had been lower than previous years.

There had been some great feedback on the market from visitors, stallholders and partners and some fantastic engagement on social media, which was always a good indicator of the feeling of the public and visitors. The 'reach' of the communications campaign had been 2.5 million with the now iconic aerial photo of the market at night having reached over 400,000. The Council was currently working through debriefs with agencies and contractors and the planning for this year's event had already begun. Councillor Murray thanked all the staff at the Council for their hard work in delivering the event.

Councillor Dave Clarkson to Councillor Neil Murray, Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth

Question

Can the Executive Member provide an update on the Secretary of State's review of the requested "call-in" of the Western Growth Corridor application?

Reply

Councillor Murray replied that the Secretary of State, via the national casework unit, had contacted the Council, as the local planning authority, to seek assurance that no decision notice would be issued until the Secretary of State had made a determination on whether the application would be called-in. The local planning authority had yet to receive this further notification.

Councillor Thomas Dyer to Councillor Bob Bushell, Portfolio Holder for Remarkable Place

Question

Can the Executive Member please provide an update on the recent closure of Yarbrough Leisure Centre?

Reply

In reply, Councillor Bob Bushell stated that the Yarborough Leisure Centre had been closed, after a routine safety inspection of the suspended ceiling above the pool had revealed some concerns about how some of the support brackets were aging. A swimming pool created a corrosive environment and in a building of this age, maintenance issues of this type would emerge, and as a result there were the regular inspections. As a precaution the pool had been closed and work was in hand to design, procure and implement a replacement ceiling.

Councillor Bushell continued by stating that whilst this work continued, the focus had moved to the learner pool which had a more recent ceiling, to assess if this could be re-opened in a shorter timeframe. This would be known in the coming week or so and councillors would be updated once the Council had the timescales. This was a significant piece of work necessitating a full replacement of the ceiling over the large pool, and the City Council was committed to expediting this work as quickly as possible in recognition this was one of the few pay-as-you-go facilities in the city, and one on which a number of clubs relied.

Supplementary

Councillor Dyer asked if there was any indication of the costs of the remedial works.

Reply

Councillor Bushell replied that there was no information on the costs currently, but members of the council would be updated.

Councillor Eddie Strenge to Councillor Neil Murray, Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth

Can the Executive Member please update Council with when he expects construction for the Western Growth Corridor to commence?

Reply

Councillor Murray advised that the Council was awaiting the conclusion of the planning process both in terms of the outcome of the call-in application and any subsequent processes. At that point the Council would need to assess the consequences of the delay on funding; budget; contractor procurement; the work required to discharge pre-commencement conditions; the public utility lead-in times; further community engagement; and the delivery programme itself. Work would start with the revised signalised junction, hopefully later in 2022.

Supplementary

Councillor Strengiel asked whether traffic problems arising from the development would be minimised to avoid any disruption to local residents.

Reply

Councillor Murray indicated that he was certain that the Council and its contractors would work to ensure that there would be minimal disruption, which was in the best interests of the local community and businesses.

Councillor Bill Mara to Councillor Neil Murray, Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth

Question

Can the Executive Member commit to the entire Western Growth Corridor development adhering to the full environmental standards in the emerging Local Plan?

Reply

Councillor Murray stated in reply that all planning applications, including the Western Growth Corridor, were assessed against the current adopted development plan for the area, which in this case was the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan. Now that the Western Growth Corridor development had secured planning permission (subject to any decision on the call-in by the Secretary of State), the scheme must be developed in accordance with the approved conditions which were set out in the report to the Planning Committee.

Councillor Murray referred to the emerging Local Plan and advised that until it were adopted, it would carry limited weight in terms of material planning considerations. However, given the significant construction period of the Western Growth Corridor scheme, reserved matters applications submitted from 2023 would be required to adhere to the new local plan requirements, including the environmental standards therein.

Councillor Murray added that the Council was working with its partners to go beyond current Local Plan policy requirements, wherever possible, to deliver an exemplar sustainable urban community, including environmental standards, overall net biodiversity gain and net zero carbon development. Progress in relation to this work would be reported regularly through the Council's performance processes.

Councillor Mark Storer to Councillor Ric Metcalfe, Leader of the Council and Portfolio holder for Our People and Resources

Question

After the success of the livestream at the recent Planning Committee, will the Leader commit to bringing the City Council into the twenty-first century and live-stream all meetings?

Reply

Councillor Metcalfe advised that everyone could all agree that the streaming of the Planning Committee on 12 January 2022 had been very successful, and he had received much positive feedback that it had been a highly professional and organised event. At its peak, there were 170 viewers of the livestream. This had helped ensure that the meeting had the greatest reach and accessibility; and had also helped safely manage capacity at the venue.

Councillor Metcalfe added that there was equipment available in the committee rooms to support hybrid meetings. However, following testing at a recent committee meeting, this was currently more suitable for smaller meetings. Options for improving this equipment were being explored, which should hopefully enable more meetings to be livestreamed at a good quality. Councillor Metcalfe emphasised that this equipment came at a cost during a time that the council was experiencing ongoing financial pressures. However, more work would be undertaken to see if the additional cost could be justified.

Councillor Metcalfe thanked Democratic Services for their efforts in the arrangements for the of the meeting.

Supplementary

Councillor Storer referred to all the other councils in Lincolnshire livestreaming their meetings and asked if the Leader of the Council would commit to delivering this to make City Council's meetings more transparent.

Reply

Councillor Metcalfe stated in reply that he was in principle enthusiastic about livestreaming all Council and committee meetings, but he referred to the high initial costs of installing equipment and the ongoing costs, such as additional staffing, of providing the service.

Councillor Chris Reid to Councillor Neil Murray, Portfolio for Economic Growth

Question

Can the Executive Member update Council on the current situation with regards to car parking revenue, following the Christmas period?

Reply

Councillor Neil Murray replied that as members of the Council would be aware, as a result of a significant fall in demand owing to Covid-19, it had been necessary to reduce the forecasts for car parking income. This had placed significant strain on council budgets, but it had of course been necessary to be prudent through this time of uncertainty.

Councillor Murray added that the later stages of last year, due to the gradual lifting of restrictions prior to Christmas, had seen business levels return to the point where income in November and December 2021 had tracked very closely to the same months in 2019. Figures for January always dropped compared with the previous season, and at this stage, owing to what was considered as public caution associated with the omicron variant of Covid-19, figures seemed to have

fallen a little further than expected. However, overall, owing to the cautious approach to budget setting, and the better than expected income prior to Christmas, there was optimism that the income target for 2021/22 of £4.5 million would be met.

Councillor Hilton Spratt to Councillor Bob Bushell, Portfolio Holder for Remarkable Place

Question

Can the Portfolio Holder provide the Council with an explanation as to how we monitor the performance of our contractors, such as Biffa?

Reply

Councillor Bob Bushell answered that Biffa held the City Council's contracts for two elements of street scene services: waste and recycling; and grounds maintenance and street cleansing. As significant contracts they were carefully monitored and controlled.

At an operational level the contractor was required to meet the demands of the work specification. If it was deemed by staff that the contractor had failed to meet the specification, then they would assess the severity of the failing against one of five categories set out in the contract. Having done this, this set three parameters: the levels of any performance points that were attributed to the failing; a potential level of cost recovery; and finally, the time permitted for the contractor to respond. Having determined this, the member of staff could then issue a formal rectification notice. In rare instances where poor performance could not be corrected, a default notice would be issued. This attracted performance points and costs with immediate effect.

Councillor Bushell explained that at the time of issue of a rectification notice, the contractor had immediately attracted the performance points, and was given the specified time to respond. From this point two things could happen: either the contractor would respond within the allotted time, at which point the rectification notice would be discharged or the contractor failed to do so. If the contractor failed to respond, the financial cost recovery element would be applied and would be charged to the contractor. The contractor still had to put the issue right, so the clock would reset. Repeated failure would attract both repeated cost recovery and performance points, so repeated poor performance at a site could quickly escalate. For this reason, it was very rare.

Councillor Bushell added that each quarter the performance points were totalled and presented to the performance management board, comprising senior staff from the Council and the contractor. One of the tasks for the Portfolio Holder for Remarkable Place was to chair these board meetings. Subject to how many points had been awarded in the quarter, the contractor was required to explain their performance and respond suitably. There were four levels of response set out contractually, with escalating levels of response accordingly. The highest level required specified levels of financial re investment by the contractor in the services.

Councillor Bushell also explained that there were also contractual parameters at which the council may terminate a contract, based on the measured performance recorded at the performance management board, which not only reviewed any

areas of poor performance, but also to sought examples of good performance, and acknowledged any specific examples of good work by any members of the contractor's staff.

Supplementary

Councillor Spratt asked how many rectification notices were issued each year.

Reply

Councillor Bushell stated that the performance management board would be receiving this data at its next meeting and these figures would be shared.

Councillor Alan Briggs to Councillor Bob Bushell, Portfolio Holder for Remarkable Place

Question

Can the Executive Member give some detail as to what steps are being taken to proactively tackle fly tipping, outside Park Ward?

Reply

Councillor Bob Bushell stated in reply that fly tipping was both a county-wide and national problem and the Lincolnshire Waste Partnership had established a separate enforcement-based group to focus on how actions could be coordinated across the county for best effect. The Environmental Crime Partnership comprised all district councils in the county, plus representatives from North East Lincolnshire Council, the Environment Agency, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, the Lincolnshire and Humberside Police forces, the National Farmers Union, the Ministry of Defence, and others. This group considered how fly tipping could be consistently addressed and what opportunities there were to share best practice, learning, resources, and information.

Lincoln's representative was working with partners to deliver 'weeks of action' on fly tipping. These periods would target key hotspots to educate those who fly tip, and where appropriate take enforcement action.

The focus for work was prioritised where the worst problems occurred, and this was generally in Park Ward by some significant margin, so it was right that resources were prioritised in that way, but it was also recognised that fly tipping occurred in many areas across the city, to differing degrees. High profile enforcement, wherever it was undertaken would benefit all parts of the city, and for this reason the Council would be seeking to maximise publicity around its work.

Councillor Bushell added that across the city staff responded to all cases of fly tipping, to ensure it was investigated and removed. Staff were proactively reporting fly tipping and responding to public concerns. However, not all fly tipping was on Council land, which added complexity. Private land had to be cleared at the owner's expense, and they did not always give it quite the same priority. Staff understood that the public did not always appreciate this.

In brief, it should be remembered that the Council did not create the fly tipping, but it was using its resources to do what it could to investigate, enforce, and clean-up, wherever it occurred in the city.

Councillor Matt Fido to Councillor Chris Burke, Portfolio Holder for Customer Experience and Review

Question

What would be the cost saving to the taxpayer should the City Council have one election every four years, like all other councils in Lincolnshire?

Reply

Councillor Chris Burke reported that the approximate average cost of holding previous stand-alone City Council elections had been calculated at approximately £90,000 and added that from this figure an approximate saving of £180,000 could be extrapolated for the two years when the Council would not be holding elections. However, holding all out elections every four years would have increased costs, for example, the cost of printing, stationery and staffing requirements would increase. Councillor Burke referred to the ballot papers needing to be larger for multi-member wards; increased printing requirements for nomination papers and registers; and 'counting sheets' would be required to count the ballot papers. There may be a requirement for more counting staff, and they would work longer hours.

Councillor Burke stated that in his view holding elections every year made the Council more accountable and responsive to the public.

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

(a) Councillor Bill Bilton, Chair of Policy Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Bill Bilton, Chair of Policy Scrutiny Committee, presented his report to Council, which had been set out on pages 19 – 20 of the agenda. Councillor Bilton thanked members of the Policy Scrutiny Committee for their input and commitment at meetings.

The Council was provided with an opportunity to make comments and ask questions, where the following points were confirmed:

- Health Inequalities across the City – it was queried whether the Health Scrutiny Committee for Lincolnshire was exploring the significant disparities in health across the City's wards. It was also queried whether Birchwood was still considered an area of childhood poverty, as previously identified in 2012. In response, it was advised that the Chair of Policy Scrutiny Committee did not have this information. However, it was noted that an all councillor briefing had been arranged for 9 March 2022 to consider a presentation by City Council officers on *Tackling Health Issues in the City*. It was also noted that the Council published the Lincoln Profile on an annual basis, which provided statistical data of this nature.
- Health Scrutiny Committee for Lincolnshire – it was highlighted that the main focus of the Committee at present was on the reconfiguration of certain local acute hospital services.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

(b) Councillor Sue Burke, Portfolio Holder for Reducing Inequality

Councillor Sue Burke, Portfolio Holder for Reducing Inequality, presented her report to the Council, which had been set out on pages 21 – 34 of the agenda. It was noted that the report covered a wide range of areas which reflected the Council's commitment to reducing inequality.

Councillor Burke wished her thanks be noted to all staff for their hard work during the pandemic.

The Council was provided with an opportunity to make comments and ask questions, where the following points were confirmed:

- Post-Pandemic Homeless Data – it was reported that there were 239 open homelessness enquiries as at 17 January 2022 of which: 24 were at the initial enquiry stage; 39 were likely to be homeless within 56 days; 143 were statutorily homeless; and 33 were awaiting accommodation. It was also noted that 41 individuals had been placed in temporary accommodation.
- Kickstart Scheme – it was queried whether data had shown whether the Kickstart Scheme had resulted in a decrease in the uptake of universal credit. It was confirmed these figures would be provided to Councillor Strenghel.
- Benefits Advice Team Visits – it was queried whether the visits made by the Benefits Advice Team had resumed, following the temporary pause owing to the pandemic. In response, it was advised that this would continue to be reviewed regularly in line with national restrictions / health and safety advice.
- Afghanistan Refugees – it was confirmed that the City Council had settled three families, who had settled in well.
- Public Protection and Anti-Social Behaviour Enforcement – the enforcement action figures, as detailed on page 30 of the agenda, concerning dog fouling were queried, as they were deemed too low compared to the number of incidences. In response, it was advised that more preventative work was required to reduce the incidences of dog fouling.
- University and Students' Union – it was queried what the 'student issues' were, as detailed on page 31 of the agenda, which had previously been discussed at the Performance Scrutiny Committee. It was suggested that in future, reports were updated following the Performance Scrutiny Committee to contain information which was discussed or clarified. In responses to a question on the lack of data on drink spiking within the report, it was confirmed that the data had been requested from the relevant partners.
- Food Vouchers for vulnerable families – it was commented that it was pleasing to see that the City Council had provided a grant of £5,430 towards the Food in School Holidays Christian Incorporated Organisation Project.
- Domestic Violence – the Portfolio Holder committed to speaking to Councillor Matt Fido on a new scheme, similar to *Ask Angela*, which involved the wearing of badges to highlight that individuals could be approached to raise any domestic violence concerns.

- Unemployment Rates / Poverty Line – It was commented that whilst unemployment figures were falling, in Lincoln almost half of the people who fell below the acceptable poverty line were in paid employment, which put into question any correlation between employment and the route out of poverty. Therefore, it was stated that there should be no complacency over raising employment rates.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

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

(a) Statement of Accounts 2020/21

A report on the Statement of Accounts 2020/21 had been circulated.

It was moved, seconded and

RESOLVED

That the Statement of Accounts for 2020/21 be approved.

(b) Localised Council Tax Support Scheme 2022/23

A report on the Localised Council Tax Support Scheme 2022/23 had been circulated.

It was moved, seconded and

RESOLVED

(1) That approval be given to the continuation of proposed 'no change' to the core Council Tax Support scheme for 2022/23, as set out in Section 4 and subject to the technical amendments described in paragraph 5.3 of the report; and

(2) That an increase in the Exceptional Hardship Payments scheme from £20,000 to £25,000, for the financial year 2022/23 be approved.

(c) Council Tax Base 2022/2023

A report on the Council Tax Base 2022/2023 had been circulated.

It was moved, seconded and

RESOLVED

(1) That it be noted that there were 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 1st April 2022 and ending 31st March 2023, as set out in Appendix B of this report, be approved; and

(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), that the Council Tax Base for the 2022/23 financial year be approved as 25,310.01.

(d) Appointment of External Auditor

A report on the Appointment of External Auditor had been circulated.

It was moved, seconded and

RESOLVED

That the Public Sector Audit Appointments' invitation to opt into the sector-led option for the appointment of external auditors to principal local government and police bodies for five financial years from 1 April 2023, be accepted.

42. Freedom of the City

A report on granting of Freedom of the City had been circulated.

It was moved, seconded and

RESOLVED

That, in accordance with Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, an extraordinary meeting of the Council be arranged to award the Freedom of the City to The Lord Cormack.

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COUNCIL

22 FEBRUARY 2022

REPORT UNDER RULE 2(VI) OF THE COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES

Report by Councillor Rebecca Longbottom, Chair of the Audit Committee

Mr Mayor, Members of the Council

Introduction

This report summarises the work of the Audit Committee during the period January 2021 – January 2022 and is to confirm that the Committee's function is consistent with best practice as well as demonstrating the positive impact of its work.

I have been Chair from May 2021, with the previous Chair being Councillor Geoff Ellis.

In this period, there were seven meetings of the Committee.

Covid-19 has obviously had a significant impact on the Council including, to some extent, the operation of Committees. Some meetings were held in person and some took place remotely, depending on the Government Regulations in force at the time. No meetings were postponed or cancelled.

Purpose of the Audit Committee

The Audit Committee, as a key part of the Council's corporate governance arrangements, oversees and assesses the Council's risk management, control and governance arrangements and advises the Council on their adequacy and effectiveness.

It also has responsibility for reviewing the statutory financial reporting process through approval of the Statement of Accounts and receiving key reports from the External Auditor.

Specifically, it provides:

- Oversight and challenge to the Statement of Accounts.
- Oversight and review of the Annual Governance Statement.
- A review of the Internal Audit Strategy and Audit Plan.
- A review of Internal Audit progress reports and recommendations including appropriate follow up actions for outstanding Audit recommendations.
- An examination of the External Audit Plan.
- Consideration of External Audit reports, including the "report to those charged with governance", the "Annual Audit letter" and "certification of grant claims and returns report".

- Review of Counter Fraud arrangements and associated monitoring reports.
- Annual review of the Council's Treasury Management Policy / Strategy.
- Annual review of risk management arrangements.
- Oversight of Information Governance including data protection.
- Annual review of key partnership governance arrangements.

Membership and Independence

The Audit Committee comprises seven Councillors and (since 2013) one Independent Member. The current Independent member, Jane Nellist, from the Education sector is a qualified accountant with experience of public sector finance and was appointed in April 2016. Having one or more Independent Members, particularly with a financial background, is seen as best practice, as their experience and expertise assists the Audit Committee to discharge its role more effectively. Indeed, the Government has recently consulted on whether having independent Members on Audit Committee's should be a statutory requirement – the Government's response on this consultation is expected in due course. The Audit Committee and the Officers have found the Independent Member's contribution to be particularly useful and I would like to offer my thanks for her continued support.

As Chairman of the Committee, I confirm I am free from Executive functions, and have not had my independence impaired during my time to date as Chair.

Membership during 2021/22

The membership for 2021/22 is:

Councillor Rebecca Longbottom (Chair)
 Councillor Helena Mair (Vice-Chair)
 Councillor David Clarkson
 Councillor Thomas Dyer
 Councillor Gary Hewson
 Councillor Rosanne Kirk
 Councillor Calum Watt
 Jane Nellist (Independent Member)

Relationships

I am happy to report that there continues to be a sound working relationship between officers and Members of the Committee.

Internal Audit functional responsibility rests with Jaclyn Gibson (Chief Finance Officer) on behalf of the Chief Executive while the Audit Manager has a direct reporting line to all levels of the Authority both at officer and member level.

I am satisfied through discussions with External Audit representatives and Internal Audit that relationships between Internal and External audit have been satisfactory and are effective.

Mazars have been the External Auditors since September 2018.

The external auditor takes consideration of and uses the work of our internal auditors in connection with their integrated audit of the Council's financial statements and other work. External and internal auditors collaborate to minimise duplication of effort and work in tandem to help management and the Audit Committee ensure that the Council's financial reports and other information are accurate and that its system of internal control is effective. Internal audit has also audited elements of the housing benefit subsidy claim on behalf of the external auditor, which also provides a saving on the audit fee.

Audit Committee - Terms of Reference

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) guidance on Audit Committees, which sets out various requirements, has been incorporated into the Audit Committee's Terms of Reference (ToRs). These ToRs were last reviewed in February 2021 (no changes were required) and were previously updated in July 2018.

CIPFA is currently working on new guidance for Audit Committees and their suggestions, together with anything arising from an upcoming External Quality Assessment review, will be considered.

Internal Audit Terms of Reference (IA Charter)

These were last reviewed in February 2021 (no changes were required) and were previously updated in December 2019, to reflect minor changes to national standards at that time.

Audit Committee Training

Committee Members received relevant training during the year, including training linked to understanding the Council's financial statements and Treasury Management. Further training on counter fraud will be provided when an e-learning product is available, and some general audit committee effectiveness training is being developed. This training forms part of a wider piece of work that is being developed to look at the training needs and skills development of the Committee members, which will result in a broader training plan being in place for 2022/23.

Information Governance and Data Protection

The Committee continues to receive a periodic update report on Information Governance from the Data Protection Officer (DPO). The Audit Committee recognises this is a significant area and presents a number of risks which are being adequately addressed. There is always further work to be done around training, asset registers, new systems etc. and this is work in progress.

Internal Audit and the Audit Committee

Independence

To comply with best practice, I can confirm that the Audit Committee is suitably independent and that the Committee's ToRs are consistent with CIPFA best practice guidance. Internal audit is an independent, objective assurance and consulting activity designed to add value and improve the City Council's operations.

Operationally it sits under the Chief Executive and has freedom to report to any level within the organisation.

Audit Plan, Progress Reports, and the Annual Internal Audit Report

The Audit Committee approves the Annual Internal Audit Plan and the Internal Audit Strategy.

The work of internal audit is reviewed at each meeting. This review includes a summary of audit reports as well as performance against the plan and other measures. It is pleasing to note that most audits achieve a high level of assurance, reflecting that in most areas, risks are being effectively managed, and the control environment is sound. Those audits which require a greater degree of improvement are classed as having limited or no assurance.

An Annual Report by the Audit Manager is presented to the Audit Committee following the end of the financial year, which also helps to support the Annual Governance Statement.

The 2020-21 Annual Internal Audit Report to the July 2021 meeting gave a Performing Well (green) assurance across areas of governance, risk, and control.

The Covid-19 emergency impacted on the 2020-21 Audit Plan but has not had any impacts in 2021-22. However, during 2021-22 the team was without an Audit Manager for almost 5 months and a revised (reduced) plan was agreed by Audit Committee in December 2021.

Counter Fraud

The Committee also reviews counter-fraud arrangements and received an annual Fraud & Error Report in July 2021.

The Council is part of the Lincolnshire Counter Fraud Partnership (LCFP), a partnership of Lincolnshire Councils led by Lincolnshire County Council. LCFP has continued to support nominated fraud representatives by raising awareness of emerging fraud risks, including those linked to Covid-19 and arrangements during a pandemic emergency. The focus of work in 2021-22 was to be around business rates, council tax single person discount and cyber-crime. However, some projects have been delayed including the introduction of a continuous rolling review of the Council Tax single person discount, which will commence later in 2022.

The Committee considers relevant corporate counter fraud policies and any updates, as well as information on fraud risk and fraud training. It reviewed the Fraud Risk Register in February 2021, the Money Laundering Policy in March 2021, and the Anti-Bribery Policy in December 2021.

The Council continues to be involved with the National Fraud Initiative (fraud and error) which involves national data matching using a range of Council data sources. Matches are received and reviewed by officers. Data submitted in 2020 was reviewed in 2021.

The cyber fraud threat is an ongoing risk to the Council and the Committee monitors agreed actions relating to anti-malware and IT Disaster recovery. The Audit Committee is monitoring IT Disaster recovery arrangements as this is currently a significant issue on the Annual Governance Statement.

The Council's main fraud strategies and policies can be found on the Council's website.

The City of Lincoln Council is a "friends against scams" organisation (www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk) to help protect the city's residents, staff, and members from becoming victims of scams. The partnership with a National Trading Standards body, involves encouraging staff and others to take part in scam awareness and advice training. The Council works with partners to publicise and warn against scams operating nationally and locally.

The processing of significant amounts of Covid-19 grants has also involved officers in managing fraud risks and assurance reports are regularly provided to the Department for Business, Enterprise, and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). Grant data is also being submitted to the National Fraud Initiative (NFI) for local and nationwide data matching.

Audit Recommendations and Agreed Action

Another important part of the Committee's role is helping to ensure that audit recommendations are implemented. The Committee ensures that officers are acting on recommendations from both internal and external audit with updates being received at alternating meetings.

The Audit Committee have asked for additional information on older outstanding recommendations and managers have attended to provide more detailed information. This approach will continue and appears to have had a positive effect on the effective implementation of audit recommendations.

Audit recommendations are integrated into the Council's performance management system and are regularly reviewed by Managers, Directorate Management teams and Corporate Management Team (CMT) as well as Portfolio holders. The number of high priority recommendations outstanding is low.

Assurance Lincolnshire Partnership

The Council's Internal Audit Team is part of the wider Assurance Lincolnshire Partnership which includes the City of Lincoln Council, Lincolnshire County Council,

and Nottinghamshire County Council. Assurance Lincolnshire provides internal audit services to eight Councils in Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire (including the three core partners).

The partnership is making good progress and yielding positive benefits for the internal audit service in Lincoln. In 2021-22 the Council's contract to provide Boston Borough Council (BBC) with its internal audit service was passed across to Lincolnshire County Council, following the formation of a partnership between BBC and South Holland District Council. Audit staff continue to undertake audit work for Lincolnshire County Council as a way of reducing the cost of audit for the Council.

Audit Standards

The City of Lincoln Council and the wider Assurance Lincolnshire Partnership comply with internal audit standards and passed their external quality assessment review (EQA) in September 2016, which must be undertaken within a 5-year period. The next review will take place later in February 2022.

Audit Committee Work Programme

The Committee receives reports mainly from the Audit Manager, the Chief Finance Officer and the External Auditor covering a wide range of topics. A selection of areas covered / reviewed this year includes:

- Annual Governance Statement (review of AGS and update reports on significant issues)
- Information Governance updates and policies
- Statement of Accounts (review)
- Treasury Management Policy and Strategy (consultation prior to approval by Council)
- Annual Internal Audit Report
- Internal Audit Strategy and Plan
- Internal Audit progress reports
- Counter Fraud Reports
- Risk Management Annual Report
- Report to those Charged with Governance
- Annual Audit Letter (External Audit)
- Partnership Governance

The resourcing for the audit plan remains at a satisfactory level enabling appropriate coverage across key financial and corporate systems, with sufficient resources to respond to emerging risks. From 2021-22 there was a small reduction in planned resources as a result of agreed savings.

The Audit Committee receives an annual “Combined Assurance” report. Working with management, Internal Audit records first, second and third line assurances for all of the key areas of Council business. The aim is to give senior management and the Audit Committee an insight on assurances across all critical activities, key risks, and projects. Assurances are drawn from the “three lines of defence” including management, corporate business assurance functions such as performance management, and internal audit plus other third parties. The report also feeds into the Audit Manager’s annual internal audit opinion, internal audit plan and annual governance statement. The next report will be presented to the Audit Committee in March 2022.

External Audit Arrangements, Reports and Conclusions

The external auditor’s primary role is to express an opinion on whether management has given a true and fair view of the information in its financial statements. The auditor expresses this assurance in an auditor’s report.

External auditors also examine and express an opinion on grant claims and returns made by the Council, to ensure that accurate figures are reported to Central Government, and that claims for grant funding are made in accordance with relevant rules.

Currently, External Audit assess whether the Council has appropriate arrangements to deliver value for money and this is also reported annually.

The Council’s external audit for 2021-22 was provided by a private sector accountancy firm, Mazars, procured through Public Sector Audit Appointments.

The Audit Committee has a role to comment on the scope and depth of external audit work, through considering plans and reports to ensure the work gives value for money.

The Committee considers the reports of External Audit and inspection agencies, including the External Auditor’s “Auditors Report” and the report to “Those Charged with Governance”.

The Committee has considered the 2020/21 External Auditor’s report. On behalf of the Committee, I am pleased to report that the 2020/21 final accounts were presented by the Council for audit by the required (revised) statutory date and the External Auditor was proposing to issue an unqualified opinion (at the time of writing this is still pending). As part of the audit work undertaken, Mazars considered the internal controls in place to be relevant to the preparation of the financial statements. The findings of this work resulted in one level 3 (low) priority recommendation being made in respect of property valuation, which will be addressed.

The External Auditor also confirmed that it has not identified any significant weaknesses in the Council's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in its use of resources (value for money approach), again the conclusion of this work is still pending.

Regulatory Framework

Risk Management

The Committee has a role (through its ToRs) in overseeing risk management strategies and receives an annual report. I am pleased to report that risk management arrangements are working well, and risk management is used effectively to help manage our strategic, operational and project risks.

Financial Statements

The Committee reviews the authority's financial and assurance statements, including the Statement of Accounts and the Annual Governance Statement, ensuring the latter properly reflects the risk environment and any actions required to improve it and then to recommend its adoption.

Annual Governance Statement and Code of Corporate Governance

The Annual Governance Statement is a statutory statement and provides an overview of key governance arrangements within the Authority, including any significant control issues arising during the year. This is signed by the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive and is presented to Council alongside the Statement of Accounts. The Audit Committee monitors all "significant issues" arising from the Statement approximately each quarter. There are currently two "significant issues" in respect of IT Disaster Recovery and Vision 2025, both of which have an Amber rating. Good progress is being made to mitigate the risks identified.

City of Lincoln Council must ensure that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded, and used economically, efficiently, and effectively. It also has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to secure continuous improvement in the way our functions are exercised, having regard to economy, efficiency, and effectiveness. In discharging this overall responsibility, the council must put in place proper governance arrangements for our affairs.

The Council's Code of Corporate Governance is about how we ensure that we are doing the right things, in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, inclusive, open, honest, and accountable manner. It sets out the documentation, systems, and processes by which the authority transparently controls its activities. It enables us to monitor the achievement of our strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate services and value for money. The Audit Committee approves the Code of Corporate Governance and updates – it was last reviewed in July 2021. The code is based on the set of seven core principles of Delivering Good Governance in Local Government (CIPFA / Solace 2016).

Treasury Management

The Committee's role is to assess the robustness of the Council's Treasury Management policy and strategy. Training is provided to the Committee by the Council's Treasury Management consultants. The Committee reviews the strategy and considers the adoption of Treasury Management indicators prior to Council approval.

The Council's Constitution

The Committee has a role in reviewing certain aspects of the Council's Constitution, in particular contract procedure rules and financial procedure rules when changes occur. There were no reviews of these rules in 2021-22, with the next review scheduled for later in 2022.

Effective Challenge

The Committee provides effective challenge across the full range of Council services and provides independent assurance on the risk management and governance framework and associated internal control environment to the Council and the public.

The Committee has received a variety of reports from both Internal and External Audit during the year. It has scrutinised and challenged the findings of audit reports on risk and control issues, sought clarification and in some cases required detailed explanations and action plans to address significant issues.

Impact of the Audit Committee's Work

By completing the work programme and providing challenge where required, the Audit Committee has:

- increased public confidence in the Council's governance arrangements
- reinforced the importance and independence of internal and external audit and other review processes that reported to the Audit Committee
- assisted in the co-ordination of assurance with internal audit and, in so doing, made management more accountable
- provided additional assurance through a process of independent and objective review; and raised awareness of the need for internal control and
- helped ensure the timely implementation of audit recommendations.

Conclusions

This annual report has summarised the work of the Audit Committee over the last twelve months and has demonstrated the breadth and impact of the Committee's work.

I confirm, therefore, that the City Council's Audit Committee and Audit function is consistent with best practice

In conclusion, I would like to express my appreciation and thanks to Helena Mair Vice-Chair, Jane Nellist, the Independent Member, to all of those elected members who have served on the Committee, to Jaclyn Gibson, Colleen Warren, and the Finance team, the Internal Audit team, Becky Scott, Sally Brooks and all of those officers that have provided reports, training, and guidance to the Committee.

Councillor Rebecca Longbottom
Chair of Audit Committee

COUNCIL

22 FEBRUARY 2022

REPORT UNDER RULE 2(vi) OF THE COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES

Report by Councillor Patrick J Vaughan, Chair of Performance Scrutiny Committee

Mr Mayor – Members of the Council:

I appreciate that this is only the second Performance Scrutiny Meeting report that Councillor Loraine Woolley, Vice Chair, and I have been involved with, however I am able to provide you with details of what the committee has covered over the last 14 months.

I think it is much better that we can now meet in the committee rooms once again. Long may that continue.

Personally I would like to thank Councillor Gary Hewson for all his hard work as Chair of this committee for the past years. It is vital to receive regular updates from the members of the Executive across their portfolio ownership, an area which Gary promoted well, and we will continue as we move forward.

In the next few sections I will give you a flavour of the business that has passed through the Performance Scrutiny Committee since the last report which was actually presented over a year ago in November 2020.

As you would expect, the 14 months covered in this report have been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, with two meetings (March 2021 and December 2021) cancelled, although all workload was picked up at subsequent meetings. However as you would expect, the focus has largely been on the core business of the committee, namely financial and operational performance, receiving portfolio holder reports, plus other regular reports as indicated below

Committee Activity

Performance Scrutiny Committee has held ten meetings since the last report which has included reports in the following areas, some of which are expanded later on in my report:

- Portfolio Holder Reports, including those aligned to Vision 2025
- Quarterly financial monitoring to provide members with a summary of actual income and expenditure compared to the revised budget and appropriate allocation of any surpluses to reserves
- Performance update reports to ensure regular monitoring of the Council's operational performance as a key component of the Local Performance Management Framework
- A quarterly review of the Strategic Risk Register - identifying improvements or new issues
- 6- monthly reports on Treasury Management and Actual Prudential Indicators as a requirement of the Council's reporting procedures under regulations issued under the Local Government Act 2003. (June and November 2021)
- An annual report detailing progress made by the Central Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee. (July 2021)

- Income and Arrears Monitoring report, providing updates to members on the position with regard to amounts of monies owed to the City Council as of 1st April 2021 (August 2021).
- A report on the financial and performance position of the Housing Repairs Service (January 2021)
- Fire Safety Updates (January 2021 and January 2022)
- Section 106 and CIL Contributions Update (June 2021)
- A pre-Christmas Market verbal report was delivered in advance of the 2021 Market
- Updated Targets report (September 2021)
- Council Investment in Properties report (September 2021)
- CCTV update report on rota changes (September 2021)
- One Council – Creating Value Processes report (January 2022)

The Committee received minutes from one sub-committee and one sub-group:

- Budget Review Group Minutes (February 2021)
- Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee Minutes (January 2021 and June 2021)

Portfolio Holder Reports

As members will be aware our strategic plan, Vision 2025 was formally agreed at Executive in February 2020 and approved at Council in March 2020 and is significantly linked to the Portfolio's.

The pandemic did lead to a number of Portfolio Holder reports being slightly delayed, but by the end of the 2021/22 financial year we will have received all reports due and be back on track to manage them as planned.

Performance Scrutiny Committee has received the following reports from portfolio holders and the Climate Change Manager in respect of progress towards our strategic priorities:

- Let's drive inclusive economic growth – with Cllr Murray's reports in March 2021 (delayed) and September 2021
- Let's reduce inequality – With Cllr R Kirk's report in February 2021 (delayed) and Cllr S Burke's report in November 2021
- Let's deliver quality housing – With Cllr Nannestad's report in January 2021
- Let's enhance our remarkable place – With Cllr Bushell's report in July 2021
- Let's address the challenge of climate change – a report from Kate Bell the Climate Change Manager was received in September 2021
- Portfolio Holder, Customer Experience and Review – With Cllr C Burke's report in July 2021
- Portfolio Holder, Our People and Resources – With Cllr Metcalfe's report in August 2021

Financial and Performance Reports

The committee was able to scrutinise all financial reports, including quarterly financial monitoring, Treasury Management and Prudential Indicators and Income and Arrears monitoring reports as normal.

However, due to the lockdown and subsequent pressures on service areas resulting in many services having to change the way their services were being delivered; quarterly performance monitoring was reported differently at Q3 2021.

Instead of the usual target driven Q3 report, the committee received a narrative report, providing a flavour of what services had done over Q3 as well as providing an indication of their plans for the future when restrictions are eased and eventually lifted. Members commented on the quality of the report and that it proved how important Local Government was in people's lives. Performance Scrutiny Committee Members also asked for the document to be circulated to all members. The subsequent Q4 report then covered both Q3 and Q4 in terms of achievements against targets

Target Setting for 2021/22 and Onwards

The original Performance Targets report was delayed after the March meeting was cancelled due to covid effects and eventually taken in June 2021, later than planned. The report contained a total of 19 targets that had been changed – some temporarily removed, some decreased and two increased.

Performance Scrutiny Committee noted that they did not accept the targets that had been set. The Committee stated that the targets should remain as they were (in 2020/21) and should have an explanation next to them as to why these targets had been changed.

The Committee expressed concern over the process of target setting for 2021/22, as it was felt that Portfolio Holders had made decisions for their portfolios without any scrutiny involvement. It was proposed that in future, Portfolio Holders attended the Performance Scrutiny Committee to present proposed changes and rationale for targets. The report was subsequently called in, but over-ruled and the targets were accepted for the year.

Performance Scrutiny Members asked for the targets report to be brought back to their committee with further explanations attached to each target as to why there had been a change. Executive accepted that future changes needed to be supported with clear rationale for the change.

In August 2021 an updated report was brought to committee answering all the outstanding queries and was accepted by Performance Scrutiny as providing sufficient rationale for the initial decisions. Future reports will contain that level of detail.

Budget Review

The role of Performance Scrutiny Committee was to scrutinise in detail the robustness of the proposed budget options and Council Tax for the 2021/22 as well as the Medium-Term Financial Strategy for 2021-2026. This was undertaken in a committee format by Budget Review Group which is a cross party sub-group of Performance Scrutiny Committee, made up of nine non-executive members. It reported in February 2021 and will be doing so again shortly for the 2022/27 proposals.

Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee

Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee looks in more detail at matters relating to housing and our housing stock.

Since January 2021, the sub-committee has considered matters relating to

- Homelessness and Rough Sleeping
- The Scheduled Repairs pilot
- Report by Councillor Donald Nannestad, Portfolio Holder for Quality Housing
- HRA Financial and performance monitoring - quarterly
- The allocations Policy
- Performance targets for 2021/22
- An update on Housing Department Operations post Covid-19
- Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 - statutory duties
- Countywide Covid-19 homelessness response
- Mutual Exchange Policy
- Lincoln Tenants Panel matters

I would like to thank the Councillors and Tenants Panel members, the Portfolio Holder who provides useful information for members at meetings, and also to Officers for the contribution of further information for members of this sub committee

Looking Ahead

The Vice Chair and I would like, with the support of the Committee, to ensure that the length of future meetings is no longer than two hours. Agenda's need to be scheduled so that they are achievable and focussed on any reports that have urgency; but should the agenda not be finished in time, either an extra meeting will be scheduled or the remaining items to be added to the next agenda if feasible. This will ensure that all items get fair scrutiny, and nothing is rushed through after an overlong meeting, because of tiredness and lack of concentration due to the duration of that meeting.

It would also be very helpful if Portfolio Holders, when delivering their report to committee, could clearly show if there has been an improvement or not in the services/projects they cover and illustrate the reasons why this is so using facts and figures. This may also help to shorten meetings.

Finally, Loraine and I thank all members for their commitment and dedication at each scrutiny meeting and also the Officers for providing the reports to enable us to, hopefully, make informed recommendations.

We thank Pat Jukes for all her hard work and support, we wish her all the best in her retirement. A warm welcome to Robert Marshall, I have to say you have a hard act to follow!

Councillor Patrick J Vaughan
Chair of Performance Scrutiny Committee

REPORT UNDER RULE 2(vi) OF THE COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES

COUNCIL

22 FEBRUARY 2022

SUBJECT:	EQUALITY JOURNAL APRIL 2020 TO MARCH 2021
DIRECTORATE:	CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND TOWN CLERK
REPORT AUTHOR:	GRAHAM ROSE – STRATEGIC SENIOR POLICY OFFICER

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To present to Council the Equality Journal 2020/21 for information.

2. Executive Summary

2.1 The Equality Journal is a record of the key corporate equality actions progressed between April 2020 and March 2021 towards meeting City of Lincoln Council's five Strategic Equality Objectives.

3. Background

3.1 All councils are required to publish information annually to demonstrate compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty. The information published must include information relating to people with protected characteristics who are employees and affected by the council's policies and practices.

4. Main body of the report

4.1 Adopted in early 2020 in line with the council's refreshed strategic plan, Vision 2025, were the council's revised equality objectives for the four-year period from April 2020.

4.2 The objectives are underpinned by the annual Equality Action Plan. The actions set out in the action plan serve to demonstrate how the council is meeting its equality objectives.

4.3 The Equality Journal at Appendix A is in effect the council's Equality and Diversity Annual Report, and acts as an evidence base for what the City of Lincoln Council has undertaken to meet our equality objectives and to comply with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty. The Equality Journal also includes equality information on Lincoln and workforce demographics. The information provided helps us ensure we are taking into account the make-up of the local community in matters relating to equality and diversity, including the make-up of the council's workforce and when undertaking strategic and service planning.

5. Strategic Priorities

5.1 Let's reduce all kinds of inequality

Through continuing to demonstrate the City of Lincoln Council's ability to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, together with the Public Sector Equality Duty, we will work to ensure the council continues to adapt to the changing needs of our residents from different backgrounds.

6. Organisational Impacts

6.1 Finance

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

6.2 Legal Implications including Procurement Rules

The information and activities stated in this report contribute to the implementation of and the monitoring of progress towards meeting the council's Strategic Equality Objectives and the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.

6.3 Equality, Diversity and Human Rights

The Public Sector Equality Duty means that the Council must consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work, in shaping policy, delivering services and in relation to their own employees.

It requires that public bodies have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

6.4 Human Resources

There are no direct Human Resource implications arising from this report.

6.5 Land, Property and Accommodation

There are no direct Land, Property and Accommodation implications arising from this report.

6.6 Significant Community Impact and / or Environmental Impact

There are no significant Community Impacts or Environmental Impacts arising from this report.

6.7 Corporate Health and Safety implications

There are no significant Corporate Health and Safety implications arising from this report.

7. Risk Implications

7.1 Options explored – N/A

7.2 Key risks associated with the preferred approach – N/A

8. Recommendation

8.1 Council notes the contents of the Equality Journal April 2020 to March 2021 included at Appendix A.

Is this a key decision? No

Do the exempt information categories apply? No

Does Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules (call-in and urgency) apply? No

How many appendices does the report contain? One

List of Background Papers: None

Lead Officer: Graham Rose, Strategic Senior Policy Officer
Telephone (01522) 873658

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Appendix A

Equality Journal

April 2020 to March 2021



CITY OF
Lincoln
COUNCIL

Together, let's deliver
Lincoln's ambitious future



Table of contents

Forward	3
1. Introduction	4
2. Our Equality Objectives	5
2.1 - Our services are more accessible and do not discriminate on any unjustifiable grounds	6
2.2 - Local communities and stakeholders are empowered to influence the way our services are provided to them.....	7
2.3 – Equality and Diversity is at the heart of decision making at all levels within the council	8
2.4 – Our workforce at all levels reflects the makeup of the local community ...	9
2.5 – Equalities, Social Inclusion and Community Cohesion have all improved within our communities	10
3. Demographic of Lincoln.....	13
4. Our workforce over time	16
5. Ways of contacting us.....	21
Alternative languages	22

Organisation	City of Lincoln Council
Title	Equality Journal April 2020 to March 2021
Author - name and title	Graham Rose, Strategic Senior Policy Officer
Owner - name and title	Graham Rose, Strategic Senior Policy Officer
Date	2 nd August 2021
Approvals	Chair E&D Advisory Panel – 6-8-21 CMT – 7-9-21 E&D Advisory Panel – 14-10-21
Filename	Equality Journal 2020-21

Forward

Welcome to the 2020-21 City of Lincoln Council Equality Journal. The Journal has been produced on behalf of the council's Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel. The panel is an informal advisory working group formed of councillors and officers overseeing equality and diversity at the council and monitoring the achievement against the council's equality objectives.

The purpose of the Equality Journal is to demonstrate how we have continued to meet our equality objectives through the delivery of a range of actions during the year 2020/21. The Journal also provides information on the makeup of the city, together with the makeup of the council's workforce.

During the year we saw a range of actions completed. These were a mix of service actions, together with actions specifically initiated as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic. We are extremely proud of what the council achieved during an extremely difficult year. This wouldn't have been possible without the dedication and efforts made by our staff and councillors.

It is expected that the impacts of the Coronavirus pandemic will continue for many years to come. It is important that we continue to provide equal opportunity and foster good relations between our residents, which will be more important than ever before.

Councillor Naomi Twedde - Chair of Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel



1. Introduction

There are three aims outlined in the Equality Act (2010) and the Public Sector Equality Duty. These are to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

The nine protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Race
- Sexual orientation
- Gender
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Religion and belief
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership

The main purpose of this Equality Journal is to provide an update on the activities City of Lincoln Council has undertaken towards achieving the council's Equality Objectives between 1st April 2020 and 31st March 2021 and to provide in one place up to date equality information. It is in effect the council's Equality and Diversity Annual Report. In addition, the Equality Journal also includes information on City of Lincoln Council's workforce demographics and Lincoln's resident demographics, both of which are used to inform decision making.

2. Our Equality Objectives

Adopted in early 2020 in line with the council's refreshed strategic plan, Vision 2025, were the council's revised equality objectives for the four-year period from April 2020.

The continued close alignment of the council's equality objectives with its strategic priorities as set out within Vision 2025 provide solid foundations for ensuring equality and diversity are embedded in the work of the council.

These objectives are:

- Our services are more accessible and do not discriminate on any unjustifiable grounds
- Local communities and stakeholders are empowered to influence the way our services are provided to them
- Equality and Diversity is at the heart of decision making at all levels within the council
- Our workforce at all levels reflects the make-up of the local community
- Equalities, Social Inclusion and Community Cohesion have all improved within our communities

The Corporate Policy Unit continues to retain responsibility for monitoring the Equality Action Plan, ensuring Equality Objectives are reviewed appropriately, assisting service areas with equality analyses, and providing overall equality information for the council in this annual Journal.

Human Resources continue to manage staff training in respect of equality and diversity, provide information relating to the council's workforce and provide employment advice around equality and diversity (e.g. recruitment), whilst legal advice continues to be provided by the Legal team. Support and training for members continues to be provided by Democratic Services.

An underpinning Equality Objectives Action Plan for 2020-21 set out specific actions identified by service areas in service plans and is therefore a way of demonstrating progress against the five overarching objectives. Brought together by the Corporate Policy Unit, the plan uses a traffic light system to indicate where we are in terms of achieving progress against specific actions and who is responsible.

At the end of the year **5** actions from the initial 2020/21 action plan had been completed, and a further **11** actions initiated in response to the Covid-19 pandemic were completed making an overall total of **16** completed equality actions.

The following pages list the main activities progressed between April 2020 and March 2021, which go towards meeting each of the council's Equality Objectives,

and highlight some of the key achievements, specifically focused on those delivered as a result of COVID-19.

2.1 - Our services are more accessible and do not discriminate on any unjustifiable grounds

Main actions progressed between April 20 and March 21:

- Progressed Boutham Park Lake project which included specific works targeted at protected characteristics
- Reviewed alternative languages and supporting text for council publications to ensure this included the most frequently spoken languages in the city.
- Survey by Customer Services to gain a clear understanding of our customer's experience of contacting the council during the start of the COVID pandemic.
- Continued development of the 70-unit extra care development on Bowden Drive in Lincoln

Case Study

- **Progress Boutham Park Lake project** – The Boutham Park Lake Restoration Project works were funded by £658,700 awarded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, along with city council funding, and delivered in partnership with Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust. The awarded contractor, Ebsford Environmental, began improvements to the lake in January 2021 and the works were completed in summer 2021. An additional £58,969 was awarded to the project by the FCC Communities Foundation in June 2021.

The improvement works included a number of activities targeted at protected characteristics. This work included:

- Lake edge and woodland under-storey planting
- Footpath improvements
- The provision of fishing pegs
- Access to occasional boating
- Improvements to the surface around the beacon
- The addition of a viewing platform
- Addition of benches and picnic tables
- A community art installation and lost features trail

Following completion of the works, the lake and surrounding area is now an accessible space for visitors from all backgrounds to enjoy.

This project is set to bring a number of opportunities for volunteering and skills building for years to come.

2.2 - Local communities and stakeholders are empowered to influence the way our services are provided to them

Main actions progressed between April 20 and March 21:

- Regular consultation with members of the Lincoln Citizens' Panel on a number of topics
- Promotion and delivery of Lincoln Community Lottery on behalf of more than 80 local good causes
- Commenced a review of the council's Consultation Strategy to include specific consideration of protected characteristics
- Ongoing support for the Lincare housing assistance scheme enabling disabled and older people to live independently.

Translation and interpretation

Our policy is generally not to translate or interpret unless required. However, we do monitor carefully where requests for interpretation have been made - details of which are provided in the table below.

Table of requests for interpretation – April 20 to March 21

Language	Number of times requested
Polish (Poland)	18
Arabic (Egypt)	1
Arabic (Classical)	0
Bulgarian (Bulgaria)	5
Greek (Greece)	8
Lithuanian (Lithuania)	5
Latvian (Latvia)	0
Portuguese (Portugal)	0
Romanian (Romania)	11
Russian (Russia)	16
Slovak (Slovakia)	10
Turkish (Turkey)	3
Chinese (Simplified, PRC)	0
Mandarin (Chinese)	1
Cantonese (Chinese)	2
Bengali (Bangladesh)	1

Language	Number of times requested
Hindi (Indian)	1
French (France)	1
TOTAL	83

In addition to the interpretations above, the council provided interpreters to work with our team in the Sincil Bank and Monks Road area of the city during January 2021 as part of a wider intervention to encourage people to go and get tested for Covid 19 at a local testing centre (this was before home testing kits became widely available). We recognised the make-up of the community and the particular challenges in engaging communities on the doorstep whose first language was not English, therefore we provided interpreters in person to start with, and then as the project progressed, we reverted to the telephone interpretation service.

There were no requests for translation between April 2020 and March 2021, however, in accordance with the legal requirements to provide translation services, and the increase in enforcement action, it is likely that the number of translations required by the City of Lincoln Council will increase over the year ahead to ensure our services continue to be accessible to our all residents and service users.

2.3 – Equality and Diversity is at the heart of decision making at all levels within the council

Main actions progressed between April 20 and March 21:

- Produced the 2019/20 Equality Journal
- Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel met virtually on two occasions to consider and comment on equality issues (September 2020 and March 2021).
- Developed a new area of the council's intranet, City People, to communicate equality and diversity news, events and training to staff working remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- All committee reports requiring decisions include paragraph on the impact on equality and also a detailed equality analysis if appropriate.
- Ongoing commitment to equalities in our strategic plan Vision 2025 with continued commitment to reducing all kinds of inequality.
- Developed and implemented the equality action plan for 2021-22.
- Ongoing development of the councils website in line with accessibility legislation

Case Study

Developed a new area of the council's intranet, City People, to communicate equality and diversity news, events and training to staff working remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Previously the council highlighted equality and diversity related matters to staff members via the equality and diversity notice boards located at City Hall and Hamilton House. Due to large numbers of council staff now working from home as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and with this set to continue into the future, the council has created an equality and diversity area on the council's intranet, City People. This new area contains equality and diversity related news and events, together with links to equality and diversity related training courses. For those staff members working in the housing repairs service located at Hamilton House, the equality and diversity notice board continues to be updated regularly. This helps to ensure all staff continue to receive important information on the topic of equality and diversity.

2.4 – Our workforce at all levels reflects the makeup of the local community

Main actions progressed between April 20 and March 21:

- Reviewed council recruitment data by protected characteristic to ensure the council continued to recruit individuals from a diverse range of backgrounds
- Continued to deliver manager briefings and workshops, which included equality & diversity topics
- Monitored the make-up of the workforce
- Considered the impact of new ways of working during lockdown and beyond on all staff, including impact relating to protected characteristics
- Publication of the Gender Pay Gap 2020
- Retained accreditation as a Mindful Employer and Disability Confident Employer
- Successfully gained accreditation to the Lincolnshire Carers Quality Award

2.5 – Equalities, Social Inclusion and Community Cohesion have all improved within our communities

Main actions progressed between April 20 and March 21:

- Delivered a Community Helpline to support vulnerable residents during the initial Covid-19 lockdown
- Befriending service developed and launched for elderly and disabled residents and those asked to shield during initial lockdown
- Delivered school meals initiative for Easter Holidays, October half term and Christmas
- Delivered pensioner voucher scheme to assist in initial lockdown
- Supported the setup and rollout of the emergency Lincoln COVID-19 Crisis Fund
- Ensured resilience support for Lincare during initial lockdown
- Kept under review impact of ongoing pandemic on vulnerable residents and initiated support as required
- Lincoln Social Responsibility Charter further developed with over 90 signatories by year end
- Facilitated the development of an informal network of organisations to provide support to our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities in the city. The network is known as Lincoln Embracing All Nations and is currently working towards creating a shared space in the city.

Case studies:

Each of the COVID-19 initiated activities listed above, together with a wide range of other activities undertaken outside of the council by community groups, voluntary groups and individuals, have helped to bring our communities together during an extremely difficult and challenging year for all.

COVID Support

The Coronavirus lockdown in England commenced in March 2020, with further lockdowns and restrictions remaining in place for the duration of 2020 and into 2021.

Throughout this time City of Lincoln Council responded to a wealth of challenges, which required the council to quickly change the way we work to ensure ongoing delivery of existing and new services to help those most in need. Many staff were redeployed into new roles overnight, which helped ensure the council could support those in need as efficiently as possible.

Below provides a summary of the key emergency services the council provided during this difficult time.

Community Helpline

A brand-new weekday signposting service comprising phone lines and an email address was created to provide support and assistance to vulnerable residents. Help included providing access to food vouchers, prescriptions, help with utility bills and more. Where a staff member detected signs of isolation in the caller, the caller would also be offered support from the council's new befriending service.

Befriending service

To ensure those vulnerable and isolated residents of all ages and backgrounds had someone to talk to during the pandemic, a befriending service was developed and launched by the council in April 2020. The service connected council staff working from home with residents across the city who would benefit from regular conversations to help prevent feelings of loneliness and isolation during lockdown when many lost their network of social support.

As well as offering regular calls, befrienders were also able to refer those in need to the Community Helpline when specific support was required.

The service ran from April 2020 through to July 2020, with staff making calls on a daily basis. The service was also relaunched on a smaller scale in the run up to Christmas 2020. This provided a friendly voice at a difficult time for many. At the peak of the service, 54 members of council staff were supporting over 500 residents. In total over 18,000 people were directly contacted by the council to see if they wanted to receive regular befriending calls. Throughout service delivery a significant number of positive comments were received, which confirmed the importance of the service and the positive impact this had on vulnerable people living in the City of Lincoln.

Julian usually works with our resident involvement team but is about to begin working with our new befriending service which ensures some of the most vulnerable residents of the city in isolation feel more socially connected.

For the latest updates and guidance regarding Covid-19 visit lincoln.gov.uk/coronavirus

 Together, let's deliver Lincoln's ambitious future



Further details on the success of this service can be found here - <https://www.lincoln.gov.uk/downloads/download/139/community-support-downloads>

Online mapping of community groups

Throughout the pandemic, voluntary groups and organisations provided essential support to many residents across the city in some form. To help signpost residents to where they could access this support, the council created an interactive map. This gave a visually friendly view of all approved voluntary organisations in the area and enabled residents to quickly find a group near them for support. Some of the information included on the map was food banks, stores offering delivery services, neighbourhood support groups and more. The map also provided information on the groups residents could support should they wish to volunteer and support their local community.

School meals initiative

The council financially supported the Active Faith Network prior to government clarifying its position on supporting families during the 2020 Easter holidays. This financial support enabled families eligible for free school meals to continue to receive support while they were at home. Working with seven local schools the council issued 384 vouchers to ensure children had access to food. This support proved vital for many families at a time when COVID-19 cases were rising significantly, and uncertainty levels continued to rise.

Lincoln COVID-19 Crisis Fund

A partnership was formed with Lincolnshire Community Foundation to offer financial grants of up to £2,500 to charities and community groups working to tackle the impact of COVID-19. This fund was supported through a donation from City of Lincoln Council, together with further donations from local businesses and also donations from the Lincoln Lottery Community Fund. In total 13 local charities and

community groups were supported by the crisis fund during 2020/21, with a total of £25,184.20 being raised and allocated.

A list of allocations from this fund is available via the following link:

<https://www.lincoln.gov.uk/people-community/lincoln-community-lottery/5?documentId=262&categoryId=129>

Resilience support for Lincare

Lincare is the continuous, automatic and remote monitoring of real time emergencies designed to manage the risks associated with independent living. The service provides a life line to many elderly, vulnerable and isolated residents. This service proved to be vital particularly during the early days of the COVID-19 crisis, with residents using the service to raise where emergency support was required. To ensure the Lincare service could continue to operate 24/7 throughout the pandemic for all its clients, additional support was provided. This service continues to be a vital lifeline for many.

3. Demographic of Lincoln

Total population
100,049

Source: ONS Mid-Year (2020) Population Estimates

Gender	Number	Percentage
Male	50,031	50%
Female	50,018	50%

Source: ONS Mid-Year (2020) Population Estimates

	Number	Percentage
Age 0-4	5,310	5.3%
Aged 5-9	5,477	5.5%
Aged 10-14	4,832	4.8%
Aged 15-19	8,013	8.0%
Aged 20-24	14,347	14.3%
Aged 25-29	7,873	7.9%
Aged 30-34	6,589	6.6%
Aged 35-39	6,087	6.1%
Aged 40-44	5,053	5.1%
Aged 45-49	5,105	5.1%
Aged 50-54	5,509	5.5%
Aged 55-59	5,819	5.8%
Aged 60-64	4,719	4.7%
Aged 65-69	4,156	4.2%

Aged 70-74	4,027	4.0%
Aged 75-79	2,777	2.8%
Aged 80-84	2,066	2.1%
Aged 85+	2,290	2.3%

Source: ONS Mid-Year (2020) Population Estimates

Religion or Belief	Number
Buddhist	303
Christian	54,265
Hindu	335
Muslim	902
Jewish	63
Sikh	73

ONS Census 2011

Disability	Number	Percentage
Day-to-day activities limited a lot	8,012	8.6%
Day-to-day activities limited a little	9,254	9.9%
Day-to-day activities not limited	76,275	81.5%

ONS Census 2011

Ethnicity	Number	Percentage
White British (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales)	83,653	89.4%
White Irish	719	0.8%
White Gypsy or Irish Traveller	80	0.1%
White: Other White	4,927	5.3%
Mixed/multiple ethnic group: White and Black Caribbean	367	0.4%
Mixed/multiple ethnic group: White and Black African	189	0.2%
Mixed/multiple ethnic group: White and Asian	372	0.4%
Mixed/multiple ethnic group: Other Mixed	302	0.3%
Asian/Asian British: Indian	522	0.6%
Asian/Asian British: Pakistani	139	0.1%
Asian/Asian British: Bangladeshi	139	0.1%
Asian/Asian British: Chinese	452	0.5%
Asian/Asian British: Other Asian	542	0.6%
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: African	504	0.5%
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: Caribbean	165	0.2%
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: Other Black	109	0.1%
Other ethnic group: Arab	175	0.2%
Other ethnic group: Any other ethnic group	185	0.2%

ONS Census 2011

NiNo (National Insurance) registrations to adult overseas nationals entering Lincoln between 2013/14 & 2020/21

Financial Year	Number of NiNo (as of March each year)
2013/14	1,002
2014/15	1,164
2015/16	1,514
2016/17	1,592
2017/18	1,409
2018/19	1,091
2019/20	1,327
2020/21	470

Source: GOV.UK March 2021 National Insurance Number allocations to adult overseas nationals

In 2020/21 there was a significant decrease in the number of National Insurance registrations to overseas nationals entering Lincoln. This decrease could also be seen throughout the UK. At this time it is too early to determine whether this decrease is as a result of Brexit, the COVID-19 pandemic or a combination of both. Future data releases will continue to be monitored to help understand the reasons for this decrease.

Population of Lincoln that can speak English well by profession

Occupation	Main language is English	Main language is not English	Main language is not English: Can speak English well or very well	Main language is not English: Cannot speak English or cannot speak English well
1. Managers, directors and senior officials	4,523	162	138	24
2. Professional occupations	7,731	460	430	30
3. Associate professional and technical occupations	6,197	214	193	21
4. Administrative and secretarial occupations	7,305	175	149	26
5. Skilled trades occupations	7,380	393	269	124
6. Caring, leisure and other service occupations	6,910	334	295	39

7. Sales and customer service occupations	9,350	187	162	25
8. Process, plant and machine operatives	5,949	1,182	801	381
9. Elementary (entry level/basic skills) occupations	12,331	1,200	764	436

ONS Census 2011

Population of Lincoln that can speak English well by ward

Area	Main language is English	Main language is not English	Main language is not English: Can speak English well or very well	Main language is not English: Cannot speak English or cannot speak English well
Lincoln	67,676	4,307	3,201	1,106
Abbey	7,582	1,192	868	324
Birchwood	5,911	259	198	61
Boultham	5,567	283	199	84
Bracebridge / Witham	5,530	119	86	33
Carholme	10,904	667	556	111
Castle	5,761	188	151	37
Glebe	4,843	366	259	107
Hartsholme	5,092	105	90	15
Minster	5,388	137	109	28
Moorland	5,355	144	100	44
Park	5,743	847	585	262

ONS Census 2011

Please note the Census 2011 data provided in this section is now ten years old, however, remains the latest data available. New Census data is expected to be published in early 2022 and will feature in the Equality Journal April 2021 to March 22.

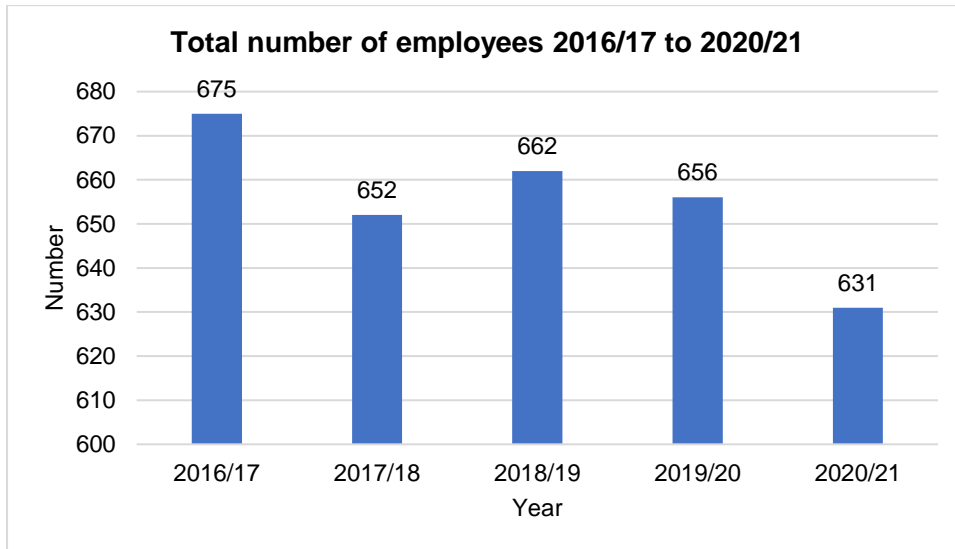
4. Our workforce over time

Previously we have compared City of Lincoln Council's workforce data against the wider 2011 Census data for Lincoln. However, as the Census data is becoming less comparable, this section is now purely focused the council's workforce to help show how our workforce demographics have changed over time.

In some cases, comparable data isn't available for the full period 2016/17 to 2020/21, and in these cases the most recent data has been provided.

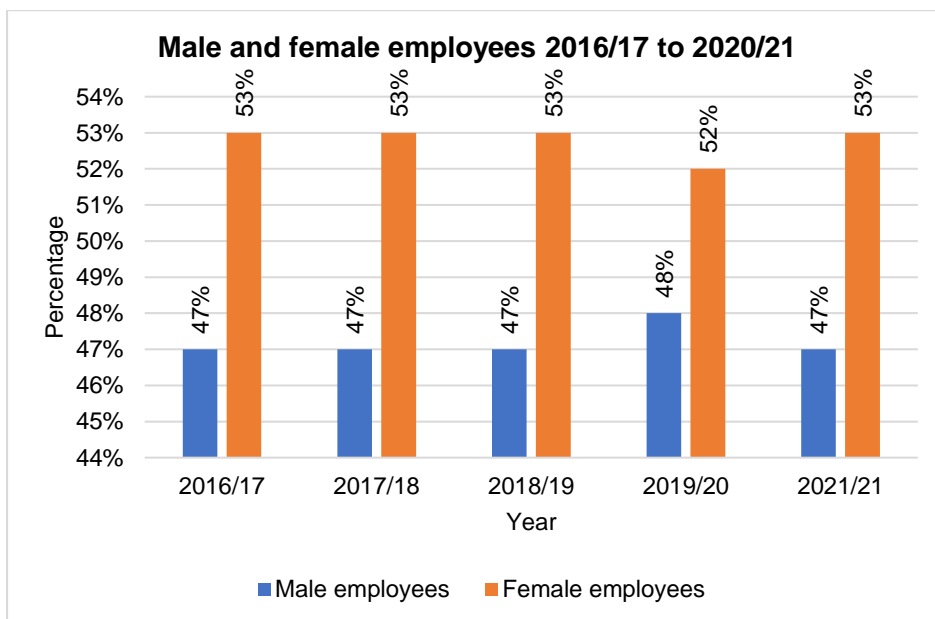
It should be noted that the council’s policy to initially offer jobs internally (to provide existing staff with development opportunities) means the rate of change in employee demographics is necessarily slower than if all vacancies were offered externally.

Total number of employees



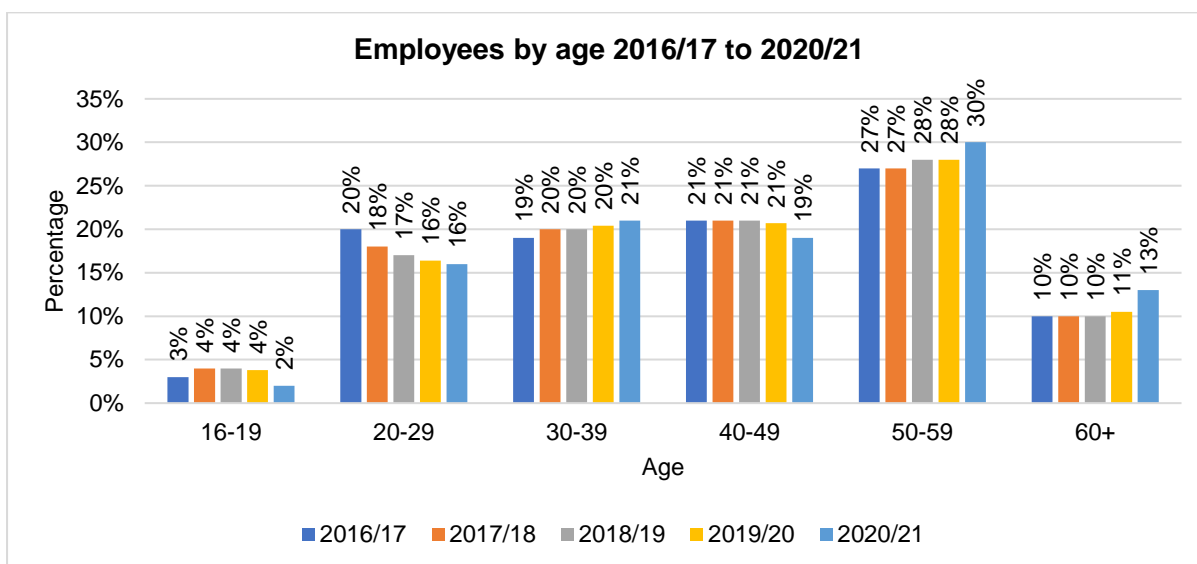
	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Total number of employees	675	652	662	656	631

Male and female employees



	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Male employees	47% (317)	47% (309)	47% (311)	48% (314)	47% (294)
Female employees	53% (358)	53% (343)	53% (351)	52% (342)	53% (337)

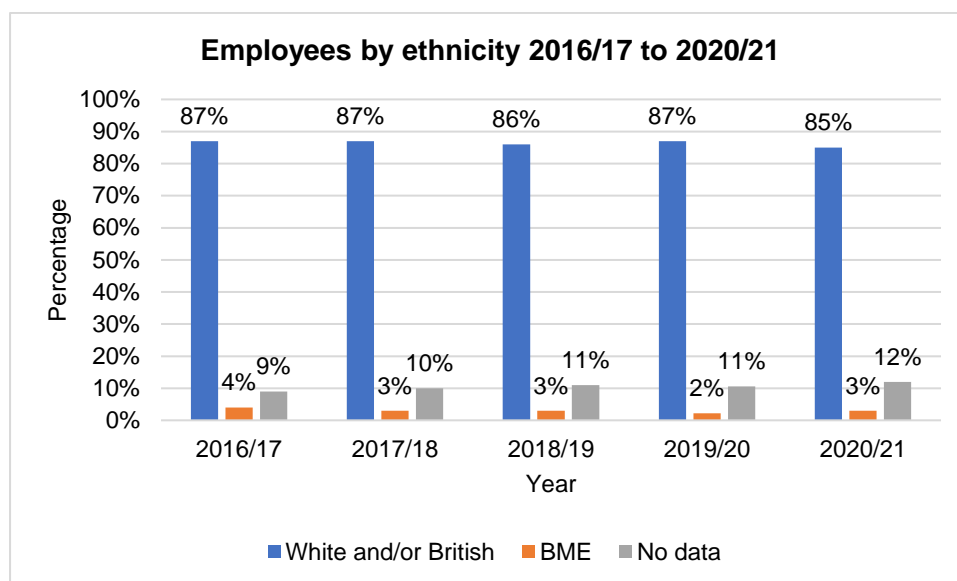
Employees by age



Age	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
16-19	3% (22)	4% (23)	4% (26)	4% (25)	2% (11)
20-29	20% (132)	18% (117)	17% (112)	16% (108)	16% (101)
30-39	19% (131)	20% (132)	20% (134)	20% (134)	21% (134)
40-49	21% (143)	21% (140)	21% (140)	21% (136)	19% (118)
50-59	27% (179)	27% (177)	28% (184)	28% (184)	30% (187)
60+	10% (68)	10% (63)	10% (66)	11% (69)	13% (80)

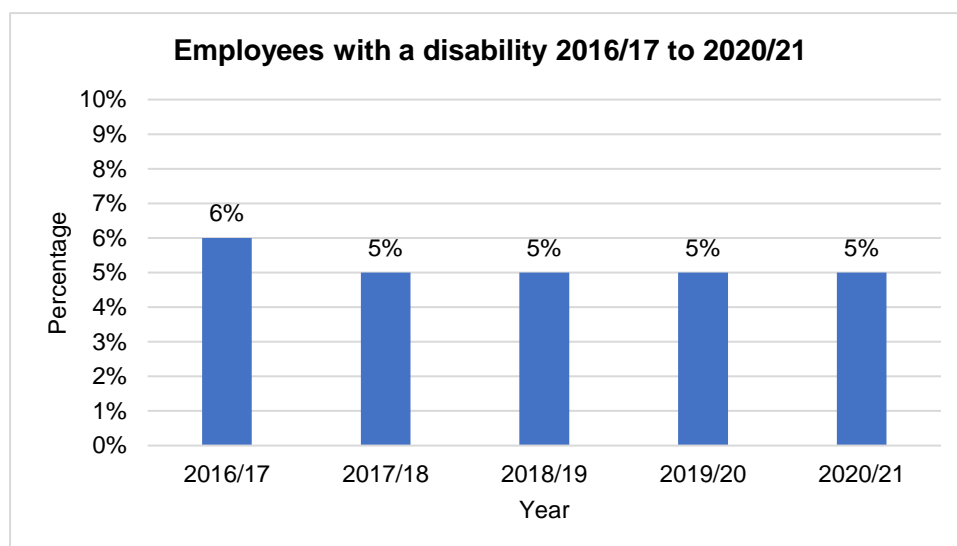
The data above shows at the end of March 2021 there continues to be a high number of employees within the age group 50-59. The Human Resources team is currently reviewing the council's recruitment policy with the aim of attracting a more diverse range of candidates to council positions. This includes methods to recruit younger people by re-engaging with schools (Work Based Learning team), where we advertise and highlighting benefits e.g., flexible working and employer branding.

Employee by ethnicity



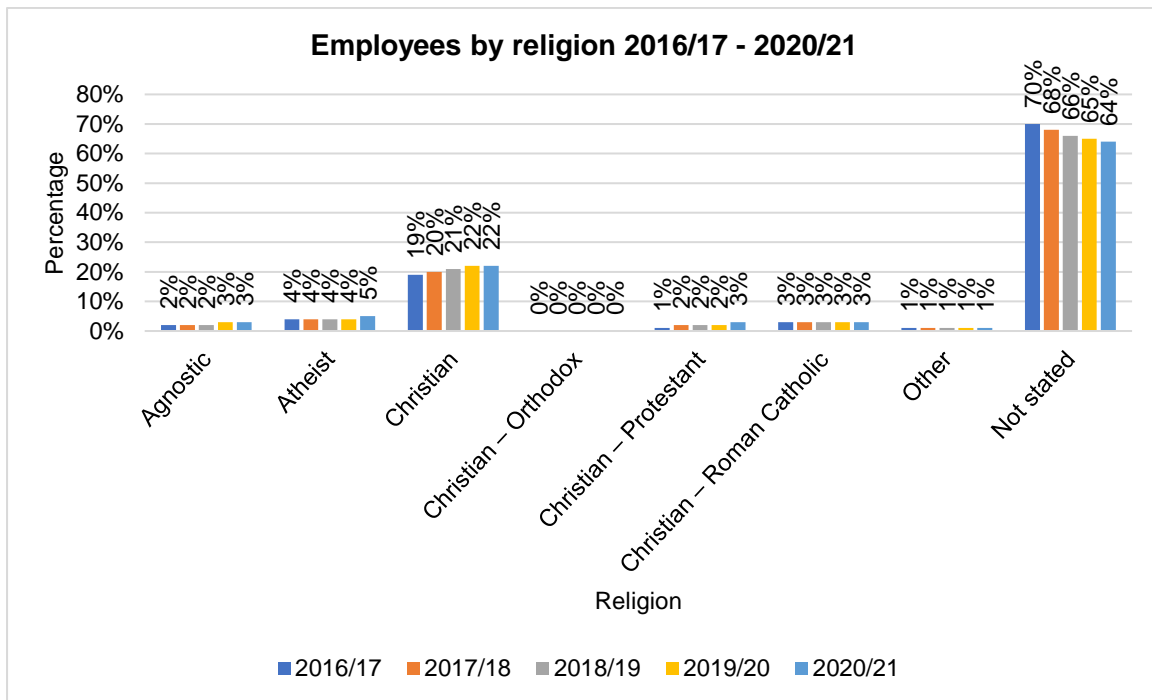
	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
White and/or British	87% (587)	87% (565)	86% (571)	87% (571)	85% (535)
BME	4% (28)	3% (20)	3% (20)	2% (15)	3% (18)
No data	9% (60)	10% (67)	11% (71)	11% (70)	12% (78)

Employees with a disability



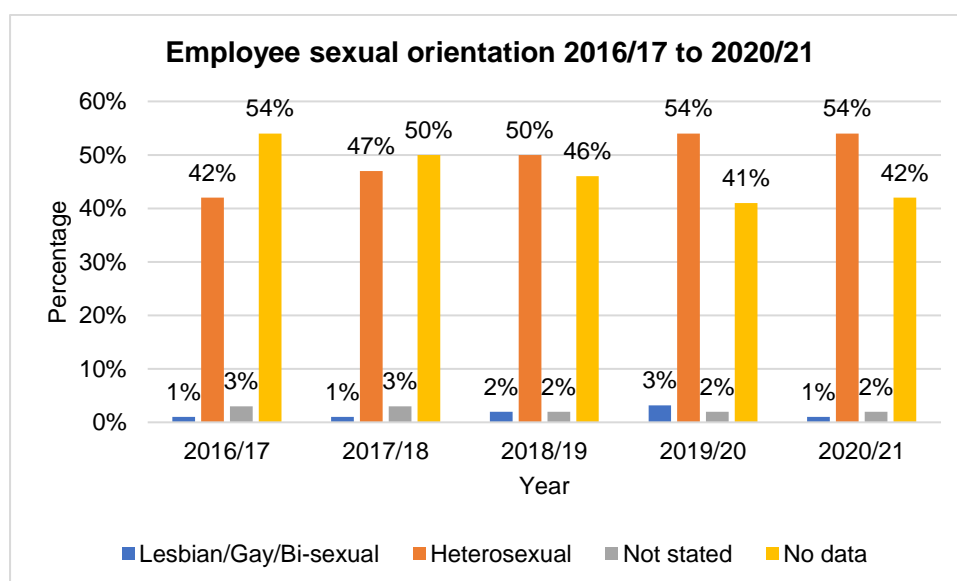
	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Employees with a disability	6% (38)	5% (34)	5% (30)	5% (34)	5% (32)
Total number of employees	675	652	662	656	631

Employees by religion



	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Agnostic	2% (12)	2% (13)	2% (15)	3% (17)	3% (16)
Atheist	4% (24)	4% (24)	4% (28)	4% (29)	5% (29)
Christian	19% (128)	20% (133)	21% (139)	22% (146)	22% (140)
Christian - Orthodox	0% (2)	0% (2)	0% (2)	0% (1)	0% (1)
Christian - Protestant	1% (10)	2% (13)	2% (14)	2% (14)	3% (16)
Christian - Roman Catholic	3% (22)	3% (20)	3% (20)	3% (21)	3% (21)
Other	1% (5)	1% (6)	1% (7)	1% (4)	1% (6)
Not stated	70% (472)	68% (441)	66% (437)	65% (424)	64% (402)

Employees by sexual orientation



	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Lesbian/Gay/Bi-sexual	1% (8)	1% (7)	2% (10)	2% (11)	2% (11)
Heterosexual	42% (284)	47% (304)	50% (333)	54% (354)	54% (340)
Not stated	3% (19)	3% (18)	2% (14)	2% (14)	2% (13)
No data	54% (364)	50% (323)	46% (305)	42% (277)	41% (267)

5. Ways of contacting us

If you have any questions on the contents of this Equality Journal, or want to know more about how the City of Lincoln Council is working to meet the aims of the Equality Act 2010 and the Equality Duty, please contact:

By Post

Policy Unit
 City of Lincoln Council
 City Hall
 Beaumont Fee
 Lincoln
 LN1 1DD

By E-mail

policy@lincoln.gov.uk

By Telephone

01522 881188

Alternative languages

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Bulgarian

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Chinese (Simplified, PRC)

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Lithuanian

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Polish

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SUBJECT:	VISION 2025 – 3-YEAR DELIVERY PLAN 2022-2025
DIRECTORATE:	CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND TOWN CLERK
REPORT AUTHOR:	ANGELA ANDREWS, CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND TOWN CLERK

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To seek approval from Executive on the draft mid-term review of the Vision 2025 and the core delivery plan for the final three years of Vision 2025.

2. Executive Summary

2.1 Vision 2025 was approved in February 2020, but due to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic was never officially launched and in some areas of activity, progress on the initial plans has been affected.

2.2 As the council moves back to a new business as usual situation, a mid-term review on the proposals in the original vision was undertaken. As part of this work, the effect of covid-19 on the health of our residents has been considered – and as a result, a new focus on physical and mental health developed for the way forward.

2.3 The attached three-year Delivery Plan (Appendix A) should be considered as an addendum to Vision 2025 as there are no changes to the core priorities, aspirations or values identified in that document.

3. Background

3.1 Following the successful completion of the three-year strategic plan ‘Vision 2020’ in late 2019, a new five-year strategic plan ‘Vision 2025’ was developed by senior management and members and approved by Executive on 24th February 2020, before being adopted by Council.

Vision 2025 provided the priorities and aspirations as well as a high-level view of how these would be achieved. The detail of what needed to be done each year to work towards the end goal was to be delivered through a specific Annual Delivery Plan (ADP) for each year, in which individual projects would be agreed by management and Portfolio Holders for each priority.

3.2 The Year one ADP was in the process of gaining agreement from Leadership for roll out at the Growth Conference, when in March 2020 Covid-19 hit and severely impacted the council’s ability to deliver beyond critical services.

The launch of the Growth Conference and the Annual Delivery Plan was immediately deferred, and services were re-focussed on service recovery.

2020/21 has seen most services recover to a 'new' normal, however, this is not necessarily the same as pre-covid times. As well as business as usual - we are still facing:

- Additional service demands as customers start to bring up requests they have held on to during the pandemic
- The reintroduction of some cyclical inspections (e.g. in Private Sector Housing, Food Health & Safety and in Housing)
- Regaining access to houses where residents have not wanted us to access from health concerns (e.g. Housing, Disabled Facility Grant's)
- Trying to restore income levels to nearer pre-covid levels (e.g. Parking, Leisure)
- The need to help the High Street recover (e.g. progressing the Town Fund, and the Welcome Back Fund)

3.3 As we move towards 2022/23 and onwards, focus is now firmly on the process of delivering our strategic aims. Due to the financial and resource effects of the Covid-19 impact, we are not in a place to completely pick up where we were, so the new three-year plan has been developed with flexible timescales.

It is important to note that not all projects will be able to start in 2022/23 and not all projects will complete by 2025 – however, the aim is to progress as quickly as possible, and the results of the public consultation will help prioritisation of workload.

3.4 It should be recognised that although the pandemic did significantly affect the council's ability to progress in all aspects of Vision 2025 – this does not mean that there has been no progress. In fact, it is worth noting the level of projects that have been continued with:

- Western Growth Corridor/Swanpool project – planning permission has been granted to progress this major development
- Market improvements have commenced
- Funding has been sought and achieved to support Greyfriars
- The city centre vibrancy programme – is now funded by Town Deal
- The Cornhill improvements are almost complete
- New affordable housing has been built on Rookery Lane
- We have additional move on accommodation to support homeless people
- The Trusted Landlord Scheme is in place and will be pushed further
- De Wint Court extra care sheltered housing scheme is complete
- Crematorium refurbishment has been completed with a new chapel and new cremators as well as additional parking
- Resident's parking schemes have been consulted on and will progress
- We have used the Welcome Back Fund to support high street recovery
- Safer Streets programme is being implemented currently
- The Boutham Park restoration (phase 2) is well underway
- A start has been made on the Heritage Action Zone project to improve the look of our high street and condition of key buildings
- We have started the creation of more wildflower meadows
- Electric vehicles charging points are being installed in new council properties
- Recruitment of new business to the Lincoln Social Responsibility Charter
- Funding found to sustain the rough sleepers and homelessness teams
- The carbon action survey and staff travel surveys are now completed

- We have a roadmap to zero carbon events programme in place
- We have a decarbonisation Strategy and Management plan
- We have achieved Environmental management accreditation

4. Development of the Mid-term Vision 2025 review

4.1 As services showed strong signs of recovery from the effects of the pandemic, the Executive group made the decision to review progress towards Vision 2025 plans, and importantly, what steps can now be taken to re-start the programme in earnest.

4.2 The five existing priorities and their aspirations will not be changed as it was determined that they still meet the needs of the city and our residents.

They remain as:

- Let's drive inclusive economic growth
- Let's reduce all kinds of inequality
- Let's deliver quality housing
- Let's enhance our remarkable place
- Let's address the challenge of climate change

4.3 However, as part of in-depth discussions at Portfolio Holder level, members highlighted key areas to be considered when considering the way forward:

- The economic recovery plan for the city
- The health and inequalities faced by residents as we move out of the pandemic
- Provision for more greening projects across the city

These key points were a significant part of the review of project priorities.

4.4 The resulting Vision 2025 mid-term review (**Appendix A**) contains a range of projects spread across the five priorities and 25 aspirations, however, this is a three-year plan and thus there are minimal specific dates given at project level, so that workload can be spread to match available resource as well as meet customer priorities.

4.5 Consultation with the public, businesses and the voluntary sector started on the 18th January 2022, and completed on 10th February 2022. The consultation primarily asked for prioritisation of key existing programmes, and the results from this are included in Appendix B and will inform the prioritisation of the programme start dates over the next three years.

In summary – the programmes seen as the most important in each Strategic Priority, by the majority of respondents are:

- Take a leading role in the recovery of the Lincoln economy
- Improve the health and quality of life for people living in Lincoln
- Continue to increase the supply and number of affordable homes in the city
- Embark on an ambitious programme to enhance the natural environment across the city
- Promote sustainable transport options

5. Strategic Priorities

5.1 By the very nature of the Strategic Plan, the Vision 2025 ADP effects all five priorities in driving them forwards. Projects included cover all five priorities, but the specific effects will be monitored via each individual project plan as it is developed, presented and approved for commencement.

6. Organisational Impacts

6.1 Finance (including whole life costs where applicable)

The **Medium-Term** Financial Strategy is central to identifying the Council's financial capacity to deliver its vision and strategic priorities, this requires a balance to be struck between the need to support the delivery of the vision with the need to maintain a sustainable financial position. This balance has become extremely difficult in recent years given the Council's financial position and a need to continue to reduce the net cost base.

The new three-year ADP includes a significant amount of new investment, primarily of a capital nature, aimed at supporting the economic prosperity of the City which will be largely funded through external grant funding. In addition, through the refocusing of existing resources and allocation of the existing Visions 2025 earmarked reserve, there are also a number of new revenue schemes.

Individual projects contained within the ADP will be subject to separate, appropriate, approval processes as they are bought forward for implementation.

Vision 2025 also recognises the need to reduce the Council's net cost base alongside the further new investment to support the priorities.

6.2 Legal Implications including Procurement Rules

This report refers to a selection of projects which will each individually be reported to the appropriate decision maker – and will include legal implications where appropriate

6.3 Equality, Diversity and Human Rights

The Public Sector Equality Duty means that the Council must consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work, in shaping policy, delivering services and in relation to their own employees.

It requires that public bodies have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

Care has been taken when developing the Vision 2025 mid-term review to consider all aspects of equality, and whilst this retained the specific Priority for "Reducing all kinds of Inequality" which specifically tackles some aspects of equality – all other projects identified will also consider this throughout their initiation, planning and

delivery. In addition consultation has been carried out which will reflect any E&D concerns raised.

7. Risk Implications

7.1 (i) **Options Explored** – Resource (financial and people) is a key risk and has been considered when reviewing which projects to tackle/continue in years three-five.

7.2 (ii) **Key risks associated with the preferred approach** – One Council, Health, and Legacy projects are to be the key focus initially, but changes in the working environment such as TFS requirements and the pandemic legacy will be built in as well.

8. Recommendation

8.1 The Executive is asked to recommend to Council the approval of the mid-term review, 3-year delivery plan.

Is this a key decision? No – Referral to Council

Do the exempt information categories apply? No

Does Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply? No

How many appendices does the report contain? Two

List of Background Papers: None

Lead Officer: Pat Jukes, Business Manager, Corporate Policy
Email address: pat.jukes@lincoln.gov.uk

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Vision 2025 Interim Review

February 2022



CITY OF
Lincoln
COUNCIL

Together, let's deliver
Lincoln's ambitious future



CONTENTS

Foreword	3
Introduction	4
Our vision	5
Our aspirations	6
Let's drive inclusive economic growth	7
Let's reduce all kinds of inequality	9
Let's deliver quality housing	11
Let's enhance our remarkable place	13
Let's address the challenge of climate change	15

Foreword

Vision 2025 sets out the priorities and aspirations over a five-year plan. However, following the pandemic faced by the world and still affecting this country and this city, we need to review actions planned to ensure they meet Lincoln residents' emerging needs.



The consequences of the pandemic have impacted us all, our home lives, our children's education, our working lives, our financial situation, and our health. It's been clear from the early stages of the pandemic that some groups are more affected than others, including the elderly, the disabled, people with limited income and those from some minority communities. One aspect has become clear, after two years of changes, people are still facing their own individual challenges, and in many cases, this is health related, both physical and mental, and at a time when our health services are under considerable pressure.

The council has a key role to play not just in working with our partners to develop the economic sustainability of our city – but also in supporting partners and other key providers to ensure that the health of our residents is placed as a high priority.

As we move towards the start of a new financial year, we see this as an opportunity to refocus our resources towards prevention and addressing those areas, including health inequalities, that will be needed most in the next three-year period, and into the future. This is an opportunity to review and relaunch Vision 2025, ensuring that the actions we take to meet our priorities will help tackle those needs. As a starting point City of Lincoln Council is already working with our Lincolnshire District Council counterparts to look at how and where we can jointly support the Health agenda across the County. The following sections will take you through our action plan for the next three years.

Angela Andrews

Chief Executive & Town Clerk

Cllr Ric Metcalfe

Leader

Introduction

This review is positioned as an addendum to the original five-year plan Vision 2025, which although originally launched in March 2020, was almost immediately affected by the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic.

The Vision, the five priorities and the aspirations under each priority agreed under consultation - are still relevant and there is no requirement to change these. However, we will ensure promoting positive health for the city will be a key feature within these goals wherever possible. That means that we do need to review the activities originally planned to achieve these goals to ensure that our limited resources are used in the most effective way.

As a nation we are facing a backlog of untreated health issues as well as a raft of indirect impacts such as obesity, excess alcohol consumption, poor quality private sector housing conditions and increasing anti-social behaviour, causing health inequalities to widen, especially in our deprived areas of Lincoln.

One change now in place is that instead of an annual delivery plan, we have developed a three-year plan which will be resourced as appropriate over the next three years. There are several new projects proposed which will support the work of partners in helping tackle health inequalities exacerbated by the pandemic.

Over the first two years of the Vision, there were several projects that continued to be progressed and some are now complete. However, with continued restrictions on our funding, there are some proposals that will either be deferred or no longer be progressed. As this is a three-year plan, the projects mentioned later will not all start in 2022, they will be phased appropriately to meet residents' needs and when resources are available.

The following pages are a reminder of our Vision, Priorities and Aspirations

Our vision

Together, let's deliver Lincoln's ambitious future

The strategic priorities that underpin our vision:

Let's drive inclusive economic growth

Let's enhance our remarkable place

Let's reduce all kinds of inequality

VISION 2025

Let's address the challenge of climate change

Let's deliver quality housing

Our aspirations

The aspirations that underpin our five strategic priorities

Let's drive inclusive economic growth

- ▶ Let's build a strong, viable, inclusive and prosperous future for Lincoln
- ▶ Let's continue to help businesses prosper
- ▶ Let's support a culture of innovation
- ▶ Let's attract investment
- ▶ Let's continue to make things happen

Let's deliver quality housing

- ▶ Let's provide housing which meets the varied needs of our residents
- ▶ Let's work together to tackle homelessness in Lincoln
- ▶ Let's improve housing standards for all
- ▶ Let's build thriving communities
- ▶ Let's help people have a sense of belonging

Let's address the challenge of climate change

- ▶ Let's ensure our development approach reduces our carbon footprint
- ▶ Let's set the Lincoln standard for sustainable zero carbon development
- ▶ Let's make walking, cycling and the use of public transport the best and favourite way to move around Lincoln
- ▶ Let's ensure the city's infrastructure is fully adaptable and resilient to the challenges of climate change
- ▶ Let's make our existing housing and business premises energy efficient

Let's reduce all kinds of inequality

- ▶ Let's improve the health and quality of life for people living in Lincoln
- ▶ Let's help people succeed
- ▶ Let's provide help to the most vulnerable in our city
- ▶ Let's help people feel safe and welcome in their communities
- ▶ Let's help more businesses embrace corporate social responsibility

Let's enhance our remarkable place

- ▶ Let's show the world what Lincoln has to offer
- ▶ Let's cherish and enhance our natural environment
- ▶ Let's preserve the unique character of our city
- ▶ Let's deliver a rich and varied cultural experience
- ▶ Let's provide interesting, exciting and vibrant places to enjoy

Let's drive inclusive economic growth

Introduction from Portfolio Holder

Cllr Neil Murray



Let's drive
inclusive
economic
growth

“Inclusive economic growth covers many areas, so in the next three years we will focus on ensuring the Town Deal programme starts delivering as soon as possible as it has potential to improve so many aspects of residents lives including their prosperity and health. In addition, sustainable developments such as the Swanpool project, and the markets project, along with regeneration, and improved digitalization, will be pivotal in supporting investment and the growth of a diverse economy”

Let's build a strong, viable, inclusive, and prosperous future for Lincoln

As part of tackling the wider determinants of health, we will develop an 'Inclusive Growth Strategy' reviewing economic inequalities such as low income and skill sets. Working with partners, we will deliver key schemes from the Lincoln Transport Strategy including Neighbourhood mobility hubs, as well as reviewing our own parking strategy in the light of changes caused by the pandemic. The Transport Taskforce will review all forms of movement in and around the city to improve sustainable and healthy connectivity. Progressing the Western Growth Corridor Swanpool project will create an inclusive, sustainable community within the heart of Lincoln, with much needed new housing.

Let's continue to help businesses prosper

We will continue to develop the city centre with a mix of city centre living and new retail offerings. The Town Deal has already funded a feasibility study for Tentercroft Street to review opportunities for a mixed-use development in that area, and funding bids will be submitted to hopefully allow us to take the project forward. Following on from the successful Cornhill developments, we will now develop the Central Market and City Square to deliver a sustainable and vibrant indoor and outdoor market offer as well as to revitalise our heritage building.

Let's support a culture of innovation

We will support the private sector in continued growth of the digital sector, with the aim of providing affordable access to broadband for all premises and homes in the city and the development of digital skills for residents who need it. We will develop a City of Lincoln Council strategy to support the continued growth of start-up and small businesses, particularly in high growth sectors.

Let's attract investment

As Lincoln is receiving £19m Government funding for the Town Deal - a programme of specifically designed projects has been built to ensure the Town Deal Partnership delivers key aims. We are applying for funding to develop a masterplan for the Waterside East area of the city. If successful, further funding will be sought to deliver the masterplan.

We will establish a Place Board with our partners that will promote Lincoln as a visitor, business, and educational destination.

Let's continue to make things happen

We will complete the review of the local plan, which will provide a blueprint for the next 20 years of how the city can continue to grow and develop. In addition, we will improve the look of the High Street through the Heritage Asset Programme - continuing the excellent progress already made in the cultural, physical intervention and community engagement strands of this key project delivering high quality heritage led regeneration, which includes a range of projects including the Central Market, St Mary's Guildhall and Shopfronts improvements.



Let's reduce all kinds of inequality



Let's reduce
all kinds of
inequality

Introduction from Portfolio Holder

Cllr Sue Burke

"Inequality of all types is an issue faced by many in our city, however, in the after-effects of the pandemic the concern is that health inequality has increased, particularly for the most vulnerable in our society. Whilst focus will be placed on this area, we will continue to deliver improvements in other areas too"

Let's improve the health and quality of life for people living in Lincoln

We will hold a concerted campaign to promote the use of all our parks and open spaces to ensure that residents can make the most of our green spaces. Through the development of a District Health and Wellbeing Strategy, we will work in partnership with the Primary Care Network to explore options for supporting projects such as volunteering, helping isolation as well as looking for opportunities for co-location through a 'one public estate' project. As part of the safer streets programme, we will introduce CCTV on all primary pedestrian routes out of the city centre.

Let's help people succeed

The Inclusive Growth Strategy will look at how we can assist residents who need skills support, and will encourage working with training providers, businesses, and partners to increase opportunities for local people to access training and employment. We will continue to work with partners to maximise the support and advice available to young people as we recover from covid.

Let's provide help to the most vulnerable in our city

We will continue our programme to eradicate the need for rough sleeping by disadvantaged groups, with teams supporting those on the street needing help for mental health, drug, or homelessness problems. In addition, we will also continue to tackle local street drinking, begging and anti-social behaviour in city centre to avoid an adverse effect on the experience for residents and visitors alike. We aim to develop a 'Community Development Toolkit' for local Ward Councillors to support them in delivering their role effectively.

Let's help people feel safe and welcome in their communities

We will continue to deliver the Sincil Bank Revitalisation project with the aim of making the area a better place for people to live and work. We have already developed the new Community Hub in Sincil Bank - to address community needs, develop the skills of residents and encourage businesses to locate to the area. We will continue to develop plans for further regeneration and community cohesion activities in the area.

Let's help more businesses embrace corporate social responsibility

We will develop a corporate approach to social value that will ensure our Social Value Policy is embedded within our procurement practices where relevant and proportionate to do so. We will review how Social Value generated through procured contracts is used, to ensure a consistent approach across the authority to ensure the best outcome for our residents.



Let's deliver quality housing



Introduction from Portfolio Holder

Cllr Donald Nannestad

“The link between good housing and good health is very clear. Affordable, safe, warm, and secure homes contribute towards good mental and physical wellbeing. We will do everything possible to meet housing demand whilst improving the quality of housing across the city”

Let's provide housing which meets the varied needs of our residents

We will continue to increase the supply and number of affordable homes in the city - over the next three years we will progress several schemes to develop new housing. This includes completing the Rookery Lane development, starting work on Hermit Street as well as progressing masterplans for several other sites such as Queen Elizabeth Road. As part of this we will review all specifications to ensure that net zero carbon and best practice guidelines are adopted.

Let's work together to tackle homelessness in Lincoln

We will continue to improve temporary accommodation options across all sectors – this includes delivering additional move-on accommodation for former rough sleepers, as well as reviewing other options for example new builds. We plan to work with the private sector to deliver a reduction in the number of properties with a category 1 hazard outstanding, at the same time sourcing and securing additional, good quality accommodation in the private rental sector to reduce pressure on social housing.

Let's improve housing standards for all

Whilst we have the Lincoln decent homes standards applied to our own housing stock, we also want to address the condition of the private rented sector in the City and the high proportion of rented properties that do not yet meet the decent homes standard. To make this happen we will continue to push the Trusted Landlord scheme; we will pursue grant funding to help address issues of poor insulation and heating within the private sector; and



we will develop a selected licensing scheme - a new tier of licensing to capture those properties falling below the HMO threshold.

Let's build thriving communities

We will continue with our plans to regenerate the Sincil Bank area. Plans that are underway or being considered include projects around – developing more open green spaces; plans for housing in Hermit Street; consideration of how to best use the Palmer Street garage site; a redesign of traffic flows and the inclusion of resident parking as well as plans for cleaner safer streets. If resources permit, we would like to hold, on a ward-by-ward basis, mini neighbourhood assessments, to determine how we could improve our housing estates in the future, improving their look and feel, and thus increasing the esteem of the tenure.

Let's help people have a sense of belonging

We will complete the De Wint extra care supported housing scheme early in 2022 and then commence letting tenancies to those in need of them. Following the opening, we will then undertake an options appraisal survey of sheltered housing bedsit schemes.

Progression with the World of Work programme development, (on hold due to Covid) will be restarted in 2023 with Abbey Access Centre and Lincoln College. This project is initially aimed at council tenants, and will bring together the council, local businesses, charities, and education providers to provide a work experience-based training course for those who are currently out of work but wish to return into employment.



Let's enhance our remarkable place



Let's enhance
our remarkable
place

Introduction from Portfolio Holder

Cllr Bob Bushell

“Lincoln is already a remarkable place and has assets that can help improve the health and wellbeing of our residents. We will do more by promoting further use of our parks and open spaces and making the most of our leisure facilities. We will provide events to encourage people to get out and about; as well as protecting our heritage now and for the future”

Let's show the world what Lincoln has to offer

As the city emerges from the effects of the pandemic, along with our partners Lincoln BIG and Visit Lincoln, we will use the government's 'Welcome Back Fund' to ensure residents and visitors alike feel safe in returning to a refreshed and deep cleaned city centre. We have delivered the second crematorium chapel, and new car park spaces to extend the capacity of our crematorium and will ensure these blend comfortably with the existing facilities.

Let's cherish and enhance our natural environment

As a city blessed with the one of the highest percentage of green space in the country, we will further enhance our natural environment by developing a tree planting scheme to further increase tree canopy cover in the city, as well as working with our grounds maintenance contractor to increase wildlife verges and meadows. Working with Lincoln BIG, we also want to maximise impact of current green spaces in the city centre, through creative thinking e.g. green walls, vertical gardens, redesign of current spaces. Further infrastructure investment is needed in the Park Ward area – for example a new residents parking scheme and re-modelled navigation across the area and greening the area will be a core principle incorporated into the designs. We will also look to tackle long standing problems with littering, fly tipping and bins left on streets in a wider area of the city.

Our partners Lincs Trust has funding for the first phase of two new projects to improve biodiversity. They are working on a pilot project to create some small improvements in biodiversity adjacent to the river including creation of channels, pools, and fish refuge. The second is biodiversity improvements to Brayford Pool with the creation of 'bio haven floating habitats' scheme.

We will also be preparing for some major changes in our waste collection services over next 4 to 5 years supporting the development of consistent policies for waste across Lincolnshire, within the Lincolnshire Waste Partnership, including waste enforcement policies.

Let's preserve the unique character of our city

We will progress the Heritage Action Zone Programme. We have already started preparation work on St Mary's Guildhall, with the aim of stabilising the building through use of HAZ funding pending applications for further funding streams and we will also submit the second-round funding bid to progress the overall Greyfriars project. In addition, in the latter part of the three-year plan we will start preparing the development of a digital heritage trail using our online heritage database called ARCADE.

Let's deliver a rich and varied cultural experience

As a key activity, if funding can be found, during this plan we will develop a programme that could potentially support a City of Culture bid in 2029. Work has already started on the development of a Cultural Compact and utilisation of the Heritage Action Zone Cultural Programme. We will also re-institute the 10-year vision for the Christmas Market to transform it from a retail experience to a cultural experience.

Let's provide interesting, exciting, and vibrant places to enjoy

We will complete the Boutham Park phase 2 - the transformation of the park including the Lake renovation and associated edge treatments, supported by a comprehensive community engagement project. In conjunction with Sport England and Active Lincolnshire we will help produce an all-encompassing Leisure Strategy for the City. This will enable us to complete a scoping exercise to identify the needs of a new leisure village and the key stakeholders that will need to be involved. And not forgetting our younger residents, we will complete the development of the Whitton's Park Play area as well as develop a Strategy to focus investment appropriately in new play areas.



Let's address the challenge of climate change



Let's address
the challenge
of climate
change

Introduction from Portfolio Holder Cllr Bob Bushell and Climate Champion Cllr Lucinda Preston

“After declaring a climate emergency in July 2019, the most important thing we need to do is to follow up on the commitments we made. We will work with partners on the Lincoln Climate Commission and deliver our Climate Action Plan to manage the impact of climate change locally, and to improve residents’ health”

Let's ensure our development approach reduces our carbon footprint

We will create a strategy for the city which ensures a joined-up approach to all energy, transport, waste, water, and digital projects for the future.

Let's set the Lincoln standard for sustainable zero carbon development

We will follow up on the commitments made in the Climate declaration, working with our partners in the Lincoln Climate Commission to develop and then deliver our Climate Action Plan. Consultations on the Plan will start in January 2022 and are expected to complete in July 2022. In the council we will stop using single-use plastics ourselves internally and at all city council events and we will encourage our partners to do the same.

Let's make walking, cycling and the use of public transport the best and favourite way to move around Lincoln

We will promote sustainable transport options through support for funding bids for appropriate projects. In addition, we will campaign to support people in reducing their own carbon footprint.



Let's ensure the city's infrastructure is fully adaptable and resilient to the challenges of climate change

As part of Town Fund Board vision, we will ensure that all new infrastructure projects are supported to ensure they are adaptable to climate change and buildings are low or zero carbon wherever possible.

Let's make our existing housing and business premises energy efficient

We will complete an annual review and update of the Council's Environmental Management Plan in June to September each year. We will maintain the independent assessment by Investors in the Environment for the Green Accreditation that we have already achieved, and we will set up a dashboard to monitor ongoing performance. The City of Lincoln council decarbonisation action plan was approved in December 2021. As part of this we will make our current and future business premises as energy efficient as possible, reviewing and implementing the commitments within the environmental policies annually.

As the opportunity arises, we will explore further options to move towards an electrical fleet, including the refuse fleet, as part of the next contract renewals, accepting this will require significant investment.





Vision 2025 Interim Review Results Summary

The maximum number of respondents to each question is 229.

City of Lincoln Council is currently completing an interim review of the direction for the next three years of our Strategic Plan, whereby respondents were asked their views on prioritisation of the projects to be delivered under each priority.

Looking ahead – Vision 2025 Strategic Plan

The following questions are 'ranked' questions whereby respondents were asked to rank the 3 projects under each priority with 1 being the most important and 3 being the least important to them.

The charts below show the percentages based on which project respondents selected as their first, second and third choice. It is important to note that the percentages do not add up to 100% as this was a non-mandatory question and some respondents chose not to answer all of these questions in this section. Therefore, the percentages reflect those who answered the question.

Priority - Let's drive inclusive economic growth

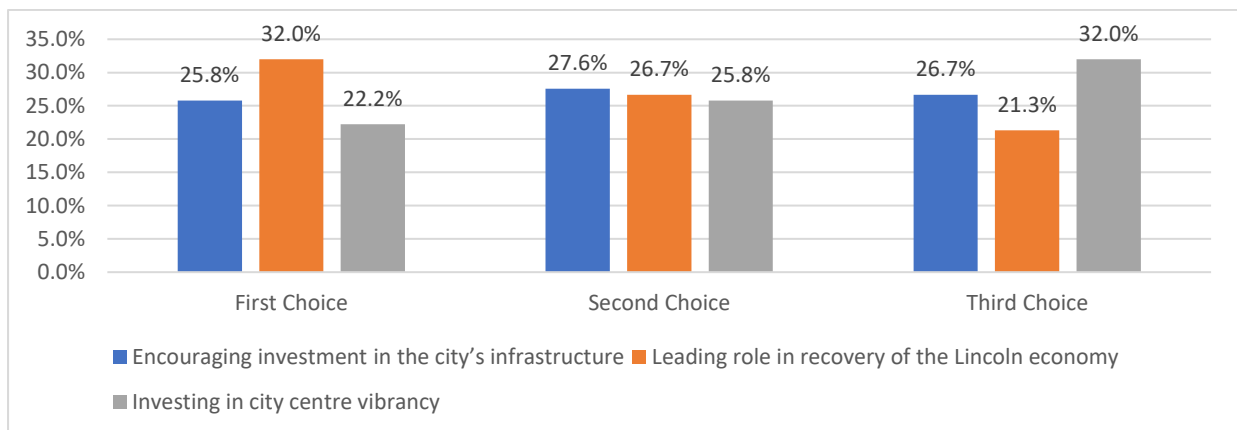


Figure 1

Priority - Let's reduce all kinds of inequality

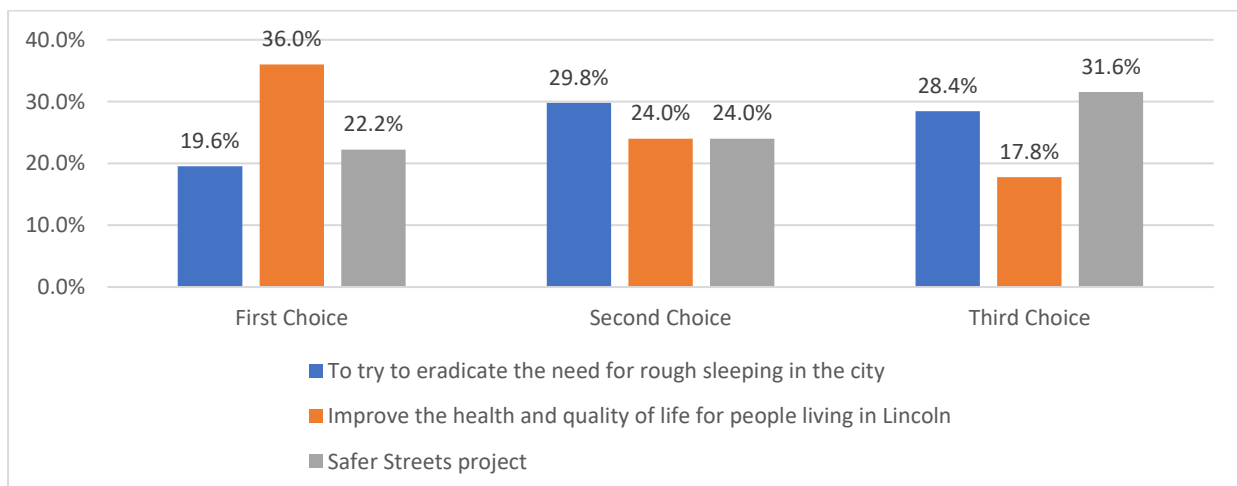


Figure 2

Priority - Let's deliver quality housing

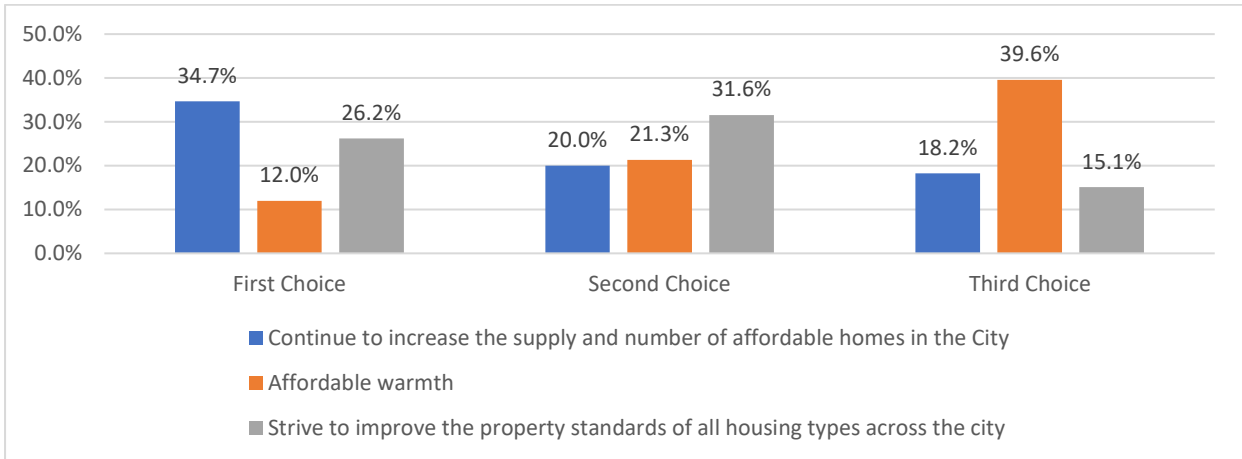


Figure 3

Priority - Let's enhance our remarkable place

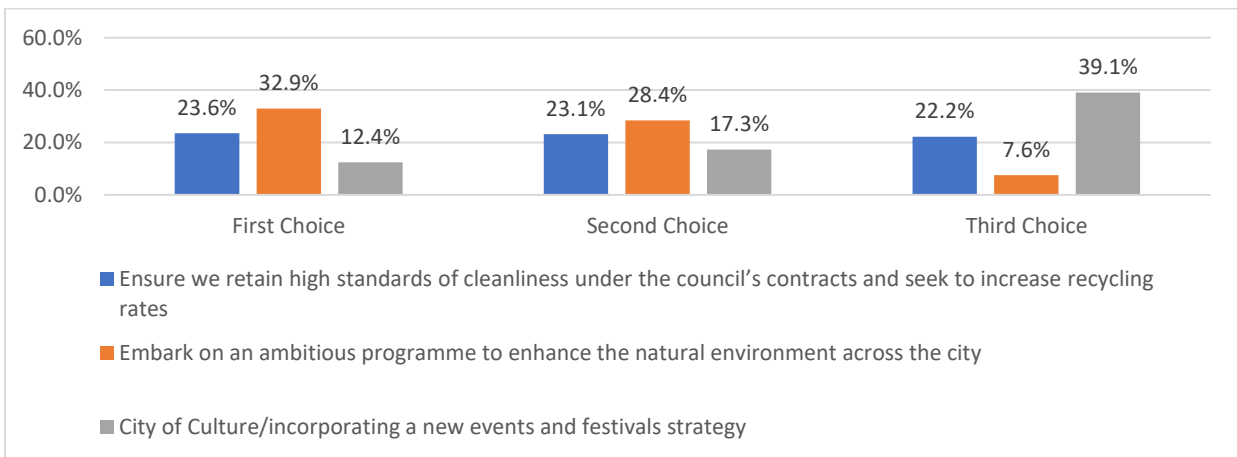


Figure 4

Priority - Let's address the challenge of climate change

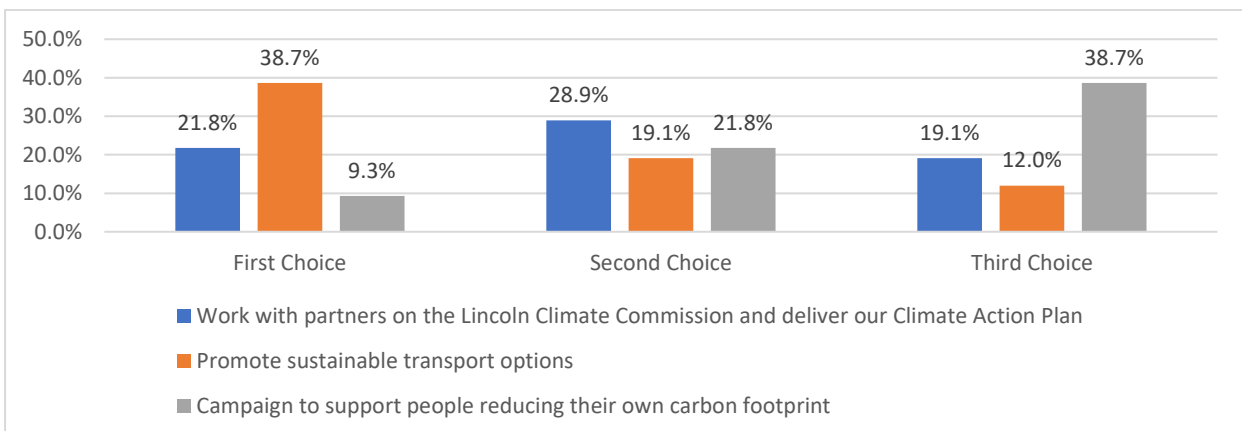


Figure 5

Demographic splits

The maximum number of respondents to each question is **229**.

Your Details

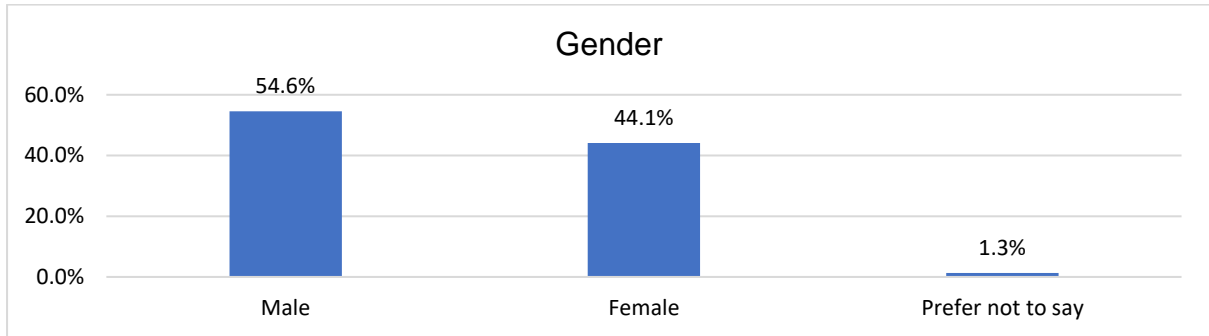


Figure 6

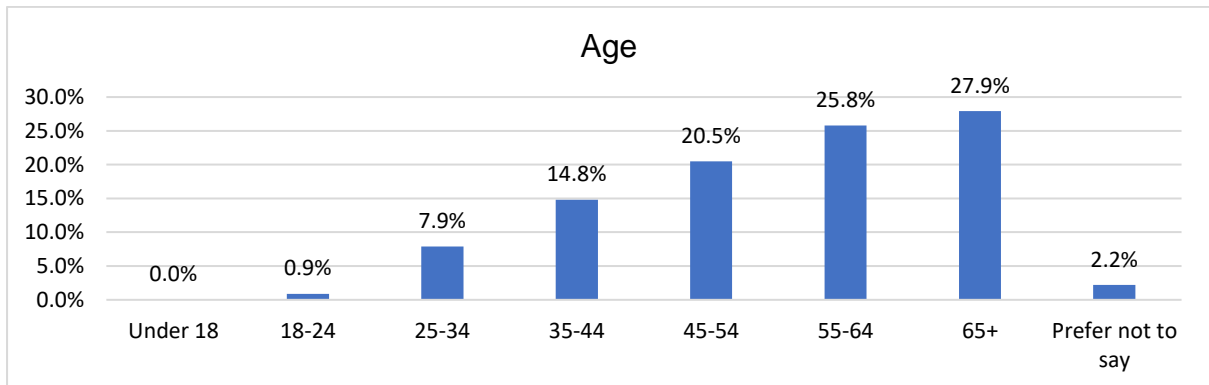


Figure 7

Postcode area

We received responses from across the city with 25% of the respondents who provided a postcode coming from the LN6 area, and the next highest levels from LN1, LN2 and LN5

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SUBJECT:	COUNCIL HOUSE AND GARAGE RENTS 2022/23
DIRECTORATE:	HOUSING AND INVESTMENT
REPORT AUTHOR:	FRANCES JELLY HOUSING BUSINESS SUPPORT MANAGER

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To propose an increase in council house rents within the terms of the Government's Rent Policy for social housing (April 2020 updated 15 November 2021) and to seek approval for the introduction of revised rents from Monday 4th April 2022.
- 1.2 To seek members approval for an increase of 3% on Council garage rents for 2022/23 in line with other fees and charges revisions by the Council.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 In October 2017, the government announced its intention to set a long-term rent deal. This would permit annual rent increases on both social and affordable rent properties of up to Consumer Price Index (CPI) plus 1% from 1 April 2020 for a period of at least five years.
- 2.2 In keeping with the current Housing Business Plan approved by Council and the Governments Rent Guidelines, the formula rent rise for 2022/23 should be based on CPI in the previous September (September 2021 = 3.1%) plus 1.0%.
As an authority, having considered the impact on our tenants, other pressures that household incomes are facing, and recognising wider economic issues it is proposed to apply a lower level of rental increase whilst also recognising that the council were required by government policy to reduce rents by 1% year on year between 2016/17 – 2019/20.

Therefore, a reduction in the advised rental change, to an average rent increase with effect from Monday 4 April 2022 is proposed and the budgeted rental income will be £29,996,080, this being based on a 3.6% increase.

- 2.3 During the last nine months we have continued to add to our housing stock via the buy-back programme using the Purchase and Repair Scheme and the NSAP/RSAP process as follows: -

2.4 01 April 2021 to 13 December 2021 – total of 15 properties have been purchased.

Bedrooms	Total No of properties purchased to date	01.4.21	Number of Purchase & Repair funding	Number NSAP/RSAP Funded
1	5		3	2
2	7		1	6
3	2		2	0
4	1		1	0
Total	15		7	8

2.5 The Government’s Right to Buy (RTB) programme sales have negatively impacted on the council’s current stock and therefore rental income. To date (April to December 2021) the Council have received 72 RTB applications (50 RTB applications in the same period last year); of these 28 properties have been sold: -

RTB Applications -2021.22 received April to Dec 2021 - 70 Sold to date -28	RTB Applications -2020.21 received April to Dec 2020 -50 Sold to date - 19
1 bed - 3	1bed - 3
2 bed – 9	2 bed - 7
3 bed -15	3 bed - 9
4 bed – 1	4 bed - 0

[Note: the loss of 3+-bedroom homes has a significant impact on our ability to provide family homes]

2.7 The average weekly social housing rent for the City of Lincoln Council based on data on 13 December 2021, for net social housing rent (calculated over 52 weeks) will increase from £70.87 to an average £73.44 for 2022/23. This will equate to an average equivalent increase of income per property of £2.57 per week over 52 weeks.

The 50-week average rent would be charged at £76.37.

2.8 There are currently 292 properties charged at an Affordable Rent which is higher than social housing rent. Based on data on 13 December 2021 the increase, on the average weekly net rent (calculated over 52 weeks) will result in rents moving from an average £112.85. to £116.91. per week for 2022/23, equating to an average equivalent increase of £4.06 per week over 52 weeks.

Please note that affordable rent properties, when they become void have a new market rent valuation completed each time and the rent is charged at 80% of the market rent.

2.9 Council Garage Rents 2022--23

An increase in garage rents of 3% is proposed in line with the Authority’s Fees and Charges increase. This would result in an average increase in the rent charged to £8.24 per week for 2022/23 (based on a calculated 52-week charge period), an increase of £0.24 per week.

Research has shown that the garage rents in Lincoln are mid-range when compared to similar locations in the East Midlands

The Lincoln Tenants' Panel (LTP) is due to consider this report at their meeting on 18 February 2022 Their comments and observations will be reported verbally during the Executive Committee meeting.

Report to be referred to Full Council for approval to ensure that rent notices can be sent to tenants prior to the start of the new financial year and providing them with the requisite 28-day notice period required by law.

3. Background

3.1 The national Rent Convergence Policy and Social Rent Guidance was introduced in April 2002, the aim of which was those rents in the social housing sector (local authority rents and those charged by housing associations) should be brought onto a common system based on a formula set by Government. The formula creates a "formula rent" for each individual property which is calculated based on:

- The relative value of the property
- Relative local income levels; and
- The size of the property.

The formula rent is often also referred to as the "target rent". The City Council and other social landlords are expected to move the actual rent of a property (which may be lower or higher than the formula rent) to the formula rent over time.

3.2 Members will be aware that the financing for council housing was changed in April 2012 – the 'Self-financing Regime' was introduced under which local authorities were required to buy themselves out of the national housing subsidy regime in return for the keeping of future rental income at local level. The valuation of the housing stock and the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan was based on rental income rising in line with the Government's rent convergence policy and rent guidelines in place at that time.

3.3 On 15 November 2021, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) formerly Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) updated the Rent Standard guidance that registered providers of social housing must stay within, to update the limit on annual rent increases for 2022 to 2023.

The Rent Standard is one of three economic standards that the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) expects private registered providers of social housing to comply with and applies to local authority providers of social housing. It sets the requirements around how registered providers set and increase rents for social housing in line with government policy as set out in DLUHC's Policy Statement on Rents for Social Housing.

In September each year the annual Consumer Price Index (CPI) figure is set which is used to establish the limit on annual rent increases for social housing. The limit on annual rent increases for the financial year 2022/23 should be CPI (September 2021 set at 3.1%) plus 1% (4.1% increase).

As an authority, having considered the impact on our tenants, other pressures that household incomes are facing and recognising wider economic issues, it is intended

to apply a lower level of rental increase and propose to increase by 3.6% (CPI + 0.5%).

- 3.4** As at week commencing 13 December 2021 there are currently 7846 council housing rent properties of those that have a current active tenancy: -
- 27% are in receipt of full housing benefit payment
 - 12% are in receipt of partial housing benefit payment
 - 32% are in receipt of Universal Credit
 - 29% do not receive any of the above

Councils continue to increase rents on those housing properties that are currently below the 'formula rent' (or convergence amount) on re-letting to new tenants before applying the 3.6% increase. For the City of Lincoln Council at the date of this report, 774 properties (that are 10 pence or more below target rent) were not at formula rent and thus when these properties become available for re-letting the rent can be increased to the formula amount plus 3.6% for 2022/23.

4. Impact of the Rent Reduction on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

- 4.1** Contextually it should be noted that in July 2015 the Government announced that Social Housing rents would be reduced by 1% year on year from 2016 for four years. The impact on the HRA has incurred a compound financial loss of circa £17,000,000 over that four-year period. Had this rent reduction not been imposed and the rents were increased as per the HRA Business Plan (CPI+1%) the average weekly rent for social housing rent would now be at £84.58 against £73.44 as of 13 December 2021.

Appendix 1.

Shows impact on weekly rents of the 1% reduction against CPI +1%.

5. Strategic Priorities

5.1 Let's reduce all kinds of inequality

The Government policy is primarily about reducing the welfare benefits bill, but it does help those just above benefit thresholds. Council house rents remain significantly lower than the rent levels in the private rented sector in the city.

5.2 Let's deliver quality housing

The new rent policy recognises the need for a stable financial environment to support the delivery of new homes and to increase resources available to maintain current homes.

6. Organisational Impacts

6.1 Finance (including whole life costs where applicable)

Council Housing Rents 2022/23

The impact of this change as of 13 December 2021 will be an increase to the current average calculated 52-week net social housing rent, from £70.87 per week to £73.44 per week – an average increase of £2.57 per week, and an increase on affordable rent from £112.85 per week to £116.91 an average increase of £4.06 per week.

Appendix 2.

Impact of increases on rent per bedroom size of property.

Council Garage Rents 2022—23

An increase in garage rents of 3% is proposed in line with the Authority's Fees and Charges increase. This would bring the charge to £8.24 for 2022/23 (based on a calculated 52-week charge period), an increase of £0.24 per week. Research has shown that the garage rents in Lincoln are mid-range when compared to similar locations in the East Midlands.

6.2 Legal Implications

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

6.3 Equality, Diversity and Human Rights

The Public Sector Equality Duty means that the Council must consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work, in shaping policy, delivering services and in relation to their own employees.

It requires that public bodies have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

When proposals of rent chargeable on social housing are recommended, they are applied across the board to all properties irrespective of any equality characteristic of the tenant.

There are policies that allow tenants to claim monetary assistance to pay their rent, for example Housing Benefit and Universal Credit for such things as age and disability. Thus, there are no direct equality, diversity, or human rights implications in this report"

7. Risk Implications

7.1 (i) Options Explored

Options explored; to calculate the rent at rates between 3.1 to 4.1% and the impact on the HRA.

7.2 (ii) Key risks associated with the preferred approach

The main risks are: -

- that the Government make further changes to the Rent Guidelines which will undermine the Business Plan,
- that future CPI levels are lower than those assumed in the MTFs and HRA Business Plan.

8. Recommendation

- 8.1** Agree the basis of rent calculation for changes to individual Council house rents as set out in paragraph 6 of this report, which represents an increase in the average calculated 52-week council house net rent in 2022/23 of 3.6% for social housing rents (£2.57 p/w) and affordable rents (£4.06 p/w) increase per property. This is in accordance with Government policy.
- 8.2** Increase Council garage rents for 2022/23 in accordance with the proposal in paragraph 6.1 above by 3%.
- 8.3** Refer this report and recommendations to Full Council on 22 February 2022.

Is this a key decision? No

Do the exempt information categories apply? No

Does Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules (call-in and urgency) apply? No

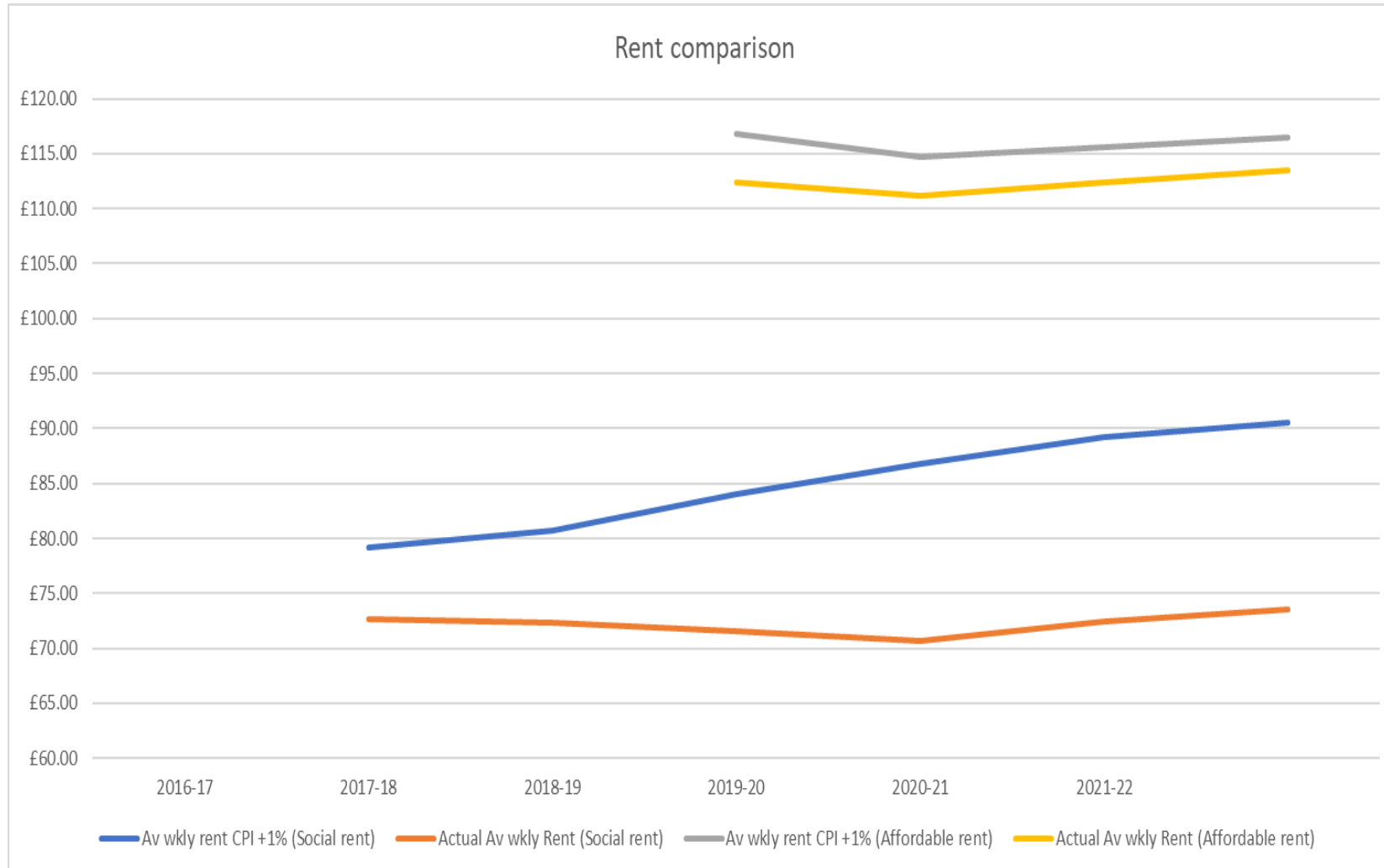
How many appendices does the report contain? 2

List of Background Papers: Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016
Policy statement on rents for social housing

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APPENDIX 1

Social Housing and Affordable Rent – showing impact on weekly rents of the 1% reduction against CPI +1%



APPENDIX 2

IMPACT OF INCREASES ON ALL TENANTS – APRIL 2022 (Based on an average 52 week rent year inclusive of all rent types)

Average rent increase per property by number of bedrooms per week as 13/12/2021	
No. of beds	Increase per week
1 & bedsits	£2.33
2	£2.65
3	£2.96
4	£3.35
5	£3.15 *
6+	£3.43 *

* No affordable rents for 5 or 6 + bed properties

SUBJECT:	INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL – REVIEW OF THE MEMBERS’ ALLOWANCES SCHEME
REPORT BY:	INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL
LEAD OFFICER:	CHERYL EVANS – DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND ELECTIONS MANAGER

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To advise on the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Members’ Allowances for the financial year commencing on 1 April 2022.
- 1.2 To decide whether to adopt the recommendations made by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Members’ Allowances the financial year commencing on 1 April 2022.

2. Background

- 2.1 Each local authority is required to adopt a remuneration scheme for its elected members and is also required to appoint an independent remuneration panel, which has a responsibility to make recommendations to the Council meeting of each local authority on the level of allowances to be paid to members of the Council. Each local authority’s scheme must be subject to regular review by the independent remuneration panel. Before making any changes to its scheme a local authority must have regard to recommendations made by the Independent Remuneration Panel.
- 2.2 The recognised principles for each independent remuneration panel when considering a scheme are that the scheme should:
 - be justifiable and defensible, based on logical construction;
 - be transparent and simple to understand and administer; and
 - neither discourage nor encourage candidates for elected office on the basis of financial considerations.
- 2.3 Following recent recruitment, the City of Lincoln Council’s Independent Remuneration Panel consists of three people, who are completely independent from the Council. The Panel was chaired by an experienced independent person, who has previously served on the Council’s Independent Remuneration Panel. This report, which reflects the findings and recommendations of the Panel, has been prepared in accordance with current legislation and guidance.
- 2.4 The last review of the Members’ Allowances Scheme recommended an increase in members’ allowances for 2021/22 matching any increase in staff pay, which was approved by the Council in February 2021. This increase applied to the Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowances. This has not yet been implemented, as the national pay award for staff has not yet been determined.

3. Review of the Members' Allowances Scheme

- 3.1 The Independent Remuneration Panel undertook a review of the City of Lincoln Council's Members' Allowances Scheme and compared the rates of the Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowances with other district councils in Lincolnshire.
- 3.2 This analysis showed that the City of Lincoln Council's Basic Allowance is lower than the average paid by other Lincolnshire district councils and the Panel is concerned that if adjustments are not implemented, the position will deteriorate. The Panel is most mindful of the huge responsibility all elected councillors have. There are discrepancies with some of the Special Responsibility Allowances, both when compared with other district councils in Lincolnshire and as indicated in paragraph 3.5 below. As a result, the Panel wishes to explore these roles in more detail as part of its next review.
- 3.3 The Panel invited all members of the Council to meet with it either in person or remotely; send comments via email to any or all of the Panel; or telephone the Chair of the Panel directly; to submit any comments to the Democratic Services and Elections Manager; or to complete an online survey in order that the views of councillors on the current Members' Allowances Scheme could assist the Panel in reaching any recommendations in respect of the Scheme.
- 3.4 The Panel would like to place on record its thanks to those members who participated in the review, particularly the Leader of the Council and the Opposition Group Leader. The Panel wishes, as part of its next review, to meet with the holder of each Special Responsibility Allowance to ascertain a thorough understanding of their roles.
- 3.5 Of the comments received, there were concerns regarding the disparity of some Special Responsibility Allowances, which it was suggested did not necessarily reflect the responsibility, time commitment and workload associated with the respective roles. This related specifically to the rate paid for the scrutiny committee chairs, which were currently the same for all scrutiny committees, and that of the Chair of the Audit Committee. The Panel intends to complete an in-depth review of all Special Responsibility Allowances, as part of its next review.
- 3.6 The Panel was unable to reach an informed view on the levels of Special Responsibility Allowances and concluded it had neither sufficient evidence nor sufficient time to make any substantial findings on this aspect of the scheme, which would justify any recommendations.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 The Panel recognises that the previous recommendation to increase the current Members' Allowances from 2021/22 has not yet been implemented, as the staff pay award was not yet confirmed. However, after implementing this increase, the basic allowance would still be lower than the comparative average. The Panel therefore recommends that for 2022/23 the annual basic allowance be increased by a sum of £250 per annum, which would reduce some of the disparity between it and the average level of basic allowance paid by other Lincolnshire district

councils.

- 4.2 Based on analysis undertaken and comments received, the Panel suggests that the Special Responsibility Allowances for 2022/23 remain at the same level until the Panel can conduct an in-depth review of each role in readiness for recommendations for changes in 2023/24.
- 4.3 The Panel suggests that this further review should involve those councillors who receive a Special Responsibility Allowance, to enable the Panel to receive essential evidence as part of the review.

5. Organisational Impacts

5.1 Financial Implications

The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022-2027 provides for an increase of £250, from 2022/23, in the members basic allowance.

5.2 Legal Implications

- 5.2 The Council has a duty to appoint an Independent Remuneration Panel who must make recommendations to the Council in accordance with the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003. The Council is required to have regard to the recommendations of the Panel but is not required to follow them. However, if the Council were to make any decision which was not in accordance with recommendations from the Panel, it should put forward and record its reasons for deviating from the Panel's recommendations.

6. Recommendations

- 6.1 That the annual basic allowance paid to all members of the Council be increased by £250 per annum with effect from 1 April 2022, to reduce the disparity between the level of the City of Lincoln's basic allowance and the average basic allowance paid by district councils in Lincolnshire.
- 6.2 That the levels of Special Responsibility Allowances remain the same for 2022/23.
- 6.3 That a further comprehensive review of the Members' Allowances Scheme be undertaken in 2022/23 by the Independent Remuneration Panel, specifically focusing on all Special Responsibility Allowances, with any recommendations arising from this comprehensive review being considered for implementation from 1 April 2023.

Key Decision

No

**Do the Exempt Information
Categories Apply?**

No

Call in and Urgency: Is the decision one to which Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?

No

Does the report contain Appendices?

No

List of Background Papers:

None

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