

Present: Councillor Rosanne Kirk (*in the Chair*),
Councillor Debbie Armiger, Councillor Biff Bean,
Councillor Alan Briggs, Councillor Chris Burke, Councillor
Sue Burke, Councillor Bob Bushell, Councillor
Liz Bushell, Councillor Martin Christopher, Councillor
David Clarkson, Councillor Thomas Dyer, Councillor
Matthew Fido, Councillor Gary Hewson, Councillor
Jackie Kirk, Councillor Jane Loffhagen, Councillor
Rebecca Longbottom, Councillor Ric Metcalfe, Councillor
Neil Murray, Councillor Donald Nannestad, Councillor
Lucinda Preston, Councillor Hilton Spratt, Councillor
Mark Storer, Councillor Rachel Storer, Councillor
Edmund Strengiel, Councillor Naomi Twedde, Councillor
Calum Watt, Councillor Joshua Wells, Councillor
Lorraine Woolley, Councillor Emily Wood and Councillor
Pat Vaughan

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Bill Mara and Councillor Adrianna McNulty

41. Confirmation of Minutes -17 January 2023

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2023 be confirmed and signed by the Chair as an accurate record.

Councillor Hilton Spratt abstained from voting.

42. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Pat Vaughan declared a Personal Interest with regard to the agenda item entitled 'Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023 – 2028'.

Reason: His granddaughter worked in the finance department at the City of Lincoln Council.

43. Mayor's Announcements

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

- A fundraising Whisky Tasting evening at the Guildhall
- A visit to a local primary school, a 187 year old tradition

44. 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.

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

Councillor Thomas Dyer to Councillor Ric Metcalfe, Portfolio Holder for Our People and Resources

Question

As the Executive Member for Communications, Councillor Metcalfe admitted himself at the Executive meeting on the 20th February that the City Council, under his leadership, did not adequately consult with both residents and businesses regarding the future of the Lincoln Christmas Market. This follows claims from Sharon Edwards that several years ago a senior officer raised concerns at how big the Christmas Market has become.

We are told that this has been privately known about for a while, the advanced public consultation has been non-existent, stakeholders have been left uninformed, the entire Lincoln Christmas offering is now uncertain.

Has Cllr Metcalfe learnt any lessons from the last couple of weeks?

Answer

We are a Council who ordinarily exercise extensive consultation. In addition, we have a good record of consultation as a matter of course. In relation to the Lincoln Christmas Market, the Council could have consulted more widely prior to the decision to end the Market in the tradition form. However, for any consultation to be meaningful, there has to be an offer of some degree of choice. This was a rare occasion whereby no choice was available to the Council or anyone else. The independent multi-agency Safety Advisory Group advice was emphatic - on public safety grounds, the Christmas Market could not continue in its current form. There will be meaningful consultation on the events programme going forward to make it a safer environment.

Supplementary

Residents, businesses, and tourists are dissatisfied. Is it time for Councillor Ric Metcalfe to step down as Leader of the Council?

Answer

The emphatic advice received from the multi-agency Safety Advisory Group was clear that, '...no revisions to the market event plan will safely deal with any increase in visitor numbers beyond those experienced in 2022'. The Council could not ignore that advice or to offer that advice for public debate. We had a solemn duty to safeguard public safety. We were aware that members of the public and businesses, like us, held great affection for the Christmas Market. In addition, we were aware that the market provided an opportunity for businesses to generate revenue over the winter months and as such, businesses may have preferred us to ignore the advice provided to us from the Safety Advisory Group. On occasion, it was necessary to put popularity aside to ensure the correct thing was done for the right reasons. This was one of those occasions. We were not saying goodbye to Christmas, we were going to find a better and safer way to enjoy Christmas.

Councillor Hilton Spratt to Councillor Donald Nannestad

Question

Can the Portfolio holder please explain what if any impact the current economic climate has had on our housebuilding programme?

Answer

It hasn't made any difference to our plans so to speak, however we must accept that material and labour costs have increased significantly, perhaps upwards of 30%. Additionally, supply can be an issue with respect to certain types of materials which of course, can cause delays and sometimes additional costs. Due to the September 22 budget from former Prime Minister Liz Truss, interest rates have increased dramatically so if we had planned to borrow to bring forward schemes, the financing cost has also increased significantly. However, we intend to continue with our plans at this stage.

Supplementary

Have we cut back? Have we stopped building Council houses, reduced building, or increased building?

Answer

We are continuing to build and have a good track record for building new properties a council of our size. As with other areas of the Council we are punching above our weight. From 2018-19 we have added 362 homes to our housing stock which is an excellent record. In addition, we will add 42 properties on Rookery Lane, which is close to completion, and with a further 11 new properties planned for Hermit Street. We also have the Western Growth Corridor which includes 640 affordable homes.

Councillor Mark Storer to Councillor Bob Bushell

Question

Over the last year I have repeatedly reported graffiti in Temple Gardens at the Usher Gallery. Whilst officers have responded quickly, the repeated clean-up operation is an ongoing cost to the taxpayer and unpleasant for residents and tourists. Does the executive member agree with me that CCTV is necessary to detect and deter criminal damage in Temple Gardens?

Answer

It is unfortunate that there have been a number of graffiti attacks in the Temple Gardens/Usher Gallery area since Covid restrictions were eased. As the Usher Gallery is managed by Lincolnshire County Council City Council, officers have needed to work with their officers to see what can be done to deter future attacks. CCTV is one option and officers are in the advanced stages of agreeing an installation for CCTV now which we hope will be able to add some protection to both the Gallery and the Temple Building itself. It is hoped that terms of

agreement should be reached very soon, with installation this spring subject to agreement.

Councillor Rachel Storer to Councillor Neil Murray

Question

When did the executive member first become aware that discussions were taking place to cancel the Christmas Market?

Answer

I first became aware that discussions were taking place to cancel the Christmas Market on 11 January 2023.

Supplementary

Given the haste that the decision was made in, does the Executive member agree that it is time to pause the decision to reflect on the impact and consult more widely?

Answer

The Executive member had not been consulted on the decision, prior to being informed in January, and that was thanks to those sat in front of him.

Councillor David Clarkson to Councillor Ric Metcalfe

Question

On the 20th February the Executive Committee agreed to set aside the existing budget provision for the Christmas Market to provide a wider events programme throughout the year, including a new “Christmas in Lincoln” offer. This budget stands at £260k pa. Will the Leader put on public record today that this budget will not be cut or watered down in any way for the next 5 financial years at the very minimum?

Answer

The Medium Term Financial Strategy makes a provision of £260kpa (plus inflation) for the Christmas market and it is this budget that will be transferred to deliver a year-long program of events and activities as per the Executive decision made on 20th February 2023 (pending call in). However, Members will be aware that within that MTFs, the council will face considerable financial challenges in 2025/26 onwards necessitating savings of approximately £1.75m. Therefore, I am not in a position today to guarantee any budget provision will stay exactly the same across all services within the council for the next 5 years.

Supplementary

Would you agree that for the alternative Christmas offering to be successful, there needed to be a set period to ensure its development. Five years was a reasonable amount of time to evaluate whether it would be successful.

Answer

We intended to make a success of the alternatives but were unable to make promises with regards to funding. There were considerable ways in which funding could be attracted to new offerings. We were determined to make a success of the alternatives and welcomed comment on what they should be.

Councillor Alan Briggs to Councillor Sue Burke

Question

Can the Executive Councillor detail the commitments made for the financial year 2022/23 via the council's Discretionary Rate Relief Policy?

Answer

The Council have currently awarded £36,155.18 through the Discretionary Rate Relief Policy for 2022/23, these cover 8 properties.

In addition to these there is currently one further property, which is currently the subject of approval, which will increase the amount committed by a further £6,090.86.

Supplementary

What do you expect the budget to be next year?

Answer

It was too early to know the answer to the supplementary question.

Councillor Matthew Fido to Councillor Donald Nannestad

Question

I have spoken with tenants at De Wint court recently, when they took on their tenancy, they were assured that they would have utility bills provided to them individually every quarter. However, they have never received a single bill or been asked for payment. They understand that they will receive bills from mid-March going forward once Esher hands over the building to the council, but their anxiety stems from not knowing if at some point they end up with demands for an excessively large lump sum of money. What reassurance can the portfolio holder give to tenants of De Wint Court that they will not end up with an excessively large bill to pay?

Answer

The Council itself has not had any bills for Gas and Electric since the facility opened in April last year. This because the contractor did not register meters and did not do the required handover to the utility supplier. Since October, when the extent of the situation became known to us and the supplier accepted our ownership, we have been working tirelessly to resolve this situation.

Despite providing form after form and all the required documentation, as of today we still have not moved forward. We have now escalated this with both the contractor of supplier via the Council's legal team, it's utilities advisor ESPO and Ofgem. We have kept residents appraised of the situation through resident meetings, individual letters and via the resident Committee's representatives. Please remember our staff are on site all day, seven days a week and therefore respond to all resident enquiries.

We have provided residents with the opportunity to pay, on account, to the Council and as of today's date, 29 have taken up this facility. Some residents have been concerned about accessing the government fund of £400 rebate. We have recently had it confirmed that this is now available to facilities with a commercial supply, however residents must apply personally for the rebate.

Our staff will be on site this week to assist those residents who need help to do this online. I have agreed with the Director of Housing that if the situation remains unresolved by the end March, we will instigate an estimated billing system based on tariffs we have in other similar facilities, in order give residents some reassurance as there is no doubt this situation is unsettling for some of our most vulnerable tenants. I can give Councillor Fido my personal reassurances that none of residents will be left financially disadvantaged by this position which is not of theirs, or the Council's making. We will continue to update the residents and I hope to have the situation rectified soon.

Supplementary

Acknowledgement was given to the work of both the Portfolio Holder and officers in beginning to address the concerns since the question was lodged and an update was looked forward to.

Answer

It was not the only issue. There had also been an issue with television licences. We submitted information to TV Licensing on at least four occasions but each time they lost the information.

Councillor Eddie Strengiel to Councillor Neil Murray

Question

By how much have the council's (projected) costs risen for the delivery of Phases 1a & 1b of the Western Growth Corridor?

Answer

There is a revised funding requirement of £4.320m to support these initial infrastructure works. This represents an increase of £2.105m over the 2019 estimates, largely as a result of cost-price inflation.

The return to be derived from the subsequent housing development, which is estimated at £2.415m, will help to recover the cost of this initial infrastructure in part over the short-medium term, leaving an estimated net cost of £1.906m.

Over the longer-term, revenues from land sales and housing delivery unlocked by the Phase 1b work will cover these costs in full and generate a surplus for the Council. The award of grant to support the bridge works under LUF2 will accelerate delivery of this infrastructure and should reduce the financial risk to the Council in delivering Phase 1b, helping to offset the additional upfront requirement for Phase 1a over the longer-term.

In terms of the Phase 1b costs (Tritton Road, Eastern Access), detailed design work is now required in order to finalise the technical construction details for the road and bridge work which will inform the detailed cost plan for these works. The arrangements for moving forward with this work, to obtain detailed costs is set out in the Part A Executive Report of 20th Feb 23 under 'Funding - Levelling Up Fund 2'.

Supplementary

There was information within the leaflet for the Western Growth Corridor development that confirmed £20m was to be spend on both bridges. Could the Portfolio Holder confirm that £20m is enough to cover two bridges?

Answer

Information received confirmed that £20m was sufficient to cover both bridges. I am happy to share all information with the whole Council.

Councillor Martin Christopher to Councillor Sue Buke

Question

I would like to raise a persistent problem in our city that has been causing inconvenience, health risks, and environmental hazards to residents and visitors alike - the issue of dog fouling. Despite any past efforts to raise awareness of responsible pet ownership and the importance of cleaning up after dogs, many owners continue to neglect their duty and leave their dog's mess on our streets, parks, and other public spaces.

This is not just an aesthetic problem - it poses a health risk to humans and animals alike, as dog faeces can carry harmful bacteria and parasites that can cause illness and infection. It also creates an unpleasant and unwelcoming environment for people to enjoy our public spaces, discouraging them and adding to our already poor health outcomes.

The Council website boasts a "Zero tolerance" policy on dog mess, yet with Zero enforcement officers and Zero Educational programmes, I feel "Zero Consequence" would be a more appropriate description of our present stance.

I would like to know when the public can expect this Council to employ an enforcement officer and finally act on this very real issue that impacts everyone's enjoyment of our City.

Answer

The council does take a zero tolerance approach to dog fouling and has several officers who are enforced to take action under the relevant legislation. However, the vast majority of our residents know that it is an offence to allow their dogs to foul and the very small number of irresponsible dog owners that don't clean up after their dog normally do so when they know other members of the public, or our enforcement officers aren't about to witness them doing it. This makes identifying offenders and taking action very difficult but where we can identify an offender, we will take action.

We receive in excess of 3,500 service requests a year into a small team with limited resources and the team must prioritise their time across a range of demands, both reactive and proactive.

The priority for awareness raising in the team at the moment is fly tipping – a crime that continues to blight many of our neighbourhoods.

We encourage the public when they are reporting the issue to identify who the perpetrator was and where the incident took place to enable enforcement action. We did not receive any enforceable complaints in the current financial year. The complaints received have either been anonymous or with no witnesses to the incident having taken place. There have been no identified hot spot areas from the complaints received.

Supplementary

Maybe we should amend the website from 'zero tolerance' as we have not convicted anyone in the last 3 years.

Answer

We have not had the evidence available to identify the perpetrator. We do have a zero tolerance. We ask for cooperation with our residents to bring cases to us with the information we need to locate the offender.

Councillor Clare Smalley to Councillor Donald Nannestad

Last month I asked how many reports of mould in our properties we'd had following the death of a child in an unfit mouldy home in Rochdale. I was told this number was 311, I would have liked to have had the opportunity to ask for update on how we are tackling these mouldy homes tonight.

Unfortunately, my supplementary question last month asked how many the of 311 properties were severe cases and therefore causing a risk to health. This question couldn't be answered at the meeting in January. This I do appreciate, however, as I've still not received the answer, I am therefore having to ask this question again tonight.

Answer

We treat all cases seriously. There is always a potential risk to health particularly homes where young children or older people are living. The policy is to try and inspect each case within 3 days and then carry out the appropriate treatment. A further 200 or so mould and damp cases have been reported since your last question. The City Council is no different to any other housing stockholder in that there has been a huge increase in reports of damp and mould since the Rochdale inquest. However, we have always had reports of mould and damp in our properties, and we respond accordingly.

Supplementary

Is there a target for us to make sure our homes are mould free? We all deserve to live in a house that is mould free and it is disappointing that we expect to live in mould.

Answer

We cannot guarantee we can get to a position where there is no mould or damp in any of our properties because it is something that comes and goes but we do our best to deal with the issues that are raised. The Housing Ombudsman previously published a spotlight report on mould and damp and early this month produced an update which we will be working through. In the update the Ombudsman makes it clear that any stockholder which has a low level of complaints about this issue will be viewed in the same way as one which has a high number of complaints. This is because it is important that tenants have the confidence to complain when they have an issue. Also, if people complain it means we can do something about it and learn from it.

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

(a) Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023 - 2028

It was moved by Councillor Rosanne Kirk, seconded by Councillor Donald Nannestad and

RESOLVED that Council Procedure Rule 17.4 regarding the content and length of speeches be suspended to allow the Leader of the Council and the Leader of the Opposition unlimited time to speak on Minute 47a.

Councillor Ric Metcalfe, Leader of the Council, proposed the recommendations contained within the report, as detailed on page 33 of the agenda pack, in relation to the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023-2028 and budget.

He reflected on strategic considerations and long term financial sustainability, highlighting effective use of resources and demonstratable progress to support effective delivery of services and alignment with aspirations for strategic priorities. In addition, there were a number of Councils that had been served with or faced a Section 114 notice, a power given to s114 Officers within Council's to challenge the sustainability of a Council's plan. Due to the determination of elected Members, the skills of Officers and excellent financial stewardship, the City of Lincoln Council (CoLC) had not received such notice.

Reference was made to budget pressures and the reduction of Drainage Board Levy's of £1.75M with a timescale of 2025/26 for achievement. It was noted that the Council had retained the £1.7M Council Tax Support Scheme and the average increase proposed for Fees and Charges was approximately 5% although many would not increase at all.

The Leader of the Council referred to section 4.4 of the report and confirmed that achievement for Council Taxpayers was significant when considered with the size of the authority in mind. He offered his thanks and gratitude to the hard working and dedicated staff for all achievements gained against the five strategic priorities.

Reference to achievements included, but were not limited to, growth within the City and urban regeneration projects, support for poorer households struggling with the cost of living crisis, investment of £50M in Council Housing stocks, the building of new homes and reduction in homelessness and aspirations for a carbon neutral city by 2030.

An increase of 2.9% in Council Tax was proposed, which averaged approximately 9-11p per week for approximately 80% of residents paying Council Tax. The proposed 2.9% increase was below the 3% Government imposed cap and it was highlighted that 14.3% of the total Council Tax bill for the City of Lincoln was attributable to the City Council, with the remainder going to Lincolnshire County Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Councillor Donald Nannestad, Deputy Leader of the Council, seconded the proposition and reiterated the points made. In addition, he referred to page 33 of the agenda pack and added that there was a series of additional pressures such as inflation, difficulties in the supply chain and the cost of living crisis, all of which affected residents.

The Council's housing stock was in good condition and the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) as seen at Appendix A to the report, outlined the considerable investments to be made to homes within the next five years. Referencing the Capital Programme, the deputy Leader confirmed that since 2018/19, we had added 362 homes and 75% of stock had an EPC rating of C or above. The Western Growth Corridor development was awaited in anticipation which would benefit from 640, much needed affordable homes.

The Mayor, having received notice of the Leader of the Opposition's intention to propose a number of amendments and notice of the Liberal Democrats intention to propose a number of amendments, permitted that more than one amendment may be discussed and debated at once to facilitate the proper and efficient

conduct of the Council's business in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 17.6(b). She reported, however, that each amendment would be voted upon separately.

Councillor Thomas Dyer, Leader of the Opposition, proposed the following amendments to the Medium Term Financial Strategy, which we seconded by Councillor Hilton Spratt, Deputy Leader of the Opposition:

Amendment 1 – Improving standards within the Private Rented Sector

- (a) Increase the budget for the Council's Private Housing Team by £177,780.
- (b) This increased budget is to be spent on increasing staff capacity to turbo charge the Council's efforts in tackling poor quality housing standards within Lincoln's private rented sector.
- (c) The £177,780 will be funded by reducing a City Council budget within the DCE to £0. To keep this budget amendment in Part A, the specific service area cannot be detailed.
- (d) Current staff working in the area proposed to have its budget removed will be redeployed into other service areas where there are vacancies. Alternatively, any redundancy costs can be funded from the earmarked reserves.

Amendment 2 – Improving the Council Housing Tenant experience

- (a) Create an additional 2.5 FTE Assistant Housing Officers to give Council housing tenants better service levels and response times.
- (b) The additional capacity will cost £74,672 PA and will be fully funded by deleting the current vacancy for an Assistant Director for Housing.
- (c) By generating the additional capacity, tenants will receive better service levels than they already do.

Amendment 3 – Supporting Residents with the Cost of Living

- (a) The deleted Assistant Housing Director role also contains £24,833 of General Fund Budget.
- (b) For the 2023/24 financial year, the £24,833 remaining from the deleted Assistant Director post is to be allocated to Citizens Advice Lincoln.
- (c) This funding is to provide Citizens Advice with additional capacity for cost of living support.

During the discussion on the proposed amendments, the following points were noted:

- Citizens Advice (CA) provided quality advice on issues such as housing and debt. The Council did not have the same depth of knowledge and additional capacity within CA would alleviate pressure on existing staff
- A great number of private sector landlords took pride in their stock however private rent cost had risen significantly and there was a shortage of housing available.
- Additional housing officers would result in the helping of more residents

- The figures had been verified by Financial Services and were in accordance with budget estimates included in the proposed MTFS 2023-2028

Councillor Ric Metcalfe, using his right to reply, advised that he would not be in support of any of the amendments despite the laudable desire to improve standards of housing within the private sector. It was noted that a great deal of work had already been carried out within the area. The reduction of £177,780 to £0 with the DCE would not be supported based on unverifiable claims.

Referencing amendment two, it was noted that the Council could not run effectively in the absence of suitable management. Housing services within the Council employed over 300 individuals and spent millions of pounds on tenants' money on a wide range of investment – under the supervision of appropriate management.

Referencing amendment three, it was noted that significant support was in place for CA and the Council's benefit team worked hard and their work was valued and recognised. There was no rationale to support the amendment.

Having been proposed and seconded, the amendments were voted upon. Amendment 1 was voted upon individually and Amendment 2 and Amendment 3 were voted on in collaboration. In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 19.7, a recorded vote was taken for each amendment, the result of which were as follows:

Amendment 1:

For (8)	Against (23)	Abstention
Councillor Alan Briggs	Councillor Debbie Armiger	
Councillor David Clarkson	Councillor Biff Bean	
Councillor Thomas Dyer	Councillor Chris Burke	
Councillor Matthew Fido	Councillor Sue Burke	
Councillor Hilton Spratt	Councillor Bob Bushell	
Councillor Mark Storer	Councillor Liz Bushell	
Councillor Rachel Storer	Councillor Martin Christopher	
Councillor Edmund Strengiel	Councillor Gary Hewson	
	Councillor Jackie Kirk	
	Councillor Rosanne Kirk	
	Councillor Jane Loffhagen	
	Councillor Rebecca Longbottom	
	Councillor Ric Metcalfe	
	Councillor Neil Murray	
	Councillor Donald Nannestad	
	Councillor Lucinda Preston	
	Councillor Clare Smalley	
	Councillor Naomi Twedde	
	Councillor Pat Vaughan	

Councillor Calum Watt
Councillor Joshua Wells
Councillor Emily Wood
Councillor Loraine Woolley

Amendment 2 & 3:

For (10)

Councillor Alan Briggs
Councillor Martin Christopher
Councillor David Clarkson
Councillor Thomas Dyer
Councillor Matthew Fido
Councillor Clare Smalley
Councillor Hilton Spratt
Councillor Mark Storer
Councillor Rachel Storer
Councillor Edmund Strengiel

Against (21)

Councillor Debbie Armiger
Councillor Biff Bean
Councillor Chris Burke
Councillor Sue Burke
Councillor Bob Bushell
Councillor Liz Bushell
Councillor Gary Hewson
Councillor Jackie Kirk
Councillor Rosanne Kirk
Councillor Jane Loffhagen
Councillor Rebecca Longbottom
Councillor Ric Metcalfe
Councillor Neil Murray
Councillor Donald Nannestad
Councillor Lucinda Preston
Councillor Naomi Twedde
Councillor Pat Vaughan
Councillor Calum Watt
Councillor Joshua Wells
Councillor Emily Wood
Councillor Loraine Woolley

Abstention

Amendments 1 to 3 were therefore declared lost.

Returning to the debate on the original motion, Councillor Clare Smalley proposed the following amendments:

Amendment 1 - Bus Shelter Improvement Programme

- (a) £20K to be allocated from the Corporate Repairs and Maintenance Reserve. This new programme will provide repairs, replacement and new installations where necessary across the city to City of Lincoln owned bus shelters.

Amendment 2 - Pride in Lincoln Programme

- (a) £33K to be allocated from the Community Chest Fund. This funding will retain its community focus, but will empower Lincoln's community by investing in targeted improvements. Funding would be allocated per

member (£1K per member) and will allow local wards to invest directly in improvements to local communities, from installing new benches to making grants to community and voluntary organisations.

In proposing the amendments, Councillor Clare Smalley highlighted the disappointment in the proposed increase in Council Tax at a time where the Council may have used some resources and reserves to offer residents rest bite in the current climate. Councillor Martin Christopher seconded the proposal but reserved his right to speak.

During the discussion on the proposed amendments, the following points were noted:

- There had been numerous complaints received regarding bus shelter vandalism and as such, the Conservatives would support the proposed amendments
- The revenue stream required for maintenance of bus shelters was a concern
- It was positive to encourage residents to use public transport to reduce congestion and carbon emissions
- It was commented that similar schemes in neighbouring authorities had worked well

Councillor Martin Christopher, who had reserved his right to speak, advised that an effective bus shelter improvement programme was important and a vital step for the Council. The use of public transport was essential in the achievement of net zero emissions by 2030. Bus shelters displayed the City of Lincoln Council logo upon them and as such, if a bus shelter fell into disrepair, there was the potential that the perception of the Council could be negatively affected. Referencing amendment 2, it was noted that a small pot of funding to represent a number of people individually was positive.

Councillor Ric Metcalfe, using his right to reply, advised that bus shelter in disrepair would require the deployment of considerable resource. The Council position was that there was not surplus funding within the corporate repairs and management revenue. The issue arose from a legacy element. It was not the City of Lincoln Council's responsibility nor was a financial contribution possible. As a result of governance issues surrounding the dispensation of funding to small groups, amendment 2 would not be supported.

Having been proposed and seconded, the amendments were voted upon individually. In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 19.7, a recorded vote was taken for each amendment, the result of which were as follows:

Amendment 1:

For (10)

Councillor Alan Briggs
Councillor Martin Christopher
Councillor David Clarkson

Against (21)

Councillor Debbie Armiger
Councillor Biff Bean
Councillor Chris Burke

Abstention

Councillor Thomas Dyer
Councillor Matthew Fido
Councillor Clare Smalley
Councillor Hilton Spratt
Councillor Mark Storer
Councillor Rachel Storer
Councillor Edmund Strengiel

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Councillor Jane Loffhagen
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Councillor Ric Metcalfe
Councillor Neil Murray
Councillor Donald Nannestad
Councillor Lucinda Preston
Councillor Naomi Tweddle
Councillor Pat Vaughan
Councillor Calum Watt
Councillor Joshua Wells
Councillor Emily Wood
Councillor Loraine Woolley

Amendment 2:

For (10)

Councillor Alan Briggs
Councillor Martin Christopher
Councillor David Clarkson
Councillor Thomas Dyer
Councillor Matthew Fido
Councillor Clare Smalley
Councillor Hilton Spratt
Councillor Mark Storer
Councillor Rachel Storer
Councillor Edmund Strengiel

Against (21)

Councillor Debbie Armiger
Councillor Biff Bean
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Councillor Lucinda Preston
Councillor Naomi Tweddle
Councillor Pat Vaughan
Councillor Calum Watt
Councillor Joshua Wells
Councillor Emily Wood
Councillor Loraine Woolley

Abstention

Amendments 1 and 2 were therefore declared lost.

Council returned to the original motion.

Councillor Edmund Strengiel referred to the Western Growth Corridor development and the build of two bridges with a suggested budget of £20M. It was noted that the proposed budget would not be sufficient to build and construct two bridges, both over Beaver Street and Tritton Road. Councillor Strengiel requested clarification.

Councillor David Clarkson referred to the climate emergency declared by the City of Lincoln Council in July 2019 and the commitment to achievement of net zero emissions by 2030. The estimated cost of improvement of Energy Performance Certificates (EPC) of the Council's housing stock was estimated to be circa £221.8M. The proposed MTFS had not proposed any provision for the cost to achieve net zero standards. Therefore, it was difficult to offer support for a budget that made no reference to a self-imposed target of 2030.

Councillor Neil Murray referred to the Western Growth Corridor development and the build of two bridges. Clarification was offered that one bridge was to be a pedestrian bridge. It was added that the Council had been inadequately funded since 2010 and cuts to budgets were necessary since that time. Recognition and gratitude was offered for funding for the Heritage Action Zone, Levelling up funding and Lincoln Town Deal funding.

Councillor Naomi Tweddle referred to the Lincoln Good Design Awards and the celebrations as part of the awards, of all the things the Council had achieved. The emergence from the Covid-19 pandemic had resulted in difficulties however investment was important, despite cuts to budgets. Lincoln had maintained delivery in spite of this. The Cornhill and Central Market were excellent examples of successes within the City.

Councillor Jane Loffhagen referred to the pride held for the City and the recognition that many town and city centres had become deprived in their appearance. There was many investment opportunities within the city as demonstrated by the Lincoln Town Deal programme. Referring to the Executives decision taken in February 2023, to disperse of Lincoln's famous Christmas Market, Councillor Loffhagen reiterated that there was no decision to take in the face of the report received from the Safety Advisory Group.

Councillor Chris Burke referred to the Council's fight to raise standards, especially demonstrated in the Sincil Bank area. Lincoln was a city we should all be proud of.

Councillor Lucinda Preston referred to Council's positive impact upon the City. She noted that maintenance, development and improvement of parks was important and the City Council worked hard daily. Her tributes were offered to all officers.

Councillor Hilton Spratt echoed comments from Councillor Lucinda Preston. The regeneration works to the City Centre had made Lincoln a better place to be both a tourist and resident. He offered his thanks to officers for their hard work. Recognition was given to the national issues identified in the proposed MTFS

however it was important to recognise and acknowledge international issues such as Covid-19 and the war in Ukraine.

Councillor Matthew Fido referred to the positivity that had occurred with the City. Residents expected the best from elected Members and a collaborative approach was positive.

Councillor Calum Watt referred to the MTFS and clarified that the proposal had been carefully considered and well thought out.

Councillor Ric Metcalfe, using his right of reply, referred to the previous thirteen years of austerity experienced which had necessitated budget cuts of circa £10M. Capacity had been affected however officers and members had done an extraordinary job maintaining service delivery despite significant cuts to budget.

Referring to Councillor Edmund Strengiel's comments, it was unknown if the budget of £20M for the bridges planned as part of the Western Growth Corridor development would be sufficient.

Referring to Councillor David Clarkson's comments, confirmation was given that the Council had an ambition to decarbonise. It was important to consider and attempt the impossible. The urgency compelled the Council's commitment to achievement as quickly as possible. A considerable number of the Council's housing stock was already reasonably well insulated and as such, we had begun from a positive point in the Council's ambitions.

Having been proposed and seconded, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 19.7, a recorded vote was taken, the result of which was as follows:

For (21)

Councillor Debbie Armiger
Councillor Biff Bean
Councillor Chris Burke
Councillor Sue Burke
Councillor Bob Bushell
Councillor Liz Bushell
Councillor Gary Hewson
Councillor Jackie Kirk
Councillor Rosanne Kirk
Councillor Jane Loffhagen
Councillor Rebecca Longbottom
Councillor Ric Metcalfe
Councillor Neil Murray
Councillor Donald Nannestad
Councillor Lucinda Preston
Councillor Naomi Twedde
Councillor Pat Vaughan
Councillor Calum Watt

Against (10)

Councillor Alan Briggs
Councillor Martin Christopher
Councillor David Clarkson
Councillor Thomas Dyer
Councillor Matthew Fido
Councillor Clare Smalley
Councillor Hilton Spratt
Councillor Mark Storer
Councillor Rachel Storer
Councillor Edmund Strengiel

Abstention

Councillor Joshua Wells
Councillor Emily Wood
Councillor Loraine Woolley

The motion was declared carried.

It was therefore RESOLVED that the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023-2028 and the Capital Strategy 2023-2028, including the following elements, be approved:

- The Council was a member of the Lincolnshire Business Rates pool in 2023/24.
- The General Fund Revenue Forecast 2023/24-2027/28, as show in Appendix 1 to the report, and the main basis of which this budget had been calculated (as set out in paragraph 4 of the report).
- The General Investment Programme 2023/24-2027/28, as shown in Appendix 2 of the report, and the main basis on which the programme had been calculated.
- The Housing Revenue Account Forecast 2023/24-2027/28, as shown in Appendix 3 of the report, and the main basis on which this budget had been calculated (as set out in paragraph 5).
- The Housing Investment Programme 2023/24-2027/28, as shown in Appendix 4 of the report, and the main basis on which this budget had been calculated (as set out in paragraph 7).

(Proceedings adjourned at 20:37)

(b) Council Tax 2023/24

(Proceedings resumed at 20:45)

The recommendations to the Council, as set out on pages 167 and 168 of the agenda and report pack, were duly moved and seconded and in accordance with the Council Procedure Rule 19.7, a recorded vote was taken, the result of which was as follows:

For (29)

Councillor Debbie Armiger
Councillor Biff Bean
Councillor Alan Briggs
Councillor Chris Burke
Councillor Sue Burke
Councillor Bob Bushell
Councillor Liz Bushell
Councillor David Clarkson
Councillor Thomas Dyer

Against (2)

Councillor Martin Christopher
Councillor Clare Smalley

Abstention

Councillor Matthew Fido
Councillor Gary Hewson
Councillor Jackie Kirk
Councillor Rosanne Kirk
Councillor Jane Loffhagen
Councillor Rebecca Longbottom
Councillor Ric Metcalfe
Councillor Neil Murray
Councillor Donald Nannestad
Councillor Lucinda Preston
Councillor Hilton Spratt
Councillor Mark Storer
Councillor Rachel Storer
Councillor Edmund Strengiel
Councillor Naomi Tweddle
Councillor Pat Vaughan
Councillor Calum Watt
Councillor Joshua Wells
Councillor Emily Wood
Councillor Lorraine Woolley

The motion was declared carried.

RESOLVED

That the following, as submitted, be approved:

(1) Acceptance of the 3rd January 2023 Executive recommendation that the Council Tax Base for 2023/24, as calculated in accordance with The Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012, to be £25,249.48.

(2) That the following amounts be calculated for the year 2023/24 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992:

- | | | |
|----|--------------|---|
| a) | £119,284,490 | being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils. |
| | | |
| b) | £111,728,580 | being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in |

Section 31A(3) of the Act.

- c) £7,555,910 being the amount by which the aggregate at 2(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 2(b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act as its Council Tax requirement for the year. (Item R in the formula in Section 31A (4) of the Act).
- d) £299.25 being the amount at 2(c) above (Item R), all divided by Item T (1 above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish precepts).
- e) £0 being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act
- f) £299.25 being the amount at 2c) above less the amount at 2e) above, all divided by the amount at 1 above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 33(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year

g) **City of Lincoln Council**

A	B	C	D
£199.50	£232.75	£266.00	£299.25
E	F	G	H
£365.75	£432.25	£498.75	£598.50

being the amounts given by multiplying the amount at 2f) above by the number which, in proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular band divided by the number which in proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in Valuation Band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different bands.

- (3) That it be noted that for the year 2023/24 Lincolnshire County Council have provisionally stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with the dwelling bandings shown below:

Lincolnshire County Council

A	B	C	D
£1,002.42	£1,169.49	£1,336.56	£1,503.63
E	F	G	H
£1,837.77	£2,171.91	£2,506.05	£3,007.26

- (4) That it be noted that for the year 2023/24 Police & Crime Commissioner Lincolnshire have provisionally stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with the dwelling bandings shown below:

Police & Crime Commissioner Lincolnshire

A	B	C	D
£194.16	£226.52	£258.88	£291.24

E	F	G	H
£355.96	£420.68	£485.40	£582.48

- (4) That having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 2g, 3 and 4 above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the following as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2023/24 in accordance with the dwelling bandings shown below:

Total Council Tax Charge 2023/24

A	B	C	D
£1,396.08	£1,628.76	£1,861.44	£2,094.12
E	F	G	H
£2,559.48	£3,024.84	£3,490.20	£4,188.24

(c) Prudential Indicators 2022-2023 - 2025/26 and Treasury Management Strategy 2023/24

The recommendations to the Council, as set out on page 176 of the agenda and report pack, were duly moved and seconded.

On being put to the meeting, the motion set out above was declared carried.

RESOLVED that: -

- (1) The Treasury Management Strategy, including the Treasury Management Prudential Indicators and the Investment Strategy, as set out in section 3 and Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.
- (2) That the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy amended from 2022/23, as set out in section 4 to the report, be approved.
- (3) That the Treasury Management Practices, as set out at Appendix 5 to the report, be approved.

(d) Pay Policy Statement

The recommendation to the Council, as set out on page 256 of the agenda and report pack, was duly moved and seconded.

On being put to the meeting, the motion set out above was declared carried.

RESOLVED that: -

The Pay Policy Statement, as set out at Appendix A to the report, be approved.

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

The recommendations to the Council, as set out on page 268 of the agenda and report pack, was duly moved and seconded.

On being put to the meeting, the motion set out above was declared carried.

RESOLVED that: -

- (1) An increase of 4.04% be applied to the existing basic allowance and special responsibility allowances from 1 April 2023.
- (2) The special responsibility allowance for the Chair of Audit Committee to attract the same special responsibility allowance as Scrutiny Committee Chairs.
- (3) That Schedule 3 – Travelling and Subsistence Allowances as detailed within the Member's Allowances Scheme, be updated to reflect HMRC's rates to 45p for the first 10,000 miles and 25p above 10,000 miles as detailed in Appendix B to the report.
- (4) That the Members' Allowance Scheme, as detailed in the Council's constitution, be amended accordingly to reflect the above resolutions by Council in respect of the basic allowance and special responsibility allowances.

(f) Appointment of Deputy Electoral Registration Officer

The recommendation to the Council, as set out on page 284 of the agenda and report pack, was duly moved and seconded.

On being put to the meeting, the motion set out above was declared carried.

RESOLVED that: -

- (1) That the Democratic Services and Elections Manager be appointed as the Deputy Electoral Registration Officer, with the full powers of the Electoral Registration Officer in their absence.

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

(a) Report by Councillor Sue Burke, Portfolio Holder for Reducing Inequality

Councillor Sue Burke, Portfolio Holder for Reducing Inequality, provided Council with an update on the work of her portfolio.

Councillor Burke reported that the dedication of Council employees and elected Members had been especially important during the past year due to the impacts from the Covid-19 pandemic and evolving cost of living crisis. Collectively, the support and service provided by the Council to its residents during this time were a great achievement and an achievement that the authority should be especially proud of.

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

- Welfare and Benefits Advice
- Welfare Reform, Covid-19 and the Cost of Living Support
- Housing Benefit / Council Tax Support
- Discretionary Rate Relief Policy
- Financial Inclusion
- Safeguarding
- Skills and Training (including Adult Learning and The Network)
- Homelessness and Rough Sleeping
- Asylum Seekers and Refugees
- Neighbourhood Working
- Equality and Diversity – Employer Perspective and Service User Perspective
- Public Protection and Anti-Social Behaviour (PPASB Team)
- CCTV Service
- Lincoln Community Lottery
- Lincoln Social Responsibility Charter
- Holocaust Memorial Day
- Looking Ahead

Councillor Burke concluded presentation of her report with a summary of what was to come over the coming municipal year. It was important to continue to provide vital services to those most in need and to continue to drive forward the reducing inequality agenda across the Council and the City.

Members expressed thanks to Councillor Sue Burke for her informative report and excellent work within the portfolio.

Question: Made reference to page 289, paragraph 3, 'Protecting Vulnerable People' training. Could the Portfolio Holder ensure that a training offer would be provided to all Members?

Response: The request would be followed up further to the meeting.

Comment: Further prevention for the issue of persistent dog fouling would be especially useful in the future.

Response: The comments regarding dog fouling were noted.

RESOLVED that the report be noted with thanks.