

## POLICY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**Tuesday, 1 October 2024**

**6.00 pm**

**Committee Rooms 1-2, City  
Hall**

Membership: Councillors Chris Burke (Chair), Calum Watt (Vice-Chair),  
Debbie Armiger, Liz Bushell, Natasha Chapman, Callum Roper  
and Rachel Storer

Substitute member(s): Councillors Dylan Stothard and Pat Vaughan

Officers attending: Democratic Services, Michelle Hoyles, Tracey Parker and Simon  
Walters

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### A G E N D A

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1. Confirmation of Minutes - 29 July 2024	<b>3 - 10</b>
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. Localised Council Tax Support Scheme 2025/26	<b>11 - 30</b>
4. Health Scrutiny Update	
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6. Exclusion of Press and Public	<b>41 - 42</b>
You are asked to resolve that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following item(s) because it is likely that if members of the press or public were present, there would be disclosure of 'exempt information'	

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### SECTION B

7. Lincoln Big Ballot	<b>43 - 76</b>
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**[Exempt Para(s) 3]**



**Present:** Councillor Calum Watt (*in the Chair*),  
Councillor Debbie Armiger, Councillor Liz Bushell,  
Councillor Natasha Chapman, Councillor Callum Roper,  
Councillor Rachel Storer and Councillor Pat Vaughan

**Apologies for Absence:** Councillor Chris Burke

**1. Confirmation of Minutes - 12 March 2024**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2024 be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a true record.

**2. Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were received.

**3. City of Lincoln Homelessness Strategy**

Daren Turner, Strategic Director of Housing and Investment:

- a. presented the Lincoln Homelessness Strategy and supporting action plan for consideration and comments prior to referral to Executive for approval
- b. explained that the Lincoln Homelessness Strategy 2024-2029 sat within a framework of documents which aimed to improve the housing situation in the City including the Lincoln Housing Strategy 2020-2025 and the Lincolnshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022-2027
- c. gave an overview of the background of the strategy as detailed at paragraph 3 of the report
- d. advised that during development of the strategy consultation took place with a number of staff from the Council and with agencies who worked with households who were homeless or threatened with homelessness
- e. further explained that although the responsibility for producing the strategy was with the Council, it was produced in partnership with various agencies within the City and was the City's strategy for homelessness rather than the Council's strategy for homelessness
- f. referred to appendix 3 of the report and outlined the objectives of the strategy:
  1. *Make homeless a rare occurrence by early intervention and timely homeless prevention.*
  2. *Make homelessness as brief as possible by providing high quality temporary and supported accommodation at points of crisis.*
  3. *Make the experience of homelessness a one-off occurrence by increasing access to secure and settled homes in Lincoln.*

g. invited members questions and comments.

**Question:** The Government fee provided for temporary accommodation was only £91 per week and the Council had to pay the difference out of its own budget to cover the cost of Bed and Breakfast. Was the Council considering acquiring buildings for temporary accommodation to address this issue?

**Response:** The Local Housing Allowance was £91 per week to spend on Bed and Breakfast. The average cost of a Bed and Breakfast could be in the region of £90 per night, therefore the Council had to pay the difference from the General Fund. Officers were always actively looking to bring additional temporary accommodation into the housing stock and had recently acquired 20 properties. The Council not only needed temporary accommodation but also move on accommodation and long term affordable housing to address the issue.

**Question:** What duty did the Council have under the Homelessness Act 2002?

**Response:** The Council had 56 days to determine if a person was homeless. During the 56 day period it was the Councils duty to provide them with housing and support.

**Question:** Would the funding for Homelessness change due to the new Government?

**Response:** Historically funding had been built into core budgets, this was removed as part of the austerity measures. The funding was now provided by annual grants which were initially for one year and were predominantly used for staffing, however, this caused issues with staff retention. Councils then lobbied the Government on this issue and the grant allocation was now provided on three year cycles. It was expected that the funding would continue given the increase in the number of homeless individuals.

**Question:** How did the Council address the disruptions to children's education and the effect on their mental health due to homelessness?

**Response:** The Council did all that it could as a landlord to support families. Officers worked with Lincolnshire County Council to provide support and wrap around care to families and children.

**Question:** Was the child's current school taken into consideration when families were placed in temporary accommodation?

**Response:** Yes, access to school was considered when placing families in temporary accommodation and transport to school was provided if necessary.

**Question:** How would the strategy be monitored?

**Response:** The departmental performance monitoring system would assess the action plan on a regular basis to monitor the progress.

**Question:** How would the increase in the number of homeless people and the early release of prisoners affect the strategy and would the strategy remain relevant?

**Response:** The activities within the strategy would remain relevant. The strategy was flexible which would allow the Council to adapt and respond to challenges. Changes were needed to national policy to address the increased homelessness.

RESOLVED that the City of Lincoln Homelessness Strategy be supported and referred to Executive for approval.

#### 4. **Parking Strategy Review**

Simon Walters, Director for Communities and Environment provided a brief introduction to the Parking Strategy and Delivery Plan and circulated a set of notes from the recent all member workshop for information.

Toby Forbes-Turner, Planning Policy Manager:

- a. presented a summary of the Parking Strategy and Delivery Plan to seek views from Policy Scrutiny Committee prior to consideration by Executive
- b. advised that the delivery plan set out parking service priorities and policies to be delivered by the Council over the next 5 years
- c. explained that the Strategy focussed on off-street parking provision in the Council car parks, but also covered the City Council's role with on-street residents parking
- d. gave an overview of the parking strategy review process which included the measures delivered from the previous car parking strategy agreed in 2015, factors that had changed since 2015 and how these factors had helped to scope the review of the Strategy. The agreed key issues were set out at paragraph 5.4 of the report
- e. referred to paragraph 6 of the report and advised on the future mobility work shop that had taken place, which had helped to identify how space could be repurposed or optimised to cater to changing use needs and respond to pressures brought on by the climate emergency
- f. summarised the stakeholders' engagement, public consultation and member engagement that had been undertaken during development of the strategy and delivery plan
- g. outlined the key implications on the parking strategy moving forward as detailed at paragraph 10 of the report
- h. highlighted the aims and strategic objectives of the strategy as detailed at paragraph 11 of the report
- i. explained that it was proposed to review the action plan annually together with a light touch review of the overall strategy every three years
- j. invited members questions and comments.

The Chair requested that the work shop notes that had been circulated to members be included with the agenda on the website.

**Question:** Had any progress been made to address the difficulties with the payment machine at Tentercroft Street car park?

**Response:** This would be addressed by the relevant Officer in due course. The issue was that the Wi-Fi for the payment machine was sometimes intermittent during busy periods.

**Question:** Would automated number plate recognition be introduced at car parks with the ability to pre-book parking spaces?

**Response:** This was an aspiration that would be looked at as part of the strategy over the next 5 years. The technology at the car parks would need updating. The first step would be to move to an automated number plate recognition system at the Central Car Park which would photograph number plates on entry and then once the parking had been paid a barrier would be used to exit the car park.

**Question:** Would signage to advise when the Central Car Park was full be installed?

**Response:** Talks were ongoing with Lincolnshire County Council Highways to establish where signs could be installed.

**Question:** Had consideration been given to install electric vehicle charging points in disability bays? Perhaps they could be lower for wheelchair users.

**Response:** A strategic approach had been taken to installing electric vehicle charging points across the City over the last few years. Consideration would be given to installing electric vehicle charging points in disabled bays.

**Question:** Would the number of disabled bays in car parks be reviewed? Some car parks did not have any disabled bays.

**Response:** Yes, Officers continually monitored and reviewed how disabled bays were being used across the car parks. Where there were not any disabled bays provided at car parks there was provision of disabled on-street parking nearby.

**Question:** What percentage of car park users used the pay by phone app?

**Response:** The figure for the percentage of people using the pay by phone app would be circulated following the meeting. The Council did encourage people to use the app, however, the option to pay by cash would always be available.

**Question:** Could clarification be provided as to which authority was responsible for residents parking?

**Response:** Lincolnshire County Council was responsible for authorising applications for residents parking. The running of the scheme was delegated to City of Lincoln Council. However, it was Lincolnshire County Councils responsibility to enforce the scheme.

RESOLVED that the Parking Strategy and Delivery Plan be supported.

## **5. A Policy for the Maintenance of City Council Owned Trees in Public Open Spaces**

Steve Bird, Assistant Director Communities and Street Scene:

- a. presented a policy for the maintenance of Council owned trees in public open spaces for comments prior to consideration by Executive
- b. explained that the proposed policy related only to trees growing on land owned by the City Council, or for which it had responsibility such as parks, gardens, amenity grass areas and common land
- c. outlined the aim of the policy which was to have in place a system that cared for City Council owned trees so as to:
  - prioritise public safety
  - protect property appropriately

- ensure that all trees were looked after appropriately, having reference to their species, age, condition and setting
- d. explained that the policy made clear the value of trees, the intention to work to recognised industry standard as default, to abide by legally required practices, to replant where there were tree losses, the need to educate people that they were an organic asset that had a life cycle and to promote the importance of trees in the City
- e. invited members questions and comments:

**Question:** Councillors were often contacted by residents asking why trees had been removed. Could a note setting out the reasons for removal of the tree be displayed on the stump for information?

**Response:** This suggestion would be considered by Officers.

**Question:** How did the Council ensure that proper care was provided to maintain new trees that had been planted?

**Response:** Every new tree that was planted had a watering package attached to it to advise the contractor how the tree should be looked after. The number of trees planted and the number of trees that had survived was tracked each year. If a tree died the contractor was required to plant a new tree to replace it.

**Question:** Was there a map or chart available that explained how many trees there were across the City and where they were located?

**Response:** The Council did have a database that mapped and provided information on the trees in the City. The database was still being updated but would eventually contain information on all of the trees in the City.

**Question:** Would the database be shared with the public?

**Response:** At the moment the database was only available to Officers. Consideration would be given as to whether it was possible to make the information available to the public.

**Question:** How was biodiversity being addressed?

**Response:** The Council planted as many trees as possible each year. Consideration was given to the resilience of the tree species that were planted to plan for the future.

**Question:** Was there a strategy in place to grow new saplings in areas that were densely populated?

**Response:** There were areas within the City that were not designed with trees in mind. The Council did plant as many trees as possible in as many areas as possible. Biodiversity net gain was now a mandatory requirement for new developments to provide a 10% improvement on green areas.

**Question:** Councillors were often contacted by residents requesting to remove trees. How should Councillors respond in these instances?

**Response:** The resident should contact the Arboricultural Officer who would consider each case on its own merit.

RESOLVED that the policy for the maintenance of Council owned tree in public open spaces be supported.

## 6. Grounds Maintenance Specification (for new contract from 1/9/2026)

Caroline Bird, Community Services Manager (Programme):

- a. presented an update on the specification for the Grounds Maintenance contract prior to commencing procurement, with specific reference to comments received in the all member workshops
- b. explained that the Council had two contracts for street scene services, street cleansing and grounds maintenance, and waste collection. Both contracts would end on 31 August 2026. Work had commenced on procuring new contracts which would commence on 1 September 2026. They were being realigned and packaged as two separate contracts: waste and street cleaning, and a separate grounds maintenance contract
- c. advised that reviewing and updating of the specification involved consultation with all members, as well as reviewing the specifications against changes in law, changes in best practice and environment awareness and 'lessons learned' as well as trying to avoid significant increases in costs and maximising cost control
- d. further advised that the changes to the waste/cleansing specification were reported to Members in autumn 2023. The waste/ cleansing procurement process was underway
- e. referred to the grounds maintenance specification at appendix A of the report which summarised the material changes that would be noticeable to service users or were significant in other ways. There were many other changes that had been made in the interests of cost control, clarity, ease of navigation, and ease of operational and understanding
- f. stated that the Council would require its contractors to pay their staff in accordance with the Real Living Wage as a minimum
- g. invited members questions and comments.

**Question:** How would the Council ensure that there was transparency during the tendering process so that it was open to public scrutiny?

**Response:** Officers were confident that the procurement process would be undertaken in a clear, fair and transparent way. Support would be provided from both Legal and the Procurement Officer to ensure that all requirements were met.

**Question:** Would the Council check that Contractors were paying their staff the real living wage?

**Response:** Yes, it was a requirement that had been included in the specification and would be monitored by the Council.

**Question:** How would the Council ensure that the same standards were being met by a sub-contractor?

**Response:** The requirements of the contract would also apply to sub-contractors. At the outset the Council would ask the contractor how they would manage sub-contractors if any elements of the contract were sub-contracted. The terms and conditions of the contract would be the same for a sub-contractor and would be enforceable.

**Question:** How would the costs be managed and stress tested?



**Response:** Officers had a duty to minimise risk to the Council as much as possible. The type of contract ensured that a schedule of prices was included to reflect the scope of the contract. A flexibility clause had been included in the contract via the open book method. Also, monthly monitoring of prices would take place.

**Question:** What would be the length of the Grounds Maintenance Contract?

**Response:** The duration of the Grounds Maintenance contract would mirror the waste contract, in that the initial contract period would be 8 years and seven months.

**Question:** Would in-cab technology be included in the contract?

**Response:** The Grounds Maintenance contract specification would require the supplier to provide in-cab technology.

**Question:** Why had decarbonisation of the fleet not been included in the contract specification?

**Response:** It was an aspiration but it was expected to be too expensive and the right technology was not available yet. There was a clause included in the contract which requested that the contractor considered introducing more environment friendly vehicles whenever vehicles were being replaced, and to include the Council in the business case and decision.

RESOLVED that the Grounds Maintenance Specification (for new contract from 01/09/2026) be supported.

## **7. Health Scrutiny Update**

This item was deferred due to the Chair of Policy Scrutiny Committee being absent from the meeting.

RESOLVED that the update be deferred.

## **8. Policy Scrutiny Work Programme 2024/25 and Executive Work Programme Update**

The Democratic Services Officer:

- a. presented the report 'Policy Scrutiny Work Programme 2024-25 and Executive Work Programme Update'
- b. presented the Executive Work Programme July 2024 – June 2025
- c. requested councillors to submit items they wished to scrutinise from the Executive Work Programme and policies of interest
- d. invited members questions and comments.

The Vice-Chair referred to the Executive Work Programme and requested that the "Lincoln Business Improvement Group Ballot" be scheduled into the work programme for the next Policy Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED that:

1. the Policy Scrutiny work programme be noted.

2. the Executive work programme be noted.
3. the Lincoln Business Improvement Group Ballet be scheduled for Policy Scrutiny Committee due to be held on 1 October 2024.

**SUBJECT: LOCALISED COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2025/26**

**DIRECTORATE: CHIEF EXECUTIVE & TOWN CLERK**

**REPORT AUTHOR: MARTIN WALMSLEY, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR – SHARED REVENUES AND BENEFITS**

## 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide an opportunity for Policy Scrutiny Committee to discuss and comment, as part of the formal consultation period, on the proposed scheme of a 2025/26 Council Tax Support scheme and accompanying Exceptional Hardship Payment scheme.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 The Council Tax Benefit system was abolished on 31 March 2013 and replaced by the Council Tax Support (CTS) Scheme. This scheme can be determined locally by the Billing Authority having had due consultation with precepting authorities, key stakeholders and residents. As at 30 June 2024, there are 8,278 residents claiming Council Tax Support in the City of Lincoln. 2,546 are pensioners who are protected under the legislation and receive Council Tax Support as prescribed by the Government (broadly similar to the level of Council Tax Benefit). It is the 5,732 working age (including those classified as 'vulnerable' for CTS purposes) claimants where a local scheme can be determined which can change the level of support provided.

- 2.2 Unless a decision by the Council is made to apply scheme changes to vulnerable working-age customers, the localised CTS scheme would historically only be applied to non-vulnerable working age. Vulnerable working-age customers are those that have one of the following for CTS purposes:

- Disability Premium;
- Enhanced Disability Premium;
- Severe Disability Premium;
- Disabled Child Premium;
- In receipt of a war pension;
- Qualifies for disabled or long-term sick earnings disregard;
- Employment and Support Allowance (income-related, where the support or work-related component is received and has been recorded separately).

The current split of the 5,732 (30 June 2024) working age CTS recipients is as follows:

- Working age – vulnerable: 3,357;
- Working age (not vulnerable): 2,375.

- 2.3 The initial City of Lincoln CTS Scheme from 2013/14 effectively 'protected' working age Council Tax payers seeking support, retaining eligible entitlement of up to 100%

and not restricting other areas of entitlement calculation. However, in recent years the scheme has changed in light of increasing scheme costs and budget pressures.

- 2.4 The proposed CTS scheme must go through certain steps to comply with the provisions stated in the Local Government Finance Act 2012, before it can be adopted by this Council as a Billing Authority:-

- *Before making a scheme, the authority must (in the following order):-*
  - *Consult any major precepting authority which has power to issue a precept to it,*
  - *Publish a draft scheme in such manner as it thinks fit, and*
  - *Consult such other persons as it considers are likely to have an interest in the operation of the scheme.*

### 3. Changes in Caseload

- 3.1 The table below shows how Lincoln's CTS caseload has changed over the last five years.

	Working age	Pension age	Total
September 2019	5,639	2,903	8,542
December 2019	5,578	2,881	8,459
March 2020	5,638	2,853	8,491
June 2020	6,197	2,842	9,039
September 2020	6,225	2,806	9,031
December 2020	6,182	2,773	8,955
March 2021	6,227	2,747	8,974
June 2021	6,220	2,720	8,940
September 2021	6,120	2,679	8,799
December 2021	5,993	2,649	8,642
March 2022	5,898	2,645	8,543
June 2022	5,891	2,618	8,509
September 2022	5,812	2,642	8,454
December 2022	5,830	2,639	8,469
March 2023	5,841	2,608	8,449
June 2023	5,867	2,591	8,458
September 2023	5,842	2,593	8,435
December 2023	5,777	2,573	8,350
March 2024	5,721	2,560	8,281
June 2024	5,732	2,546	8,278

- 3.2 The level of CTS caseload is an important factor when considering the potential cost of a local CTS scheme – as effectively an increase in caseload increases the cost of the scheme, and vice versa the cost decreases when the CTS caseload reduces. Understandably, the Covid-19 pandemic had a direct impact on the number of residents claiming CTS. It can be seen that caseloads rose sharply in 2020 and 2021 as an outcome of the impact of Covid-19 on the economy and residents' incomes. The caseload then plateaued somewhat before falling and returning back to pre-pandemic

levels. However, with the ongoing cost of living pressures on residents there is the potential that the number of claimants may begin to increase again.

#### 4. City of Lincoln Council 2024/25 CTS Scheme

4.1 The current, 2024/25 scheme, has the following restrictions for working age customers:

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- Capital limit £6,000;
- Minimum entitlement of £2 per week;
- Property banding capped at Band B e.g. a customer in Band C (and above) property, will only have their CTS calculated on Band B liability;
- Backdating restricted to 1 month; and
- Temporary absence from home in line with Housing Benefit regulations.

4.2 A recent report provided to the Council by LG Futures ([LG Futures | Accounting, Medium-Term Financial Planning, Funding Formulae and Business Rates, Policy and Research, Events and Training](#)), provided the following information regarding City of Lincoln Council's CTS scheme 2023/24 and its impacts:

*In 2023/24, Lincoln's revenue was reduced by 14.1%, due to its local CTS scheme. Of this, 4.5% was in the form of support to pensioners and 9.6% was support for working-age families. The table below compares the share of revenue foregone with the nearest neighbour (referring to 'similar' local authorities in terms of demographics (not location)) and England averages.*

**Table - Council Tax revenue foregone due to CTS in 2023/24**

	<i>Lincoln</i>	<i>Neighbour average</i>	<i>England average</i>
<i>Support for pensioners</i>	4.5%	4.4%	3.7%
<i>Support for working-age families</i>	9.6%	7.0%	5.1%
<i>Total Council Tax Support</i>	14.1%	11.4%	8.8%

*In terms of support for working-age families, the age group for which councils have discretion over the level of support provided, for Lincoln support for working-age residents was equivalent to 9.6% of Council Tax revenue. This was higher than the nearest neighbour average of 7.0% and higher than the England average of 5.1%.*

#### 5. Council Tax Support Scheme options for 2025/26

5.1 In this Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), the budgeted cost of the 2025/26 CTS scheme is £1.304m (i.e. City of Lincoln Council's share 14.3%, - (with the estimated total scheme cost of c£9.369m dependent on increases in the main preceptors levels of Council Tax).

Changes to the CTS scheme may be made for both non-vulnerable and vulnerable working age customers, however pension age residents are 'protected' and the 'default' government scheme effectively applies. If the Council wishes to continue protecting vulnerable working age CTS recipients, then any changes to the CTS scheme will only apply to 2,375 customers or 28.69% of the caseload.

City of Lincoln's CTS caseload as at June 2024, can be broken down as follows:

Caseload breakdown	Caseload	% of total caseload
Total caseload	8,278	
Pensioner	2,546	30.76%
Working age vulnerable	3,357	40.55%
Working age non-vulnerable	2,375	28.69%

- 5.2 Based on the current core elements of the existing scheme, a caseload decrease of 1%, 0% change, and an increase of 5% have been modelled, along with Council Tax increases of 1.9% and 2.9%. These are summarised in **Appendix 1**, giving an indication of the potential cost and savings to City of Lincoln Council. Also included is the potential value for non-collection, based on the collection figure currently included in the MTFS of 98.75%, in light of current collection rates, this may be reviewed as part of the refresh of the MTFS.
- 5.3 As a billing authority the Council can decide whether or not to amend core elements of its scheme each year. Proposed options for consultation are included in Appendix 1 to this report.

There will be some technical changes that will still need to be applied to ensure that the Council's scheme complies with the Prescribed Scheme Regulations (for example, covering Universal Credit, premiums and discounts). These details are awaited from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).

Technical amendments to the scheme in relation to uprating incomes, applicable amounts, disregards and allowances are to be collated once statutory details have been released by the Secretary of State.

- 5.4 In developing the modelling for each of the CTS scheme options a number of assumptions have been made, as follows:
- **5% uprating of benefits figures** - the national benefits uprating figure was 3.1% for 2022/23, and then 10.1% in 2023/24 (in line with the September 2022 inflation rate). The 2024/25 uprating figure, 6.7%, was announced at the Autumn Statement in November 2023. As the actual 2025/26 benefits upratings figure is unknown at this time, as and when this becomes clearer modelling of a potential scheme may be refined.
  - As the Council and major preceptors are likely to set differing levels of Council Tax increases, this creates a variety of modelling scenarios. **Council Tax increases of 1.9% and 2.9%** have therefore been assumed for modelling purposes. The final costs of the scheme will though be increased by the actual level of Council Tax increases applied. The modelling does not though take into consideration that the Council's percentage share of the overall cost of the scheme would slightly reduce if other preceptors increase their Band D by a greater percentage than the Council, this would in effect reduce the cost of the scheme to the Council.

- **1% caseload reduction, no change in caseload, also a 5% caseload increase.** These caseload projections would effectively allow for the currently-slightly decreasing CTS caseload to continue, then potentially rise due to ongoing and potentially increased cost of living pressures. Of course, officers can only predict the economy and subsequent impacts on CTS caseload, particularly in the current climate this cannot be an 'exact science'.
- **Collection rate of 98.75%.** The MTFS assumes a collection rate of 98.75% for 2024/25 (this is higher than the 2022/23 figure of 98.25%). Given ongoing cost of living challenges, the collection rate will be reviewed as part of the development of the updated MTFS.

Another key factor to be considered is to ensure our software supplier, NEC, can accommodate the changes being proposed. NEC has already indicated they would need to have known of any prospective software changes for a 2025/26 CTS scheme, by the end of June 2024. NEC has already developed a potential banded scheme as part of City of Lincoln's 2024/25 scheme options, although this was delivered too late to be considered for adopting for 2024/25 – and as at the time of writing this report, continues to be tested by officers. This is a key risk as not only would officers need full assurance that the IT software works effectively and accurately with a banded scheme, but also that the related initiative of automation of certain Universal Credit documents is also in place. These are resource intensive and detailed tasks, which will continue to be tested/implemented over the following weeks and months.

5.5 The options proposed to be considered, are as follows, (all options are modelled including the factors as set out in paragraph 5.4 (above):

- **Option 1: No change to the current scheme;**
- **Option 2: Introduction of a 'banded scheme' for all working age customers** - \*see paragraph 5.6 (below) for further information.

## 5.6 Banded Scheme for all working age customers

For 2025/26, an option being put forward for consideration is to make a fundamental change to the way CTS is calculated for working age customers.

This could be a more streamlined, efficient and easier to understand scheme based on specified income bands and percentage awards. A key factor for consideration is due to the way Universal Credit (UC) is re-assessed on a monthly basis by Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) – this means some Council Taxpayers have their UC entitlement altered each month – for example, where they have a fluctuating wage. If the UC recipient is also receiving CTS, this subsequently means that they then have a re-assessment of their CTS entitlement – meaning that it is possible to keep having a new bill sent each month, with instalments for repayment being 're-set' – which can be confusing for customers, as well as administratively inefficient for officers – and preventing recovery progressing where there is non-payment of Council Tax. This is a particular issue with customers who have opted to pay by direct debit, as month after month the instalment resets and the direct debit is never taken. This moves their whole debt to the end of the year where potentially they are asked to pay more than they can afford, when they may have made every effort to pay this during the year.

Therefore, an option for consideration is to adopt an income-banded local CTS scheme for all working age CTS customers (not just UC recipients). Key objectives would be to move towards a scheme that is more adaptable to UC regulations, - and to provide clarity to customers as to what their entitlement to CTS will be.

Currently, 3,914 CTS customers are in receipt of UC, - which equates to 68.28% of the working age caseload, - a further breakdown being as below:

	Pensioner	Working inc vulnerable	Single	Single, 1 dependant child	Single, 2 or more dependant children	Couple	Couple, 1 dependant child	Couple, 2 or more dependant children	Total
UC	0	0	2053	650	708	202	117	184	3,914
Non-UC	2,539	1,825	135	25	45	12	4	14	4,364

The scheme being modelled has a series of 'income bands' and a customer's entitlement to CTS is based on what band their earned income falls within. A banded scheme means that small changes in a claimant's income will not necessarily change their entitlement to CTS. Officers are continuing to model a range of factors in relation to a potential banded scheme, to refine options in advance of and during the consultation period, to present a final potential option to Executive in January 2025.

An example of how a banded scheme could look, is as below.

**N.B. These figures are for illustrative purposes only, and unlikely to be the figures utilised for a City of Lincoln banded scheme.**

BAND	SINGLE	SINGLE 1 CHILD	SINGLE 2 + CHILDREN	COUPLE	COUPLE 1 CHILD	COUPLE 2 + CHILDREN
100%	£0.00 – £350.00	£0.00 – £650.00	£0.00 – £900.00	£0.00 – £550.00	£0.00 – £850.00	£0.00 – £1000.00
80%	£350.01 – £450.00	£650.01 – £750.00	£900.01 – £1000.00	£550.01 – £650.00	£850.01 – £950.00	£1000.01 – £1100.00
60%	£450.01 – £550.00	£750.01 – £850.00	£1000.01 – £1100.00	£650.01 – £750.00	£950.01 – £1050.00	£1100.01 – £1200.00
40%	£550.01 – £650.00	£850.01 – £950.00	£1100.01 – £1200.00	£750.01 – £850.00	£1050.01 – £1150.00	£1200.01 – £1300.00
20%	£650.01 – £750.00	£950.01 – £1050.00	£1200.01 – £1300.00	£850.01 – £950.00	£1150.01 – £1250.00	£1300.01 – £1400.00
0%	£750.01 +	£1050.00 +	£1300.00 +	£950.01 +	£1250.01 +	£1400.01 +

The 'Band' column shows the percentage of CTS award – and the £ figures under each household composition column are the income bands used to assess CTS entitlement. For example, a household comprising of a couple with 1 child with a weekly Council Tax liability of £10.00 and assessed income of £875.25 would receive CTS of 80% of liability – i.e. £8.00 per week, leaving £2.00 per week to pay (via specified monthly instalments). Even if their income increased to no more than £950.00 per week they would continue to receive a 80% CTS award.

There are variables around entitlement which would result in some customers receiving an increased CTS award (or becoming entitled for the first time), and with some receiving a reduced CTS award. However, the scheme is being modelled and



designed to try and keep these fluctuations as low as is possible, - but with an exceptional hardship scheme fund proposed to sit alongside a banded scheme – where appropriate, reductions in 2025/26 CTS awards could be mitigated. This work will continue, with a final proposed banded scheme to be presented to Executive in January 2025 for consideration.

- 5.7 The banded scheme being modelled as part of this report (paragraph 5.6 (above)), is likely to achieve some efficiencies, - particularly in terms of simplicity of scheme for officers and customers alike – reducing in customer enquiries and subsequent responses, reductions in Council Tax adjustment notices being issued (e.g. in cases with Universal Credit entitlement changes month-on-month). With UC managed migration announced as being progressed in the latter part of 2023/24 and during 2024/25, 2025/26 may be the time to introduce such a banded scheme. The full impact of UC migration as a result of the 4 July 2024 general election, is not known at the time of writing this report.

Officers are seeking to introduce a banded scheme that is as ‘fair’ as possible and that would be broadly in line with the total cost of the current scheme, but – as stated above – with some residents receiving higher, some lower, awards - potential utilising Exceptional Hardship Payments to help mitigate detrimental impacts.

Testing within the NEC software system is intensive and detailed and is likely to take several months, with automation of Universal Credit information recently being advised as being required in order to deliver a banded scheme, -this automation is not currently in place but is being worked on by officers.

- 5.8 **Continuation/increase of the Exceptional Hardship Scheme:** Exceptional Hardship Payments (EHP) assist persons who have applied for CTS and who are facing ‘exceptional hardship’ – it is similar to the Discretionary Housing Payment scheme (DHP) for Housing Benefit shortfalls. EHP provides a further financial contribution where an applicant is in receipt of CTS but the level of support being paid by the Council does not meet their full Council Tax liability.

The Council is required to provide financial assistance to the most vulnerable residents, who have been disproportionately affected by the changes made to the CTS Scheme. Since April 2013, the Council has agreed to introduce an EHP scheme each year, in order to provide a safety net for customers, in receipt of Council Tax Support who were experiencing difficulty paying their Council Tax. Exceptional Hardship falls within Section 13A(1) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and forms part of the CTS Scheme.

The cost of EHP awards is borne solely by City of Lincoln Council. As at the end of June 2024, a total of £1,292.99 EHP has been awarded for 2024/25. It is proposed that an EHP budget of £25,000 be in place for 2025/26. If a banded scheme is adopted, EHP could potentially help assist in mitigating the transition to cases where there is a reduced level of award.

## 5.9 **Committee and Consultation Timetable**

- 5.10 The timetable to approve any changes to the new scheme takes into account the existing calendar of meetings. Full Council of the Billing Authority needs to approve the scheme after consultation as outlined in paragraph 2.4.

#### 5.11 The timetable is as follows:

- Executive: 16 September 2024, *to consider/approve options for consultation*
- Consultation starts (6 weeks): 24 September 2024, *including consultation with public, other appropriate organisations (e.g. Citizens Advice), and major precepting authorities*
- Policy Scrutiny Committee: 1 October 2024, *as part of consultation process*
- Consultation Ends: 5 November 2024
- Executive: 6 January 2025, *to refer to Council a recommendation on a proposed 2025/26 scheme*
- Council: 21 January 2025, *the Local Government Finance Act 2012 requires a full review of the scheme by the Billing Authority. City of Lincoln Council will need to approve a new scheme after consultation by 31 January 2025.*

## 6. Significant Policy Impacts

### 6.1 Strategic Priorities

**Let's drive inclusive economic growth** - Council Tax Support has a key role in Reducing poverty and disadvantage by ensuring residents in those households who cannot afford to pay their Council Tax receive financial support. The changes to Council Tax Support form part of the national welfare reform agenda, with the risks of changes to numbers of claimants due to economic change and funding gap costs being passed from central government to local authorities. Central government now has a fixed cost funding arrangement whereas local government must set a scheme in advance of the financial year it applies to but cannot change it should circumstances change unexpectedly or if the assumptions used to decide the scheme are not realised. Central government states that this places responsibility for the local economy such as creating businesses and jobs on local government as part of the localism agenda

**Let's reduce all kinds of inequality** - The Authority will be obliged to comply with its general equality duty under the Equality Act 2010. The scheme is being amended in line with statutory requirements and uprating the financial allowances. Early modelling shows the number of customers affected and pay how much (total and average per week). Once a decision has been made regarding the options of modelling, an equality impact assessment will be undertaken.

Council Tax Support awards are notified on Council Tax bills. If the scheme were likely to change, consultation with precepting authorities, stakeholders (such as Citizens Advice and Financial Inclusion Partnership) and residents would be required. Once a decision has been made, notification within Council Tax bills and annual CTS uprating letters would be issued advising claimants of the decision once their award for the new financial year is known.

### 6.2 Organisational Impacts

**Finance** (including whole life costs where applicable)

The actual cost of the discount scheme in 2025/26 will not be known for certain until the end of the financial year and will be dependent on the actual caseload in year as

well as the levels of Council Tax set by the City Council and the major precepting authorities.

An indicative range of costs for 2025/26 based on various scenarios and the options set out in section 5 of this report are set out in Appendix 1.

The estimated cost of the scheme, based on current caseload, is taken into consideration when calculating the Council's tax base for the financial year and will impact on the estimated Council Tax yield for the year. Any difference in the actual cost of the discount scheme to that estimated in the tax base calculation will be accounted for within the Collection Fund and will be taken into account when future years surpluses or deficits are declared.

It is proposed an Exceptional Hardship Fund of £25,000 be made available during 2025/26. The cost of this fund is wholly borne by City of Lincoln Council as Billing Authority.

### **6.3 Legal implications inc Procurement Rules**

The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Default Scheme) (England) Regulations 2012, laid before Parliament on 22 November 2012, set out the regulations for a default scheme and this was adopted by the Council subject to local policy needs in January 2013. The Secretary of State has issued amendment regulations setting out some changes that must be adopted by the Council for pensioners and the Council has also decided in 2013 to keep the schemes allowances and premiums in line with those for Housing Benefit for working age claimants. These are incorporated into amendments to the local scheme for approval by the Council.

The regulations for the City of Lincoln Council scheme proposed to be adopted are to be collated and made available for Council in January 2025.

### **6.4 Equality, Diversity and Human Rights**

The Authority will be obliged to comply with its general equality duty under the Equality Act 2010 – an Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken before this report is referred to Executive.

### **6.5 Staffing**

No change to current staffing arrangements as a result of this policy.

## **7. Risk Implications**

- 7.1 The Council, along with the other preceptors, bears the risk of the cost of the Council Tax Support scheme should caseload increase causing the cost to increase more than predicted.
- 7.2 Any revisions to the scheme must be approved by 31 January 2025, before the new financial year begins.
- 7.3 The scheme cannot be changed mid-year and therefore it is vital an appropriate scheme is in place.

7.4 NEC does not deliver a banded scheme module that is able to be fully tested and accurately meets requirements.

## 8. Recommendations

8.1 Policy Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

- (i) Consider and comment on options for a 2025/26 Council Tax Support scheme.
- (ii) Consider and comment on provision of an Exceptional Hardship Fund of £25,000 for 2025/26.

<b>Key Decision</b>	Yes
<b>Do the Exempt Information Categories Apply</b>	No
<b>Call In and Urgency:</b> Is the decision one to which Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?	No
<b>Does the report contain Appendices?</b>	Yes
<b>If Yes, how many Appendices?</b>	2
	Appendix 1 – Council Tax Modelling 2025/26
	Appendix 2 – Equality Impact Assessment
<b>List of Background Papers:</b>	None
<b>Lead Officer:</b>	Martin Walmsley, Assistant Director – Shared Revenues and Benefits Email: <a href="mailto:martin.walmsley@lincoln.gov.uk">martin.walmsley@lincoln.gov.uk</a>

## Appendix 1: 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024 – Policy Scrutiny Committee - City of Lincoln Council – Council Tax Support 2025/26 scheme

***\*N.B.\* In this Appendix, several figures are ‘£TBC’ at this stage. Scheme modelling is continuing and these figures will be provided as soon as available.***

<b>Option 1: No change to the current scheme</b>	<b>Estimated Total Spend (all preceptors)</b>	<b>City of Lincoln Spend – 14.5%</b>	<b>Difference to MTFS (£1,303,800) – (saving) / cost</b>	<b>Amount expected to be collected using collection figure of 98.75%</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1% caseload decrease</li> <li>• 1.9% Council Tax increase</li> </ul>	£9,124,040	£1,322,986	£19,186	£18,946
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1% caseload decrease</li> <li>• 2.9% Council Tax increase</li> </ul>	£9,221,046	£1,337,052	£33,252	£32,836
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0% caseload change</li> <li>• 1.9% Council Tax increase</li> </ul>	£9,216,971	£1,336,461	£32,661	£32,253
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0% caseload change</li> <li>• 2.9% Council Tax increase</li> </ul>	£9,314,952	£1,350,668	£46,868	£46,282
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5% caseload increase</li> <li>• 1.9% Council Tax increase</li> </ul>	£9,678,438	£1,403,374	£99,574	£98,329
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5% caseload increase</li> <li>• 2.9% Council Tax increase</li> </ul>	£9,781,268	£1,418,284	£114,484	£113,053

## Appendix 1: 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024 – Policy Scrutiny Committee - City of Lincoln Council – Council Tax Support 2025/26 scheme

<b>Option 2: Income Banded Scheme</b>	<b>Estimated Total Spend (all preceptors)</b>	<b>City of Lincoln Spend – 14.5%</b>	<b>Difference to MTFS (£1,303,800) – (saving) / cost</b>	<b>Amount expected to be collected using collection figure of 98.75%</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1% caseload decrease</li> <li>• 1.9% Council Tax increase</li> </ul>	£TBC	£TBC	£TBC	£TBC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1% caseload decrease</li> <li>• 2.9% Council Tax increase</li> </ul>	£TBC	£TBC	£TBC	£TBC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0% caseload change</li> <li>• 1.9% Council Tax increase</li> </ul>	£TBC	£TBC	£TBC	£TBC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0% caseload change</li> <li>• 2.9% Council Tax increase</li> </ul>	£TBC	£TBC	£TBC	£TBC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5% caseload increase</li> <li>• 1.9% Council Tax increase</li> </ul>	£TBC	£TBC	£TBC	£TBC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5% caseload increase</li> <li>• 2.9% Council Tax increase</li> </ul>	£TBC	£TBC	£TBC	£TBC

Further information re Option 2:

The Income Banded Scheme would result in some Council Taxpayers receiving a higher level of CTS than under the current scheme, and some customers would receive a reduction in CTS. Based on the modelling that has taken place:

## Appendix 1: 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024 – Policy Scrutiny Committee - City of Lincoln Council – Council Tax Support 2025/26 scheme

- Biggest **increase** for a resident: £tbc per week
- Biggest **decrease** for a resident: £tbc per week
- Tbc have an increased award, tbc no change, tbc have a reduced award.

**Appendix 1: 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024 – Policy Scrutiny Committee - City of Lincoln Council – Council Tax Support 2025/26 scheme**

<b>Difference in weekly entitlement range: From (£) (- decrease, + increase)</b>	<b>Difference in weekly entitlement range: To (£)(- decrease, + increase)</b>	<b>Number of customers</b>



## Equality with Human Rights Analysis Toolkit



### SECTION A

Name of policy / project / service	<b>Council Tax Support Scheme 2025/26</b>
Background and aims of policy / project / service at outset	<p>The Council must review and reapprove its Council Tax Support scheme each year as part of its budget setting process, and make any necessary changes for 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025.</p> <p>It is recognised that the combined effects of the wider welfare reform package on the residents of the District requires a robust and detailed Equality Impact Assessment (EIA).</p> <p>This EIA makes reference to data derived from the current Council Tax Support caseload.</p> <p>Formal consultation will commence on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2024, utilising a combination of the Council's website, press releases, social media and letters issued to those in receipt of Council Tax Support directing the public to the on-line consultation documents, as well as potentially interested organisations such as Citizens Advice, and other Council Tax major precepting authorities.</p> <p>The level of changes to the current scheme are not yet known but the individuals / groups impacted by the selection of changes are being identified through ICT systems.</p> <p>Each of these are being considered in relation to how the changes might differently and / or adversely affect people with protected characteristics.</p> <p>The EIA assesses our approach to consultation on the proposed scheme and will be added to during and following the results of this consultation. The consultation will be monitored with information used to develop the draft scheme.</p>
Person(s) responsible for policy or decision, or advising on decision, and also responsible for equality	Martin Walmsley, Assistant Director – Shared Revenues and Benefits

Appendix 2 – 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024 Policy Scrutiny Committee – Council Tax Support Scheme 2025/26 Equality Impact Assessment

analysis	
Key people involved <i>i.e. decision-makers, staff implementing it</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Decision Makers – City of Lincoln Members, and Executive</li><li>• Staff implementing any changes</li></ul>

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SECTION B

This is to be completed and reviewed as policy / project / service development progresses

	Is the likely effect positive or negative? (please tick all that apply)			Please describe the effect and evidence that supports this?*	Is action possible to mitigate adverse impacts?	Details of action planned including dates, or why action is not possible
	Positive	Negative	None			
Age	Y	Y		Pensioners are a protected group for the purposes of Council Tax support Scheme so	Yes	Action dependant on outcome of consultation and Executive

## Appendix 2 – 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024 Policy Scrutiny Committee – Council Tax Support Scheme 2025/26 Equality Impact Assessment

27				<p>will not be financially affected, therefore the reduction in benefit will be borne by the remainder of those in receipt of Council Tax Support (working age).</p> <p>There could be a risk people of working age who will bear all the financial impact of the changes, may 'resent' the fact that pensioners are exempt. Working age claimants with younger children under 5 are more likely to be unemployed or work part-time hours (and are mostly female), therefore childcare costs could be a barrier to employment. However, the current Council Tax Support scheme takes childcare costs up to a certain level into account, also Universal Credit takes account of childcare costs in the assessment of entitlement.</p> <p>Council Tax Support will only be available to those young people who are liable to pay Council Tax and this only applies to householders over 18 years of age. If the young person is living in their parent or other householder's home they will not be liable to pay Council Tax so will not be affected by the Council Tax Support scheme unless they are a non-dependent in the householder's home.</p>		<p>recommendation on 6<sup>th</sup> January 2025</p> <p>With effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025</p>
Disability including carers (see Glossary)	Y	Y		The Department for Work and Pensions states that disabled people are less likely to be in employment. Proposals will be carefully considered in relation to this group.	Yes	Action dependant on outcome of consultation and Executive recommendation on 6 <sup>th</sup> January 2025

## Appendix 2 – 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024 Policy Scrutiny Committee – Council Tax Support Scheme 2025/26 Equality Impact Assessment

						With effect from 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2025
Gender re-assignment			Y	This does not have any effect on the decisions made under this policy.	N/A	
Pregnancy and maternity			Y	This does not have any effect on the decisions made under this policy.	N/A	
Race			Y	Neither race nor ethnicity itself have any effect on the application of the scheme.  Council Tax Support is proposed to be considered to potentially affect all working age customers.	N/A	
Religion or belief			Y	There is no evidence at this stage of an impact in relation to religion or belief	N/A	
Sex			Y	This does not have any effect on the decisions made under this policy.	N/A	
Sexual orientation			Y	This does not have any effect on the decisions made under this policy.	N/A	
Marriage/civil partnership			Y	This does not have any effect on the decisions made under this policy.	N/A	
Human Rights (see page 8)			Y	This does not have any effect on the decisions made under this policy.	N/A	

- Evidence could include information from consultations; voluntary group feedback; satisfaction and usage data (i.e. complaints, surveys, and service data); and reviews of previous strategies

## Appendix 2 – 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024 Policy Scrutiny Committee – Council Tax Support Scheme 2025/26 Equality Impact Assessment

Did any information gaps exist?	Y/N/NA	If so what were they and what will you do to fill these?
	Y	Further modelling is taking place in relation to impacts of a working age banded scheme.

### SECTION C

#### Decision Point - Outcome of Assessment so far:

Based on the information in section B, what is the decision of the responsible officer (please select one option below):

Tick here


- ✓ **No equality or human right Impact** (your analysis shows there is no impact) - sign assessment below [ ]
- ✓ **No major change required** (your analysis shows no potential for unlawful discrimination, harassment)- sign assessment below [ x]
- ✓ **Adverse Impact but continue** (record objective justification for continuing despite the impact)-complete sections below [ ]
- ✓ **Adjust the policy** (Change the proposal to mitigate potential effect) -progress below only AFTER changes made [ ]
- ✓ **Put Policy on hold** (seek advice from the Policy Unit as adverse effects can't be justified or mitigated) -STOP progress [ ]

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Conclusion of Equality Analysis (describe objective justification for continuing)	<p>Council Tax has to be paid by all those liable to pay it but some people will have limited means to do this because of their low income or they have higher living costs due to illnesses, disabilities or family or personal circumstances.</p> <p>Council Tax is required to raise money to fund Council services but a certain amount of money is directed to those who cannot afford to pay the Council Tax to reduce the financial burden on those households because they need it or because society considers that financial support is beneficial to help certain categories of people in certain situations.</p> <p>If a banded scheme was to be implemented, detailed testing of impacts on groups will be fully considered.</p>
When and how will you review and measure the impact after implementation?*	<p>The policy and Council Tax Support is the responsibility of City of Lincoln Council. It is approved by Executive and then Full Council. It will be administered by the Council's Shared Revenues and Benefits Service.</p> <p>The Council continually analyses its Council Tax Support caseload and produce figures showing the main</p>

Appendix 2 – 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024 Policy Scrutiny Committee – Council Tax Support Scheme 2025/26 Equality Impact Assessment

	groups of working age claimants getting Council Tax Support now and likely to be affected by changes to the current scheme. Extracts of the data will allow monitoring of the main types of people affected by the policy can take place as required.
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Checked and approved by responsible officer(s) (Sign and Print Name)		Date	
Checked and approved by Assistant Director (Sign and Print Name)	 Martin Walmsley	Date	13 <sup>th</sup> September 2024.

**POLICY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE****1 OCTOBER 2024**

**SUBJECT: POLICY SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2024/25 AND EXECUTIVE WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE**

**REPORT BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE & TOWN CLERK**

**LEAD OFFICER: CLAIRE TURNER, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OFFICER**

**1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To present the Policy Scrutiny Committee Work Programme for 2024/25 and receive comments and considerations from members of potential further items for discussion in the municipal year 2024/2025.
- 1.2 To advise Members of the items that are on the current edition of the Executive Work Programme.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 The work programme is attached at **Appendix A**.
- 2.2 The Constitution provides for the publication of the Executive Work Programme on a monthly basis detailing key decisions/ exempt para (Section B) items to be taken by the Executive, a committee of the Executive or a Member of the Executive during the period covered by the programme. This is attached at **Appendix B** and has been provided to assist members in identifying items for inclusion within the work programme.

**3. Recommendation**

- 3.1 That Members give consideration to the Policy Scrutiny Work Programme for 2024/25 and update where appropriate to include items which they wish to consider from the Executive Work Programme as required.

**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?** Two

**List of Background Papers:** None

**Lead Officer:** Claire Turner, Democratic Services Officer  
Email: [claire.turner@lincoln.gov.uk](mailto:claire.turner@lincoln.gov.uk)

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## Policy Scrutiny Committee Work Programme – Timetable for 2024/25

### 11 June 2024 - CANCELLED

Item(s)	Responsible Person(s)	Comments
Health Scrutiny Update	Chair of Policy Scrutiny	Regular Report
Policy Scrutiny Work Programme 2024 -2025	Democratic Services	Regular Report

### 29 July 2024

Item(s)	Responsible Person(s)	Comments
Policy Scrutiny Work Programme 2024-2025 Update	Democratic Services	Regular Report
Health Scrutiny Update	Chair of Policy Scrutiny	Regular Report
Grounds Maintenance Specification (for new contracts from 1/9/2026)	Caroline Bird	
Car Parking Strategy	Simon Walters	
Tree Policy	Steve Bird	
Lincoln Homelessness Strategy	Alison Timmins	

**1 October 2024**

Item(s)	Responsible Person(s)	Comments
Policy Scrutiny Work Programme 2024 -2025	Democratic Services	Regular Report
Health Scrutiny Update	Chair of Policy Scrutiny	Regular Report
Lincoln Business Improvement Group Ballot	Simon Walters	Requested at 29 July 2024 meeting.
Localised Council Tax Support Scheme 2025/26.	Martin Walmsley	

**19 November 2024**

Item(s)	Responsible Person(s)	Comments
Policy Scrutiny Work Programme 2024-2025 Update	Democratic Services	Regular Report
Health Scrutiny Update	Chair of Policy Scrutiny	Regular Report
Corporate Document Review	Michelle Hoyles	Annual Report
Customer Complaints Policies	Emily Holmes	

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**14 January 2025**

Item(s)	Responsible Person(s)	Comments
Policy Scrutiny Work Programme 2024-2025 Update	Democratic Services	Regular Report
Health Scrutiny Update	Chair of Policy Scrutiny	Regular Report

**18 March 2025**

Item(s)	Responsible Person(s)	Comments
Policy Scrutiny Work Programme 2024-2025 Update	Democratic Services	Regular Report
Health Scrutiny Update	Chair of Policy Scrutiny	Regular Report
Safeguarding Policy	Emily Holmes	Annual Report

**Unscheduled Items.**

Recycling- paper and card collections proposal

## EXECUTIVE WORK PROGRAMME

**September 2024 - August 2025**

### NOTES

1. The Leader in consultation with the Chief Executive and Town Clerk prepares an Executive Work Programme to cover a period of twelve months.
2. The Executive Work Programme contains matters which the Leader has reason to believe will be the subject of a key decision during the period covered by the Plan or Executive decisions which are likely to be taken in private.
3. A Key Decision is one which is likely:
  - a) to result in the Local Authority incurring expenditure which is , or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the Local Authority's budget for the service or function to which it relates; or
  - b) to be significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising 2 or more wards in the area of the local authority.
4. Whilst the majority of the Executive's business at the meetings listed in the Executive Work Programme will be open to the public and media organisations to attend, there will be some business to be considered that contains, for example, confidential, commercially sensitive or person information.

This document serves as formal notice under the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 that certain items in the Executive Work Programme will be considered in private because the item contains exempt information under Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) and that the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing it. If an item is to be considered in private this will indicated on the individual decision notice.

If you have any queries, please telephone 01522 873387 or email [democratic.services@lincoln.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@lincoln.gov.uk).

## EXECUTIVE WORK PROGRAMME SUMMARY

Date of Decision	Decision	Decision: Summary	Decision Taken By	Key Decision	Exempt Information
16 September 2024	A policy for the care of City Council owned trees in public open spaces.	To adopt , change, or refuse to adopt the draft policy proposed.	Executive	Yes	Public
16 September 2024	A POLICY AND STRATEGY FOR FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO SUPPORT PARKS AND OPEN SPACES	To adopt a policy and supporting strategy.	Executive	Yes	Public
16 September 2024	Localised Council Tax Support Scheme 2025/26	<p>1) Consider and comment on options for a 2025/26 Council Tax Support scheme.</p> <p>2) Confirm which options will move forward for public consultation and scrutiny.</p> <p>3) Consider and comment on provision of an Exceptional Hardship Fund for 2025/26.</p>	Executive	Yes	Public
14 October 2024	RPS Process	To approve a new formalised RPS process	Executive	No	Public
14 October 2024	Lincoln Business Improvement Group Ballot	To confirm City Council's position in relation to voting in the BIG ballot . Ballot seeks businesses views on continuation of Lincoln BIG for a further 5 years.	Executive	Yes	Public

18 November 2024	Cornhill Market - Operational Plan	Update on progress to set context for decisions covering: - permanent staff - operational budget - operational business plan	Executive	Yes	Partly Private
18 November 2024	Housing Pipeline Approach	Decision on the approach to developing a housing pipeline on City Council owned land	Executive	Yes	Public
18 November 2024	City Centre Masterplan - Review	Agreement to proceed with the City Centre Masterplan Review including the specific detailed pieces of work on Town Fund projects on Tentercroft Street and Wigford Way	Executive	Yes	Public
18 November 2024	Strategic Risk Register Quarterly Review	To provide the Executive with a status report of the revised Strategic Risk Register as at the end of the second quarter 2024/25.	Executive	No	Partly Private
18 November 2024	Quarter 2 2024/25 Operational Performance Report	To present to Members a summary of the operational performance position for the second quarter of the financial year 2023/24.	Executive	No	Public
18 November 2024	Financial Performance Quarterly Monitoring	To present to Executive the second quarter's financial performance 2024/25.	Executive	No	Public
18 November 2024	Treasury Management Stewardship and Actual Prudential Indicators Report 2024/2025	To note the Prudential and Local Indicators and the performance against the Treasury Management Strategy 24/25 Quarter 2	Executive	No	Public
18 November 2024	Income Management and Arrears Policy	To approve the Policy	Executive	No	Public
18 November 2024	Pet Policy	Approve the Policy	Executive	No	Public

18 November 2024	Neighbourhood Management Policy	Approve the Policy	Executive	No	Public
18 November 2024	Acquisition Approval	Approval required for 9 x new build homes through the Housing Revenue Account.	Executive	Yes	Private
09 December 2024	Disposals Strategy	Approval of Strategy	Executive	Yes	Private
06 January 2025	Council Tax Base 2025/26	To recommend to Council, the calculated Council Tax Base for 2025/26	Executive	Yes	Public
06 January 2025	Localised Council Tax Support Scheme 2025/26	To recommend to Council a Localised Council Tax Scheme for 2025/26, and associated Exceptional Hardship Fund.	Executive	Yes	Public
24 February 2025	Jasmin Green	Development of allocated housing site for council housing with associated improvements/enhancements	Executive	Yes	Public
24 February 2025	Tenancy Agreement	Approve the revised Tenancy Agreement to apply for all new tenants and retrospectively to all existing tenants from 1st April 2025	Executive	Yes	Public



<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS &amp; PUBLIC</b>
<b>DIRECTORATE:</b>	<b>CHIEF EXECUTIVE &amp; TOWN CLERK</b>
<b>REPORT AUTHOR:</b>	<b>CAROLYN WHEATER, MONITORING OFFICER</b>

**1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To advise members that any agenda items following this report are considered to contain exempt or confidential information for the reasons specified on the front page of the agenda for this meeting.

**2. Recommendation**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the press and public be excluded from the meeting at this point as it is likely that if members of the press or public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt or confidential information.

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