

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

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Yvonne Bodger

24. Mayoral Announcements

The Mayor welcomed Councillor Bill Mara to his first meeting of the Council since his election on 12 December 2019.

The Mayor reported that the lead up to Christmas had been a very busy period. Earlier in the month the Mayor had visited some of the city's care homes and the civic party had also joined the moving St Barnabas Hospice Light-up-a-Life service and walk to the tree of life by the Lincoln Hotel. She had also recently attended the Lincoln launch of GamCare's face-to-face gambling addiction support service.

With regard to the Mayor's charity 'LEAP' which supported vulnerable homeless young people, the Mayor was in the process of organising the popular whisky tasting event. She also asked for members' support for the Mayor's Ball on 14 March 2020.

The Mayor emphasised her wish to continue to be referred to as Madam Mayor as opposed to the traditional Mr Mayor and was proud how far members had come in their commitment to equal opportunities.

25. Confirmation of Minutes - 24 September 2019

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 24 September 2019 be confirmed.

26. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

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

No questions had been received.

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

No questions had been received.

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

(a) Report by Councillor Ric Metcalfe - Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Our People and Resources

Councillor Ric Metcalfe, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Our People and Resources, presented a report which provided Council with an update on the work of his Portfolio.

Councillor Metcalfe reflected on another period of success for the authority on a number of fronts and said that it was incredible how much it had done considering the Council's relatively small size, financial challenges associated with local government and the authority's low tax base. He said that the Council would continue to promote the growth of the city, develop more socially sustainable policies and link inequality whenever it could and was committed to making Lincoln a more environmentally sustainable place.

Councillor Thomas Dyer asked for the Leader's views on local government reform in Lincolnshire, in particular the introduction of a unitary authority.

Councillor Metcalfe stated that the intentions of the new Government were not yet clear regarding local government reform. He highlighted that numerous discussions had been held by all parties historically to either retain the two-tier system of governance thereby retaining self-governance for Lincoln or alternatively a form of unitary governance for the city which was likely to be a much larger footprint than the existing city boundary. He was personally uncomfortable with the prospect of Lincoln being governed by people located 30, 40 or 50 miles away from the city.

Councillor Eddie Strengeil, acknowledging that Lincoln was a small city, and made the point that residents knew who their democratically elected representatives were. To weaken this democratic link, in his opinion, would be very detrimental to democracy in Lincoln.

The report was noted.

(b) Report by Councillor Neil Murray - Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth

Councillor Neil Murray, Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, presented a report which provided Council with an update on the work of his Portfolio.

Councillor Murray was pleased to see that residents in the Sincil Bank area voted positively for the introduction of the Residents' Parking Scheme in a consultation exercise recently held. This would be very helpful by removing vehicles which at the moment clogged up the streets in that area and would improve the quality of life for residents. He was hopeful that the County Council would address the problem of rat runs through the area given that the East-West link road was now well established. Councillor Murray was concerned about the air quality and road safety in this area as a consequence to this unnecessary traffic.

Another positive development was the introduction of a ban on 'to let' signs, which had seen an immediate beneficial effect on the street scene when introduced in April 2019.

Councillor Murray reported that nearly 250,000 people had attended the Lincoln Christmas Market in 2019 and emphasised what a special and unique event it continued to be. He praised staff from across the authority who all came together from different service areas to provide excellent support in running the event alongside key partners from the emergency services in particular.

The Guildhall was now part of the Lincoln tourism trail and Councillor Murray reported that the Civic Team had done the Council proud in opening up the building to the public. This year marked 500 years since the last major works had been completed on the building, which had been used as a meeting place to govern the business of the city since 1237. Exciting events to commemorate this anniversary would take place later this year.

Councillor Murray reported that the Council's car parks had responded to anti-social behaviour by investing in security equipment to keep people safe. CCTV and sensor equipment to deter anti-social behaviour had been put in place with an immediate positive effect. He highlighted that staff continued to provide an excellent service despite some difficult situations, but emphasised the importance of protecting staff.

The Council's Planning and Heritage Officers had worked closely with the Co-operative in relation to the re-development of the Sincil Street area. The results were excellent and were being viewed as an exemplar by an increasing number of planning, heritage and regeneration professionals both regionally and nationally. Councillor Murray was keen for people to understand the important role that the Council's officers were playing in support of these re-development works.

Councillor Eddie Strenziel referred to the proposed Western Growth Corridor development which sought to provide good quality homes and new leisure facilities on the Swanpool site linking into the city centre. He reflected on plans he had seen in 2007 which involved the proposal commencing development from Beevor Street going out towards Birchwood Avenue and Skellingthorpe Road. However, the latest plans indicated that development would now commence from Birchwood Avenue and Skellingthorpe Road. Councillor Strenziel felt that this would cause unnecessary disruption to residents and commuters and questioned the feasibility in respect of revenue generation to fund a new railway bridge, which was a fundamental part of the whole development. He therefore asked the Portfolio Holder to give due consideration to the feasibility of commencing the development works from Birchwood Avenue and Skellingthorpe Road.

Councillor Murray emphasised that the Western Growth Corridor development was vital for Lincoln and was the largest and most sustainable urban extension in the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan. He agreed to raise Councillor Strenziel's concerns with officers.

Councillor Ronald Hills referred to the section in the report which highlighted that officers were looking into ways they could address developments in the central residential area of the city where on-street parking was at a premium. He made a plea from the perspective of the Planning Committee that any changes in respect of this issue be implemented as a citywide policy.

Councillor Hilton Spratt, regarding rat runs in the Sincil Bank area, suggested that it may have been a mistake to block off the bottom of Portland Street as part of recent redevelopments in the area. He added that consideration could perhaps be given to opening up Portland Street as a bus route only. With regard to car parking, he highlighted that residents in other areas off the high street such as Foster Street also suffered with a lack of parking provision due to commuters or shoppers parking outside their homes and walking into town. He therefore called for further Residents' Parking Schemes. Councillor Spratt was supportive of the introduction of CCTV in car parks to protect staff, stating that anyone working for the City of Lincoln Council should be able to undertake their duties without fear of abuse or threatening behaviour.

Councillor Murray reiterated the problem of rat-running in the Sincil Bank area from the perspective of unnecessary traffic and very poor air quality. Anything that could be done to help residents in that area would be beneficial and he agreed that it would be worth speaking to the County Council regarding bus movement in that area.

With regard to other Residents' Parking Schemes in the area, Foster Street was included in a consultation for a Residents' Parking Scheme where a vote in favour of a scheme had been confirmed.

Councillor Chris Burke said that improvements to the Sincil Bank area had been as a result of the valuable work undertaken by the Neighbourhood Team and the introduction of the Community Hub in the area. As a consequence, the number of people engaging in events in the area, including meetings of the Neighbourhood Board, had increased.

The report was noted.

(c) Report by Councillor Geoff Ellis - Chair of the Audit Committee

Councillor Geoff Ellis, Chair of the Audit Committee, presented a report which provided Council with an update on the work of the Committee. He took this opportunity to thank all members of the Committee for their contributions.

Councillor Ronald Hills thanked Councillor Ellis for his even handedness in chairing meetings of the Audit Committee.

Councillor Thomas Dyer, reflecting on problems experienced last year with the external auditors, asked what the Council could do to monitor the external auditors closer this year and ensure that the process ran much smoother.

Councillor Ellis provided an assurance that the Council would closely monitor its external auditors this year and that the Committee would be making representations throughout the year to ensure that work did not fall behind schedule.

The report was noted.

(d) Report by Councillor Gary Hewson - Chair of the Performance Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Gary Hewson, Chair of the Performance Scrutiny Committee, presented a report which provided Council with an update on the work of the Committee. He took this opportunity to thank all members of the Committee for the time they put into the work of the Committee and to officers, particularly from the Council's Policy Team, for their ongoing support.

Councillor Hewson emphasised the importance of the Performance Scrutiny Committee and its role in enabling all members, from the administration and the opposition, in holding the Executive and the performance of the Council's service delivery, to account.

Councillor Eddie Strenziel was concerned that the issue of homelessness still seemed to be prevalent in Lincoln, despite introducing measures in 2017 which were supposed to have addressed the issue. He understood that lots of organisations provided support to homeless people but questioned how joined up they were and whether they had opportunities to work together or share good practice. An issue such as homelessness required a joined up approach and so he suggested that the Council sought to arrange an event such as a conference to facilitate this.

Councillor Chris Burke highlighted that the Council was doing the best it could through its Intervention Team to tackle the issue of homelessness. He added that a lot of the problems were beyond the Council's own powers and highlighted that budget cuts and the loss of seven hostels in ten years had contributed to the problem in Lincoln.

Councillor Donald Nannestad highlighted that a conference was recently held at the Showroom in Lincoln involving over 100 people from a range of organisations regarding homelessness in the city.

Councillor Hewson explained that changes in the Homelessness Act placed more pressure on the City Council but that the authority worked very hard through intervention and prevention. The City Council had also allocated 20 of its properties in partnership with the organisation P3 and was using all means possible to address homelessness. He added, however, that this was not an easy situation to resolve and that the authority and partners were doing the best they could with the resources available to them.

Councillor Ronald Hills praised the work of the Committee and the important role it undertook. He took this opportunity to thank the Chair for all of his work and even handedness with the Committee.

Councillor Thomas Dyer echoed Councillor Hills' sentiments. He referred to discussions last year where a proposal was put forward to place time limits on meetings of Scrutiny Committee meetings. He therefore sought assurances that the Executive would not be able to control or influence these meetings and that meetings would continue to last as long as they needed into order to conduct business as necessary.

Councillor Ric Metcalfe reminded Council that the Executive had not suggested or proposed any time limits associated with Scrutiny Committee meetings and in no way sought to curtail its very important role. Suggestions from some members

were put forward following a very long meeting of the Performance Scrutiny Committee last year to provide the Committee with the ability to defer items of business should meetings exceed a particular length, acknowledging that meetings were held in the evening. Such suggestions had not been formalised but Councillor Metcalfe reiterated that this was not an attempt to interfere with the Council's scrutiny function.

Councillor Hewson highlighted that the Ethics and Engagement Committee had previously considered this issue. He said that the Performance Scrutiny Committee sought to undertake business as efficiently as possible but agreed that this was not always easy. This was mainly due to the nature of the information presented which would always generate questions, adding that members should be able to take the opportunity to seek information and ask questions at these meetings to ensure the Committee undertook its role properly.

The report was noted.

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

Councillor Bill Bilton, Chair of the Policy Scrutiny Committee, presented a report which provided Council with an update on the work of the Committee. He took this opportunity to thank members of the Committee for the great effort that they put into the Committee and the business it conducted.

The report was noted.

30. Motion under Council Procedure Rule 14 - International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance Definition of Antisemitism

Councillor Rosie Kirk, Portfolio Holder for Reducing Inequalities, in presenting a motion highlighted that the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance was initiated in 1998 and that its aim was to unite Governments and experts to strengthen, advance and promote Holocaust education, research and remembrance, and to uphold the commitments to the 2000 Stockholm Declaration.

The Alliance's network was formed of trusted experts who shared their knowledge on early warning signs of present-day genocide and education on the Holocaust. This knowledge supported policymakers and educational curricular, with the key eight focus areas of the Alliance being:

- Antisemitism and Holocaust Denial
- Archives and Research
- Education
- Holocaust, Genocide & Crimes Against Humanity
- Genocide of the Roma
- Killing Sites
- Preserving Sites
- Remembrance

The Association's membership consisted of 33 member countries, with each country recognising that international political coordination was imperative to strengthen the moral commitment of societies and to combat growing Holocaust denial and antisemitism. It co-operated closely with eight other governmental

bodies which included Holocaust-related issues as part of their mandate. These eight governmental bodies were:

- United Nations
- UNESCO
- Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe/Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
- International Tracing Service
- European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights
- European Union
- Council of Europe
- Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany

The UK Government formally adopted the Alliance's working definition of antisemitism on 12 December 2016, which was as follows:

"Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities."

In addition the UK Government adopted the following 11 contemporary examples of antisemitism as part of Government policy:

- calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a radical ideology or an extremist view of religion;
- making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Jews as such or the power of Jews as collective — such as, especially but not exclusively, the myth about a world Jewish conspiracy or of Jews controlling the media, economy, government or other societal institutions;
- accusing Jews as a people of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Jewish person or group, or even for acts committed by non-Jews;
- denying the fact, scope, mechanisms (e.g. gas chambers) or intentionality of the genocide of the Jewish people at the hands of National Socialist Germany and its supporters and accomplices during World War II (the Holocaust);
- accusing the Jews as a people, or Israel as a state, of inventing or exaggerating the Holocaust;
- accusing Jewish citizens of being more loyal to Israel, or to the alleged priorities of Jews worldwide, than to the interests of their own nations;
- denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavor;
- applying double standards by requiring of it a behavior not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation;
- using the symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism (e.g., claims of Jews killing Jesus or blood libel) to characterize Israel or Israelis;
- drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis;
- holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the state of Israel.

The Stockholm Declaration was the outcome of the International Forum held in Stockholm in January 2000. The forum was attended by representatives from governments around the world and focused on Holocaust education, remembrance and research. During the forum all attendees signed a declaration committing to preserving the memory of those who had been lost in the

Holocaust. This became the 2000 Stockholm Declaration and had remained intact and unaltered, demonstrating its universal and enduring value.

Councillor Kirk therefore proposed that the Council:

- (1) Resolved to adopt the definition of antisemitism in full as set out by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance.
- (2) Pledged to combat this pernicious form of racism wherever it manifests itself no matter where, how or when.
- (3) Reaffirmed its condemnation of all forms of racism and discrimination based on religious belief (including Islamophobia), disability, race, gender or sexual orientation.

Councillor Lucinda Preston seconded the motion and expressed her sadness that the measure was so necessary. She reflected that antisemitism reflected one of the oldest forms of prejudice and that the holocaust was perhaps claimed or perceived as an isolated incident when in fact Jewish people had been the subject of persecution for hundreds of years. Such abuse was often subtle or carefully worded but unfortunately Councillor Preston reported that it was on the rise and called for everyone to be vigilant. There were approximately 280,000 Jewish people in the country, which represented one of the smallest minorities, with there being a small Jewish community in the city of Lincoln. Councillor Preston reflected on and shared her personal experiences of her visit to the Holocaust Education Centre near Newark. She said that the Council had done so much work to battle prejudice and sought the authority to demonstrate its support and solidarity towards the Jewish community.

Councillor Hilton Spratt supported the motion and shared his personal experiences of having visiting concentration camps in Poland, including Auschwitz.

Councillor Chris Burke highlighted the importance of the content of this motion to Lincoln's Jewish community.

Councillor Ric Metcalfe paid tribute to the moving speeches made in support of the motion. He reminded members that the Council had put equalities policies in place for many years but agreed that it was still necessary to support this motion in respect of antisemitism. This was both to recognise that antisemitism still existed in society and to provide a definition, making it absolutely clear what was meant by the term 'antisemitism'. Supporting this motion would reassert this Council's commitment to combat not just antisemitism but any form of racism.

Councillor Ronald Hills shared his personal experiences of having visited both the Holocaust Education Centre and the concentration camp at Auschwitz. He fully supported the motion and the stance that the City Council would decry any form of discrimination.

Councillor Edmund Strenziel shared his father's personal experiences of having served in Poland during World War II.

Councillor Jane Loffhagen reported that antisemitism was very prevalent in the city and encouraged anyone witnessing any form of such behaviour to take necessary action on behalf of those people who were suffering this abuse.

RESOLVED that the motion be approved.

31. Motion under Council Procedure Rule 14 - Standing up for Responsible Tax Conduct

Councillor Gary Hewson proposed the following motion:

Full Council notes that:

- (1) The pressure on organisations to pay the right amount of tax in the right place at the right time has never been stronger.
- (2) Polling from the Institute for Business Ethics finds that “corporate tax avoidance” has, since 2013, been the clear number one concern of the British public when it comes to business conduct.
- (3) Almost two-thirds (63%) of the public agree that the Government and local councils should consider a company’s ethics and how they pay their tax as well as value for money and quality of service provided, when undertaking procurement.
- (4) Around 17.5% of public contracts in the UK have been won by companies with links to tax havens.
- (5) It has been conservatively estimated that losses from multinational profit-shifting (just one form of tax avoidance) could be costing the UK some £7bn per annum in lost corporation tax revenues.
- (6) The Fair Tax Mark offers a means for business to demonstrate good tax conduct, and has been secured by organisations with a combined annual income of £50bn and more than 6,500 outlets and premises, including many social enterprises and co-operatives.

Full Council believes that:

- (7) Paying tax is often presented as a burden, but it shouldn’t be.
- (8) Tax enables the Council to provide local services and enables policing and defence. It also helps to counter financial inequalities and rebalance distorted economies.
- (9) As recipients of significant public funding, the Council should take the lead in the promotion of exemplary tax conduct; be that by ensuring that the contractors we enter into partnership with are paying their proper share of tax, or by refusing to enter into contractual arrangements when buying land or property if offshore tax arrangements are in place by the seller.
- (10) Where substantive stakes are held in private enterprises, the Council should use its influence ensure that such businesses are exemplars of tax transparency and tax avoidance is shunned - e.g., no use of marketed schemes requiring disclosure under DOTAS regulations (Disclosure Of Tax Avoidance Schemes) or arrangements that might fall foul of the General Anti-Abuse Rule.

- (11) More action is needed, however, current law significantly restricts councils' ability to either penalise poor tax conduct or reward good tax conduct, when buying goods or services.
- (12) Lincoln and the Council should stand up for responsible tax conduct and the Council should do what it can within existing frameworks and pledging to do more given the opportunity, as active supporters of international tax justice.

Full Council resolves to:

- (13) Approve the Councils for Fair Tax Declaration.
- (14) Lead by example and demonstrate good practice in our tax conduct, right across our activities.
- (15) Ensure our contractors implement IR35 robustly and pay a fair share of employment taxes, in line with our employees.
- (16) Not use offshore vehicles for the purchase of land and property, especially where this leads to reduced payments of stamp duty.
- (17) Undertake due diligence to ensure that not-for-profit structures are not being used inappropriately as an artificial device to reduce the payment of tax and business rates, which should benefit the City.
- (18) Demand clarity on the ultimate beneficial ownership of our suppliers and their consolidated profit & loss position.
- (19) Promote Fair Tax Mark certification for any business in which we have a significant stake and where corporation tax is due.
- (20) Support Fair Tax Week events in the area, and celebrate the tax contribution made by responsible local businesses who say what they pay with pride.
- (21) Support calls for urgent reform of EU and UK law to enable the Council and all other local authorities to better penalise poor tax conduct and reward good tax conduct through their procurement policies, to achieve best economic value for Lincoln businesses and residents.

Councillor Hewson, in presenting the motion, outlined that other Councils across the country with different political leadership had supported this motion.

Councillor Ric Metcalfe seconded the motion, stating that tax avoidance and evasion cost everyone billions of pounds per year. He acknowledged that multi-national companies shifted profits to low tax jurisdictions with some legitimised through tax avoidance notions. The Government had published a strategy in 2019 for dealing with this issue entitled 'no safe havens'. This provided for a global exchange of information and introduced a range of penalties, supporting internationally agreed rules. Councillor Metcalfe agreed that the introduction of such a strategy was a step in the right direction but felt that there was significantly more to be done and that local authorities should also play their part. An essential element was to maximise revenues nationwide to meet the cost of public services.

Councillor Ronald Hills reflected on the two key words of avoidance and evasion and the inference that the two terms were interchangeable, stating that tax avoidance was completely legal whereas tax evasion was a criminal offence. He was concerned that the motion was seeking to provide the Council with powers to refuse contracts to businesses in relation to tax avoidance, explaining that anyone who completed a tax return could be considered guilty of tax avoidance. Councillor Hills was of the view that what really mattered was the law of the land, with tax evasion being the significant factor, and proposed an amendment to remove (13) to (20) of the resolution so that the Council resolved to:

‘Support calls for urgent reform of EU and UK law to enable the Council and all other local authorities to better penalise poor tax conduct and reward good tax conduct through their procurement policies, to achieve best economic value for Lincoln businesses and residents.’

Councillor Edmund Strengiel seconded the amendment and referred to the marriage allowance as an example of how individuals were encouraged to avoid tax, not evade it. He was keen to ensure that small businesses were not negatively impacted as a result of such a motion.

Councillor Metcalfe drew members’ attention to (17) of the resolution which read:

‘Full Council resolves to undertake due diligence to ensure that not-for-profit structures are not being used inappropriately as an artificial device to reduce the payment of tax and business rates, which should benefit the city.’

He was of the view that more action was required because the current law restricted the Council’s ability to be able to adequately act. He was of the view that the reasoning for the amendment was a misrepresentation of the intention of the motion and that the amendment removed most of the good things about improving best practice.

A vote was held on the amendment and the amendment was lost.

Returning to the original motion, Councillor Lucinda Preston agreed that the motion represented best practice, with fair taxation essential for the delivery of publicly funded services.

Councillor Thomas Dyer did not feel that the majority of the motion was relevant to the City Council and that it represented virtue signalling. He was concerned that small businesses would find it even more difficult to enter the tendering process for contracts as a result of this motion being implemented.

Councillor Hilton Spratt reiterated that tax evasion was a criminal offence whereas tax avoidance was perfectly legal. With regard to tax avoidance, he outlined that this was a moral consideration but highlighted that tax was not based upon what was moral, it was based upon what the Government agreed should be levied.

Councillor Hewson acknowledged that more needed to be done by central Government but explained that the motion represented the City Council taking a stance and seeking to deliver best practice.

RESOLVED that the motion be approved.

32. Motion under Procedure Rule 14 - Use of Fireworks

Councillor Naomi Tweddle, in proposing a motion, recognised that fireworks were used by people throughout the year to mark different events and that, whilst they could bring much enjoyment to some people, they could cause significant problems and fear for other people and animals, including pets, farm livestock and wildlife.

Councillor Tweddle explained that studies had found fireworks to be the most common cause for fear responses in dogs. Such a fear could be treated in the long term but owners needed to prepare themselves and their pets sooner, rather than just before the fireworks were let off. It was therefore important to raise awareness about the impact of fireworks on animals to the wider public to encourage them to be more considerate of those with pets, horses and livestock as well as local wildlife. Other measures that could be introduced included:

- introducing a limit on the public use of fireworks on or close to specific dates and times;
- tightening restrictions on the sale of fireworks in the run up to Bonfire night;
- reducing the maximum noise level of fireworks sold to the public, ensuring they were labelled accurately;
- licensing all public firework displays and ensuring displays were better advertised to the public.

Councillor Tweddle proposed that the Council resolved to:

- (1) Require all public firework displays within the local authority boundaries to be advertised in advance of the event, allowing residents to take precautions for their animals and vulnerable people.
- (2) Actively promote a public awareness campaign about the impact of fireworks on animal welfare and vulnerable people – including the precautions that can be taken to mitigate risks.
- (3) Write to the UK Government urging them to introduce legislation to limit the maximum noise level of fireworks to 90dB for those sold to the public for private displays
- (4) Encourage local suppliers of fireworks to stock 'quieter' fireworks for public display.

Councillor Gary Hewson seconded the motion and felt that residents would see the Council as a listening, caring and responsible authority should it be approved.

Councillor Andy Kerry supported the motion but felt that more emphasis should be placed on vulnerable people, particularly armed forces veterans who may experience Post Traumatic Stress Disorder or similar mental health issues.

Councillor Ronald Hills made the point that it was usually in the event's best interests to advertise their fireworks displays to ensure that as many people attended as possible due to public displays usually taking the form of fundraisers.

RESOLVED that the motion be approved.

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

(a) Council Tax Base

It was proposed, seconded and RESOLVED that Council:

- (1) Notes that there are no special items as defined in Section 35 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended) applicable to any part or parts of the City of Lincoln local authority area.
- (2) Approves the Chief Finance Officer's calculation of the Council Tax Base for the financial year commencing 1 April 2020 and ending 31 March 2021, as set out in Appendix B of the report.
- (3) Approves, in accordance with the Chief Finance Officer's calculation, and pursuant to the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992 (as amended), that the Council Tax Base for the 2020/21 financial year is 24,689.50.

(b) Localised Council Tax Support Scheme 2020/21

It was proposed, seconded and RESOLVED that Council:

- (1) Notes consultation responses relating to the Localised Council Tax Support Scheme for 2020/21.
- (2) Approves a proposed 'no change' Council Tax Support Scheme for 2020/21 as set out in section 4 of the report.
- (3) Approves continuation of the £20,000 Exceptional Hardship Fund for 2020/21 to top up Council Tax Support awards in appropriate cases.
- (4) Approves Council Tax changes for 2020/21, being:
 - Care Leavers: 100% Council Tax exemption being extended up to their 25th birthday;
 - Council Tax empty homes premium: for any property empty between five and ten years to receive a premium of 200% (giving a total Council Tax charge of up to 300%), but subject to criteria as outlined in Appendix 3 of the report.

(c) Council House and Garage Rents 2020/21

It was proposed, seconded and RESOLVED that

- (1) The basis of rent calculation for changes to individual council house rents, as set out in paragraph five of the report, representing an increase in the average calculated 52 week council house net rent in 2020/21 of 2.7% for social housing rents at £1.83 per week and affordable rents at £2.85 per week increase per property be approved.
- (2) The increase of garage rents for 2020/21 in accordance with the proposal in paragraph 6.1 of the report by 3% be approved.

(d) Private Sector Housing Enforcement

It was proposed, seconded and RESOLVED that Council:

- (1) Approves the introduction of a variable charge to recover costs associated with the service of specified enforcement notices, as set out in paragraph 4.4 of the report but that charges do not apply to owner occupiers.
- (2) Approves the introduction of a charge for Civil Penalties issued under the provisions of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 of up to £30,000 per offence as an alternative to prosecution for specific offences under the Housing Act 2004.
- (3) Approves the introduction of a penalty notice charge under the provisions of the Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations 2015 and that the penalty be set at £5,000, with a reduction to £2,500 for the first breach if the penalty charge is paid within 14 days, and repeat breaches be set at £5,000 with no discount for early payment.
- (4) Approves the removal of the 5% discount off the Houses in Multiple Occupation basis fee for multiple applications.
- (5) Delegates authority to the Assistant Director for Health and Environment in relation to (1) to (3) above in order that they can agree, in certain circumstances, to reduce or waive the charge.

(e) Hartsholme Country Park - Fees and Charges

It was proposed, seconded and RESOLVED that:

- (1) The principle of setting some fees two years ahead where there is a business need be approved and that this be reflected in future fee and charge setting reports to Council.
- (2) The Council approves the use of the fees and charges schedule attached at Appendix A to the report.

(f) Internal Audit Charter

It was proposed, second and RESOLVED that the Internal Audit Charter be approved.

(g) Code of Conduct and Constitutional Changes

It was proposed, seconded and RESOLVED that:

- (1) The revised Member Code of Conduct be approved.
- (2) The Leader of the Council be given the power to suspend the Chief Executive, immediately in the event of an emergency.
- (3) The Constitution be amended to formally record the existence of the Member Investigating and Disciplinary Committee.