

Present: Councillor Bill Bilton (*in the Chair*),
Councillor Calum Watt, Councillor Liz Bushell, Councillor
Bill Mara, Councillor Alan Briggs and Councillor
Rebecca Longbottom

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Jane Loffhagen, Councillor Mark Storer and
Councillor Pat Vaughan

20. Confirmation of Minutes - 5 October 2021

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 5 October 2021 be confirmed.

21. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

22. Localised Council Tax Support Scheme 2022/23

Martin Walmsley, Head of Shared Revenues and Benefits

- a. presented the proposed scheme for Local Council Tax Support for the financial year 2022/23, as part of the formal consultation period, as well as regarding proposals made in relation to an Exceptional Hardship Payments Scheme.
- b. gave the background to the scheme as detailed at paragraph 2 of the report and advised that there were currently 8870 residents claiming Council Tax Support in Lincoln.
- c. advised that there were 2,704 pensioners in receipt of Council Tax Support and they were protected under the legislation so that they would not be affected by any changes made to the Council Tax Support Scheme.
- d. further advised that there were 6166 working claimants who would be affected by any changes made to the scheme, and such any potential reduction in support being provided. Unless a decision by the Council was made to apply scheme changes to vulnerable working-age customers, the localised Council Tax Scheme.
- e. highlighted the impacts of Covid-19 on the amount of Council Tax Scheme awarded, with significant increases in caseload and cost of the scheme as detailed at paragraph 3 of the report.
- f. referred to paragraph 4 of the report and gave an overview of the current Council Tax Support Scheme.
- g. advised that based on the current core elements of the existing scheme, caseload increases of 0% and 5% had been modelled, along with Council Tax increases of 1.9% and 2.5%. These were summarised in Appendix 1 of the report which gave an indication of the potential cost and savings to

the City of Lincoln. Also included was the potential value for non-collection (based on projected collection in the tax base of 98.75%)

- h. explained that as a billing authority the Council could decide whether or not to amend core elements of its Council Tax Support scheme each year. Officers were proposing options for consultation to change certain core elements of the scheme which were summarised at Appendix 1 of the report.
- i. referred to paragraph 5.3 and 5.4 of the report and explained the technical amendments and assumptions that had been made in developing the modelling for each Council Tax Support Scheme.
- j. explained option 2 the 'All Working Age' Banded scheme as detailed at paragraph 5.6 of the report and advised that it was an option put forward and would make a fundamental change to the way that the Council Tax Support Scheme was calculated for all working-age customers.
- k. referred to paragraph 5.7 of the report and explained the 'De Minimis' Scheme which was put forward as option 3.
- l. referred to paragraph 5.8 of the report which detailed the Exceptional Hardship Payments Scheme and proposed that the Exceptional Hardship Budget be increased from £20,000 to £25,000 for 2022/23.
- m. asked for committee's consideration and comments as part of the formal consultation process.

Members discussed the Exceptional Hardship Scheme and supported the proposed increase in budget to £25K which they felt was reasonable considering the current circumstances.

The committee discussed in detail the options proposed and were minded to support option 2 which was the "All Working Age" banded scheme. It was felt that this option would be the best option for residents and would also be more streamlined for the Council to administer. Members questioned how many residents would 'lose out' in the scheme and requested information on which band would be affected by this. Martin Walmsley, Head of Shared Revenues and Benefits responded that the scheme would be continued to be modelled based on the case load, to reduce the number of 'losers' as much as possible. The information on the affected band would be circulated to members following the meeting and be included within the Executive report.

RESOLVED that

- 1. option 2 "All Working Age" Banded Scheme, as set out in paragraph 5.6 of the report be supported.
- 2. the proposed increase of the £5,000 to £25,000, in the Exceptional Hardship fund for 2022/23 to top up Council Tax support awards in appropriate cases be supported.

23. Draft City of Lincoln Council Decarbonisation Strategy and Action Plan Report

Kate Bell, Climate Change Manager

- a. presented the City of Lincoln Council's Decarbonisation Strategy and Action plan for consideration prior to referral to Executive for approval.
- b. advised that full Council had passed a motion to Declare a Climate and Environmental Emergency which resolved to deliver a carbon neutral vision for Lincoln by 2030.
- c. referred to a draft copy of the Decarbonisation Plan at Appendix 1 of the report and advised that the plan set out how the council intended to achieve net zero carbon for its own operations and services and contribute towards Lincoln's area wide carbon neutral ambitions.
- d. explained that the basis of the draft Decarbonisation Plan was to provide a comprehensive assessment of the carbon impact of the Councils own operations which included a calculation of our carbon footprint and an action plan.
- e. advised that the plan identified eight decarbonisation pathways which included Carbon data where available and identified key challenges and opportunities for each pathway towards a net zero carbon target by 2030.
- f. advised that the plan would need to be reviewed and updated annually to reflect emerging knowledge and understanding to ensure the council achieved a net zero carbon target by 2030.
- g. invited committee's questions and comments.

Question: Referred to the decarbonising of Lincoln Central Market and asked if officers were confident that net zero carbon would be achieved.

Response: A full plan had been put in place and an application for funding had been submitted. The gas had been removed and the building had been insulated, also the majority of the electricity used would be renewable.

Question: Asked if there were plans to decarbonise City Hall.

Response: There were detailed feasibility works planned as part of a larger piece of work regarding how the building would be used in the future.

Question: Referred to the Action Plan at Appendix 1 of the report and asked when the "Reuse and Recycle all IT waste" would be completed.

Response: Further information was required from IT. The action plan was a working document and would be updated regularly.

Question: Asked if there would be more trees planted in Lincoln.

Response: There was funding available for trees, the City Council were working with Lincolnshire County Council to identify suitable locations. The tree coverage in Lincoln City was significantly higher than some rural areas and therefore it was about managing and maintaining the current tree coverage in the City. A tree strategy would be produced in future.

RESOLVED that the Decarbonisation Strategy and Action Plan be supported and referred to Executive for consideration.

24. Resident Engagement, Building Safety

Chris Morton, Resident Involvement Manager

- a. presented to Policy Scrutiny Committee the draft Resident Engagement Strategy for building safety for comments prior to referral to Executive.
- b. gave the background to the Strategy as detailed at paragraph 2 of the report and advised that following the Grenfell tragedy in 2017 the government launched a review to improve building safety in Higher Risk Residential Buildings.
- c. advised that the Resident Engagement Strategy for Lincoln had been developed in consultation with elected members, staff and the Lincoln Tenants Panel. It was also in line with the best practise from the housing sector.
- d. explained that the strategy set out the Council's approach to engaging with residents and had three main strands:
 - Information and understanding
 - Resident and landlords' responsibilities
 - Action to take in the event of a fire
- e. referred to the Action Plan at Appendix 2 of the report and advised that to deliver the Engagement Strategy the Council would need to meet all of the actions contained within the action plan.
- f. invited committee's questions and comments

Question: Referred to the Building Safety Bill and asked if the strategy had been written prior to the legislation being passed.

Response: The Strategy had been written based on the best practice that had been received. The Strategy and Action Plan could be amended if necessary once the legislation was passed.

Question: Referred to the Action Plan at Appendix 1 of the report and asked if the Building Safety Manager was a new role that would be appointed to or if it was covered by existing posts.

Response: A response would be circulated following the meeting.

The Chair commented that it was important to have someone who was responsible for the Action Plan and requested that Executive provide resources as necessary to support this.

RESOLVED that the Resident Engagement Strategy for building safety be supported and referred to Executive for approval.

25. Health Scrutiny Update

The Chair of Policy Scrutiny Committee updated members of the business that had been discussed at the Health Scrutiny meeting held on 13 October 2021, these were:

- Lincolnshire Acute Services Review
- General Practice Access
- Lincolnshire Clinical Commissioning Group – Support for General Practice

He further advised that he had raised the question regarding the significant disparities in the health of people living in different wards in Lincoln and had received a response from Public Health who felt that they were doing all they could to address the issue. The City of Lincoln Council was currently gathering and reviewing data which would be used to develop an action plan to address this issue and would be brought to a future committee.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

26. Policy Scrutiny Work Programme 2021-22 and Executive Work Programme Update

The Democratic Services Officer:

- a. presented the report 'Policy Scrutiny Work Programme 21-22 and Executive Work Programme Update'.
- b. presented the Executive Work Programme November 2021 – October 2022.
- 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.

Members made no further comments or suggestions regarding the Policy Scrutiny work programme.

RESOLVED that:

1. the work Policy Scrutiny work programme be noted.
2. the Executive work programme be noted.