

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

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Hilton Spratt

33. Confirmation of Minutes - 29 November 2022

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 29 November 2022 be confirmed and signed by the Chair as an accurate record.

34. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Pat Vaughan declared a Personal Interest with regard to the agenda item entitled 'Fees and Charges'.

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

35. Mayor's Announcements

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

- Opening of the 40th Anniversary Lincoln Christmas Market
- Welcoming German guests including the Oberburgermeister
- Attendance to Cinderella in Pantomime
- Christmas Carol Concerts
- The 2022 Lincoln Santa Fun Run and Walk

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

No questions had been submitted by members of the public.

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

Councillor Martin Christopher to Councillor Ric Metcalfe, Portfolio Holder for Our People and Resources

Question

The waste to energy facility at North Hykeham has made a considerable profit this year burning waste we pay an equally considerable sum to collect for them. Due to energy price increases this past year, it has allegedly paid approximately £3,000,000 in profit share to the County Council. I would like to know if any of this money will come back to us?

Answer

There were no requirements for any Waste Disposal Authority to make payments to a Waste Collection Authority if the value of any commodities collected, resulted in the generation of an income stream. Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) had not declared any intention as to how they planned to use any 'windfall income', but it would feature as an issue in future Lincolnshire Waste Partnership meetings.

Councillor Clare Smalley to Councillor Donald Nannestad, Portfolio Holder for Quality Housing

Question

Following the tragic death of a young child in Rochdale caused by mould in the boy's home, I understand that many residents have been reporting similar issues in our own properties. How many have we received since this case was in the news please?

Answer

All reports of damp and mould were treated seriously and we responded to all service requests. If damp and mould was left untreated within a property and all the causes of damp and mould were not adequately identified or resolved, this could cause serious health complications to our customers, especially those under 16 and over 65.

The Portfolio Holder confirmed that further to 14/11/2022, the date of publicity post inquest into the tragic death of Awaab Ishak, the current data relating to the reports of damp and mould were:

- 319 households had reported damp and mould within their properties to the Council.
- Our repairs service (HRS) had conducted inspections and completed all identified repairs at 71 of those properties. These repairs had now been billed and the repairs closed.
- 248 jobs remained open for HRS to complete.

The Portfolio Holder confirmed that the 248 jobs were at various stages from pre-inspection, works ordered, works completed on site and due to be billed. As part of the billing process, we needed to wait a minimum of 30 days for all costs to be allocated to jobs before they could be set to 'closed' and therefore, the true figure of open jobs would appear inflated whilst the billing process completed its cycle.

Supplementary

Were any of the homes awaiting repairs, classed as a danger to health?

Answer

All cases of damp and mould were treated seriously with considerable time given to evaluate the problem. The Portfolio Holder confirmed that figures of Category A Hazards due to damp and mould would be distributed to members further to the meeting.

Councillor Emily Wood to Councillor Donald Nannestad, Portfolio Holder for Quality Housing

Question

The Government have announced £4,000,000 pounds of extra funding to help deal with homelessness, £803,422 of which will be directly for Lincoln. Could the Portfolio holder update us on what this money will be spent on?

Answer

The money referred to was the Homelessness Prevention Grant for 2023/24 and 2024/25. This was funding that the Council had received for a number of years. The current amount was consistent with expectation of an inflationary uplift. We continued to finalise the likely spend for the funding but confirmed projects were:

- Staffing – additional Homelessness Case Workers, 2 x Private Housing Liaison Officers and 2 x Temporary Accommodation Officers
- Access to private rented accommodation – in particular rent deposits
- Sanctuary Scheme
- Temporary Accommodation provision
- Homelessness Research leading to additional Prevention options

It was added that homelessness figures had risen by 35% per quarter this year, caused by a variety of reasons.

Councillor Thomas Dyer to Councillor Neil Murray, Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth

Question

Could the Portfolio Holder provide a breakdown of how many and what sort of injuries were treated by the first aiders at the 2022 Lincoln Christmas Market?

Answer

The 2022 Lincoln Christmas Market enjoyed its 40th anniversary and it was the busiest on record. Over 320,000 people visited the market over the four day period. As with any large event, there were a number of medical referrals. These totalled 82, which was not considered to be a large number for the volume of people who attended. The breakdown of injuries included:

- Thursday - 8 injuries were recorded which included fractures, minor cuts and grazes and head injury (cut to head)

- Friday – 20 injuries were recorded which included fractures, dislocation, minor cuts and grazes, blisters, diabetic, faints, seizure, nosebleed and vomiting
- Saturday – 38 injuries were recorded which included fractures, seizure, chest pain, fall (at home), dizzy/vomiting, minor cuts and grazes, blisters, diabetic, faints, abdominal pain, diabetic, sprain and panic attack
- Sunday – 16 injuries were recorded which included seizure, back pain, chest pain, faint and minor cuts and grazes

Supplementary

Were any injuries a result of poor crowd management?

Answer

All measures had been adhered to and Lincoln were nationally renowned for its excellence in safety procedures. Recognition was given to Council Officers, the Police, and the Ambulance service who continued to provide brilliant service as they had over the last 40 years. Injuries were not caused by poor crowd management and were a result of individuals that weren't very well and/or minor injuries. It was reiterated that the 40th anniversary of the Lincoln Christmas Market saw the biggest numbers ever recorded and made for great anniversary market experience.

Councillor Mark Storer to Councillor Ric Metcalfe, Portfolio Holder for Our People and Resources

Question

Could the Leader of the Council report on how many Assistant Directors were appointed without the applicants being interviewed by the cross-party Member Appointment Panel in the last year?

Answer

There were no permanent Assistant Director posts appointed without the applicants being interviewed by the cross-party Member Appointment Panel in the last year.

A fixed term contract post was recruited to and it was confirmed that should this role become a permanent post, the normal approval of Executive and subsequent recruitment process would apply which would include that of a Member Appointment Panel.

Supplementary

It was concerning that there appeared to be a lack of openness from a publicly funded organisation. Could the Portfolio Holder provide further reassurance that the Council would be more transparent with appointment of Executive Directors?

Answer

There was no case to be made that the Council had been less than open. The fixed term contract post had been taken through Executive, open for scrutiny and therefore, subject to the call-in procedure. In addition, procedures allowed for

temporary appointment without a Member Appointment Panel. Reassurance was given that in the future, if the need arose that temporary appointments needed to be made at senior level, the practice of consulting with the Leader of the Opposition would occur.

Councillor Rachel Storer to Councillor Bob Bushell, Portfolio Holder for Remarkable Place

Question

How many fines were issued by the City Council in 2022 for fly-tipping?

Answer

Fly tipping was investigated as it was reported prior to arrangement of its timely removal. Where evidence of the perpetrator of fly tipping was available, a range of options were available. In 2022 we issued:

- Littering Fixed Penalty Notices - 1
- Littering Prosecutions - 0
- Fly Tipping Fixed Penalty Notices - 11
- Fly Tipping Prosecutions - 1
- Fly Tipping Community Protection Notice Warnings - 11
- Fly Tipping Community Protection Notices - 1

All were separate and distinct cases.

Supplementary

Could the Portfolio Holder increase awareness in residents of the impacts and penalties of fly tipping to continue to do all we can to crack down on those who break the law?

Answer

We worked within Lincoln Waste Partnership and had a Communications strategy to educate people to remind residents of their legal duty to dispose of rubbish in accordance with the law. In addition, individuals were educated that fly-tipping was considered anti-social behaviour and informed of the consequences that could arise. It was added that people advertised online to dispose of rubbish, however it was important to be aware that the person paying for that service remained responsible for the rubbish if fly tipped. Businesses should continue to dispose of rubbish appropriately. In the last quarter, there had been a slight reduction in fly tipping following a robust response. Proactive work with residents would continue.

Councillor Alan Briggs to Councillor Donald Nannestad, Portfolio Holder for Quality Housing

Question

Can the Portfolio Holder outline how many open cases there are for residents with mould complaints within the Housing Revenue Account?

Answer

There were 248 cases open for Housing Repair Services to complete. We had reviewed our service delivery as part of our response to the increase in reports of damp and mould within our properties and we had introduced the following:

1. All our operatives, Team Leaders, Project Officers, Housing Officers, and elements of Customer Service had received damp, mould and condensation training
2. The Housing Repairs Service had created a dedicated 'fast response team' which consisted of a Team Leader and a team of operatives to respond to work requests which related to damp and mould
3. We had engaged with an accredited damp and mould advisor to assist in the inspection of more complex cases
4. We had also reviewed and updated our advice and guidance to customers on our website
5. We were currently working on an internal guidance note to our staff across Maintenance and Investment, Housing and Customer Services which aimed to clarify how we dealt with and resolved service requests that related to damp and mould.
6. We were working on introducing separate repair categories which related to damp and mould that would sit outside of scheduled repairs with a quicker response time

Supplementary

What are your proposals to reduce the figure to zero?

Answer

Until recently, there had been very low levels of complaints of mould and damp within our properties. Since the tragic death of Awaab Ishak in Rochdale, cases had increased as there was now an understanding of the dangers of damp and mould. It was not a Council house issue or a property age concern. Damp and mould could affect any house, despite the age of the property. We continued to work hard through the list of 26 recommendations identified by the Housing Ombudsman to ensure we complied in full. It would be difficult to state we could ever see a reduction to nil cases; however, we would continue to do our best.

Councillor Bill Mara to Councillor Bob Bushell, Portfolio Holder for Remarkable Place

Question

Could the Portfolio Holder update the Council with what feedback funeral providers gave the council in respect to the crematorium?

Answer

Staff at the Crematorium talked with Funeral Directors on a daily basis and if they had any concerns, they could raise them with any of the team and they would be dealt with.

We had not received any negative feedback and the little feedback we had received, was positive with regard to both the service and the team. The physical improvements at the crematorium over recent years had been well received by both Funeral directors and relatives attending services.

Councillor Matthew Fido to Councillor Sure Burke, Portfolio Holder for Reducing Inequality

Question

How many Antisocial Behaviour cases did the council positively resolve in 2022?

Answer

During 2022, we had closed 426 Cases of Antisocial Behaviour. The investigating Officer would only close an Antisocial Behaviour case for one of the following reasons:

- The complainant was satisfied that the enforcement/engagement action had 'resolved' the situation for them. (The complainant effectively requested that the case was closed)
- The complainant stopped engaging with us (we would class this as resolved as this effectively brought the case to a close as we could only assume they no longer needed us to investigate)
- There was a lack of evidence (this would be classed as resolved as we had investigated and were satisfied that there was no Antisocial Behaviour of which we could enforce or engage over)

Supplementary

During the summer of 2022, there was an incident at a Council property which had involved a house party hosted by a young person. There had been a great amount of damage to the property which included damage to doors and ceilings. What powers do the Council have, alongside other stakeholders such as the Police, to clamp down on antisocial behaviour?

Answer

Due to the complexity of the question, it was requested that the supplementary be emailed to the Portfolio Holder further to the meeting for consideration and response.

Councillor Eddie Strenziel to Councillor Bob Bushell, Portfolio Holder for Remarkable Place

Question

Could the Portfolio Holder provide an update on the bulky waste collection agreement with West Lindsay District Council?

Answer

There had been some delay in getting the necessary legal papers processed, however operational preparations were now well under way. Although delayed beyond our original hopes, it was expected that the new service should begin operations within approximately one month.

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

Question

On a regular basis the Lincoln Central Car Park is plagued with issues (payment machines not working, lifts not operating, barrier faults). Recently the IT infrastructure did not work which resulted in transactions not being processed. Could the Portfolio Holder outline why this car park continues to be plagued with various issues several years after its opening?

Answer

The issues referred to were not connected and the recent system failure which resulted in transactions not being processed was rare and related to an update to the system. This was resolved by the provider within 8 hours of the fault being registered. Officers have contacted the provider since to enquire whether altering the timing of the updates to the system could reduce the risk of this happening in the future. A 'pay on foot' system was a complex operation and occasional downtime was experienced across the industry. The ongoing issues associated with the lifts were being investigated by a structural engineer to understand what the cause could be. Despite some of the operational challenges, Lincoln Central has had its most successful year to date.

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

(a) Report by Councillor Bob Bushell, Portfolio Holder for Remarkable Place

Councillor Bob Bushell, Portfolio Holder for Remarkable Place, presented his report to Council, which had been set out on pages 11-40 of the agenda. Tributes were paid to all staff and contractors that had worked hard within the Portfolio.

The Council was provided with an opportunity to ask questions, where the following points were noted:

- The Portfolio Holder was not aware of any negative feedback regarding the appearance of the flower beds at Lincoln Crematorium and was proud of the progress made. The staff were commended for the pride they took in their work.
- The reopening of Yarborough Leisure Centre was welcomed and was completed within budget. The amount of compensation paid to Active Nation was financially sensitive information and in compliance with legal rules, would not be disclosed in the public domain.
- Any works identified at Yarborough Leisure Centre at an earlier date would have been completed in accordance with Health and Safety reports. Works had been carried out to a high standard and would be regularly scrutinised in the interest of public safety.

The report was noted.

(b) Report by Councillor Chris Burke, Portfolio Holder for Customer Experience and Review

Councillor Chris Burke, Portfolio Holder for Customer Experience and Review, presented his report to Council, which had been set out on pages 41-48 of the agenda.

The Council was provided with an opportunity to ask questions, where the following points were noted:

Councillor Chris Burke, Portfolio Holder for Customer Experience and Review, presented his report to Council, which had been set out on pages 41-48 of the agenda.

The Council was provided with an opportunity to ask questions, where the following points were noted:

- The efforts of the City Solicitor and Democratic Services team resulted in a smooth and successful planning meeting which considered the Council's largest planning application on the 12 January 2022.
- The dedication and commitment from the Democratic Services team ensured elections continued to be successful. Recognition and thanks were given to Julie Rouston prior to her retirement. Her work over many years to ensure the democratic process expedited at all times, was appreciated and she was considered to be an excellent employee of the Council.
- It was important to balance the request for live streaming and initial cost of the equipment to provide the service. The Portfolio Holder was aware of the need for an increase in accountability and openness to the public and this was of importance.
- Customer services vacancies were being dealt with however it was important to fill vacancies with the right staff. Call waiting times had reduced further to appointment of additional staff. Recognition was given to customer service staff for their commendable work, empathy, and commitment to customer care.

The report was noted.

(c) Report by Councillor Jane Loffhagen, Chair of Policy Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Jane Loffhagen, Chair of Policy Scrutiny Committee presented her report to Council, which had been set out on pages 49-50 of the agenda. Councillor Loffhagen highlighted that the minutes of the Committee were available to the public.

The report was noted.

(d) Report by Councillor Rebecca Longbottom: Chair of Audit Committee

Councillor Rebecca Longbottom, Chair of Audit Committee presented her report to Council, which had been set out on pages 51-62 of the agenda. Thanks were expressed to members of Audit Committee for contributions and officers who had supported the work of the Committee.

The report was noted.

39. Fees and Charges

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

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

(a) Council Tax Base 2023/24

It was moved by Councillor Ric Metcalfe and seconded by Councillor Donald Nannestad that the Council Tax Base 2023/24 be approved.

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

RESOLVED

That the Council Tax Base 2023/24 be approved.

(b) Localised Council Tax Support Scheme 2023/24

It was moved by Councillor Ric Metcalfe and seconded by Councillor Donald Nannestad that the Localised Council Tax Support Scheme 2023/24 be approved.

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

RESOLVED

That the Localised Council Tax Support Scheme 2023/24 be approved.

(c) Review of the Constitution - Financial Procedure Rules

It was moved by Councillor Ric Metcalfe and seconded by Councillor Donald Nannestad that the Review of the Constitution – Financial Procedure Rules be approved.

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

RESOLVED

That the Review of the Constitution – Financial Procedure Rules be approved.

(d) Council House and Garage Rents 2023/24

It was moved by Councillor Donald Nannestad and seconded by Councillor Ric Metcalfe that the Council House and Garage Rents 2023/24 be approved.

Councillor Thomas Dyer highlighted that the Conservative party supported proposed rent increases and given the demand and increase in cost of materials, the rent increase was reasonable. However, it was essential to ensure that

service provision was maintained especially in the circumstance of rental increase.

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

RESOLVED

That the Council House and Garage Rents 2023/24 be approved.

Councillor Clare Smalley and Councillor Martin Christopher requested that their votes against the proposals be recorded.