

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 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 Hilton Spratt, Councillor Mark Storer,
Councillor Rachel Storer, Councillor Naomi Tweddle,
Councillor Pat Vaughan, Councillor Calum Watt,
Councillor Joshua Wells, Councillor Emily Wood and
Councillor Loraine Woolley

Apologies for Absence: Councillor David Clarkson, Councillor Thomas Dyer and
Councillor Edmund Strengiel

17. Moment of Silence

The Council observed a minute's silence to mourn the passing of Her Majesty The Queen Elizabeth II.

The Council also observed a minute's silence in memory of former city councillor, mayor and sheriff, David Jackson.

18. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Pat Vaughan declared a Personal Interest with regard to the agenda item titled 'Councillor R Metcalfe, Portfolio Holder, Our People and Resources'.

Reason: His daughter worked within the benefits department at the City of Lincoln Council, and similarly his granddaughter worked in the finance department.

19. Confirmation of Minutes - 21 June 2022

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 18 October 2022 be confirmed and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

20. Mayor's Announcements

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

- The Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth games Queen's Baton Relay, which had visited Lincoln.
- Bishop Grosseteste University graduation.
- Ceremonies to mark the passing of Her Majesty The Queen Elizabeth II.
- Local Proclamation ceremonies for King Charles III.
- RAF Scampton Closure Parade.
- The launched of a TikTok account for the Mayor of Lincoln.

- The unveiling of the George Boole Statue at Lincoln Central Railway Station.

The Mayor also took the opportunity to promote two events to raise money for her chosen charities.

21. 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.

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

Councillor Clare Smalley to Councillor Ric Metcalfe, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Our People and Resources

Question

Whilst cost of living remained a concern, with food and bills rising, and the council is under similar pressures, what assurances could be given to residents and tenants that essential services would not be cut?

Reply

All political groups across the council had been briefed by senior finance colleagues on the financial position of the Council. A range of options were currently being explored by the Council to close the financial shortfall. However, all options would include difficult decisions to be made and therefore it was not possible to provide any assurances. Options would continue to be explored and shared with all councillors in due course.

Councillor Martin Christopher to Councillor Donald Nannestad, Portfolio Holder for Quality Housing

Question

How many homes would be needed to provide adequate housing provision for every family currently on our waiting list?

Reply

It was noted that the Council did not operate a waiting list, it had a housing register, which was split into bands 1,2 and 3.

Bands 1 and 2 relate to demonstratable housing need:-

Requirement:-

1 Bed 282

2 Bed 192

3 bed 227

4+ Bed 30

Therefore to accommodate this need the council would require 731 properties split in house type as above.

Band 3 is defined as having very little or no housing need.

Requirement:-

1 Bed 530

2 Bed 233

3 Bed 69

4+ Bed 1

Therefore, if the council were to accommodate all band three customers as well, the council would need an additional 833 properties split in the house type as above.

In summary, to accommodate all those on the current register the Council would require:

812 one-bedroom homes

425 two-bedroom homes

296 three-bedroom homes

32 four (+) bedroom homes.

This would create a grand total of 1,565 additional homes.

However, it was clearly not as simple as this as you would normally provide approximately 15% of unmet housing need, because if you provide for everyone then when a property becomes vacant arguably you would have no new tenants to take up the void.

Supplementary

If there were 1,565 inadequately housed, why was it that this number did not appear on the housing register?

Reply

It was reiterated that there were 833 considered to be inadequately housed. However, it could simple be that a large proportion of this number included tenants that simply just wished to move elsewhere.

Councillor Mark Storer to Councillor Neil Murray, Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth

Question

What assessment has been made on the additional costs of this year's Christmas market given the predicted reduction in stallholders and contractual cost increases?

Reply

The Christmas market budget was made up of a number of aspects:

- expenditure primarily related to the many contracts required to deliver the market; and
- income mainly derived from stall fees and park and ride usage.

The budget for the market was a difficult balancing act, , which was why the Performance Scrutiny Committee had taken a detailed interest in the estimated budget and then the out-turn position after the event each year.

For 2022/23, the fortieth year of the market, the council had experienced an increase in contract costs, not least because approximately nineteen contracts had been re-tendered. In some areas the council had reduced costs. For example, visitors to the park and ride would now pay on the bus rather than at a separate ticket booth. In addition, the recovery from Covid-19, now impacted further by the cost-of-living crises, had affected the number of stalls. Currently the council had approximately 150 stalls providing a good mix of offer. This was below the usual number of stalls, approximately 190-200.

The budget for 2022/23 had predicted a subsidy from the city council of £43k. Officers were working hard to mitigate this, but currently it would be a challenge to reach that level of subsidy. Until the level of success at the park and ride was determined, and the extent of any additional expenditure required during the market itself to tackle unforeseen circumstances such as adverse weather, it was difficult to predict a final out turn beyond the budget.

The portfolio committed to reporting the provisional out turn to a meeting of the Performance Scrutiny Committee in the new year as per normal arrangements.

Supplementary

Council a full assessment be undertaken to secure the future of the Lincoln Christmas Market?

Reply

Yes. It was also highlighted that a lot of planning went into the preparation for the Lincoln Christmas Market throughout the year, each year. It was hoped that the Market in 2022 would continue to be a success, with higher numbers of visitors expected, as other councils had cancelled their markets. As a result, it was hoped that the subsidy would be reduced owing increased attendance.

Councillor Hilton Spratt to Councillor Bob Bushell, Portfolio Holder for Remarkable Place

Question

Will the Council achieve its target to reach net zero by 2030?

Reply

The Council had declared, in which it had committed to 'Join with Parliament and other Councils in declaring a Climate and Environment Emergency, and commit to the vision of a carbon neutral Lincoln by 2030 at the latest.' Also to facilitate the work of the Lincoln Climate Commission a carbon reduction roadmap had been devised.

In September 2022, the Lincoln Climate Commission had approved the Lincoln 2030 Climate Action Plan (CAP) reaffirming the net zero carbon target and outlining how this could be achieved. The CAP outlined the challenges and opportunities to delivering a net zero carbon target by 2030, the need for a joined-

up approach; and the national and local factors that would be required so Lincoln could be net zero by 2030. Many of these factors were outside the control of the local authority but by working with Commission members and Central Government, the Council was fully committed to achieving this ambitious target and addressing the issue of climate change as it was embedded across the Council's vision.

Supplementary

Is this target entirely reasonable given the council's financial pressures, as outlined in Councillor Ric Metcalfe's earlier answer to a question?

Reply

It was acknowledged that there were some external factors beyond the Council's control. However, the Council remained committed to achieving this target and there was a clear need for renewable energy. It was highlighted that it would be detrimental to the council services should the Government use fracking in search of fossil fuels, rather than invest more heavily in renewable energy.

Councillor Matthew Fido to Councillor Neil Murray, Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth

Question

At a recent meeting of the Community Leadership Scrutiny Committee, the prospect of Lincoln applying to be City of Culture in 2029 had been discussed and was something that was met warmly by the Committee. Can the portfolio holder please tell the Council, what preliminary discussions if any, had been held with relevant stakeholders, such as the universities, local groups, and private sector, in regard to putting a bid together to this?

Reply

The Council was part of a wider long-standing network of cultural organisations across the city including the University of Lincoln, Lincoln BIG, Visit Lincoln, County Council and various providers. This partnership was called the "Lincoln Cultural and Arts Partnership" and had to date been chaired by the University. Only a very early exploratory conversation had taken place to test the appetite with partners for aspiring to be UK City of Culture for 2029, either on a city footprint or wider. There was an appetite to indeed look at this further but a full gap analysis would be required to assess where the city was now in terms of cultural offer compared to where it would need to be and the level of financial investment required. The city would need to develop that strong cultural offer over the years ahead, on which partners were working at present through various applications for grant funding.

Councillor Rachel Storer to Councillor Sue Burke, Portfolio Holder for Reducing Inequality

Question

What assessment had been made of how integral the council operated CCTV was for the policing of our high-street?

Reply

As confirmed by Chief Superintendent Jon McAdam, at the recent meeting of the Community Leadership Scrutiny Committee, CCTV was an important tool for the police to call upon. The police have invested extensively in policing the city centre, with the creation of a dedicated city centre team. This was supported by the CCTV system and a network of partners day and night through the shop watch radio link system in the day and the Pub Watch Radio system in the evening economy. These provided additional “eyes and ears” on the ground working effectively with the police and CCTV. So CCTV was indeed well used by the Police and other partners but it was that partnership itself that provided the Police with the most support and helped enable convictions.

The Council continually kept the CCTV operation under review to assess how the Police could maximise the use of the technology that the CCTV system offers and also keep city council costs as low as possible.

Supplementary

Could the portfolio holder assure the Council that this would not form part of any cuts in service?

Reply

Whilst funding was available, this service would continue to be funded.

Councillor Bill Mara to Councillor Chris Burke, Portfolio Holder for Customer Experience and Review

Question

What preparation, including public communications plan, is being put together by the council ahead of the expected voter ID requirement ahead of the 2023 local elections?

Reply

The Elections Act 2022 had received Royal Assent on 28 April 2022. This legislation contained substantial changes for polling at elections, as well as electoral registration in the UK, including the requirement for voter identification at polling stations. A total 173 days had passed since Royal Assent and the government had so far failed to issue the required regulations with the much-needed detail on how the changes would affect voters. They were currently expected in November 2022.

In spite of its continued failure to issue regulations, the government continued to insist that polls on 4 May 2023 would be the first date to implement voter identification. The Association of Electoral Administrators, which was the national representative professional body, had expressed serious concerns to the relevant minister in the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

Even if regulations were issued in November, this provided very little time for the Electoral Commission to draft guidance for electoral registration officers, returning officers, candidates and agents. Furthermore, it provided councils with very little time to implement such major changes.

However, in preparation for these changes, members of the electoral services team had been attending training events and seminars. At one of these events, there had been a demonstration of the digital platform, which would be used to process requests for voter identification, which electoral services would be required to administer. In addition, there was a programme board of officers in place to oversee the changes, which would include a communications plan.

The electoral services team could only go so far, but while the government kept failing to issue the regulations, it was difficult for anything other than outline preparations to be made.

Councillor Alan Briggs to Councillor Ric Metcalfe, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Our People and Resources

Question

Due to the City Hall's outdated heating system, which is incredibly inefficient and cannot be turned off over winter – even if entire floors are empty, how does the Council plan to reconcile this with its net zero ambitions?

Reply

Investment in City Hall had been considered and costed to ensure they maximise the carbon savings, as well as achieve financial savings for the Council. As a result, the energy performance of City Hall had been rated as a 'C' and that the overall building performance, including the heating system performed well when benchmarked against similar size, age and type of buildings. The radiators in City Hall were part of the original heating system and could not be removed without considerable cost and would result in a minimal carbon and cost saving.

Turning the heating system off over winter for parts of City Hall would cause other problems, for example condensation, and would risk damaging the fabric of the building.

Over the last ten years City Hall had been refurbished and facilities upgraded including:

- Replacing the heating with a more energy efficient system and heating controls to ensure an even distribution of heating throughout the building.
- Improvements to roof insulation to reduce heat loss.
- Installation of solar thermal hot water.
- Installation of photovoltaic arrays.
- Replacement of the lifts to reduce electricity consumption.
- Server virtualisation to reduce the number of servers and requirement for air conditioning in the server room.

Supplementary

As the building is considered energy inefficient, should consideration be given as to whether City Hall was adequate and good value for money for tax payers?

Reply

As the country is currently facing a cost of living crisis, it was not considered appropriate timing to be looking to acquire a new building.

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

(a) Councillor R Metcalfe, Portfolio Holder, Our People and Resources

Councillor Ric Metcalfe, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Our People and Resources, presented his report to Council, which had been set out on pages 17 – 38 of the agenda.

The report was noted.

(b) Councillor G Hewson, Chair of Performance Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Gary Hewson, Chair of Performance Scrutiny Committee, presented his report to Council, which had been set out on pages 39 – 42 of the agenda. Councillor Hewson thanked all members and officers involved in the Committee.

The report was noted.

(c) Councillor J Loffhagen, Chair of Community Leadership Scrutiny Committee (2021/22)

Councillor Jane Loffhagen, former Chair of Community Leadership Scrutiny Committee (2021/22), presented her report to Council, which had been set out on pages 43 – 52 of the agenda. Councillor Loffhagen thanked all members and officers involved in the scrutiny reviews, details of which were included within her report.

The report was noted.

(d) Councillor C Watt, Member Safeguarding Champion

Councillor Calum Watt, Member Safeguarding Champion, presented his report to Council, which had been set out on pages 53 – 56 of the agenda. The Council was provided with an opportunity to ask questions, where the following points were noted:

- The Modern Slavery member development session, which had been cancelled owing to the death of Her Majesty The Queen Elizabeth II, would be rescheduled for a later date.
- It would be fed back to officers that there was a desire for a streamlined way of signposting safeguarding information, which would be particularly helpful for councillors.
- It was confirmed that future reports would include detail on funding and where monies were spent.

The report was noted.

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

(a) Review of Hackney Carriage Fares

It was moved by Councillor Loraine Woolley and seconded by Councillor Ric Metcalfe that Option 2, as detailed in the report and Appendix D, be adopted by the Council for implementation, provided that the unit of measurement be converted from metres to miles and yards.

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

RESOLVED

That Option 2, as detailed in the report and Appendix D, be adopted by the Council for implementation, provided that the unit of measurement be converted from metres to miles and yards.