

Present: Councillor Biff Bean (*in the Chair*),
Councillor Debbie Armiger, Councillor Alan Briggs,
Councillor Chris Burke, Councillor Sue Burke, Councillor
Bob Bushell, Councillor Liz Bushell, Natasha Chapman,
Councillor Martin Christopher, Councillor David Clarkson,
Councillor Thomas Dyer, Councillor Matthew Fido,
Councillor Gary Hewson, 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 Dylan Stothard, Councillor
Edmund Strengiel, Councillor Naomi Tweddle, Councillor
Pat Vaughan, Councillor Calum Watt, Councillor
Aiden Wells, Councillor Joshua Wells, Councillor
Emily Wood and Councillor Loraine Woolley

Apologies for Absence: None.

14. Confirmation of Minutes - 25 July 2023

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 25 July 2023 be confirmed.

15. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Pat Vaughan declared a Personal Interest with regard to the agenda item titled 'Statement of Accounts 2022/23'. Reason: His daughter worked within the Benefits Section and his grand daughter worked within the Finance Section of the City of Lincoln Council.

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

Question from Jessica Bunn, Member of the Public

The science is clear that meat and dairy are major contributors to the climate and ecological emergencies and other councils, for example Oxfordshire County, Oxford City, Cambridge City, Exeter City and Lewisham Borough, are ensuring that all food served at internal events is plant-based, and I'd like Lincoln to do the same.

Therefore, my question is, given the climate emergency and Lincoln's stated aim to reduce their emissions, will the City of Lincoln Council ensure that all food and drink provided at internal events is plant-based by default, as other councils have done? Even if this only applies to refreshments at a very small number of events per year, it will be a small step that sends a powerful message and is the logical and necessary next step after having declared a climate emergency.

Reply from Bob Bushell, Portfolio Holder for Remarkable Place

Councillor Bob Bushell confirmed that all City Council internal and external events, as part of Climate Hope Lincoln and the Lincoln Climate Commission, throughout 2022 and 2023 had served only plant-based menus for lunch and light refreshments which would be continued in the future.

Councillor Bushell explained that Members were committed to working with other teams at the Council to encourage them to provide plant-based food and drink by default. The Council had signed up to Food for the Planet 'Every Mouthful Counts' campaign and had worked through the actions. Councillor Bushell referred to the Lincoln page: <https://www.foodfortheplanet.org.uk/local/lincoln/>.

Councillor Bushell continued that as part of our commitment to the campaign, we had worked with third party catering outlets that provided food and drink in Council owned buildings to increase the range of plant-based items on the menu. We encouraged local businesses that supplied plant-based food and drink to register on the 'Every Mouthful Counts' website to help promote them and encourage more businesses to do the same.

Supplementary

Would you be willing to meet with me to discuss the sustainable future you referenced?

Reply

Councillor Bushell confirmed he remained happy to meet with Jessica Bunn.

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

Councillor David Clarkson to Councillor Naomi Tweddle

Question

Can the executive member explain why the bus stop outside 26 Birchwood Avenue, heading towards the Western Growth Corridor roadworks, has been closed?

Answer

As the Councillor is well aware, this bus stop has been closed during the works on the Birchwood Avenue and Skellingthorpe Road junction to open up the Western Growth Corridor at the request of Stagecoach. City Council officers have been working to get to a position where the bus stop can be re-opened without causing further queuing time delays to traffic at the temporary lights. Officers are hopeful of reaching agreement soon.

Supplementary

Councillor Clarkson confirmed he had contacted the East Midlands Area Business Manager for Stagecoach who had confirmed he had visited the bus stop and

there had been no other requests received. The issue of one bus stop within the Western Growth Corridor development was not insignificant for the individuals that had been affected. Would the Portfolio Holder be willing to meet with both myself and the residents of Hartsholme and Birchwood wards to reach a solution?

Answer

The Portfolio Holder would task the Major Developments Director with contacting Stagecoach as the bus stop was closed at their request. Councillor Twedde confirmed that she remained happy to meet with residents and receive their views.

Councillor Alan Briggs to Councillor Sue Burke

Question

How many prosecutions have been brought in the last 12 months for fly tipping-littering or dog fouling which represent a significant ASB issue within Lincoln?

Answer

We have undertaken the following enforcement activity for these issues in the last 12 months:

| | |
|---|----|
| • Number of Fly-tipping related Community Protection Warnings (CPW) | 9 |
| • Number of Fly-tipping related Community Protection Notices (CPN) | 2 |
| • Number of Fly-tipping Duty of Care Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN) | 3 |
| • Number of Fly-tipping FPN's | 22 |
| • Number of Littering FPN's | 0 |
| • Dog fouling FPN's | 0 |
| • CPW for dog fouling on private property | 1 |

No cases have escalated past a CPW to court action.

A Community Protection Warning (CPW) is the first stage of official enforcement action under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

A Community Protection Notice (CPN) is the second stage of official enforcement action under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

Both our Enforcement Policy and national guidance requires us to take a tiered and proportionate approach to enforcement. Government advice is that where it is appropriate to discharge an offence by issuing a fixed penalty notice then this should be done rather than taking a case to court.

Supplementary

Councillor Alan Briggs offered thanks and confirmed that there had been 42 evidenced incidents specifically related to fly tipping and it appeared that there had been successful movement against the issue.

Councillor Bill Mara to Councillor Sue Burke

Question

The Government have announced that as part of its mission to support more people into work, the Department for Work and Pensions has launched a consultation on changes to the Work Capability Assessment, following the landmark Health and Disability White Paper published earlier this year.

These changes represent the next step in welfare reform, reflecting the rise of flexible and home working and better employer support for disabled people and people with health conditions. These changes also reflect that one in five of those with no work preparation requirements would like to work at some point in the future, with the right support. Does the council support these proposals?

Answer

The Chancellor's Autumn Statement on 22 November 2023, included:

5.26 Work Capability Assessment (WCA) gateway reform – The Government is reforming the activities and descriptors in the Work Capability Assessment for new claimants in Great Britain, to support more people into employment, with implementation occurring from 2025.

The proposals were welcomed by some individuals and concerned from others. Disabilities and medical conditions varied greatly and there had been anxiety expressed that some conditions were more symptomatic on given days. Furthermore, concerns had been shared that the proposals would compel certain individuals to accept terms not appropriate for their condition, such as working from home.

Supporting our residents back into employment who were reasonably able to work was something the Council supported, and officers would continue to work closely with Department for Work and Pensions colleagues to help deliver this aspiration, wherever possible and appropriate.

The Portfolio Holder remained hopeful that Government proposals would enable individuals with disabilities or medical conditions, the positive impact of work.

Councillor Eddie Strengiel to Councillor Naomi Twedde

Question

Can the Portfolio Holder update Council on the progress of the traffic light system at the junction of Birchwood Avenue and Doddington Road as a result of the Western Growth Corridor project?

Answer

The scheme to construct the new permanent signalised junction on Birchwood Avenue/ Skellingthorpe Road remained scheduled for completion in summer 2024, in accordance with the anticipated 52-week period. The programme was being monitored and the works to the junction were currently on programme.

Supplementary

Could the Portfolio Holder confirm how the scheme was funded?

Answer

The scheme was funded through City of Lincoln Council.

Councillor Thomas Dyer to Councillor Ric Metcalfe

Question

Does the Leader warmly welcome the recently announced Greater Lincolnshire Devolution Deal?

Answer

Councillor Ric Metcalfe, Leader of the Council confirmed he welcomed the recently announced Greater Lincolnshire Devolution Deal.

Supplementary

Given comments made by some of the District Council Leaders, what was the Leader's view on the proposed governance arrangements for the mayoral combined authority?

Answer

Additional money and autonomy from an overcentralised Government was welcomed. The city would benefit from the ability to bid for projects; £28M in year one and £24M in the year thereafter. There would likely be a number of issues however there would be a public consultation in December/January.

An additional power included the levy of precept and residents would expect a fourth layer of Council tax. Democratic legitimacy was important especially given that district Council's in Lincolnshire had experienced difficult conversations with regard to representation with upper tier colleagues which resulted in the securing of four places.

It was likely that speculation would arise in regard to the person appointed as Mayor. It was important that the successful individual recognised and accepted that they would have to run the combined authorities in a collegiate way. It would be a commissioned purchase holding body and there would be reliance on local partners which included local government partners, to ensure the aims of the deal were delivered. The Devolution Deal was welcomed and the city Council remained committed to its success.

Councillor Mark Storer to Councillor Ric Metcalfe

Question

What measures has the council put in place to address the growing number of crumbling walls, damaged and subsiding gravestones at Newport Cemetery?

Answer

For gravestones across all of the city Council's cemeteries there is an inspection regime based on a rolling programme of inspections. Whilst individual gravestones are not the property of the city council, if as part of the inspection, minor repairs are required then the Council will undertake them. If the repairs are larger scale in nature, then the gravestones will simply be laid down on the plot and any surviving immediate family notified.

I can confirm that the programme continues and I will arrange for details of when Newport cemetery will next be inspected to be sent to you as soon as possible.

In terms of the walls in the cemetery, these again are inspected for safety but if there are sections of wall causing a particular concern over their safety, if details can be provided, I will ask officers to investigate further. Things changed between inspections.

Councillor Matthew Fido to Councillor Ric Metcalfe

Question

The City of Lincoln Council continue to use external agency staff to plug the significant holes in the council's recruitment and retention failures. So far this financial year, how much has the council spent on paying for external agency staff?

Answer

Hard to fill vacancies remain an issue nationally within the public sector but we remained diligent and energetic. The national pay scales are impacting on

recruitment and pay is lower than other organisations. Human Resources (HR) continues to review attraction strategies in line with best practice and local partners. In addition, HR work with recruiting managers to ensure the best routes are maximised to seek suitable candidates.

Councillor Ric Metcalfe confirmed that he shared concerns regarding the cost of external agency staff which totalled approximately £744,000 in the current year. It was important to note that such staff did not cover the work of day-to-day unfilled vacancies. It was often the case that agency staff were used for specific pieces of work for short periods of time. This approach allowed the Council to purchase expertise that they did not have and that would be more expensive on a longer-term basis.

For day-to-day unfilled vacancies, the use of agency staff remained only for essential work in order to maintain service delivery. Revenues and Benefits was a service that could not be interrupted; the continuation of benefits payments and successful performance targets were essential. It was possible to utilise overtime however it was not sustainable long term due to risk of staff burn out.

Councillor Metcalfe added that another consideration was that private sector conditions had caught up with local authority working conditions, and as such, the gap between public sector and private sector employment, had closed considerably. A full-time permanent establishment for the authority was preferred, but not always possible.

Councillor Rachel Storer to Councillor Naomi Tweddle

Question

What pedestrian safety measures have been put in place in relation to site traffic using Pig Lane whilst works on the Western Growth Corridor are in progress?

Answer

At present there is a segregated route for the construction traffic indicated by a white line on the top section of Pig Lane, which is being used for access. The contractor will be implementing a physical barrier to further demarcate the construction access, although in some instances, due to the size of the vehicles, the full width of the Pig Lane access will be needed. The contractor also operates a system whereby any large vehicles existing the site have a banksman in place. The site is being operated safely and we will continue to monitor in line with our Control of Contractors policy and our health & safety obligations.

Supplementary

Councillor Rachel Storer confirmed that a number of residents had contacted her and expressed that they had witnessed a number of near misses. Was it possible for the Council and contractor to conduct a safety review?

Answer

Councillor Naomi Tweddle offered her apologies for the reports of near misses and confirmed that it was important that feedback was received in a timely manner. She continued that work with Councillors and residents would continue in an attempt to keep works as unobstructive as possible. A safety review would be conducted.

(Councillor Martin Christopher wished it be noted that he had a family member who lived at the end of the lane).

Councillor Hilton Spratt to Councillor Naomi Tweddle

Question

How much extra private sector investment and extra jobs have been created as a result of the public sector investment in regenerating our city centre?

Answer

The City Centre Masterplan is being fundamentally reviewed in 2024 and this will include an evaluation of its effectiveness since coming into place in 2007. That evaluation will include an assessment of all the investment from public and private sector partners in the city during the past 15 years and will therefore provide a comprehensive response to this question.

The Transport Hub investment impact was assessed independently in May 2019 as having directly created/safeguarded 360 new jobs, 138.5 construction jobs during its development and created 3 new businesses. Indirectly, its impact on the Cornhill Quarter was 58 jobs created/safeguarded with 102 construction jobs with 8 new businesses coming to the city. A total of 76,204 sq ft of new commercial floorspace was also created which is positive for economic stimulus. We are just commissioning a 5-year review which will provide a full assessment of the investment and will be in the Portfolio Holder report next year.

Lincoln's Town Deal programme has already delivered additional investment spend of nearly £3million, 28.67 new jobs (full-time equivalent permanent), a further 2 jobs safeguarded and 104 temporary jobs. A mid-programme independent assessment on the benefits of the programme is currently being completed and will be included in the end of year performance report.

Supplementary

Councillor Hilton Spratt offered thanks to the Portfolio Holder for the information provided. Was the Portfolio Holder in agreement that the amount of money the Government had invested into levelling up was foresight?

Answer

The Portfolio Holder confirmed that the investment in Lincoln was not only for the Towns fund but levelling up also. There had been significant investment and time by the city Council to deliver projects and it took considerable work in order to

secure investment. The city Council continued to strive for investment and as a fantastic place to work and live, Lincoln should be on the national stage.

Councillor Martin Christopher to Councillor Donald Nannestad

Question

In light of the Council's dedication to fair and transparent procurement, could the Housing Portfolio Holder provide clarification on the deviation from established policy for direct approaches in the case of the £98,500 contract with Savilles Ltd, for work on the recent HRA 30-year plan?

Answer

There is no deviation from established policy for direct approaches in the case of the appointment of Savilles Ltd in relation to the HRA 30-year business plan. Whilst Contract Procedures Rules, which is the Council's internal policy in relation to how procurement should be undertaken, sets out the processes that must be followed based on the relevant contract value banding (less than £25,000 a direct approach can be made), it also states that this is only relevant where a compliant framework arrangement is not being used. In respect of this appointment a compliant framework was utilised and to clarify, a compliant framework can therefore be more than £25,000.

Supplementary

Councillor Martin Christopher offered thanks to the Portfolio Holder for the information provided. Frameworks needed to go through a tendering process and as such, what processes were in place for the framework that was utilised for the process? The information had not been received further to a freedom of information request.

Answer

The Portfolio Holder confirmed that the framework was a provision that had been fully tendered, in accordance with public tender and as such, was legally fully compliant. Procedure rules had been followed.

Councillor Natasha Chapman to Councillor Donald Nannestad

Question

A year ago, Councillor Smalley raised concerns about the prevalence of mould in homes across our city. This issue has the potential to cause significant health problems for residents. Could the housing portfolio holder please provide an update on measures being taken to identify the extent of this problem and to address the issue?

Answer

As a result of a more effective way of working, tested during the pandemic, tenants in the private rented sector who are complaining about housing standards are asked to provide photographs of their disrepair concerns. In terms of damp and mould this gives good intelligence on the extent of the mould and damp that is present at the outset of the referral.

Damp mould and complaints are assessed based on a range of factors which include age of occupants (all persons aged 14 years or under), any known respiratory health conditions, seasonal variation, EPC of property (D or below), review of photographic evidence and compliance history of the landlord.

Consequently, damp and mould complaints will each be determined on an individual basis and higher risk cases will be given appropriate priority. The City Council prioritises service requests on a risk-based approach. High priority are classed as red, medium priority as amber and low priority as green. The level of work demand in the system means that greens and ambers are not currently being looked at until they become an escalated red (when the situation has got worse, or the referral has been waiting some time for allocation to an officer).

Our Enforcement Policy allows us to take action for what are termed 'Category 2 Hazards' as long as we take a tiered approach allowing the landlord an informal opportunity to remedy the Hazards before we take the appropriate formal action. If the case is deemed as low priority at the initial assessment stage, officers do send an advice leaflet to the tenant advising on how damp and mould is caused and how it can be managed.

Officers do work closely with a range of parties to promote good housing standards. We work closely with the University of Lincoln ensuring all student accommodation is safe. Additionally, we regularly attend landlord forums to educate and advise landlords.

We have advice on our website that provides both tenants and landlords information on all aspects of our service including damp and mould and officers are currently reviewing the website to insure it provides the most up to date and relevant information.

Departments within the City Council who will often refer cases to the private sector housing team regarding housing standards as well as outside bodies such as the Fire Service, Police and Social Services who also make referrals to us if they have concerns with conditions of any property they visit.

Finally, we are presently awaiting the results of a new stock condition survey providing more up to date modelling data. This data on the private rented stock will assist us in identifying private rented properties that may have a higher potential for excess cold, damp and mould.

Damp and mould affected all types of properties, both new and old and privately owned as well as rented and social housing. The city Council had two roles in respect of their own social housing stock and a regulatory role in the private rented sector. Robust practices were in place for social housing stock. Damp and mould was complicated and needed to be considered carefully and individually.

Supplementary

Councillor Natasha Chapman offered thanks to the Portfolio Holder for the information provided. Were there figures related to the number of incidents where further action had to be taken against landlords who had not complied in the correct way, to address mould in their properties?

Answer

The requested information would be circulated further to the meeting.

Councillor Clare Smalley to Councillor Donald Nannestad

Question

Can the portfolio holder explain why our drainage system is not properly maintained, resulting in a delayed resolution of a heavily blocked drain (with weeds growing in it) at Shuttleworth House carpark, reported in August, by myself, with a promised fix within three days, yet it was only addressed in October while the carpark was the flooded, following Storm Babet?

Answer

Councillor Donald Nannestad confirmed the reported repairs, since August, relating to the external drainage for Shuttleworth House:

- 08 August 2023 – Attendance on the same day
- 10 October 2023 – Blocked external drains, repairs by HRS on 11 August 2023
- 23 October 2023 – Drain blocked in car park and unblocked by the drainage contractor on 24 October 2023

Further to a number of reports of the same drainage issue, an assessment from the drainage contractor was awaited.

Supplementary

Councillor Clare Smalley requested a copy of the information once the assessment had been received.

18. Motion Under Council Procedure Rule 14 - Lincoln Christmas Market

Councillor Thomas Dyer, Leader of the Opposition, proposed the following motion:

'Earlier in 2023 the Labour City Council Executive took the decision to scrap the much-loved Lincoln Christmas Market – following a successful 2022 Christmas Market that attracted 320,000 people to our city. As we approach what would have been another Christmas Market, there continues to be significant public outcry for the return of our Christmas Market. The City Council's alternative events program does not and will never replace the Christmas Market.'

The City of Lincoln Council formally call upon the Labour Executive to reconsider their decision to cancel the market and make alternative plans for a safe and workable 2024 Lincoln Christmas Market’.

Councillor Thomas Dyer confirmed that Lincoln’s famous Christmas Market placed Lincoln on the national and global stage. He added that the motion had not disregarded the significant health and safety concerns of the Safety Advisory Group (SAG) and the requirement for change and modernisation. The issues that plagued the Christmas Market were not underestimated.

Councillor Thomas Dyer added that the motion requested the commencement of a process rather than the arrival to a conclusion or disregard of advice. The decision to cancel the Christmas Market continued to be highly debated on social media, despite the passing of many months since the decision was formally taken. Lincoln’s Christmas light were beautiful but they had not been a satisfactory replacement for the market which continued to be sorely missed. The budget for 2024 would not rise in line with inflation and as such, was essentially cut.

Councillor Rachel Storer, Deputy Leader of the Opposition, seconded the motion and reserved the right to speak.

Councillor Chris Burke highlighted the deep safety concerns received from the Safety Advisory Group; a multi-agency approach who spoke without ambiguity. He expressed concerns that the Leader of the Opposition had proposed a motion which considered a disregard for safety advice. Lincoln would discover a new way to enjoy Christmas.

Councillor Hilton Spratt confirmed that the city Council’s Executive took the decision to disperse of Lincoln’s famous Christmas Market, in February 2023 when Councillor Neil Murray was Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth. He highlighted that Councillor Murray, as relevant Portfolio Holder at the time, was not consulted with prior to the decision being made. He expressed disappointment that the decision appeared to have been made by a small number of individuals and his view was that it should have been taken on the basis of consultation.

Councillor Chris Burke, in response to Councillor Hilton Spratt, expressed a Point of Order. He confirmed that the decision was taken by the Executive, as a collective and highlighted that Councillor Hilton Spratt was not in attendance.

Councillor Gary Hewson confirmed that Councillors Thomas Dyer and Rachel Storer had expressed their concerns during the subsequent call in, presented to the Select Scrutiny Committee. He added that a detailed report had been received by officers which had considered alternative provisions such as an extension of the event and why that was not feasible. The Health and Safety advice had been made clear. He confirmed that the market could not be carried on in the area that is had been as crowd control could not be ensured. He would not be in agreement to an event that had the potential to cause injury as human

life was valued much more than the Christmas Market. His view was that the correct decision had been taken, not only for the residents of Lincoln.

Councillor Eddie Strengiel highlighted that there was minutes available, of the meeting of the Executive whereby the decision was taken and consideration of the minutes in respect of the discussion, would be useful. He confirmed that the market became a victim of its own success. He added that attendance to large events often required a ticket and therefore, it was not within the realms of impossibility to reintroduce the market as a ticketed event to control visitor numbers. His view was that with the correct management, the market could be a success once again as a great asset to the city. He recognised that Steep Hill caused problems with access however added that on level, flat ground, it would be easier to manage. A great amount of revenue was brought into the city from stall holders. He addressed concerns that stall holder did not make much money and confirmed that it could have been a result of visitor that struggled to access stalls due to continual movement. His view was that the market could be made viable once again.

Councillor Ric Metcalfe, Leader of the Council expressed his view that the motion was frivolous and opportunistic. He added that the Council did not disperse of a much-loved event, that had been carefully planned and held in such affection for forty years, without thought and careful consideration. He added that it was not necessary to remind the city Council of the affection held for the market nor the economic significance. He reminded Members that the report presented to the Executive on 20 February 2023, was thorough and detailed. The message received was clear; the predicted increase in visitor numbers for future years would have created an unsafe event. The implications of the advice received could have been serious.

The space in a historic city was restricted and there were 577,000 people movements within Castle Square alone in 2022. He expressed disappointment that a motion would call on the Council to return to an event that evidently damaged safety and the visitor experience of people that visited Lincoln. He referred to the adverse reaction on social media and confirmed that the reputation of the city had become adversely affected.

He added that although not a material consideration of the final decision, infrastructure costs in 2022 were £750,000 to ensure the event was safe and it was expected that costs for 2023 would rise significantly. He expressed an interest in proposals from the Opposition on an extension of the footprint and a predication of associated costs. He concluded that as a responsible public body, it was a situation that could not be allowed and recommended a rejection of the motion.

Councillor Martin Christopher confirmed that a number of residents had contacted him and did not want to see the end of the Lincoln Christmas Market. He added that the Lincolnite had been informed of the decision prior to Members and his view was that it was undemocratic. He confirmed that many residents expressed a desire for a Member vote on the subject. His view was that anything became possible with safety if time and effort were to be invested into it. He felt the

decision had been taken quickly and without the views of Members which he felt was wrong.

Councillor Naomi Tweddle seconded the opposition to the Motion. She confirmed that she represented Minster Ward which covered half of the Lincoln Christmas Market. She shared contact she had received from residents that had welcomed the cancellation of the market and expressed a strong opposition to a proposed return. It was important to balance the debate.

The new events programme had been designed to spread visitor numbers across a full year and attempted to avoid the visitor issues that were experienced at the Christmas market in 2022. As a result, the economic stimulus and social media influence was spread across a full year. In addition, the new events programme offered a diverse choice, ensured there was an event that suited everyone and offered value for money. The city Council continued to support and sponsor Lincoln Pride and Steampunk. The new events programme resulted in approximately 17% increased footfall in September 2023 and had reached over 230,000 people on social media.

The Monster Invasion experienced 63,324 people movements on 28 October 2023 in the Bailgate area alone. During the weekend of 28 October – 29 October 2023 there were more people in the Bailgate area than in the city centre and reached over 800,000 people on social media. She expressed her thanks to Simon Walters, Strategic Director of Communities and Environment and his team for their hard work and feedback received had been positive; some businesses had experienced an increase of over 20%.

Councillor Naomi Tweddle concluded that the Lincoln Ice Trail was upcoming and included a sculpture trail, stilt walkers, characters from Frozen, a carousel and christmas singing. It was hoped that events would encourage footfall in the city centre as well as the Bailgate. Lincoln was a photogenic place.

Councillor David Clarkson confirmed that nobody had suggested an unsafe event. He highlighted that the Safety Advisory Group had confirmed that the Christmas Market was not safe in the form that it was in. He added that an expanded time frame for the event, which included Christmas holidays, would better enable the control of footfall. He confirmed that 17% attended the market on the Thursday, 23.5% attended on the Friday, over 44% attended on the Saturday and 14.7% attended on the Sunday. Therefore, Saturday was almost twice as busy as the Friday. He highlighted that the issue was Saturday, not the other days of the Christmas Market and the motion requested a consultation to be commenced.

He concluded with a comparison to York Christmas Market whereby there had been safety concerns which had been resolved. Other events did not make up for the Christmas Market; an internationally recognised event.

Note: Councillor Hilton Spratt left proceedings at 19:46

Councillor Calum Watt confirmed that further to the cancellation of the Christmas Market, some businesses within the Boultham Ward felt more included and a part

of Christmas in Lincoln. He confirmed that he deemed the motion to be disingenuous, further to the receipt of safety advice from the Police, Ambulance and Fire Service. He added that the resources required for additional infrastructure in order to support a longer market, was not available due to a lack of resources provided by central Government. He acknowledged that there had been disappointment in the dispersal of the Christmas Market, however it was the decision was a responsible one.

Note: Councillor Hilton Spratt returned to proceedings at 19:50

Councillor Rachel Storer, Deputy Leader of the Opposition, using her right to speak, expressed her disappointment in the decision further to a lack of public consultation. The motion did not underestimate the health and safety issues further to the 2022 Christmas Market. The motion sought dialogue to enable Members' participation. She confirmed that the motion did not suggest a return to the market in the historical format. The Safety Advisory Group had confirmed that the market was not safe however offered recommendations which did not include cancellation of the event.

Innovation and Christmas spirit were required to bring back a safe Christmas Market in 2024. She concluded that many businesses in the Bailgate area were unsure of their future due to the cancellation of the Market. The motion sought consultation on views for a workable event in the future.

Councillor Thomas Dyer, Leader of the Opposition, using his right of reply, confirmed that safety had been mentioned in the motion raised and the call in of the decision took place after the decision had been taken by the Executive. He added that there were large scale events all over the world which remained safe. He noted that whilst the new events programme was positive, the focus of the motion was on the Christmas Market and consideration could be given to both.

He expressed disappointment that a debate on the topic had been scheduled for Radio 4 on today's date, however, was subsequently cancelled as the Leader of the Council declined to participate. His view was that the Leader of the Council refused to explain himself to the public. The Conservative party acknowledged and accepted that the Market needed to change. Councillor Thomas Dyer reflected on safety concerns that had been known about for many years prior to the dispersal and therefore, suggested that prior planning should have taken place. He confirmed that he had been a Councillor since 2016 and officers had never before briefed Members on safety concerns.

He added that as a democratic body, this meeting was the first time all thirty-three Members had discussed the Executive's decision. It was positive that all democratically elected members were able to discuss and debate the motion. He concluded that a senior member of the Lincolnshire Police had confirmed, via email, that the Police remained happy to work with event organisers in the creation of a safe Christmas Market in the future.

Councillor Thomas Dyer formally requested a recorded vote on the motion.

Further to a show of hands and in accordance with the prescribed requirements under Council Procedural Rule 19.4, a recorded vote was agreed and taken on the motion, the result of which were as follows:

For (13)

Councillor Alan Briggs
Councillor Natasha Chapman
Councillor Martin Christopher
Councillor David Clarkson
Councillor Thomas Dyer
Councillor Matthew Fido
Councillor Bill Mara
Councillor Clare Smalley
Councillor Hilton Spratt
Councillor Mark Storer
Councillor Rachel Storer

Councillor Edmund Strengiel
Councillor Aiden Wells

Against (20)

Councillor Debbie Armiger
Councillor Biff Bean
Councillor Chris Burke
Councillor Sue Burke
Councillor Bob Bushell
Councillor Liz Bushell
Councillor Gary Hewson
Councillor Rebecca Longbottom
Councillor Adrianna McNulty
Councillor Ric Metcalfe
Councillor Neil Murray

Councillor Donald Nannestad
Councillor Lucinda Preston
Councillor Dylan Stothard
Councillor Naomi Twedde
Councillor Pat Vaughan
Councillor Calum Watt
Councillor Joshua Wells
Councillor Emily Wood
Councillor Loraine Woolley

Abstention

Having been proposed and seconded and being put to the vote it was RESOLVED that the motion be declared lost.

19. Motion under Council Procedure Rule 14 - Lincoln Central Car Park

Councillor Mark Storer proposed the following motion:

‘The Lincoln Central Car Park continues to be plagued with customer facing issues. The lifts are very rarely fully operational, the payment machines have recently had significant down time and on busy days, traffic can build up within the car park – resulting in motorists waiting for over half an hour to get from their parking bay to the exit.

Despite costing a significant amount of money, this car park does not perform in the way that its customers expect.

This Council requests that the City of Lincoln Council conduct a full review of the Lincoln Central Car Park providing a full detailed report to Council – this review must focus on completely resolving the issues that continue to plague the car park more than half a decade after its initial opening’.

Councillor Mark Storer confirmed that the car park was a new gateway to prosperity in Lincoln and had opened 6 years ago but had sadly not provided the high-quality experience for businesses, residents and visitors. A total of £150,000 had been ring fenced for the repair of the lifts which caused concern, given their age. The motion requested a full review which focussed on the issues that plagued the car park.

Councillor David Clarkson seconded the motion and reserved the right to speak.

Councillor Martin Christopher confirmed that he was pleased to see the motion. He advised that the city Council's parking services team had not been in discussions of the design of the park. He referred to the payment machines and stated that a person was required overnight in the case of a lost parking ticket. Many of the car parks operated on a park and ride basis.

Councillor Chris Burke highlighted that every car park had issues and everything built could experience issues. He added that it would be unusual for all the lifts and stairs to fail. The car park was superbly built and well maintained. It was important to recognise successes and not to be overly critical.

Councillor Naomi Tweddle, Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, commented that central car park had proved incredibly successful. Last year, a total of 181,427 cars visited the car park which far exceeded the volume of any other car park in the city. Customer satisfaction remained high and with such popularity, wear and tear became inevitable.

Equipment had to cope with thousands of transactions a month and there was an increased risk of failure in the cold and damp months. A number of individual payment machines were to be repaired and the oldest fault was from the end of October. Consideration had been given to why the machines had not worked properly. On Remembrance Saturday, there was a large volume of traffic. This circumstance was unique and therefore, not commonplace. Officers had worked on a mitigation plans in the run up to Christmas to alleviate the impact as much as possible. She confirmed that there was a desire to spread demand on other car parks within the city centre and work had commenced to make other car parks more attractive to use. She acknowledged the situation caused frustration to visitors with pushchairs etc.

It was not foreseeable that the North side was used significantly more when compared to the South side. Consultation with specialist contractors had taken place to carry out an assessment of the car park. A quote had been received to enable repair of the two minor parts that needed replacement. The work would be carried out as soon as possible.

Councillor Naomi Tweddle concluded that the park was built to a high standard and was very safe to use. There were reliability issues, but it would be resolved. The car park demonstrated the great transport hub that the city Council had provided.

Councillor Ric Metcalfe, Leader of the Council, commented that Members be proud of the high standard car park that was used by many people. He added that

it was clear that the issues highlighted had not discouraged use of the car park. He expressed confusion of a motion that sought to criticise the car park. He acknowledged that it was inconvenient for customers if a lift or payment machine had not worked correctly however the test was how quickly issues were resolved. He concluded that a review wasted officer resources and was premature as the identified issues were in the process of correction.

Councillor Thomas Dyer, Leader of the Opposition commented that Councillor David Clarkson was a fantastic asset to the Council and Conservative group. He confirmed that he had discussed concerns with a parking attendant on the day prior to Remembrance Sunday. He explained that further to discussions, it was a peak occurrence on every busy Saturday. He added that there was a significant amount of concern over the car park and discussions were not intended to criticise. The purpose of the motion was to improve the car parks' success. He offered thanks to Councillor Naomi Twedde and was pleased to learn that all concerns had been taken seriously however he suggested that there was no harm in a report or a review which offered reassurance to the public and Members. Councillor Dyer expressed disappointment in comments received that the use of the stairs was a suitable alternative to the lift. It was important that the needs of pushchair users, wheelchair users and visitors were considered. The signage was poor and many people were unaware that there were additional lifts.

Councillor Clare Smalley confirmed that it appeared the use of the car park was blamed for the issues experienced. She echoed frustration with comments received that the use of the stairs was a suitable alternative to the lift. Her view was that the city offered other car parks however it may be the case that individuals used the central car park due to disabilities or the requirement of a lift for a pushchair. She concluded that all Members wanted to be proud of all City of Lincoln assets.

Councillor Edmund Strengiel addressed the Chamber with clarification of his umbrage to comments that suggested the Opposition had criticised Lincoln and confirmed that was not intended. He referred to last paragraph within the motion and added that debate was permitted as Members of the Council. He added that all Members were elected Members of the Council and irrespective of political affiliation, all retained the right to conduct a review and debate an issue.

He shared his own experience of attendance to the car park a number of months ago where both sets of lifts were out of order. In addition, there was a large puddle of water by the exit. He confirmed that the motion considered the issues and attempted to resolve them.

Councillor David Clarkson, using his right to speak, confirmed that stairs rarely failed. There had been occasions where both North end lifts had failed at the same time. He confirmed that the Opposition had not criticised and expressed his praise for the car park. He added that the ramps had low level curb stones, unlike Lucy Tower car park which meant that visitors accessed and exited the car park easily. In addition, his view was that spaces had been designed for modern cars and offered plenty of room. The car park was extremely well lit. He explained that there had been incidents of anti-social behaviour and therefore, it was positive that the car park was manned 24 hours a day.

He added that there had been lifts longer than multi story car parks and regular use was not an acceptable reason for failure. He expressed surprise that two minor parts were estimated to cost £150,000 and confirmed that the car park specification should have been designed to cope with the volume of traffic. He shared Members' experiences of the car park on Remembrance Day and confirmed that it took 55 minutes to exit the car park. He confirmed that the two barriers had worked well however issues surrounded the junction that lead to Broadgate. Traffic had been restricted by traffic lights. The motion only requested a review and did not proportion blame. The advice of the designers had been taken and the equipment recommended had been installed.

Councillor Matthew Fido confirmed that the car park was the jewel in Lincoln's crown. He confirmed that with so much revenue generated from car parking, the car parks needed to be accessible to everyone. The scrutiny was in place with democratic oversight.

Councillor Mark Storer, using his right of reply, offered thanks to Councillor Naomi Tweddle for the serious consideration offered of the issues and urged Members considered the motion carefully.

Councillor Mark Storer formally requested a recorded vote on the motion. Further to a show of hands and in accordance with the prescribed requirements under Council Procedural Rule 19.4, a recorded vote was agreed and taken on the motion, the result of which were as follows:

For (13)

Councillor Alan Briggs
Councillor Natasha Chapman
Councillor Martin Christopher
Councillor David Clarkson
Councillor Thomas Dyer
Councillor Matthew Fido
Councillor Bill Mara
Councillor Clare Smalley
Councillor Hilton Spratt
Councillor Mark Storer
Councillor Rachel Storer

Councillor Edmund Strengiel
Councillor Aiden Wells

Against (20)

Councillor Debbie Armiger
Councillor Biff Bean
Councillor Chris Burke
Councillor Sue Burke
Councillor Bob Bushell
Councillor Liz Bushell
Councillor Gary Hewson
Councillor Rebecca Longbottom
Councillor Adrianna McNulty
Councillor Ric Metcalfe
Councillor Neil Murray

Councillor Donald Nannestad
Councillor Lucinda Preston
Councillor Dylan Stothard
Councillor Naomi Tweddle
Councillor Pat Vaughan
Councillor Calum Watt
Councillor Joshua Wells
Councillor Emily Wood
Councillor Loraine Woolley

Abstention

Having been proposed and seconded and being put to the vote it was RESOLVED that the motion be declared lost.

20. Receive Reports under Council Procedure Rule 2 (vi) from Members
(a) Report by Councillor Naomi Tweddle - Portfolio Holder for Inclusive Economic Growth

Councillor Naomi Tweddle, Portfolio Holder for Inclusive Economic Growth, presented her report to the Council, as detailed at pages 19 – 48 of the agenda.

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

- Recent filming of Napoleon in the City meant that so many people would get to see our beautiful Cathedral.
- The portfolio holder would speak to the Highways Authority to request that workmen refrain from parking their vehicles along Burghley Road at the risk of obscuring the views of elderly residents whilst accessing and exiting the area in their own cars. We must do our best for city residents.
- Thanks were given for the lovely comments regarding our City. Lincoln was a fantastic place to live with so much exciting work going on. The portfolio holder was proud to be a part of this City born and bred.
- The portfolio holder agreed that further roll-out of the Residents Parking Scheme was good news for residents and the City.
- The opening of the refurbished Central Market had been delayed due to a whole month of wet weather in July. Stall holders did not wish to start trading until after Christmas to give them time to prepare. It was important to listen to their wishes.
- Some of the Prosperity Funding available had been awarded but not all. The portfolio holder was 100% in favour of transparency and would provide full information on the data once available.

The content of the report was noted.

(b) Report by Councillor Rebecca Longbottom - Portfolio Holder for Customer Experience and Review

Councillor Rebecca Longbottom, Portfolio Holder for Customer Experience and Review, presented her report to the Council, as detailed at pages 49 – 64 of the agenda.

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

- Members would be supplied with further information regarding the involvement of the Electoral Registration Team in an ongoing trial on behalf of the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. The trial invited electors taken from the open register in Birchwood, Boultham and Park Wards to participate in the trial of online absent vote applications before the system went live.
- A new set of performance figures were now available since her report was published. The portfolio holder noted that CS3 'Average time taken to answer a call to Customer Services' had improved. Thanks were given to staff and members for their continued support to ensure residents and customers received the best possible service.

The content of the report was noted.

(c) **Report by Councillor Gary Hewson - Chair of Performance Scrutiny Committee and Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee**

Councillor Gary Hewson, Chair of Performance Scrutiny Committee, presented his report to the Council, as detailed at pages 65 – 68 of the agenda.

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

- Councillor Hewson gave thanks to officers and members for their passion on Performance Scrutiny Committee.
- Special thanks were given to Emily Holmes, Assistant Director - Strategic Development and Michelle Hoyles, Corporate Policy Business Manager for their support.
- Council had lasted longer tonight than Performance Scrutiny Committee which was a record to beat.

The content of the report was noted.

(d) **Report by Councillor Joshua Wells - Chair of Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel**

Councillor Joshua Wells, Chair of Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel, presented his report to the Council, as detailed at pages 69 – 76 of the agenda.

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

- Councillor Wells gave thanks to Graham Rose, Senior Strategic Policy Officer and the eight members of Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel for their support.
- Councillor Wells would check further why residents having applied to be a member of the Citizen's Panel had apparently been rejected as they were home owners and not Council tenants.

The content of the report was noted.

(e) **Report by Councillor Emily Wood - Chair of Policy Scrutiny Committee**

Councillor Emily Wood, Chair of Policy Scrutiny Committee, presented her report to the Council, as detailed at pages 77 – 80 of the agenda.

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

- Councillor Wood gave thanks to officers and members for their support resulting in all new policies having been scrutinised.
- Councillor Wood confirmed her involvement in Health Scrutiny Committee work by attending all the meetings, together with a special meeting regarding GP's and Lincoln Hospital Walk-In Centre.

The content of the report was noted.

21. **To Consider the Following Recommendations of the Executive and Committees of the Council**

(a) **Equality Journal April 2022 to March 2023:**

It was moved by Councillor Ric Metcalfe and seconded by Councillor Donald Nannestad that the Equality Journal April 2022 to March 2023 be approved.

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

RESOLVED

That the Equality Journal April 2022 to March 2023 be approved.

(b) Statement of Accounts 2022/23

It was moved by Councillor Ric Metcalfe and seconded by Councillor Donald Nannestad that the Statement of Accounts 2022/23 be approved.

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

RESOLVED

That the Statement of Accounts 2022/23 be approved.

(c) Independent Remuneration Panel - Comprehensive Review of the Members' Allowance Scheme

Councillor Metcalfe referred to the re-issued supplementary report to be considered this evening which replaced the report issued as part of the original agenda bundle, circulated in error. He clarified that the only element of the Members' Allowance Scheme to be considered this evening related to Schedule 2 – Duties for Childcare and Dependant Carer's Allowance.

It was moved by Councillor Ric Metcalfe and seconded by Councillor Donald Nannestad that the Members' Allowance Scheme-Schedule 2-Duties for Childcare and Dependant Carer's Allowance be approved.

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

RESOLVED

That the Members' Allowance Scheme-Schedule 2-Duties for Childcare and Dependant Carer's Allowance be approved.

(d) Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places 2023

It was moved by Councillor Ric Metcalfe and seconded by Councillor Donald Nannestad that the Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places 2023 for future elections be approved.

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

RESOLVED

That the Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places 2023 for future elections be approved.