

**Present:** Councillor Alan Briggs (*in the Chair*),  
Councillor Debbie Armiger, Councillor Biff Bean,  
Councillor James Brown, Councillor Chris Burke,  
Councillor Sue Burke, Councillor Bob Bushell,  
Councillor Liz Bushell, Councillor Natasha Chapman,  
Councillor Annie Currier, Councillor Laura Danese,  
Councillor Gary Hewson,  
Councillor Rebecca Longbottom, Councillor Bill Mara,  
Councillor Neil Murray, Councillor Donald Nannestad,  
Councillor Lucinda Preston, Councillor Callum Roper,  
Councillor Anita Pritchard, Councillor Clare Smalley,  
Councillor Hilton Spratt, Councillor Rachel Storer,  
Councillor Naomi Tweddle, Councillor Calum Watt,  
Councillor Aiden Wells, Councillor Joshua Wells and  
Councillor Emily Wood

**Apologies for Absence:** Councillor Martin Christopher, Councillor Thomas Dyer,  
Councillor Adrianna McNulty, Councillor Dylan Stothard,  
Councillor Pat Vaughan and Councillor Loraine Woolley

**31. Confirmation of Minutes - 08 October 2024**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 8 October 2024 be signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

**32. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest at this stage in proceedings.

**33. Mayor's Announcements**

The Mayor was pleased to report on some of the activities he had undertaken since the last meeting of Council, which included his attendance at the following:

- St Barnabas Torchlight Procession
- A performance of Sunset Boulevard at Lincoln Theatre Royal
- Diwali celebrations

The Mayor made particular reference to the Lincoln Christmas Lights Switch On, which had been arranged by the Council's Civic Team. The Mayor congratulated the Team for such a well organised event.

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

There were no questions received.

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

**Councillor James Brown to Councillor Joshua Wells**

*Question*

“Can the Portfolio Holder please list how many empty stalls at Lincoln Cornhill Market there have been per month since it opened in May?”

*Answer*

From May to September, there had been six vacant stalls in the market, not including the pop-up stalls.

Since September, this had increased to nine as two businesses, as reported at the last Council meeting, had moved into their own premises or had altered their business plans.

The stall formerly occupied by Bradford Plants had now been leased to a new business, Just Because Gifts. The Council was working with a number of businesses who had expressed an interest in the market, but they were not quite ready to make the leap.

The Council had been working with those expressing interest and existing stall holders on their business plans, making sure they could sustain trading in the market.

*Supplementary question*

“Why are bookshops banned from the Lincoln Central Market?”

*Answer*

The Portfolio Holder advised this was not the case but would consult officers.

**Councillor Clare Smalley to Councillor Donald Nannestad**

*Question*

“Can the Portfolio Holder provide an update on the situation of homelessness in Lincoln with an assurance that no one will be homeless on the streets this Christmas?”

*Answer*

The Council was actively engaging with those that were currently rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping, and temporary accommodation was provided to those that were in priority need or under a rough sleeping power. It was noted that some people had complex needs and chose to rough sleep. The Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) would also be put in place when required but this was weather dependent.

The team was currently gathering data about the services that were available in the voluntary and faith sectors so that people could be signposted to these services. This information could also be made available to councillors if they wish to receive it.

The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Teams would continue to provide a full service on working days and on the days/hours when the Council buildings were closed. The Out of Hours Service within Housing could be contacted and people requiring assistance or accommodation could be offered accommodation (this was the same service that was available overnight and at weekends).

### **Councillor Natasha Chapman to Councillor Naomi Tweddle**

#### *Question*

“At the last Full Council meeting my colleague Councillor Brown proposed a motion on tackling the impact of the two-child benefit cap on Lincoln residents, which was then amended and passed. Could the Portfolio Holder please provide an update on what actions have been taken so far to implement the amended motion?”

#### *Answer*

A letter was sent, on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2024, to the Chancellor of the Exchequer regarding both Winter Fuel Payment and Two Child Benefit Cap motions. The text in the letter regarding Two Child Benefit Cap, read:

#### ***Two Child Benefit Cap:***

*At a recent meeting of the Council it was noted:*

- The huge financial failures the Labour Government has inherited from the previous Conservative administration, including a significant financial black hole and a significant number of unfunded policies and projects;*
- The effects of austerity imposed originally by the Conservative and Liberal Democrat Coalition in 2010, which was a significant factor in increasing poverty, including child poverty;*

*Lincoln faces some real challenges in relation to child poverty. Latest data shows Lincoln's employment rate is 73.5% and over 22,000 residents are in receipt of Universal Credit. We are continuing to conduct a publicity campaign with partners to assist families who are struggling with the cost-of-living crisis to claim the full amount of benefits they are entitled to. We are also carrying out an assessment of child poverty and its effect on Lincoln families in a refresh of the Authority's anti-poverty strategy. The Council is helping to mitigate impacts of cost-of-living challenges through vital local welfare funds such as Household Support Fund, Discretionary Housing Payments, Council Tax Support and UK Shared Prosperity Fund.*

*As Leader of City of Lincoln Council, I hereby urge prioritising the lifting of the Two Child Benefit cap, when the financial position allows.*

A copy of this letter had also been sent to the office of the Member of Parliament for Lincoln.

**36. Motion Under Council Procedure Rule 14 - Christmas Market**

Councillor Clare Smalley, Leader of the Opposition, moved the following motion:

“Council notes:

- “In February 2023 the Executive of the City Council decided to cancel the Lincoln Christmas Market from 2023 onwards.
- “Despite a successful Christmas Market in 2022 that attracted over 320,000 people to our city.
- “That the replacement events programme has not attracted the same number of people or the same publicity to our city.

“Council believes:

- “That the decision to cancel the market was done in haste and without proper consultation of stallholders, local businesses, residents and visitors to see what changes could have been made to the market without a cancellation.
- “A Christmas Market in Lincoln is a vital part of the local economy and provides income to hotels, restaurants and shops of all kinds in the city.
- “The previous incarnation of the Christmas Market was not perfect and had issues around overcrowding and safety. However, events of a much bigger magnitude are run across the country and there are lessons to be learnt on how to run such an event in a safe and secure manner.

“Council resolves:

- “That the Executive should consult stallholders, local businesses, residents and visitors on what they would like to see in a future Lincoln Christmas Market.
- “That the Leader of the Council bring an item to the Executive agenda in the next 6 months to vote on “Bringing back a safe and sustainable Lincoln Christmas Market”.”

The above motion was seconded by Councillor James Brown, who reserved his right to speak.

During discussion on the motion, the following points were noted:

- It was commented that the vast majority of residents of Lincoln had moved on from the Christmas Market, and that retailers had expressed happiness with the new programme of year-round events. Furthermore, it was advised that the market had changed and had grown too big. Social media comments from the last Christmas Market were evidence that the perception of the market had soured. It was also commented that by increasing the market’s size or length to address safety concerns would come at a considerable cost to the ratepayer nor was it guaranteed to make it safe. It was also noted that Christmas markets were now liable for VAT and business rates charges, which would significantly increase costs to holding a Christmas Market and this was the reason for other markets being cancelled across the country. However, should a private events company wish to explore options, this would be supported by the Council by way of advice, but not financially. It was reiterated that safety would

need to be paramount. It was for these reasons the councillor urged the Council to vote against the motion.

- It was suggested that the market could be condensed into a smaller area over a longer period of time and that not all options had been explored by the Executive prior to cancelling the market. It was reiterated that there was a lack of consultation, which was unfair on residents, stallholders and local businesses.
- A councillor commented that the year-round programme of events had been successful and it brought visitors to Lincoln throughout the year. Particular reference was made to Lincoln Live, the Ice Trail, the Festival of History, Monsters Invasion, Lincoln Pride and the Steam Punk event, all of which were either hosted or supported by the Council. Some of these events would not have been possible without the reallocation of funds from the Christmas Market to the year round programme of events.
- A councillor reiterated that the motion urged the Council to consult with residents, businesses and stallholders to find a suitable solution to enable the market to return.
- It was commented that there was evidence to suggest that there was a growing number of people who were becoming tired of Christmas markets and therefore it was relevant for the Council to diversify its range of events across the year.
- The significant disruption to residents in the Minster Ward, where the market was largely located, was acknowledged, particularly that those residents could not use their vehicles during period of the market nor leave their homes.
- Concerns regarding the safety of visitors was discussed, particularly highlighting that it was the responsibility of the Council to ensure any events it put in place were held in a safe manner. It was therefore reiterated that the correct decision had been made at the time by the Executive.

Councillor James Brown, who had reserved his right to speak, reiterated that the motion sought commitment to consult local businesses, stallholders, residents and visitors on what they would like to see in a future Lincoln Christmas Market. It was reiterated that whilst the Council may not have made any money from the market, it had generated the local economy millions of pounds through hotel bookings, restaurants and sales in shops and also aided stallholders. However, those stallholders now had an income shortfall. It was stated that the same level of visitors was not being drawn in by the year-round events programme and therefore the city had overall lost out by the cancellation of the market. It was suggested that the Executive had not looked at viable options to ensure the market could continue, for example implementing a ticket system to gain entry to the market, holding it over a longer period of time or hosting it over a larger area. Leeds Christmas Market was cited as an example of a returning market being held in a safe and sustainable way.

Councillor Clare Smalley, who had moved the motion, was invited to give her right of reply. Councillor Smalley reiterated that the motion was asking for consultation to find a safe and sustainable way for the Lincoln Christmas Market to return. It was felt to be a shame to lose the market which had been held over forty years and was a well-loved annual event enjoyed by visitors and residents and therefore the motion tried to encourage its return. Council was urged to support the motion.

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

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

**(a) Report by Councillor Naomi Tweddle, Portfolio Holder for Our People and Resources**

Councillor Naomi Tweddle, Leader of the Council, presented her report to Council, which was detailed on pages 21 to 52 of the agenda pack.

It was noted that Councillor Tweddle had been assigned to the Executive post of Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Corporate Strategy at the meeting of Council on 16 July 2024, which reflected the changes to her portfolio responsibilities.

The report provided an update on the work progressed by the services under the Portfolio Holder for Our People and Resources preceding the change in portfolio responsibilities and built on former Councillor Metcalfe's previous report on this portfolio.

Additionally, an update on *Addressing the Challenge of Climate Change* had been presented to Performance Scrutiny Committee on 26 September 2024 and was detailed as Appendix A to the report.

Particular reference was made to the financial information contained in the report, as the financial outturn for 2023/24 had a small underspend, despite the challenging financial pressures faced by the Council. The Leader of the Council expressed that this was owing to the hard work of officers and exceptional financial management.

The Leader of the Council also thanked the Council's Communication team for its ongoing hard work and support.

The report was noted.

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

Councillor Bob Bushell, Portfolio Holder for Remarkable Place, presented his report to Council, which was detailed on pages 53 to 100 of the agenda pack.

The Portfolio Holder was pleased to report that not only had Lincoln retained its Green Flag Award for its three main parks (Aboretum, Boultham Park and Hartsholme Country Park) along with the additional Green Heritage Award in Boultham Park, but it could now boast an unprecedented fourth Green Flag park in Hope Wood. The Portfolio Holder wished his thanks be conveyed to officers and volunteers for their time on maintaining the parks. These thanks were echoed by the Council.

In response to a question on the removal of graffiti, it was confirmed that the Portfolio Holder would make enquiries with officers as to whether the Council could work in partnership with Lincolnshire County Council's Probation Service by utilising the community payback scheme in removing graffiti. Furthermore, the complexity around the removal of graffiti was discussed and it was highlighted that any offensive or racist graffiti was removed within 24 hours of being reported.

NOTE: At this stage in the meeting, Councillor Hilton Spratt, wished it be noted that he was a Lincolnshire County Councillor.

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 and Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee, presented his report to Council, which was detailed on pages 101 to 106 of the agenda pack.

The report was noted.

**(d) Report by Councillor Chris Burke, Chair of Policy Scrutiny Committee**

Councillor Chris Burke, Chair of Policy Scrutiny Committee, presented his report to Council, which was detailed on pages 107 to 110 of the agenda pack.

The report was noted.

**(e) Report by Councillor Emily Wood, Chair of Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel**

Councillor Emily Wood, Chair of Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel, presented her report to Council, which was detailed on pages 111 to 118 of the agenda pack.

The Chair thanked the councillors and officers for their work on the advisory panel.

The report was noted.

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

**(a) Treasury Management Stewardship and Prudential Code Update Mid-Year Report -30 September 2024**

It was moved, seconded and

RESOLVED that the Prudential and Local Indicators and the actual performance against the Treasury Management Strategy 2024/25 for the half year ended 30 September 2024 be noted and approved.

**(b) Gambling Act 2005 Triennial Review of Statement of Licensing Policy**

It was moved, seconded and

RESOLVED that the Gambling Act 2005 Statement of Principles (Policy) 2025 - 2028, as detailed at Appendix A to the report, be approved for adoption.

**39. Equality Journal April 2023 to March 2024**

It was moved, seconded and

RESOLVED that the contents of the Equality Journal April 2023 to March 2024, as detailed at Appendix A to the report, be noted.

**40. Establishment of the District Joint Committee - Greater Lincolnshire Devolution**

It was moved, seconded and

RESOLVED

- (1) That approval be given to the establishment of a District Joint Committee of the Lincolnshire Districts for the purposes of devolution and participation at the Mayoral Combined County Authority.
- (2) That the Leader of the Council be appointed as the Council's representative at the District Joint Committee.
- (3) That the Terms of Reference and Standing Orders for the District Joint Committee, as detailed at Appendices A and B to the report, be approved.
- (4) That the Chief Executive and Town Clerk and the City Solicitor, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, be delegated authority to make any further review or amendment of the Terms of Reference and Standing Orders.

**41. Freedom of the City**

It was moved, seconded and

RESOLVED that in accordance with Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, an extraordinary meeting of the Council be arranged for Tuesday, 17 December 2024 at 6.00 pm to award the Freedom of the City to Rob Bradley.