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**NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON**

**14<sup>th</sup> March 2024**

**Present:** Councillor Lindley (in the Chair)  
Councillors Aisthorpe, Batson, Beasant, Boyd, Brasted, Cairns, Cracknell, Croft, Dawkins, Downes, Farren, Freeston, Goodwin, Haggis, Harness, Hasthorpe, Henderson, Holland, Hudson, Jackson, Mickleburgh, Morland, Parkinson, Patrick, Pettigrew, Reynolds, Shepherd, Shreeve, Shutt, Silvester, Smith, K Swinburn, S Swinburn, Westcott, Wheatley and Wilson.

**Officers in Attendance:**

- Rob Walsh (Chief Executive)
- Simon Jones (Monitoring Officer and Assistant Director Law and Governance)
- Zoe Campbell (Senior Scrutiny and Committee Advisor)
- Paul Wisken (Civic and Mayoral Officer)

**NEL.78 MR JOHN BRIGGS**

Mr Mayor took the opportunity to ask members to observe a one minutes' silence as a mark of respect for Councillor John Briggs, Deputy Mayor of North Lincolnshire Council, who sadly passed away recently. Councillor Briggs was elected to North Lincolnshire Council in 1999 and many of our members would have encountered and worked with him during his significant tenure as both a member and the Chair of the Humberside Fire Authority.

## **NEL.79 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor welcomed everyone in attendance at this meeting.

He thanked those who had attended his recent successful eighties fundraiser and looked forward to his 24-hour danceathon that was due to take place on the 21<sup>st</sup> March 2024. All donations towards the mayoral charities would be gratefully received and he thanked those who had already donated.

## **NEL.80 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence from this meeting were received from Councillors Brookes, McLean, Robinson and Sandford.

## **NEL.81 MINUTES**

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meetings of North East Lincolnshire Council held on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2023, 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2024 and also the special meeting of North East Lincolnshire Council held on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2024 be approved as a correct record.

## **NEL.82 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Pettigrew declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in item NEL. 87 as the proposed new high voltage overhead electricity transmission line would run adjacent to his property.

Councillor Shepherd declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in item NEL. 87 as the proposed new high voltage overhead electricity transmission line would run adjacent to his property.

## **NEL.83 QUESTION TIME**

There were four questions submitted by members of the public for this meeting, in accordance with the Council's procedures.

The first question was submitted by Ms McKinnon to the Portfolio Holder for Culture, Heritage and the Visitor Economy. Ms McKinnon attended the meeting and put the question as set out below.

*"In the Independent newspaper on 9th June 2017 there was an article on this council's disposal of Humberston Fitties. In that article Mr Paul Spriggins, Tingdene director, stated: "We intend to consult with the existing chalet owners and listen to their views as well as the community group and prominent stakeholders. Humberston Fitties has significant historical value and it is set in a fantastic environmental location, we have the expertise and experience to add to this value and we look forward to safeguarding the next 100 years of use for*

*existing and new residents.” The article went on to say, residents face with some trepidation the possible slotting in of statics wherever a plot becomes available. And once one factory-built home arrives, the second will arrive by low-loader soon after. In the Grimsby Evening Telegraph on 19th July 2017 there was a headline: Preferred bidder Tingdene has given a raft of assurances over the future of the Humberston Fitties in talks with North East Lincolnshire Council. In this article Tingdene stated they would ‘Ensure compliance and full regard is adopted by all parties on matters relating to conservation’. In the Grimsby Evening Telegraph on 4th October 2017, ward councillor for Humberston and New Waltham, John Fenty claimed Tingdene has so far not given the councillors assurances that heritage of the site will be protected. “We wanted assurances that the heritage of the chalets will be protected and as good landlords, the council puts safeguards in place. I am bitterly disappointed at the whole process and do not feel assured in any shape or form”. Fast forward to 2024, despite all of the assurances given, the first caravan has arrived and there are likely more to come. This council has responsibility under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to preserve and enhance the conservation area. The National Planning Policy Framework emphasises that local plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment. This includes heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay and other threats. Policy 39 of the Local Plan on ‘conserving and enhancing the historic environment’ outlines the Council’s strategy for securing and facilitating conservation of the historic environment and the Borough’s heritage assets. Can the portfolio holder explain how the granting of a caravan site licence to install caravans on Humberston Fitties can be seen to preserve or enhance this heritage asset or in any way secure and facilitate conservation of the historic environment? What assurances can he now give that the heritage of the Humberston Fitties will be protected for future generations?*

Councillor Dawkins Portfolio Holder for Culture, Heritage and the Visitor Economy thanked Ms McKinnon for the question about the Humberston Fitties. He explained that Council was committed to the protection of the Humberston Fitties through its status as a Conservation Area which was outlined in Policy 39 of the North East Lincolnshire Local Plan in 2018, which alongside the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the National Planning Policy Framework, highlighted the importance of conserving and enhancing the historic environment. All of these documents were relevant considerations for planning applications.

One of the main reasons why the unique character of the Fitties had been retained and was so cherished was due to the implementation of the planning process. At the same time, past decisions and approvals were part of any considerations and could not be ignored, for example Cleethorpes Borough Council granted holiday use of the overall site in 1992.

With regard to the lease of the site, Tingdene Holiday Parks Limited were granted a 125 year lease from 2017 ‘(to) use as a chalet park and yacht club and as ancillary car park, reception, management services and such other

purposes provided for the benefit of users and occupiers of the property'. This included the provision of caravans and, as such, a caravan licence was issued on 6th June 2023 for a maximum of 11 caravans with a season between 1st March – 31st December. Prior to issuing the licence, a full inspection of the site was undertaken to ensure that it complied with the licence conditions. The licensing authority had no lawful discretion to refuse this and would be open to challenge from the applicant if the licence was refused.

The second question was submitted by Mr Bright to the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Economy, Net Zero, Skills and Housing. Mr Bright attended the meeting and put the question as set out below.

*“On 13th February, as part of its long-term plan for housing, the government announced that every council in England, will be told that they will need to prioritise brownfield developments, and instructed to be less bureaucratic, and more flexible in applying policies that stop housebuilding on brownfield land. The raft of policy measures announced show the government is taking immediate action on its long-term plan for housing, which will deliver homes in the areas that need and want them the most. The focus on brownfield land and urban development is part of the government’s plan to take a common-sense approach to delivering the housing, that is needed to protect the countryside and Green Belt. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said: “We need to build homes in the places where people need and want them. There’s little point, trying to force large new estates on our countryside and green belt, when that is where public resistance to development is strongest, and where the GP surgeries, schools and roads don’t exist to support new communities.” Housing Secretary Michael Gove said: “Today marks another important step forward in our Long-Term Plan for Housing, taking a brownfield first approach, to deliver thousands of new homes where people want to live and work, without concreting over the countryside. Our new brownfield presumption will tackle under delivery in our key towns and cities – where new homes are most needed, to support jobs and drive growth”. Will the council leader and portfolio holder, now concede, that as well as being out of step with the public, they are also now out of step with central government, and remove the Grimsby West development from the local plan?”*

The Leader responded that the Council was very much aligned with Government policy on brownfield development, both in the current Local Plan and the draft revised Local Plan. He referred Mr Bright to the Brownfield Land Register, accessible via the council’s website, which identified brownfield sites that had been and were being developed for housing, and those that potentially could be. A few examples included the Matthew Humberston and Western School sites where discussions with potential developers were well advanced. The latter also has the infrastructure in place. The council was working with Homes England, a government agency, to deliver low carbon homes on Alexandra Dock in Grimsby to boost town centre living. A number of other sites, like the former Birds Eye site off Ladysmith Road, were already substantially built-out. The Leader confirmed that we could not meet all our housing needs with brownfield development alone.

With regard to the potential Grimsby West development, neither he nor any other councillor had the power to remove it from the Local Plan. The current Local Plan was approved unanimously by this Council in March 2018, following extensive public consultation and an examination in public by a Planning Inspector. The Local Plan was, in effect, a legal document which had to remain in force until replaced by the revised Local Plan in 2026.

The third question was submitted by Mrs Bate to the Portfolio Holder for Children and Education. Mrs Bate attended the meeting and put the question as set out below.

*“Now that that the published Nurseries Consultation Review Report has unequivocally proven that the consultation was indeed ‘a car crash’ (quote from Councillor Shreeve), when will the staff, parents, children and the communities of Scartho Nursery School, Great Coates Village Nursery School and Reynolds Day Care receive a public and sincere apology for the emotional, financial, physical distress, and anxiety this has all caused?”*

Councillor Cracknell, Portfolio Holder for Children and Education, said that she could only repeat what she said at the Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel meeting on the 7<sup>th</sup> March 2024 that in hind sight she made a decision to allow a process to begin resulting in uncertainty for the three nursery settings. She apologised to the settings, the nursery staff, governors, and parents. She genuinely for one minute did not think she would be making a singular decision as the recommendations given to her by officers showed there would be a clear system of decision making, namely Childrens Leadership Team, the Council's Senior Leadership Team, informal Cabinet and Cabinet.

The fourth question was submitted by Mr Bate to the Portfolio Holder for Children and Education. Mr Bate attended the meeting and put the question as set out below.

*“Will the council publicly apologise for sending out communications which stated that a cumulative 1.5million pounds of renovations was required to make the nurseries suitable to provide nursery education when they didn't, accepting that such communications created a negative narrative that has ultimately impacted on pupil numbers and both nurseries' budgets?”*

Councillor Cracknell fully appreciated Mr Bate's comments as set out in the narrative. She assured Mr Bate that there would be an inclusive process to properly assess the building requirements with the nurseries to ensure a shared understanding of the future needs of the safety and wellbeing of those children in their learning environment.

Mr Bate asked his second question to the Portfolio Holder for Children and Education.

*“Councillor Cracknell publicly apologised to nursery staff, parents and pupils, in the Grimsby Telegraph and at children’s scrutiny last week, for not knowingly agreeing to a formal consultation for the closure of the nurseries. She had clearly accepted that her decision had a negative impact on the lives of staff, parents and pupils. The independent investigation report identified that the communications also released at the time created a negative narrative about the nurseries viability. With the acceptance that all the aforementioned have impacted negatively on pupil numbers and thus the nurseries budgets, will the Council accept their part in this and recompense the nurseries for the financial impact this mistaken agreement has had on their budgets?”*

Councillor Cracknell highlighted that, as Mr Bate pointed out in his question, communication at all levels had not been the best, however, in terms of his request, there was no doubt whatsoever that anxiety and uncertainty had played a part but there was no provable evidence of financial impact. The local authority was committed to continue to work with the settings to increase the number of children on roll move towards genuine sustainability.

## **NEL.84      LEADERS STATEMENT**

The Council received a statement from the Leader of the Council.

The Leader reported that so many positive things were currently happening within North East Lincolnshire around regeneration, the local economy, business and jobs, service improvements, and progress with delivery against strategies and plans that he could only talk about the highlights tonight.

He first addressed the independent Nurseries Consultation Review Report. All members had received a copy and it had been considered by scrutiny. This report vindicated his decision, as Leader of the Council, to halt what was clearly a flawed public consultation.

It was clear from the report that council officers failed to adequately communicate with both the Cabinet and Ward Councillors regarding the challenges associated with the three nursery settings and the proposed course of action and did not comply with normal governance processes. These issues were being addressed but, more importantly, whilst some focus their energies on political posturing, the Cabinet and officers were now working closely with the three settings to try to ensure their ongoing viability and sustainability so they could continue to serve parents and children within their communities.

On a more positive note, for the first time in many years there was a permanent leadership team in children’s services, providing much needed stability. We were now finding it much easier to recruit permanent social workers and there had been a safe reduction in our numbers of looked after children, including within externally funded provision. Whilst we were clearly now on the right road with children’s services, the Leader recognised that there was still a long way to travel.

Whilst on the subject of a better future for our young people, the new Youth Zone, named Horizon by local young people, was a step closer to becoming a reality as work at the Garth Lane site continued to gather pace. The Leader visited the site a couple of weeks ago to view the progress. Expected to open in 2025, the state-of-the-art youth centre would provide thousands of young people with opportunities to engage in activities and access support from skilled youth workers, helping them to develop their skills and reach their full potential.

Whilst talking about Grimsby town centre, work had started on the NHS Community Diagnostic Centre (CDC) within Freshney Place. This would occupy five retail units and was expected to open in the summer. The new facility would provide the local community with better access to NHS services through its central location, providing a range of non-urgent test facilities and aiming to provide 150,000 additional health checks a year, removing the need to attend acute hospital sites. The addition of the CDC to Freshney Place emphasises the aspiration of the Council, to create a mixed use destination for the community, combining retail and leisure with services within central Grimsby, increasing footfall and boosting the town centre economy.

Preparation work continued on the cinema and leisure scheme at the western end of Freshney Place as well as on the conversion of St James House into a business and conference centre, all adding to the diverse offer in the town centre.

Grimsby was one of 55 town centres across the country that were allocated 'Long-Term Plan' money from the Government to help transform Grimsby Town Centre into a central hub where people and families could visit and enjoy. The £20million scheme, with money to be spent over the next 10 years, would look at tackling issues like anti-social behaviour, graffiti and other things that would help people feel and be safe when visiting the town centre. Government had also announced that Grimsby had been nominated as one of 10 towns to take part in a High Street Accelerator pilot scheme to help improve the town's future. We had been invited to take part in a pilot programme to build on the work of the town centre task force to agree a long-term vision for the town centre, and given an allocation of £237,000 to put initial interventions in place.

Turning to regeneration in the resort on the back of the Cleethorpes Masterplan and £18.4 million of Levelling Up Funding, the Leader reported that an announcement would soon be made on who would be leasing the new landmark Sea Road building, with construction commencing later in the year. Public consultation had now started on the refurbishment proposals for Pier Gardens and Cleethorpes Market Place, with very positive engagement so far. There was also good news for Stallingborough and Immingham, with the announcement that DFDS, which employed over 1,000 people on the Humber, had taken the first steps in creating a new combined commercial office in the area by purchasing seven acres of land on Pioneer Business Park.

Further signs that the local economy was booming came with the most recent Office for National Statistics published earnings figures, which showed that, for

the first time in many years, earnings in North East Lincolnshire were higher than in the Yorkshire and Humber region and were 97% of the England average. The Leader commented that this was all good news for our families and the local economy.

The most exciting announcement was the awarding of almost £120 million of Local Transport Fund monies to North East Lincolnshire to bring transformational change to transport across the borough. The Leader reported that this was our share of the money released from the scrapping of the northern leg of HS2, a project he never supported and which would have brought little or no benefit to North East Lincolnshire. Funding would be available from April 2025 and provided a yearly programme until 2032, with a £20 million limit on individual projects. Cabinet yesterday approved the start of a planning journey, which would see a mapping out of how these significant monies would be invested. However, at the top of their priority list was a new transport hub – bus station – in Grimsby town centre, for which we had already acquired the land. This would give a major boost to public transport in the area, encouraging more people to use buses and improve connectivity.

Continuing on the theme of public transport, Bus Service Improvement grant monies would be used once again to allow those with bus passes to travel free on our buses before 9.30 am. We were currently in discussions with Stagecoach as to how this would be implemented but he hoped that it would encourage greater bus patronage and more people into the town centre, especially once the new Community Diagnostic Centre opened.

The Leader reported that, following a big increase in recycling rates as a result of the introduction of the new recycling bins and on the back of a successful food waste collection pilot, North East Lincolnshire Council has received £1.2 million from Government to help with the implementation of separate collections of food waste for recycling across the whole borough. We were currently assessing how the scheme would operate with a view to providing an update in autumn this year and implementation by April 2026.

The Leader noted that the bell from the now decommissioned HMS Grimsby had recently been presented to the town. The vessel was now being refitted for use by the Ukrainian navy. It was now over two years since the start of the dreadful war in that country, with no immediate end in sight. So far, in North East Lincolnshire, we have hosted 112 people through the Homes for Ukraine scheme by way of 54 sponsors, and the Leader gave a huge thank you to them.

Finally, the current Council tracking of actions document and details of special urgency decisions taken since the last ordinary meeting of Council were circulated at this meeting.



The Council considered a report from the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Economy, Net Zero, Skills and Housing seeking to agree further steps to secure devolution to Greater Lincolnshire, including consideration of the results of the recent public consultation, review of the devolution proposal and a decision on further implementation including submission of the final Proposal to the Secretary of State with associated delegations.

Following a debate, a recorded vote was held in accordance with the requirements of the Council's Standing Orders; the votes cast were recorded as follows:

For the Motion:

Councillors Batson, Beasant, Boyd, Brasted, Cairns, Cracknell, Croft, Dawkins, Freeston, Harness, Hasthorpe, Hudson, Jackson, Lindley, Parkinson, Pettigrew, Reynolds, Shepherd, Shreeve, Silvester, Smith, K Swinburn, S Swinburn and Westcott (24 votes).

Against the Motion:

Councillors Aisthorpe, Downes, Farren, Goodwin, Haggis, Henderson, Holland, Mickleburgh, Morland, Patrick, Shutt, Wheatley and Wilson (13 votes).

The motion was therefore carried.

**RESOLVED –**

1. That the outcomes of the public consultation, attached at Appendix A of the report now submitted, be noted.
2. That due regard be given to the response to the consultation outcomes, attached at Appendix B, and the updated Equality Impact Assessment, attached at Appendix C of the report now submitted.
3. That the amendments that have been made to the Proposal to take account of the results of the consultation be noted and that the document at Appendix D of the report now submitted be approved as the final Proposal relating to Devolution in Greater Lincolnshire.
4. That the submission to the Secretary of State pursuant to section 45(1) of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 of the final Proposal, at Appendix D of the report now submitted, together with relevant associated documents proposing the establishment of a Combined County Authority for Greater Lincolnshire, be approved.

5. That the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executives of the other constituent councils, be delegated authority to take all decisions and approve all steps necessary to finalise the establishment of a Mayoral Combined County Authority for Greater Lincolnshire, up to and including the giving of consent to its establishment on behalf of the Council for the purposes of section 46(1)(d) of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023.

## **NEL.86      SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS**

The Mayor moved that the Council's Standing Orders governing the length of meetings be suspended to permit this meeting to continue beyond 10.00 p.m. This was seconded by the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Beasant. Upon a show of hands, the motion was carried and it was:

RESOLVED - That the Council's Standing Orders governing the length of meetings be suspended to permit this meeting to continue beyond 10.00 p.m.

## **NEL.87      NOTICE OF MOTION 1**

Note - Councillor Shepherd and Councillor Pettigrew left the Chamber for this agenda item.

The Council considered a Notice of Motion, to be proposed by Councillor Jackson and seconded by Councillor Harness, submitted in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders as set out below:

*National Grid Electricity Transmission is consulting on proposals to build approximately 140 km of new high voltage overhead electricity transmission line between Grimsby West and Walpole in Norfolk. This will support the UK's net zero target by reinforcing the electricity transmission network between the north of England and the Midlands and facilitating the connection of planned offshore wind generation and interconnectors with other countries, allowing more energy from renewables and low carbon sources to be carried on the network.*

*Within North East Lincolnshire, this overhead transmission line is proposed to be routed from a new substation at Grimsby West, south between Waltham and Barnoldby-le-Beck and around Brigsley and Ashby-cum-Fenby and close to an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).*

*Whilst this Council welcomes this much needed upgrading of our electricity transmission infrastructure, it is concerned about the visual and environmental effects of an overhead transmission line and associated pylons and requests National Grid Electricity Transmission to place any new transmission line within the North East Lincolnshire boundary underground and/or re-route it so that it is subsea. Furthermore, our two North East Lincolnshire Members of Parliament be copied in, requesting their support and urging them to lobby as appropriate at Government level.*

An amendment to the Motion had been received, in accordance with the Constitution, and was moved by Councillor Holland and seconded by Councillor Henderson, as follows:

*That the Council:*

- 1. Request National Grid Electricity Transmission to place any new transmission line within the North East Lincolnshire boundary underground and/or re-route it so that it is subsea.*
- 2. Write to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero to robustly express the views within this Motion on Notice and request the support of our two MPs in this matter; urging them to lobby as appropriate at Government level and to liaise closely with the parliamentary 'Off Shore Electricity Grid Task Force'.*
- 3. Put in a formal objection to the scheme in a similar manner to Lincolnshire County Council.*
- 4. Encourage, through a press release, all residents and community groups such as parish councils to make their views known to National Grid Electricity Transmission.*
- 5. Publicly support the call made by Victoria Atkins MP and others for an independent review of offshore options for the Lincolnshire East Coast.*
- 6. Work closely with Lincolnshire County Council to ascertain the feasibility of being included in the independent review of the impact of the scheme that they are in the process of commissioning and fully support them in their intention to "take legal action to challenge the reasoning that this infrastructure is the best solution if necessary".*
- 7. Urge the Police and Crime Commissioner for Humberside to study carefully the objection formally submitted by his counterpart for Lincolnshire due to the serious risk to the operation of emergency services and provide a public statement in due course.*

Following a debate, the amendment was put to the vote. A recorded vote was held in accordance with the requirements of the Council's Standing Orders. The votes cast were recorded as follows:

For the Motion

Councillors Aisthorpe, Batson, Beasant, Boyd, Brasted, Cairns, Cracknell, Croft, Dawkins, Downes, Freeston, Harness, Hasthorpe, Henderson, Holland, Hudson, Jackson, Lindley, Parkinson, Reynolds, Shreeve, Silvester, Smith, K Swinburn, S Swinburn, Westcott and Wilson (27 votes)

Against the motion

Councillors Mickleburgh, Morland and Wheatley (3 votes)

Abstained

Councillors Farren, Goodwin, Haggis, Patrick and Shutt (5 votes)

The motion was therefore carried.

Following a debate, the substantive motion as amended was put to the vote. A recorded vote was held in accordance with the requirements of the Council's Standing Orders. The votes cast were recorded as follows:

For the Motion

Councillors Aisthorpe, Batson, Beasant, Boyd, Brasted, Cairns, Cracknell, Croft, Dawkins, Downes, Freeston, Harness, Hasthorpe, Henderson, Holland, Hudson, Jackson, Lindley, Parkinson, Reynolds, Shreeve, Silvester, Smith, K Swinburn, S Swinburn and Westcott (26 votes)

Against the motion

Councillors Farren, Haggis, Mickleburgh, Morland, Patrick, Shutt, Wheatley and Wilson (8 votes)

Abstained

Councillor Goodwin (1 vote)

The substantive motion as amended was therefore carried.

**RESOLVED –**

1. That National Grid Electricity Transmission be requested to place any new transmission line within the North East Lincolnshire boundary underground and/or re-route it so that it is subsea.
2. That this Council write to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero to robustly express the views within this Motion on Notice and request the support of our two MPs in this matter; urging them to lobby as appropriate at Government level and to liaise closely with the parliamentary 'Off Shore Electricity Grid Task Force'.
3. That a formal objection to the scheme be made by North East Lincolnshire Council in a similar manner to Lincolnshire County Council.

4. That all residents and community groups, such as parish councils, be encouraged, through a press release, to make their views known to National Grid Electricity Transmission.
5. That the call made by Victoria Atkins MP and others for an independent review of offshore options for the Lincolnshire East Coast, be publicly supported.
6. That this Council work closely with Lincolnshire County Council to ascertain the feasibility of being included in the independent review of the impact of the scheme that they are in the process of commissioning and fully support them in their intention to “take legal action to challenge the reasoning that this infrastructure is the best solution if necessary”.
7. That the Police and Crime Commissioner for Humberside be urged to study carefully the objection formally submitted by his counterpart for Lincolnshire due to the serious risk to the operation of emergency services and provide a public statement in due course.

Councillor Shepherd and Councillor Pettigrew returned to the meeting following the end of this agenda item.

## **NEL.88 NOTICE OF MOTION 2**

To consider a Notice of Motion, to be proposed by Councillor Patrick and seconded by Councillor Shutt, submitted in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders as set out below:

*Council will note in recent weeks that large areas of North East Lincolnshire are currently victim to high degrees of traffic chaos, caused largely by a combination of highway maintenance, utility works and ongoing delays to the planned repairs to Corporation Road bridge.*

*The cumulative effect of all these works is adding very large amounts of time upon what should be otherwise easy journeys through non-metropolitan areas like ours, harming our environment with standing traffic, damaging our local economy, as well as causing frustration and inconvenience to the lives of residents, including motorists and users of public transport.*

*The current Conservative administration has, objectively, failed to keep the traffic flowing.*

*Several other local authority areas have enacted fresh and ambitious plans to keep their own traffic flowing, with one such strategy being a charter to harmonise and collaborate between the local authority and utility companies to minimise traffic disruption.*

*North East Lincolnshire desperately needs a new strategy to meet this challenge and resolves to create our own meaningful charter, to meet the needs and expectations of our residents and businesses.*

*Council resolves to form a Select Committee to report back to Cabinet recommendations as to how this charter should be formed.*

*This Select Committee will evidence recommendations through, but not limited to:*

- Inviting affected residents and businesses to put forward their experiences and suggestions.*
- Investigating existing charters currently in use with other local authorities.*
- Explore options with our existing in-house highways team.*
- Discussing with utility companies and their partner organisations that currently operate in the borough.*

*The Select Committee will invite representation of at least two non-Cabinet members of all political groups on Council for genuine cross-party participation.*

During the debate on the motion, Councillor Holland moved an amendment for the third paragraph of the motion to be removed. This was seconded by Councillor Henderson.

Following a debate, the amendment was put to the vote. A recorded vote was held in accordance with the requirements of the Council's Standing Orders. The votes cast were recorded as follows:

For the Amendment:

Councillors Aisthorpe, Batson, Beasant, Boyd, Brasted, Cairns, Cracknell, Croft, Dawkins, Downes, Freeston, Harness, Hasthorpe, Henderson, Holland, Hudson, Jackson, Lindley, Parkinson, Pettigrew, Reynolds, Shepherd, Shreeve, Silvester, Smith, K Swinburn, S Swinburn and Westcott (28 votes).

Against the Amendment:

Councillors Farren, Goodwin, Haggis, Mickleburgh, Morland, Patrick, Shutt, Wheatley and Wilson (9 votes).

The amendment was therefore carried.

Following a debate, the substantive motion as amended was put to the vote. A recorded vote was held in accordance with the requirements of the Council's Standing Orders. The votes cast were recorded as follows:

For the Motion:

Councillors Aisthorpe, Beasant, Downes, Farren, Goodwin, Haggis, Henderson, Holland, Mickleburgh, Morland, Patrick, Shutt, Smith, Wheatley and Wilson (15 votes).

Against the Motion:

Councillors Batson, Boyd, Brasted, Cairns, Cracknell, Croft, Dawkins, Freeston, Harness, Hasthorpe, Hudson, Jackson, Lindley, Parkinson, Pettigrew, Reynolds, Shepherd, Shreeve, Silvester, K Swinburn, S Swinburn, Westcott (22 votes).

The substantive motion as amended was therefore declared not carried.

## **NEL.89 COMMUNITY FOOD PROVISION**

The Council considered a report from the Portfolio Holder for Safer and Stronger Communities providing a progress update on local community food provision and associated issues.

During the debate, Councillor Aisthorpe proposed an amendment, seconded by Councillor Beasant, as follows:

1. *That the Food Poverty Action Plan be referred to the Communities Scrutiny Panel for review.*
2. *That the Portfolio Holder for Safer and Stronger Communities refer the matter to our two local Members of Parliament to lobby on behalf of the Council for a further extension of the Household Support Fund, or a sustainable successor source of funding after the 6 month extension.*

There was challenge around the content of the report fulfilling the resolution made at Full Council on the 16<sup>th</sup> March 2023. With agreement from the Leaders of each political party, the report was deferred to the next ordinary meeting of Council, including a debate on the amendment as laid out by Councillor Aisthorpe and seconded by Councillor Beasant.

RESOLVED –That the report, and the amendment as set out in the above minute, be deferred to the next ordinary meeting of Full Council.

## **NEL.90 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2024 – 2025**

The Council considered a report from the Leader of the Council presenting the Pay Policy Statement for 2024-2025.

RESOLVED –

1. That the pay policy statement for the period 2024/25 be approved.
2. That, in accordance with the Localism Act 2011, the approved policy be appropriately published.

## **NEL.91 PARISH COUNCIL COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW**

The Council considered a report from the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Resources and Assets on the outcome of the third period of public consultation on the Parish Council Community Governance Review and setting out recommendations to complete the review.

RESOLVED –

1. That feedback received during the third consultation phase of the parish council community governance review, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report now submitted, be noted.
2. That option 2 (move five properties from Waltham parish to Barnoldby Le Beck parish) for the proposed new parish boundary between Waltham and Barnoldby Le Beck parish councils, with Bradley Road made the new parish boundary with effect from the May 2027 parish council elections, be supported.
3. That the Assistant Director Law and Governance make a Reorganisation of Community Governance Order to implement the changes to parish council boundaries agreed by Council during the second and third consultation phases.
4. That the Electoral Registration Officer be asked to incorporate the changes to Immingham Town Ward boundaries and Barnoldby Le Beck and Waltham parish boundaries into the electoral registers to be published on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2026.

## **NEL.92 QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

The Chair invited Councillor Aisthorpe to present the following question to the Leader of the Council, the question having been submitted on notice in accordance with Council's Standing Orders.

*“Speaking to Gi Grimsby News, Councillor Jackson said he accepts responsibility for axing the costly £38K Palm Tree project but stressed that neither he nor anybody else from the Conservative administration was responsible for the original concept or design. Councillor Jackson, if it is not the ruling administration*



*approving these costly projects, who then is steering the helm of the Council ship?"*

Councillor Jackson, Leader of the Council, responded that back in 2017 the Government gave Coastal Communities grant funding to Cleethorpes for a variety of projects. The money was allocated to an organisation called CoastNEL, a partnership of local business people, arts, heritage and tourism groups as well as Council representation. It was their role to commission the various projects, with the council merely administering the funding.

The projects were launched in 2018, including £750,000 for public art on the North Promenade. The idea of the White Palm was born, to be financed from that pot of money, and design work was commissioned, all under the auspices of CoastNEL. This all happened whilst the previous Labour administration was in power; the Conservatives didn't take control of the Council until May 2019.

Whilst some of the projects on the North Promenade were completed before Covid, the pandemic delayed progress with the White Palm. By June 2021, £38,000 had been spend on artists fees, consultation and the early stages of design and planning for the White Palm. However, by then it had become apparent that the White Palm would have cost £170,000 more than originally budgeted. This was a combination of underestimation of costs at the preliminary design stage, escalation of material costs (which happened to most projects post-covid) and covid delays. This additional £170,000 would have had to be paid by the Council Tax payer as there was insufficient Coastal Communities grant funding to cover such a major cost escalation.

As Leader of the Council, he decided that this extra cost could not be justified, especially not for what was proving to be a very controversial project and one that had not been instigated by the Conservatives. He stood by his decision to cancel the White Palm at this point, and he was sure that most council tax payers in North East Lincolnshire were in full support of this course of action. It was precisely because this administration had a strong grip on the helm of this Council that this decision was made.

The Chair invited Councillor Aisthorpe to ask her second question to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport.

*"The persistent problem of graffiti tagging on railway bridges across our borough, not only detracts from the visual appearance of our area, but it also fosters a sense of neglect and insecurity within our communities, potentially encouraging further anti-social behaviour issues as well. Some of these cases of vandalism appear to have been left unaddressed for several years. What action has the Council taken to engage with Network Rail to ensure the removal and prevention of graffiti tagging on railway bridges?"*

Councillor S Swinburn, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport, responded that he shared Councillor Aisthorpe's concerns over the graffiti around

the borough. He confirmed that it was several years since a directive had been issued stating that the railways were private property, and it was therefore responsibility of Network Rail to remove the graffiti. He highlighted that we were not unique in the issue of graffiti as this was a national problem, especially around railway bridges. He confirmed that as soon as the graffiti was removed it would be back within the week and that was one of the reasons why Network Rail would not remove it. He explained that council officers did not have the expertise or equipment to work at night, together with the permit required to work on the bridges by Network Rail. He was reluctant to instruct staff to carry out the work that Network Rail was responsible for. He felt it was better for Network Rail to cover the bridges in anti-graffiti paint so it could be jet washed off. He confirmed that he had asked the Street Cleansing Team to meet with Network Rail to address this issue.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Aisthorpe asked if the Portfolio Holder could provide an update at the next Communities Scrutiny Panel meeting.

Councillor Swinburn confirmed that he would ask officers to restart conversations with Network Rail and would report back to the Communities Scrutiny Panel.

The Chair invited Councillor Aisthorpe to ask her final question to the Portfolio Holder for Safer and Stronger Communities

*“Addressing the issue of dog fouling through the Grimsby Telegraph last year, the portfolio holder advised residents to report dog fouling through the Council’s dedicated webpage. However, with over 850 reports of dog fouling in the past 6 years resulting in only 35 fines, it suggests flaws in the enforcement and reporting process. Meanwhile our streets are currently plagued by dog fouling with seemingly no resolution in sight, especially in the East Marsh, Heneage, Sidney Sussex and Park Wards. What actions will be taken to enhance enforcement measures and effectively tackle the persistent issue of dog fouling?”*

Councillor Shepherd, Portfolio Holder for Safer and Stronger Communities, noted that a company called WISE had been undertaking enforcement on behalf of the council since December 2023. He explained that WISE did not have a set specific ward patrol matrix but all wards were visited each month and there were very few calls reporting offences taking place. He highlighted that dog fouling needed to be observed by the enforcement officer and this was often difficult. He encouraged people to report any offences through an app called SNAP where video evidence could be uploaded and a statement made. Councillor Shepherd provided data for dog fouling reports to the Street Cleansing team during 2023 within East Marsh, Sidney Sussex, Park and Heneage wards.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Aisthorpe appreciated the difficulty with enforcement and asked if the Portfolio Holder was committed to look at alternative approaches to the issues of dog fouling and report back to the Communities Scrutiny Panel.

Councillor Shepherd responded by explaining that that the enforcement providers had not been with us for long but had already carried out dog fouling enforcement on 9 cases. He wanted to wait to have 6 months figures to review before coming back to scrutiny.

The Chair invited Councillor Mickleburgh to present the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Safer and Stronger Communities, the question having been submitted on notice in accordance with Council's Standing Orders.

*"At the budget setting meeting, much was made of the fact that there will be no cuts, and that it was important to protect the vulnerable in the borough. How does this square with the decision to end the contract of Rev Mary Vickers, who co-ordinated the Food Banks in the area?"*

Councillor Shepherd the Portfolio Holder for Safer and Stronger Communities, responded that the work of the food providers in North East Lincolnshire played an important role in supporting communities. The coordinator had been a valued single point of contact for food related matters throughout Covid and the cost of living crisis and had supported the distribution of the Household Support and other funds. These funding streams had now ceased and in the absence of any further funding the post would end. The role of food coordinator had been hosted by Sector Support, who had employed the postholder, on a series of fixed term contracts since July 2020. The post had been funded from external grants, but never by the Council's core budget. The sector had sought alternative funding for the role but this had, to date, proved unsuccessful. The Council would continue to look for and work with the sector to identify alternative funding.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Mickleburgh asked the portfolio holder if he would fund the role of the Food Coordinator?

Councillor Shepherd responded that he had witnessed first-hand the food coordinators and the Food Forum. He confirmed that he would explore every avenue to see if the council could obtain funding to secure the post.

The Chair invited Councillor Downes to present the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Children and Education, the question having been submitted on notice in accordance with Council's Standing Orders.

*"Nothing is more important for this Council than looking after the children of the Borough and making sure that regardless of background, they get the best chance in life. To ensure this, we need the to be reassured of the functions of cabinet and scrutiny in overseeing improvements to this long struggling portfolio.*

*The recent independent report around governance makes for distressing reading. A catalogue of serious errors that the Portfolio Holder had ample time to challenge and raise as red flags were left to run their course. This almost led to the closure of two outstanding nursery schools and a day care setting and dozens*

*of staff losing their jobs. Those settings provide a crucial service for some very disadvantaged children.*

*Amongst the catalogue of blunders is the fact that on the 7th June Councillor Cracknell received an email stating that the Head of Education and Standards was good to go, seeking her agreement to launch, and I quote the email received, "formal public consultation, and consultation with staff, about the proposed closure of Great Coates Village Nursery, Scartho Nursery and Reynolds Day Care."*

*There was an explicit timeline in the body of that email for how this announcement would be made to staff, heads, and parents and the email even contained a template letter explaining all of the above as well as confirming a date for trade union consultation. The following day, the portfolio holder, gave consent for the consultation as per the timeline and for the "button to be pushed."*

*Furthermore, two senior council officers have given evidence to an independent inquiry that the portfolio holder knew what was going to happen back in October 2022, some eight months before the consultation aimed at closing the settings began.*

*The portfolio holder stated that she was not briefed by council officers until December 12th, despite a briefing note being placed in her in-tray on November 10th. Even at worst case, the portfolio holder knew what was planned well before the end of 2022 and could, and should, have ensured that correct processes were followed with respect to the intended closures.*

*The portfolio holder states in the enquiry that she had misunderstood the clear steps within the email she received and realised only when the consultation started what she had agreed to. Yet the consultation continued at pace. A quick conversation with the Council's Monitoring Officer could have easily resolved that and might have stopped the fiasco that followed. Instead, the Portfolio Holder went on public record to promote the consultation, repeating the unsubstantiated and incorrect claims such as that there was £1.5m of repair works needed to allow the settings to remain open. The Council did everything possible to avoid having to justify those numbers and has STILL failed to provide any financial detail. The consultation, which the portfolio holder fully supported, was only extended and then stopped due to the prospect of legal action and public outrage across the Borough. Does the portfolio holder accept, in full, the findings of the Nurseries Report?"*

Councillor Cracknell, Portfolio Holder for Children and Education, read highlights from the report that stated that lack of communication from council officers and the misunderstanding by officers of the term key decision, in turn led to inadequate governance and a misunderstanding of information. More importantly a management system and governance process, although clearly laid out in the briefing paper of the 12<sup>th</sup> December 2022 and 10<sup>th</sup> February 2023, was ignored. Quoting directly from both communications it was clear that the

route highlighted was the only way to obtain a decision. She also referred to a freedom of information enquiry, which concluded that the Portfolio Holder briefing in December 2022 had been the first she had heard on this matter.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Downes asked whether, due to the catastrophic failures, it would be deemed reasonable that the best thing to do to restore public confidence would be for Councillor Cracknell to resign from her position as Portfolio Holder for Children and Education.

Councillor Cracknell felt that Councillor Downes was quoting inaccurately and she felt that the findings in the report were very clear, in particular that communication was sadly lacking.

The Chair invited Councillor Patrick to present the following question to the Leader, the question having been submitted on notice in accordance with Council's Standing Orders.

*"Can the leader outline his full and frank thoughts on the recent report published on the botched nursery consultation?"*

Councillor Jackson, the Leader of the Council responded that the independent report vindicated his decision, as Leader of the Council, to halt what was clearly a flawed public consultation. He subsequently requested the Chief Executive to commission the report to determine how this unnecessary and damaging situation arose, and how we could ensure it was never repeated. It was clear from the report that council officers failed to adequately communicate with both the Cabinet and ward councillors regarding the challenges associated with the three nursery settings and the proposed course of action did not comply with normal governance processes. These issues were being addressed but, more importantly, the Cabinet and officers were now working closely with the three settings to try to ensure their ongoing viability and sustainability so they could continue to serve parents and children within their communities.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Patrick asked if the Leader thought everyone else was responsible except himself.

The Leader clarified that the report was clear where the responsibility laid.

The Chair invited Councillor Patrick to present the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Children and Education, the question having been submitted on notice in accordance with Council's Standing Orders.

*"Your predecessor was unable to continue in his post after public confidence in his performance was objectively shattered, will she now also do the honourable thing and stand down for the good of our community and our council?"*

Councillor Cracknell, Portfolio Holder for Children and Education, responded that the findings of the independent report concluded there was a lack of

communication. The report found inadequate governance and a lack of officers understanding of key decisions. It found failure by officers to carry out the recommendations and the next steps she referred to earlier from the December 2022 meeting, meaning key parties including the Cabinet were not involved and those findings related to officers.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Patrick asked who was responsible for holding officers to account.

Councillor Cracknell responded that accountability applied not only to members but to officers as well.

The Chair invited Councillor Patrick to present the following question to the Mayor, the question having been submitted on notice in accordance with Council's Standing Orders.

*"You will be aware Mr Mayor that the nurseries report has been escalated to full Council by scrutiny, does the mayor understand the critical public interest in full Council debating this report as quickly as is practically possible?"*

Mr Mayor accepted the public interest in the independent nurseries report that was considered by scrutiny. He understood that the report would be brought to Full Council in accordance with the Constitution.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Patrick asked, subject to the law and the boundaries of the constitution and all the practicalities, if six members asked for a special Full Council meeting that it would be brought forward and would Mr Mayor take all steps to ensure the meeting was brought forward as soon as possible, practically, legally and constitutionally.

Mr Mayor explained that the nursery consultation took place last June/July and the recommendations in the independent report did not warrant for an urgent response, however, he did acknowledge the need for debate at Full Council as recommended by scrutiny and that should be granted whether it be a special before or at the first Full Council meeting in July.

The Chair invited Councillor Wilson to present the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport, the question having been submitted on notice in accordance with Council's Standing Orders.

*"When will Corporation bridge open for cars?"*

Councillor S Swinburn Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport, clarified that, as widely reported, engineers were currently carrying out an assessment of the whole bridge to ascertain the level of deterioration that was remaining on the bridge, and what further work was required. Once this assessment had been completed, officers would have a better idea of the work that was needed and when the work to the bridge was likely to be completed and open to vehicles.

He added that the work was being carried out under license granted by the Marine Management Organisation. This license limited which parts of the bridge we could work on at once, so officers were assessing each span of the bridge they went along and carrying work at the same time. This project was also limited by the tide times, so work needed to be done to the underneath of the bridge could not take place during periods of high tide.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Wilson felt his question was not answered and asked when the work would be completed on the bridge.

Councillor Swinburn responded that he could not answer that until the assessment had been completed.

The Chair invited Councillor Holland to present the following question to the Leader, the question having been submitted on notice in accordance with Council's Standing Orders.

*"The published report into the nurseries consultation is a damning indictment of serious failure at senior levels within the council. As just one example, the closure consultation was launched without the prior knowledge or approval of the council's own legal team. The council did not seem to realise that wheels were being set in motion to make dozens of staff redundant and if the t's were not crossed and i's dotted then the council would be potentially open to dozens of claims for unfair dismissal with serious financial and reputational consequences. That ineptness alone almost beggar's belief. The report confirms that the council refused to explain the financial position of each nursery once the consultation was underway. The recommendations of the report are not restricted to Children's Services. They address perceived failings at corporate level, and the recommendations apply to all service areas. Every large organisation makes mistakes and has failings to some degree; the human element will almost always eventually lead to error. What every successful organisation knows, however, is that an open and accountable manner in addressing and rectifying failings is key to repairing reputational damage and restoring public confidence. One of the first steps required of this council is to issue a public apology at corporate level. That has to come from the top. Will Councillor Jackson, be prepared, therefore, as Council Leader to issue an immediate public statement to apologise on behalf of North East Lincolnshire Council to all those directly impacted, and also to the public who were given misleading information by the council in an attempt to justify the proposed closures?"*

Councillor Jackson, the Leader of the Council explained that the independent report vindicated his decision, as Leader of the Council, to halt what was clearly a flawed public consultation. He subsequently requested the Chief Executive to commission the report to determine how this unnecessary and damaging situation arose, and how we could ensure that it was never repeated. It was clear from the report that council officers failed to adequately communicate with both the Cabinet and ward councillors regarding the challenges associated with

the three nursery settings and the proposed course of action and did not comply with normal governance processes. These issues were being addressed. More importantly, the Cabinet and officers were working closely with the three settings to try to ensure their ongoing viability and sustainability so they could continue to serve parents and children within their communities. With regard to an apology, if one was due, Councillor Holland has hit the nail on the head and it should come from the corporate centre, not the political administration.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Holland highlighted the Leaders point where the responsibility laid and questioned if he would be urging council officers at a senior level to issue that public apology.

Councillor Jackson confirmed that Councillors Holland's comments had been heard.

The Chair invited Councillor Holland to present the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport, the question having been submitted on notice in accordance with Council's Standing Orders.

*"In early October 2023, it was announced that Corporation Bridge would be closed indefinitely whilst further detailed assessment of required repairs was undertaken. The Council promised that a date for completion of works and bridge re-opening would be provided in Quarter One of this year. That deadline is now rapidly approaching. Local business will be busy finalising their business plans for the coming financial year, and for some of those businesses, knowledge of when the bridge will be re-opened with full traffic access will be of significant importance. I know that the portfolio holder shares my deep frustration on this matter. Can he kindly give Council members and the public an assurance that a statement will be issued before the end of this month, giving an update on the expected repairs timeline and a clear indication as to when the bridge will be back in service?"*

Councillor S Swinburn, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport, explained that Equans had indicated that an update on the works to the bridge would be forthcoming in the new financial year. He confirmed that officers were waiting for the outcome of the assessment, but the works were subject to a number of restrictions which meant that work could not progress as quickly as they would have liked. This is a 100 year old structure and therefore it was a complex project but work was progressing.

## **NEL.93      MINUTES OF THE CABINET AND COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL**

The Council received the minutes of decisions taken under delegated powers at the following meetings, subject to any questions asked in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders:



- Cabinet – 30th November and 20<sup>th</sup> December 2023, 17<sup>th</sup> January, 22<sup>nd</sup> January, 14<sup>th</sup> February and 21<sup>st</sup> February 2024
- Portfolio Holder Environment and Transport – 18<sup>th</sup> December 2023, 22<sup>nd</sup> January and 12<sup>th</sup> February 2024
- Portfolio Holder Finance, Resources and Assets - 16th January
- Budget Scrutiny - 22<sup>nd</sup> January and 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2024
- Scrutiny Panel Children and Lifelong Learning – 16th November 2023 and 25<sup>th</sup> January 2024
- Scrutiny Panel Communities – 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2023 and 4<sup>th</sup> January 2024
- Scrutiny Panel Economy – 28<sup>th</sup> November 2023
- Scrutiny Panel Health and Adult Social Care – 29<sup>th</sup> November 2023 and 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024
- Scrutiny Panel Tourism and Visitor Economy – 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2023 and 25<sup>th</sup> January 2024
- Joint Scrutiny Panel Communities and Economy – 6<sup>th</sup> February 2024
- Health and Wellbeing Board – 20<sup>th</sup> November 2023
- Audit and Governance Committee – 1<sup>st</sup> February 2024
- Planning Committee – 29th November 2023, 3rd January and 31st January 2024
- Licensing Sub Committee - 7th December 2023
- Standards Referrals Panel – 10<sup>th</sup> January 31<sup>st</sup> January and 21<sup>st</sup> February 2024
- Appointments Committee – 8<sup>th</sup> January 2024

The Mayor advised that two questions on notice had been received on the above minutes. They would be dealt with in the order in which they had been received; each questioner would be permitted one supplementary question and there would be no debate on the questions asked or the answers given.

(1) A question on notice was submitted by Councillor Farren to Councillor Jackson, Leader of the Council, in accordance with the Council's Constitution as follows:

Cabinet – 17<sup>th</sup> January 2024 CB.68 (Cleethorpes Levelling Up Fund Sea Road Strategic Lease)

*“The recommendation that has been agreed/approved to progress with the lease agreement for the Sea Road Building. Can you provide details of the impact assessment that was carried out prior to this scheme being approved?”*

The Leader responded that the decision to lease was of a transactional nature. Impact assessments were usually more relevant where service delivery may change or be modified, or where there were new or emerging services, policies or strategies. In those situations, there would be some form of impact assessment and equality analysis given the impact on residents and/or the environment. The Cabinet report referred to in the question did, of course, include the usual considerations and implications around reputation and communications, finance, children and young people, human resources, legal

issues, council wards affected, climate and the environment. The new Sea Road building was, of course, the subject of a successful Levelling Up Fund bid. The application included a number of assessments, including economic impact and equalities assessments. These were a mandatory part of the application and were subject to scrutiny as part of the grant assessment process.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Farren asked if she needed to go to the planning application for the impact assessment or was he prepared to share it.

Councillor Jackson referred to the Cabinet report that he felt explained the rationale.

(2) A question on notice was submitted by Councillor Mickleburgh to Councillor Jackson, Leader in accordance with the Council's Constitution as follows:

Cabinet – 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2024 CB.73 (Budget, Finance and Commissioning Plan 2024/25 – 2026/27)

*“It says that Cabinet considered a report from the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Resources and Assets outlining how the Council plans to deliver its agreed financial strategy over the coming three-year period. How much true consideration can have been given to such an important matter when the entire meeting was over in 4 minutes?”*

The Leader explained there was considerable work that Cabinet members put in to the preparation of the budget and financial strategy each and every year. Meetings with officers, so-called “star chambers”, informal Cabinet, informal and formal scrutiny had taken place by the time it was submitted to Cabinet, so there had already been extensive true consideration.

Councillor Mickleburgh felt there was a contradiction of the meeting lasting four minutes and this full Council meeting lasting four hours and he asked what did the Leader think was the most effective.

Councillor Jackson felt it was a matter for individual members to judge.

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the following meetings of Cabinet and the Committees of the Council be approved and adopted:

- Cabinet – 30<sup>th</sup> November and 20<sup>th</sup> December 2023, 17<sup>th</sup> January, 22<sup>nd</sup> January, 14<sup>th</sup> February and 21<sup>st</sup> February 2024
- Portfolio Holder Environment and Transport – 18<sup>th</sup> December 2023, 22<sup>nd</sup> January and 12<sup>th</sup> February 2024
- Portfolio Holder Finance, Resources and Assets - 16<sup>th</sup> January
- Budget Scrutiny - 22<sup>nd</sup> January and 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2024
- Scrutiny Panel Children and Lifelong Learning – 16<sup>th</sup> November 2023 and 25<sup>th</sup> January 2024
- Scrutiny Panel Communities – 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2023 and 4<sup>th</sup> January 2024

- Scrutiny Panel Economy – 28<sup>th</sup> November 2023
- Scrutiny Panel Health and Adult Social Care – 29<sup>th</sup> November 2023 and 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024
- Scrutiny Panel Tourism and Visitor Economy – 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2023 and 25<sup>th</sup> January 2024
- Joint Scrutiny Panel Communities and Economy – 6<sup>th</sup> February 2024
- Health and Wellbeing Board – 20<sup>th</sup> November 2023
- Audit and Governance Committee – 1<sup>st</sup> February 2024
- Planning Committee – 29<sup>th</sup> November 2023, 3<sup>rd</sup> January and 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024
- Licensing Sub Committee - 7<sup>th</sup> December 2023
- Standards Referrals Panel – 10<sup>th</sup> January, 31<sup>st</sup> January and 21<sup>st</sup> February 2024
- Appointments Committee – 8<sup>th</sup> January 2024

There being no further business, the Mayor declared the meeting closed at 11.58 p.m.