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NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING HELD ON

19th February 2025

Present: Councillor Beasant (in the Chair)

Councillors Aisthorpe, Augusta, Bonner, Boyd, Bright, Cairns, Clough, Cracknell, Crofts, Dawkins, Emmerson, Farren, Freeston, Goodwin, Harness, Hasthorpe, Henderson, Holland, Hudson, Humphrey, Jackson, Kaczmarek, Lindley, Mickleburgh, Mill, Morland, Patrick, Pettigrew, Shepherd, Shreeve, Shutt, Silvester, K Swinburn, S Swinburn, Wheatley and Wilson.

Officers in Attendance:

- Rob Walsh (Chief Executive)
- Zoe Campbell (Senior Scrutiny and Committee Advisor)
- David Humm (Civic Chauffeur and Assistant)
- Simon Jones (Assistant Director Law and Governance - Monitoring Officer)
- Eve Richardson Smith (Deputy Monitoring Officer)
- Paul Windley (Democratic and Scrutiny Team Manager)
- Sharon Wroot (Executive Director Place and Resources)

NEL.68 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from this meeting were received from Councillors Brookes, Downes, Haggis, Jervis and Parkinson.

NEL.69 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interests made from Members with regard to items on the agenda for this meeting.

NEL.70 MOTION TO COUNCIL

The Council considered a motion submitted in accordance with the Council's Constitution, and requested by six Members of Council, to be proposed by Councillor Holland and seconded by Councillor Henderson as follows:

This Council notes the contents of the letter sent on 9th January 2025 by the Council Leader and the Leaders of North Lincolnshire Council and Lincolnshire County Council to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government with regards to local government reform.

This Council believes that proper consultation with Members should have taken place prior to that letter being sent to allow the elected representatives of this Borough a voice on the matter.

This Council refuses to endorse the contents of the said letter and will write to the Secretary of State accordingly.

This Council believes that:

1. The proper time to embrace unitary government and the bringing together of ten authorities is not now, but after due diligence has taken place and the impacts carefully evaluated and understood.
2. Evidence of support and capacity in place to 'move at pace' must be provided at the earliest opportunity to assure Members of the validity of that position.
3. Financial modelling should be conducted prior to assuring Government that moving to a unitary model would deliver considerable financial savings to the public purse.
4. Elections in 2025 should not be deferred other than for a state of emergency.
5. Public confidence in the stated preferred proposal of the Leaders of two unitary authorities is at this time unknown.
6. Local elections are the bedrock of our local democracy. The holding of local elections in North East Lincolnshire in 2026 is a priority objective, particularly given that 2025 is a 'fallow year' when residents will not have an opportunity to vote.
7. That the impact on democratic institutions, including the effective functioning of ward councillors must be included in any future consideration of local government reorganisation.

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 Aisthorpe, Augusta, Beasant, Bonner, Bright, Clough, Emmerson, Farren, Freeston, Goodwin, Henderson, Holland, Humphrey, Kaczmarek, Mickleburgh, Mill, Morland, Patrick, Shutt, Wheatley and Wilson (21 votes).

Against the motion:

Councillors Boyd, Cairns, Cracknell, Crofts, Dawkins, Harness, Hasthorpe, Hudson, Jackson, Lindley, Pettigrew, Shepherd, Shreeve, Silvester, K. Swinburn and S. Swinburn (16 votes).

The motion was therefore carried and it was:

RESOLVED – That this Council refuses to endorse contents of the letter sent on 9th January 2025 by the Council Leader and the Leaders of North Lincolnshire Council and Lincolnshire County Council to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government with regards to local government reform and that a letter be sent to the Secretary of State to inform her of this decision.

There being no further business, the Mayor declared the meeting closed at 8.09 p.m.