

# NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

## CABINET

6 February 2023

**PRESENT:** - R Waltham (Chairman)

R Waltham (Chairman), J Davison, D Rose, C Sherwood and E Marper

Peter Thorpe, Becky McIntyre, Ann-Marie Matson, Helen Manderson, Kathy Clark, Will Bell, Victoria Lawrence, Helen Rose, Adam Lovell and Richard Mell attended the meeting.

Councillors Ali, A Davison, O'Sullivan, L Foster, Southern and Yeadon also attended the meeting.

The meeting was held at the Conference Room, Church Square House, Scunthorpe.

1512 **DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND PERSONAL OR PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS.**

The following personal interests were declared at the meeting –

Cllr D Rose - North Lincolnshire Community Energy Board, minute 1520 refers.

Cllr R Waltham MBE – Humber Leadership Board (chair), minute 1521 refers.

1513 **TO APPROVE AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD ON 21 NOVEMBER 2022 (ENCLOSED).**

That the minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 21 November 2022 having been circulated amongst the members, be taken as read and correctly recorded and be signed by the chair.

1514 **2022/23 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND MEDIUM - TERM FINANCIAL PLAN UPDATE**

The Director: Governance and Communities submitted a report providing an update on the Council's in-year financial position and set out the Council's updated medium term financial planning position and options for consideration for funding strategy.

The Director in her report explained that the Council Plan 2022-25 provided the frame for policy decisions and utilisation of resources intended to achieve the greatest impact on improved outcomes for residents. In response to the economic climate affecting the Council's operating environment Cabinet agreed to increase the planned use of reserves in 2022-23. The report provided an overview of the latest financial position, estimated year-end

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projection and forecast of spending power for the medium-term financial plan 2023-26. A summary explanation for the in-year financial position with supporting appendices was provided under the following headings -

- Revenue 2022/23
- Capital 2022/23
- Budget Adjustments 2022/23
- Treasury Management 2022/23

The Director's report also provided an update on the Council's medium term financial plan with supporting appendices under the following headings –

- Core Spending Power Funding
- Financial Sustainability - Net Operating Expenditure
- Financial Resilience - Use of Reserves

The Council's financial planning process would culminate in the 2023/26 medium term financial plan being taken to Council in February 2023.

Councillor Marper, Cabinet Member Finance, Governance and Veterans thanked the Director for her report and work carried out by her officers and highlighted, summarised and commented upon key aspects of its content.

**Resolved** – (a) That the financial position set out in the report be noted; (b) that the budget adjustments approved under delegated powers and the revised budget position for 2022/23 be noted, (c) that the revised capital investment programme 2022/25 be approved, (d) that the progress against the approved Treasury Management Strategy and prudential code indicators be noted, and (e) that the formulation of the Financial Strategy and Medium Term Financial Plan be endorsed.

1515 **LOCAL SAFEGUARDING ADULTS BOARD - ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2021-22 AND STRATEGIC PLAN FOR 2023-25**

The Safeguarding Adults Board Independent Chair, Kathy Clark submitted a report requesting Cabinet to note the publication of the Local Safeguarding Adults Board (LSAB) Annual Report for 2021-22 which covered how the last set of priorities for the board had been met and also the Board's Strategic Plan for the next three years which set out what the board aimed to do to, and how it would work with partners to help protect adults who were at risk of abuse and neglect. Both documents were attached as appendices and should be considered in relation to planning, commissioning and budget setting.

The Independent Chair's report explained that the LSAB was committed to ensuring that local safeguarding arrangements and partners acted to help and protect adults who had care and support needs from abuse and neglect. The board also had a statutory duty to publish a strategic plan which set out how the board planned to work with partners and people in the community so that adults could be safe from abuse and neglect. The LSAB must also

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publish an annual report which informed people how they had worked with partners and the community to deliver the strategic plan.

The annual report highlighted the progress made during the period in delivering the last strategic plan, and evidenced that positive outcomes for adults with care and support needs and their families had been achieved. Key achievements and positive impacts were also summarised.

The Strategic Plan for the next three years (2023-2025) intended to ensure that adults with care and supported needs in North Lincolnshire could live the lives they wanted, free from abuse and neglect. Listening to the voice of people with a lived experience continued to remain at the heart of the plan. The plan would follow the six safeguarding principles - partnership, empowerment, protection, accountability, prevention, and proportionality. The board partners would measure progress and achievements through a delivery plan, which would be regularly reviewed and shared within the next Annual Report.

Both the 2023-2025 Strategic Plan and the Annual Report had been approved by the LSAB and had been published on its website. LSAB partner organisations were required to share the key documents through relevant governance routes and should consider how they could improve their contributions to both safeguarding throughout their own organisation, and to the joint work of the LSAB.

Councillor Waltham MBE, Leader and Cabinet Member Place Shaping and Connectivity thanked Kathy Clark for her report and the work carried out by all officers and partners and commented on key aspects of both the Annual Report and Strategic Plan.

**Resolved** – (a) That the publication of both the LSAB Annual Report for 2021/22 which covers how the last set of priorities for the board have been met, and the Strategic Plan for 2023/25 which sets out what the board aims to do to, and how it will work with partners to help protect adults who are at risk of abuse and neglect be received and noted, and (b) that the use both documents in considering their respective planning, commissioning, and budget setting be agreed.

**1516 2021/2022 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE VIRTUAL HEADTEACHER**

The Director: Children and Families submitted a report seeking approval of the Annual Report of the Virtual Headteacher for 2021/2022, which was attached as an appendix.

The Director in her report explained that the role of the Virtual School was to promote the educational achievement of children in our care whether educated in North Lincolnshire or placed out of the county. The Virtual School had high aspirations for and strived to close the attainment gap between our children and their peers. The Virtual School worked tirelessly to provide effective support and make a difference to the education outcomes for our children in care and care leavers regardless of when they came into care.

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The 2021/2022 annual Virtual Headteacher Report was published in line with statutory requirements for children in care and covered the work of the Virtual School in raising achievement and attainment for our children in care and care leavers for the previous academic year.

The annual report also reflected upon the impact and the successes over the past year and had been considered within MALAP (Multi Agency Looked After Partnership) and the Corporate Parenting Board.

Councillor D Rose, Cabinet Member Environment and Strategic Planning thanked the Director for her report and work carried out by her officers and highlighted, summarised and commented upon key aspects of its content.

**Resolved** – That the 2021/2022 Annual Report of the Virtual Headteacher be approved.

**1517 FOSTER CARERS SUPPORT - COUNCIL TAX**

The Director: Children and Families submitted a report seeking approval for expansion to the current recruitment, retention and support offer to foster carers for North Lincolnshire through a Council Tax reduction scheme.

The Director's report stated that North Lincolnshire Council foster carers continued to benefit from being part of our close community with strong support and a responsive team and explained that carers voiced their commitment to remaining with the Council based on its values, the support they received and our strong fostering family. Carers were, however, feeding back that they were feeling the impact of increasing costs on their families. Some were expressing that this was meaning they were reluctantly exploring private fostering agencies who pay more, but were not always in the best interest of the child as they were often placed a significant distance away from their families, schools and communities and lead to the child or young person potentially losing their sense of identity.

The report stated that Council Tax deduction schemes had been implemented within a number of Councils, including neighbouring authorities. Council Tax discounts were now considered as an attractive aspect of a financial support package to foster carers and the Director recommended the introduction of a full council tax exemption scheme for all approved North Lincolnshire foster carers and supported lodging providers as set out in option 1 (of three options) which was subject to a specified criteria which was also summarised, together with associated financial implications.

Councillor D Rose, Cabinet Member Environment and Strategic Planning thanked the Director for her report and work carried out by her officers and highlighted, summarised and commented upon key aspects of its content.

**Resolved** – That that the proposed Council Tax reduction scheme for foster carers as set out in Option 1 of the report be approved.

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**1518 UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND UPDATE - JANUARY 2023**

The Director: Economy and Environment submitted a report updating Cabinet on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund Programme and to note key milestones.

The Director in her report explained that the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) was part of the suite of funds available through the government's £2.6bn Levelling Up agenda. It empowered each place to identify and build on their own strengths and needs at a local level. There were three investment priorities within the fund which would increase pride of place and life chances:

- Community and Place
- Supporting Local Business
- People and Skills

North Lincolnshire's allocation of the fund was £5,466,833 for the financial years 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25. An investment plan was submitted to secure the funds. The Towns Fund Board would provide the governance and assurance for the programme and North Lincolnshire Council would act as the accountable body and ensure compliance. The Investment Plan set out at a high-level what North Lincolnshire wanted to achieve through this fund and provided details of the proposed expenditure, outputs and outcomes to be achieved. The Investment Plan was approved by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities in December 2022. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed by both parties on 21 December 2022.

Key milestones for the programme were set out in the report as follows-

<b>Date:</b>	<b>Action:</b>
January 2023 27/01/2023	2022/23 – Call for Projects Launched 2022/23 – Call for Projects - Deadline for applications
February 2023 Offers	2022/23 – Decision Making Panel and Project offers made
February/March 2023 March 2023	2023/24 – Call for Projects Launched 2023/24 – Decision Making Panel and Project Offers made
December 2023 January/February 2024	2024/25 – Call for Projects Launched 2024/25 – Decision Making Panel and Project Offers made

Councillor Waltham MBE, Leader and Cabinet Member Place Shaping and Connectivity thanked the Director for her report and work carried out by her

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officers and highlighted, summarised and commented upon key aspects of its content.

**Resolved** – That the UK Shared Prosperity Funding be welcomed and the timeline and milestones for the 2022/23 grant be noted.

**1519 LEVELLING UP FUND - BARTON REGENERATION**

The Director: Economy and Environment submitted a report updating Cabinet on the council's successful bid to regenerate Barton upon Humber.

The Director's report explained that North Lincolnshire Council applied to the Department of Levelling Up in July 2022 to enable and progress the Regeneration of Barton Upon Humber. The bid included:

- Barton Link Road – providing both the link road and improvements to the A1077,
- Barton Interchange – providing improved railway station including covered cycle parking, EV charging points, improved public realm, and real-time passenger information and
- Barton Active Travel – providing a number of new cycle and pedestrian routes across the town of Barton

The value of the bid is £20.2m.

On 19 January 2023, the Department for Levelling up confirmed that North Lincolnshire Council application for Levelling Up Funding for Barton Regeneration had been successful, with the full amount being granted to deliver the programme. The programme would run from April 2023 with practical completion by March 2025. The grant offer letter was expected in the next few weeks outlining the conditions of the grant.

Councillor Waltham MBE, Leader and Cabinet Member Place Shaping and Connectivity thanked the Director for her report and work carried out by her officers and highlighted, summarised and commented upon key aspects of its content.

**Resolved** – That the success of the bid for Levelling up Funding to support the Regeneration of Barton upon Humber be welcomed

**1520 NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COMMUNITY ENERGY - TOWNS FUND PROJECT ENABLING A FUTURE FOR CLEAN GROWTH**

The Director: Economy and Environment updating Cabinet on the progress of the Towns Fund project 'Enabling a Future for Clean Growth' known as 'North Lincolnshire Community Energy'.

The Director in her report explained that North Lincolnshire Community Energy (NLCE) is a community benefit society, set up in 2022 with £1.4m Towns Fund grant received by North Lincolnshire Council. NLCE had been

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created to bring people together to create an affordable, zero-carbon energy system in North Lincolnshire to help reduce energy costs for local community organisations, whilst educate residents and businesses in the region. Solar panels were being installed on roof spaces, offering a clean and green energy source and, in turn, enabling everyone to understand better and benefit from renewable energy. It was run by local people, and those who invest would help to provide a greener future for the whole of North Lincolnshire.

The Towns Fund targets agreed with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities for NLCE were the following.

- To provide onsite renewable energy to at least 30 schools and community organisations in Scunthorpe.
- Reducing 481 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e per annum in Scunthorpe.
- Saving a minimum 25% on energy bills (\*based on 20/21 tariff prices, now forecasting a saving of 60%+)

The report stated that the total project cost for the delivery of the Towns Fund outputs was £2.78m and was being funded by £1.4m of the Towns Fund grant and £1.38m of community shares. The first share offer would be launched in March 2023 to raise the first £700k and an additional share offer would be launched later in the delivery of the project. The focus of the share offer was to maximise membership rather than investment size, therefore the minimum investment of any local resident or business would start at £100, with a return of 4%. It would be promoted nationally, and local residents would get priority first.

The Director's report summarised the progress of the scheme identifying six schools in the first phase of the project which have received solar panels, phase two schools which had an anticipated delivery timeframe of Spring - Summer 2023, subject to detailed structural surveys, asbestos surveys and DfE approvals and stated that phase three sites would be determined in March 2023. It was expected that Outwood Academies, additional Primary Schools and some NLC owned community buildings would be included within this final phase.

In addition, to ensure leaving a legacy and having a lasting impact, a school solar roadshow had been organised for Wednesday 8th February 2023 which would see five schools take part in a workshop on climate change, how solar panels work and other green energy initiatives and careers within the sector. These workshops were being delivered by Joju Solar who was the delivery partner for NLCE in the first phase of schools. Images of all the installations to date were attached as appendices.

Councillor D Rose, Cabinet Member Environment and Strategic Planning thanked the Director for her report and work carried out by her officers and highlighted, summarised and commented upon key aspects of its content.

**Resolved** – That the excellent progress and impact North Lincolnshire

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Community Energy is having on Schools in Scunthorpe be noted and welcomed.

**1521 HUMBER FREEPORT**

The Director: Economy and Environment submitted a report recommending that the Deputy Chief Executive, on behalf of North Lincolnshire Council, be nominated as a Director for the Humber Freeport Company Limited, and that the Leader of the Council be appointed as a member of Public Funds Committee. This Director's recommendation was in accordance with the recommendations of the Humber Leadership Board.

The Director's report stated that the Humber Freeport was announced as successful (subject to business case) in March 2021 Budget. Since this time work had progressed on the business case and plans for the formal establishment of the Freeport. The Humber Freeport Company Limited (HFCL) would be the governing body of the Humber Freeport. A representative from North Lincolnshire Council would sit on the Board as a director of the Company.

In addition to the Board, a Public Funds Committee would be established sitting under the Humber Leadership Board. The Terms of Reference for the Public Funds Committee had yet to be finalised, however, the focus of the Committee was likely to be centred around the review of pipeline projects and initiatives utilising public funds generated because of the Freeport initiative.

At its meeting on 8 December 2022, the Humber Leadership Board considered a recommendation that the Leaders of member Local Authorities should limit their involvement to stewardship and control of public funds rather than the day-to-day operational aspects of the company. As such, it was proposed that Leaders would sit on the Public Funds Committee and each local authority would nominate an appropriate officer to sit on the board of the HFCL. The Humber Leadership Board established as an Executive board of member councils required its recommendation to be approved by the Executives of its member councils.

Councillor Waltham MBE, Leader and Cabinet Member Place Shaping and Connectivity thanked the Director for her report and work carried out by her officers and highlighted, summarised and commented upon key aspects of its content.

**Resolved** – That in accordance with the recommendation of the Humber Leadership Board, the Leader of the Council be appointed to the Public Funds Committee and the Deputy Chief Executive be appointed to the Board of HFCL be approved (Option 1 in paragraph 4.1 of the Director's report refers).

**1522 HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND**

The Director: Governance and Communities submitted a report which set out an update arising from the continuation of the Household Support Fund

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Scheme (originally Winter 2021/22) in North Lincolnshire.

The Director in her report explained that In October 2021 the Government announced the launch of a £421 million Household Support Fund (HSF) to support those most in need over the winter during the economic recovery, covering the period 6 October to 31 March 2022. Councils were given discretion to use the funding flexibly, with the expectation that it was primarily used to support households in the most immediate need with food, energy, water and other essential household bills.

The local delivery model for the fund was launched in North Lincolnshire on 29 November 2021. The model comprised the three core elements of welfare assistance, food vouchers and housing related support costs. There had been two further allocations of Household Support Fund in 2022/23 each for a six-month period (HSF2 and HSF3) and with guidance that it should primarily be used to support households in the most need particularly those including children and pensioners who would otherwise struggle with energy bills, food and water bills. The delivery model was updated to add an energy payment for pensioner households in receipt of full or partial council tax support in addition to the elements above.

The report stated that The delivery plan for HSF3, September 2022 to March 2023 was to support:

- 3,400 households through welfare assistance (targeted application administered by Citizen Advice)
- 7,500 households through the food voucher scheme (£30 vouchers issued December 2022); and
- 5,000 pensioner households through the energy payment (£100 post office pay out issued January 2023).

The funding for Household Support Fund was extended in the Government's Autumn Statement. The guidance and allocations for schemes April 2023 had not yet been published therefore a further report and proposals would be submitted to Cabinet for consideration once the scheme guidance and North Lincolnshire allocation were available. Financial implications were also summarised in the report.

Councillor Marper, Cabinet Member Finance, Governance and Veterans thanked the Director for her report and work carried out by her officers and highlighted, summarised and commented upon key aspects of its content.

**Resolved** – That the update and ongoing outcomes arising from the Household Support Fund Scheme in North Lincolnshire be noted.

1523 **REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS 2000 UPDATE**

The Director: Governance and Communities submitted a report informing Cabinet of the Council's activity relating to surveillance matters under the RIPA regime for the period 1st January 2022 to 31st December 2022.

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The Director in her report explained that RIPA provided a legislative framework which detailed a system of authorisation which existed to secure the lawfulness of surveillance activities and ensure that they were consistent with obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998. The different types of authorisation included covert surveillance directed at a person(s); the use of a "covert human intelligence source" (CHIS) which involved the establishing of a relationship for the covert purpose of obtaining information and access to communications data such as telephone subscriber details and itemised phone logs.

The report stated that Between 1st January 2022 and 31st December 2022, the Council presented three RIPA applications to the Authorising Officer which were authorised and approved by the Magistrates Court in accordance with the Council's RIPA Policy. This surveillance had assisted in the discovery of a large quantity of illicit tobacco and in addition uncovered the underage sales of Vapes. A successful prosecution resulted relating to the underage sale of Vapes in which the defendant was ordered to pay £1233.33 in fines and costs. Other investigations were ongoing in relation to the surveillance obtained.

In addition, the Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office advised that as a good practice measure officers who regularly use RIPA should receive refresher training. Training was provided by an external provider and took place in April 2022. Officers attended from various council departments including officers from Children's Services and the Adult Social Care Service. As a result of staffing changes within the organisation, the Assistant Director Public Protection and the Assistant Director Resources and Performance had been designated as Authorising Officers and they received training provided by the RIPA Coordinator in October 2022. In August 2022 the RIPA Coordinator also provided a briefing session to the Chief Executive in relation to RIPA roles and responsibilities. The Council's existing RIPA Policy had been amended to reflect the above changes (page 14 refers) and was attached as an appendix to the report.

Councillor Marper, Cabinet Member Finance, Governance and Veterans thanked the Director for her report and work carried out by her officers and highlighted, summarised and commented upon key aspects of its content.

**Resolved** – (a) That the report be noted, and (b) that the amendment to the existing RIPA Policy regarding Authorising Officers attached as an appendix to the Director's report be approved.