

Minutes of a meeting of the **SOUTH HOLLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL** held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Priory Road, Spalding, on Thursday, 29 February 2024 at 6.30 pm.

PRESENT

J Whitbourn (Vice-Chairman)

B Alcock	S Chauhan	I Sheard
D Ashby	L J Eldridge	S-A Slade
J R Astill	M Geaney	E J Sneath
J Avery	R A Gibson	T Sneath
P Barnes	A Harrison	A Spencer
A C Beal	M Hasan	G J Taylor
H J W Bingham	S Hutchinson	J Tyrrell
M D Booth	J Le Sage	D J Wilkinson
C J T H Brewis	P A Redgate	C N Worth
T A Carter	J L Reynolds	
A Casson	G P Scalese	

Apologies for absence were received from or on behalf of Councillors N Chapman, J L King, M Le Sage, A C Tennant and A R Woolf.

In Attendance: The Chief Executive, the Deputy Chief Executive – Corporate Development (S151), the Assistant Director – Governance (Monitoring Officer), the Assistant Director – Corporate, the Assistant Director – Housing, the Strategic Finance Manager (Capital) (PSPS), the Democratic Services Manager, the Democratic Services Officer, Nikki Marzec (Independent Remuneration Panel) and Chris Penney (Independent Remuneration Panel)

80. **MINUTES**

Consideration was given to the minutes of Full Council held on 24 January 2024.

DECISION:

That the minutes of the meeting of Full Council held on 24 January 2024 be signed as a correct record.

81. **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS.**

There were none. However, it was noted that all members had an interest in agenda item 18 (Independent Remuneration Panel). The Monitoring Officer clarified that agreement of the Members' Allowances Scheme was one that could only be taken by Full Council and could not be delegated elsewhere. There was therefore no requirement for members to declare a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in order to partake in this item.

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82. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

The following announcements were made by the Vice-Chairman:

The official portrait of His Majesty, King Charles III had now arrived and had been hung up in the Council Chamber.

The Vice-Chairman wished to personally thank members of the Democratic Services Team who had assisted her in preparing to chair the meeting.

The Vice-Chairman reminded members that details of events that had been attended by the Chairman could be viewed under the Chairman's Log on the Council's website.

The Vice-Chairman advised of the following events that had taken place since the last Council meeting:

- Friday 26 January 2024 – an Open Mic Night had been held at the South Holland Centre.
- Friday 16 February 2024 – a Quiz Night had been held at Cowbit Village Hall. This had been a very successful night and had raised £575 for the Chairman's Charities. The Chairman wished to thank all those who attended and supported the event.

The Vice-Chairman advised of the following forthcoming events:

- Saturday 30 March 2024 – 'Spring into Spalding' event – Chairman's 'Bake Off' Competition at the South Holland Centre
 - Members were encouraged to enter the competition.
- Saturday 20 April 2024 – Chairman's Ball – Springfields Events Centre.

83. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY LEADER AND MEMBERS OF THE CABINET.

The Leader made the following announcement:

It had been noted that 16 members had received paper copies of the Council agenda for this meeting – this particular agenda was very large, and it had taken Democratic Services almost a whole day to print them all out, at considerable cost. All members had iPads and had received training on how to use them. He therefore encouraged all members going forward to use a digital copy of an agenda where possible, with the exception of Chairmen, where it was accepted that a paper copy would be required. The Council was aiming to be paperless as far as possible, and this would help to save money.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercialisation, UKSPF and Levelling Up made the following announcement:

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With regard to the IDB Special Interest Group that had been set up, an event had recently been held at the House of Commons to engage MPs cross-party. In the Portfolio Holder's view, the event had been a success and the message had been loud and clear, that the funding mechanism for IDBs had to be reviewed by government. He was hopeful that a resolution to this issue would be in place in time for the 2025/26 budget.

The Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing, Leisure Centre Delivery and Spalding Town Improvement made the following announcement:

With regard to the new South Holland Health and Wellbeing Hub, a huge amount of work was being undertaken behind the scenes. A public consultation would be launched at the end of March/beginning of April when residents would be able to find out more about the designs. The consultation starting with an all-member briefing that would take place on 13 March to enable members to ask any questions and to provide feedback. There would also be three exhibition days held at the existing Castle Sports Complex and market stalls for residents to be able to give their views as part of the consultation. He encouraged as many residents as possible to make their views known.

The Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing, Conservation and Heritage made the following announcement:

It had been confirmed that the allocation for South Holland as part of Round 4 of the Household Support Fund was £23,000. She confirmed that £9,000 of this allocation would be committed to next winter's warm packs scheme. It was proposed that the remaining money be allocated to food banks and community larders. The final amounts would go into the Community Foundation to extend the current energy voucher scheme which would run until the end of March. There were tight timescales as the allocation needed to be spent by the end of March 2024.

84. **QUESTIONS ASKED ON NOTICE UNDER STANDING ORDER 6**

There were none.

85. **QUESTIONS ASKED WITHOUT NOTICE UNDER STANDING ORDER 7**

Question to: Councillor Worth

Question from: Councillor Gibson

Subject: National Grid Pylon Proposals

Councillor Gibson noted that the S&ELCP had provided a press release on the Grimsby to Walpole National Grid proposals but stated that in his view, it was not strong enough. He stated that the County Council Portfolio Holder for Environment and Planning had agreed to write to National Grid and the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero to encourage them to re-consider an underground or offshore option. Would the Leader be willing to do the same? Councillor Worth advised that the responsible Portfolio Holder, Councillor Bingham would respond on this question

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and provide more detail. Councillor Bingham stated that the proposal would affect the whole S&ELCP area and in his view, would have an unacceptable impact on the landscape. He fully recognised the need for energy security and the need to distribute energy to where it was needed, but the cost of doing so should not come as a burden on host communities or be detrimental to the local landscape. He noted that the application would be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate and determined by the Secretary of State. The process was lengthy, and it was not likely that a decision would be made for a number of years. Numerous rounds of public and technical consultation would take place. It was important to note that the District Council was only a consultee, and not the determining body. He encouraged residents to complete the National Grid consultation and participate throughout. It was critical that the environmental impact of these proposals was appraised. The Portfolio Holder was also of the view that the National Grid should re-consider the proposal all together, and work with developers who would be making applications to route interconnectors in the East of England. It was important to have an integrated approach to such a significant infrastructure project.

Question to: Councillor Worth

Question from: Councillor Alcock

Subject: Defibrillators

Councillor Alcock noted that a number of defibrillators had been distributed throughout Spalding and asked whether there was any funding available to install more defibrillators across the rest of the district. Councillor Worth asked Councillor Bingham to respond, who stated that he would work with members and assist in identifying funding if a defibrillator was needed in a specific location.

Question to: Councillor Worth

Question from: Councillor Alcock

Subject: Funding for road improvements

Councillor Alcock enquired as to whether the District Council would be lobbying the County Council for funding to improve the roads in South Lincolnshire, particularly the A16 and A17, which needed either resurfacing or for potholes to continue to be filled. Councillor Worth responded that the announcement of funds for the County Council to improve the roads was good news and confirmed that he would be lobbying on the Council's behalf to ensure South Holland got its fair share of the money for maintaining infrastructure in the area.

Question to: Councillor Carter

Question from: Councillor Eldridge

Subject: Green Homes Funding

Councillor Eldridge had noted that some councils were beginning to hand back their green homes funding and enquired whether South Holland would be doing the same. Councillor Carter confirmed that the team were on track to spend all of their allocated funding and therefore would not be handing any money back. She stated that South

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Holland had received £2.8m of funding and this had been used on projects to increase EPC ratings of properties within the district.

Question to: Councillor Carter
Question from: Councillor Hutchinson
Subject: Property Inspections

Councillor Hutchinson highlighted a concern surrounding a recent experience of an SHDC tenant who had paid for repairs to their property and asked whether property inspections were being carried out to a good standard. Councillor Carter responded to say that she was limited in what she could say about the case Councillor Hutchinson had referred to. However, she did state that she was confident that inspections were generally of a good standard. She did however note that every Housing department could always do better and encouraged members to speak to her if they had concerns about tenant satisfaction with the service.

Question to: Councillor Astill
Question from: Councillor Scalese
Subject: Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Councillor Scalese asked whether the Council had a position on the use of AI. Councillor Astill highlighted that while AI could revolutionise some customer services systems, there was a need to ensure that the correct controls and governance was in place before using it. He advised that an AI strategy was currently being worked on.

Question to: Councillor Taylor
Question from: Councillor Scalese
Subject: Spalding in Bloom

Councillor Scalese asked what could be done to make the area look attractive, given that Spalding would not be submitting an entry to the In Bloom competition this year. Councillor Taylor confirmed that while Spalding wouldn't be entering the official In Bloom competition this year, the Council would still be putting in place floral displays and bedding in Spalding and Ayscoughfee, and the budget for planting had not been reduced this year. He stated that there were businesses in the town centre interested in adding to the In Bloom offer and there were also opportunities in the future, such as working with the potential future Spalding BID Town Board. Councillor Taylor also advised that new groups and volunteers could join in – many voluntary groups worked together in other towns and villages. A Community Garden would be developed as part of the new health and wellbeing hub. He also expressed his hope that new volunteers would come forward for Spalding in Bloom so that it could be relaunched.

Question to: Councillor Casson
Question from: Councillor Booth
Subject: Flytipping and Litter

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Councillor Booth asked whether the enforcement officers were still patrolling outside of Spalding, in small towns and villages across the district. He also asked whether any statistics could be provided for the number of fines issued. Councillor Casson responded to say that the enforcement officers did go out to the towns and villages. If there was a particular problem in an area, he asked that he be advised. Councillor Casson confirmed that in January, 115 Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) had been issued (92 for littering, 23 for flytipping) and in February, 94 FPNs had been issued (84 for littering, 8 for flytipping, and 2 for commercial duty of care).

Question to: Councillor Carter
Question from: Councillor Brewis
Subject: Markets Promotion

Councillor Brewis asked when the campaign to promote the markets would start and how vigorous it would be. Councillor Carter responded that plans were currently being worked on in preparation for the campaign to start. She stated that gazebos had been purchased to assist new traders wanting to stand on the market (that did not have a gazebo) and also to promote the Teenage Market. Existing traders that wanted to use a gazebo could also use one. Traders would not be forced to use the gazebos however some canopy covers that tied in with the gazebos were being sourced so there was a consistency to the markets. She confirmed that banners had been put in place in Holbeach with different designs for the other market towns in the District also being prepared. Councillor Carter also stated that the team were looking to tie events in with the markets, possibly during the school holidays in the summer.

Question to: Councillor Astill
Question from: Councillor Geaney
Subject: SHDC's 50th Anniversary

Councillor Geaney enquired whether any plans were in place to celebrate South Holland District Council's 50th Anniversary. Councillor Astill confirmed that he would be working with the Communications Team and Portfolio Holders on ideas of how to recognise the occasion.

Question to: Councillor Tyrrell
Question from: Councillor Geaney
Subject: Garden Waste Bins

Councillor Geaney commented that at the start of the year, it had been announced that the supply of garden waste bins would be starting again, and that those on the waiting list would have the opportunity to acquire bins. What was the current situation and had those that had been waiting some time for a bin now been able to get one? Councillor Tyrrell responded that over 2,000 brown bins had been requested, 1,035 individuals had been contacted and of those, 651 had now received their bins. He stated that those people that had been contacted needed to respond if they still required a bin – failure to do so would mean that they would drop off the list. From 8 January, people had been contacted about 1500 more bins, with approximately 150 bins a week being supplied at the moment. There were plans to

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expand to other areas and if there was sufficient demand, then the Council would start supplying those areas.

Question to: Councillor E Sneath

Question from: Councillor Avery

Subject: Refurbishment of Spalding Station House

Councillor Avery stated that the Council had last year acquired Spalding Station House to be preserved for future generations – what were the Council’s plans for refurbishment and was there a timeframe? Councillor E Sneath replied to advise that specifications and costs for renovation works (initially to the outside of the property) were currently being drawn together. The premises had been built in 1882 and was in a good state of repair – the plan was to restore it to a good stand and secure a safe future for this heritage asset. Internally, a number of options were being worked on (flats/serviced offices/small family home) – whichever option was chosen would bring in income for the Council.

Question to: Councillor E Sneath

Question from: Councillor Avery

Subject: Restoration of Lutyens Memorial in Ayscoughfee Gardens

Councillor Avery asked what progress was being made with regard to the restoration of the Lutyens Memorial in Ayscoughfee Gardens and what was the timeframe. Councillor E Sneath responded to advise that there was progress with regard to the Lutyens Memorial – listed building consent had been applied for, to start some exploratory drainage work around the perimeter of the memorial, and this would start in April. Over the years, the paths around the memorial had been raised up resulting in water not being able to drain away from around the memorial, and this was what was causing the damage. Considerable funds to carry out the major restoration works were now available, and the Council was looking to start working with specialist heritage building contractors as soon as possible. It would be wonderful to have this work completed by Remembrance Sunday this year and both Councillors E Sneath and Bingham both hoped that this would be the case.

Question to: Councillor Redgate

Question from: Councillor Beal

Subject: UKSPF Funding

Councillor Beal asked with regard to UKSPF funding, what total monies had notionally been received, how much had been spent and how much was still available for applications still to be made. What businesses/organisations should be approached or targeted. Councillor Redgate responded to advise that circa £3 million had been provided to distribute throughout the whole district to support local projects. This had been split into three pots – ‘Communities and Place’, ‘Supporting Local Businesses’ and ‘People and Skills’. The vast majority for the first two pots of money had been committed with a small amount of around £70,000 remaining for ‘Communities and Place’ and about the same for ‘Supporting Local Businesses’. ‘Supporting People and Skills’ was still undersubscribed by approximately £0.25

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million. The Portfolio Holder strongly reiterated that all the funding had to be committed by December 2024 and spent by this time next year. The money was there for communities and over the next few months, Parish Councils and village halls would be contacted to get them to engage, get involved and seek applications. The next round of funding was due around May, and it was hoped that by then, 100% of the funding for the first two pots would have been earmarked. All members were encouraged to engage with the team administering the UKSPF funding to ensure that the funding was all spent across the district, specifically around the 'People and Skills' pot of funding.

86. COMMITTEE MINUTES

The minutes of the following Committees and Panels were noted:

- Governance and Audit Committee – 18 January 2024
- Performance Monitoring Panel – 23 January 2024
- Joint Performance Monitoring Panel and Policy Development Panel – 25 January 2024
- Policy Development Panel – 6 February 2024
- Planning Committee – 7 February 2024

87. KEY DECISION PLAN

Consideration was given to the Key Decision Plan.

The following issues were raised:

- It was queried whether the decision date of end of March was likely to be achieved for eight decisions included on the Key Decision Plan.
 - The Portfolio Holder for Communities and Operational Housing commented that these decisions sat within her Portfolio and as most related to contracts, all were on track and decisions would be made before the deadline set out.

DECISION:

That the Key Decision Plan be noted.

88. REPORT FROM CABINET MEETING ON 13 FEBRUARY 2024

Consideration was given to the report of the Cabinet which sought approval for the Cabinet's recommendations.

Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2024/25

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercialisation, UKSPF and Levelling up presented the report.

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DECISION:

- 1) That the continuation of the current Council Tax Support scheme, including uprating in line with DWP's annual update of allowances and premiums for 2024/25 be approved; and
- 2) That the provision for Care Leaver support under this scheme be increased to age 25.

89. **ANNUAL BUDGET REPORT 2024/25, MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY, CAPITAL PROGRAMME AND CAPITAL STRATEGY, TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICY/STRATEGY, AND ANNUAL DELIVERY PLAN**

Consideration was given to the report of the Deputy Chief Executive – Corporate Development (S151) which sought to approve: the General Fund and HRA budgets for 2024/25 including the use of reserves, Medium Term Financial Strategy, Capital Programme and Strategy, Treasury Management Policy/Strategy, and the Annual Delivery Plan.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercialisation, UKSPF and Levelling Up presented the report.

The following issues were raised:

- The Leader thanked the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercialisation, UKSPF and Levelling Up, and the Finance Team for undertaking an excellent job in another difficult year. Not knowing how much money was to be received from central Government made the task of producing the Budget very difficult. Many Councils across the country were struggling financially and it was pleasing that SHDC was not, due to finances being extremely well managed. Many Councils were having to dip into their reserves, but this was not the position at SHDC.
- In her capacity as District Ward Councillor for Holbeach, the Portfolio Holder for Communities and Operational Housing raised her concerns regarding charges for car parking in Holbeach. The original proposals had suggested Sunday charging and a £2 charge for parking all day however, her comments and feedback had been taken on board and the proposals were now less extreme. Councillor Carter still felt that Holbeach was being treated unfairly, and she would continue to fight for 1 hour of free parking in Holbeach. She asked that this be kept under review, and perhaps next year consider removing the 1-hour parking charge.
- Members commented that the public in Holbeach had raised concerns regarding the proposed car parking charges in the town, including the loss of 2 hours of free parking in the Boston Road car park. There were concerns that it would reduce footfall in the High Street, users of the doctors' surgery would have to park on the road, parents picking up children from school would be inconvenienced. Had alternatives been considered and costed, and what was the difference if charges were increased but the two-hour free parking was kept?

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- The Portfolio Holder for Assets and Strategic Planning advised that he did not have the information immediately available and would provide it after the meeting. He stated that careful consideration had been given to all car parking charges, with the aim of increasing them as little as possible. Holbeach had an abundance of free car parking around the Boston Road car park, and there was also a car park under Council ownership which was still free. The Authority was looking to invest in car parks in Holbeach, to continue to provide this service however, they could not be subsidised by other assets. The issues raised by Councillor Carter would be kept under review.
- Members thanked the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercialisation, UKSPF and Levelling up for the interesting presentation, and for the progress being made on the IDB funding issue.
- The management of efficiency savings of £1 million were queried. One of the biggest costs for the Authority was staff. Was there an up to date Pay Policy for senior officers?
 - Members were advised that work on this was under way and that the Policy would be coming forward to a Special Council meeting before the end of March. In response to whether this would affect figures in the budget, members were advised that it should not have a detrimental effect on the budget.
- Members commented that the increase in remuneration for employees was substantial – was the Authority satisfied that it was fully justified and necessary?
 - The Deputy Chief Executive – Corporate Development confirmed that the pay increase was set nationally through the NJC. Each year, the Authority made an assumption as to the increase that the NJC might set for the pay increase (for the forthcoming year, this was 3.5%). Last year's generous assumption of 5% had been exceeded. Pay pressure within local government was a challenge, and the Government had already indicated to the NJC that it needed to be careful with the 2024/25 increases.
- Members commented that there had recently been more funding provided to offset the issue of IDBs. What was SHDC's share? Also, there was a gap to fill and there was a plan of activity to achieve this, both short and long term which worked on the assumption that the Drainage Board levy would be altered at some point this year. If this did not happen, had we done all we could at this stage to mitigate what could be a very difficult situation next year.
 - The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercialisation, UKSPF and Levelling Up commented that it was hoped that something could be achieved. With regard to figures, the assumption had been made that the funding received was a one-off and that the Authority would have to fund going forward. The amounts for future years had been factored in.
 - The Deputy Chief Executive – Corporate Development advised that with regard to the saving targets that had been set, there were two elements to this – a smaller more general element, and a larger one specifically

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targeted against the IDBs. £300,000 had been received last year from Government as one-off funding, and a further £3million had recently been announced however the allocation on this was not yet known. In the officer's view, this should be £6 million as there were two years to deal with however, the Government had indicated that they were seeking to try and resolve this in time for the 2025/26 settlement. A lot of work with Government was required going forward to ensure that this was a suitable figure to support SHDC's budget.

- Members commented that Councils generally were having difficulties in balancing their budgets. Underfunding by central Government was an issue. With regard to efficiency savings, could members be reassured that SHDC would not themselves become the recipient of a S114 notice, and was it his belief that local government was being underfunded by central government?
 - The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercialisation, UKSPF and Levelling Up responded that the whole of local government was hugely underfunded by central government, and Lincolnshire as a whole was underfunded. Local MP worked hard to fight for our interests. With regard to efficiencies, the Working Party had been set up to continually monitor these efficiency savings. Transparency was important and Scrutiny were welcome to review these as well. Some hard decisions had to be made but these were necessary to avoid the risk of bankruptcy. In particular, the S151 Officer would keep a tight control to ensure that all remained on course. As a rural authority, SHDC did make good pragmatic decisions for its residents.

DECISION:

- 1) That the Revenue Estimates for the General Fund, HRA and Spalding Special for 2024/25 (Appendices 1, 1a, 1b and 1c) be approved.
- 2) That the Council Tax for a Band D property in 2024/25 be set at £201.42 (£6.03 per annum increase on 2023/24 levels).
- 3) That the Spalding Special Expenses for a Band D property be set at £25.83 for 2024/25 (previously £25.47 in 2023/24).
- 4) That the additions to and use of reserves (As detailed at Appendix 1) be approved).
- 5) That the uplift to the Real Living Wage (Appendix 1, paragraph 4.22) be approved.
- 6) Council re-affirms its previous decision in respect of long-term empty properties, as set out in paragraph 4.11 of Appendix 1, and makes a determination for the introduction of the premium for substantially furnished with no resident (Second homes), to be introduced at the earliest point, 1 April 2025.
- 7) That the Medium Term Financial Strategy (at Appendix 1) be approved.

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- 8) That the Capital Programme and Capital Strategy (Appendices 1, 1d and 2) be approved.
- 9) That the Treasury Management Policy 2024/25 (Appendix 3a) and Treasury Management Strategy, including the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy and Annual Investment Strategy 2024/25 (Appendix 3b) be approved.
- 10) That the Fees and Charges Schedule 2024/25 (Appendix 4) be approved, along with the application of annual RPI uplifts for all fees and charges where applicable.
- 11) That the Annual Delivery Plan for 2024/25 (Appendix 5) be approved.
- 12) That the results of the Budget Consultation process in Appendix 6 be noted.
- 13) That the alignment of constitutional financial limits across the partnership in Appendix 7 be approved.

In accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, a recorded vote was taken on the recommendations (Annual Budget Report 2024/25, Medium Term Financial Strategy, Capital Programme and Capital Strategy, Treasury Management Policy/Strategy and Annual Delivery Plan). The vote was as follows:

For	Against	Abstain	Apologies
Councillor Alcock	Councillor Hutchinson	Councillor Barnes	Councillor Chapman
Councillor Ashby			Councillor King
Councillor Astill			Councillor M Le Sage
Councillor Avery			Councillor A Tennant
Councillor Beal			Councillor A Woolf
Councillor Bingham			
Councillor Booth			
Councillor Brewis			
Councillor Carter			
Councillor Casson			
Councillor Chauhan			
Councillor Eldridge			
Councillor Geaney			
Councillor Gibson			
Councillor Harrison			
Councillor J Le Sage			
Councillor Hasan			
Councillor Redgate			
Councillor Reynolds			
Councillor Scalse			

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Councillor Sheard			
Councillor Slade			
Councillor E Sneath			
Councillor T Sneath			
Councillor Spencer			
Councillor Taylor			
Councillor Tyrrell			
Councillor Whitbourn			
Councillor Wilkinson			
Councillor Worth			

90. **COUNCIL TAX SETTING 2024/25**

Consideration was given to the report of the Deputy Chief Executive – Corporate Development (S151) which set out the amounts of Council Tax applicable for 2024/25 for each valuation band and in each part of the district.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercialisation, UKSPF and Levelling Up presented the report.

The following issues were raised:

- The Leader highlighted details of Parish Council precepts at Appendix B to the report. He commented that District Councils were restricted to a £5 increase on Council Tax however, Parish Councils had no restrictions. This year, a number of Parish Councils had increased their precepts significantly. He would be raising the issue of this disparity in restrictions with DLUHC. Consideration had to be given as to whether Council Taxpayers were being given value for money – in his view, these continued increases were making Council Tax unaffordable for some people.
 - Members responded that Parish Councils shared these concerns. However, it was important that Parish Councils had the opportunity to respond and explain the difficulties that they may be facing. Parish Councils were often able to undertake projects forced upon them by circumstances, mainly as a result of massive housing increases in their area. Whilst understanding the frustrations in the disparity around restrictions to increases, it was important to understand the needs and aspirations of Parish Councils.
 - The Leader acknowledged these points.

DECISION:

- 1) That the formal Council Tax resolutions for 2024/25 as set out in Appendix A and summarised in paragraph 4.1 (And detailed below) be approved; and
- 2) That the charge to be levied on the Council Taxpayers of Spalding for services provided in their town (Spalding Special Estimates) will be £264,418 for 2024/25. This equates to a Band D equivalent charge of £25.83 (£25.47 for 2023/24).

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4. Council Tax Resolutions

4.1 The required resolutions for the approval of the levels of Council Tax are set out at Appendix A. The figures relating to the District Council and the average of the parishes are summarised in the following table:

Resolution Ref	Description	SHDC	Parish Precept (incl Spalding Special)	Total
		£	£	£
3a	Gross expenditure	46,800,807	1,545,493	48,346,300
3b	Gross Income	40,702,615	-	40,702,615
3c		6,098,192	1,545,493	7,643,685
1a	Tax base	30,276	30,276	30,276
3d 3f	Band D Council Tax	201.42	51.05	252.47

Council is recommended to approve the following resolutions:

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- 1 It is to be noted that on 12 December 2023 the Council calculated: -
 - (a) the Council Tax Base 2024/25 for the District as **30,276** (item T in the formula in section 31B(3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended) and;
 - (b) Dwellings in those parts of the district to which a Parish precept relates as shown in **Appendix B**
2. Calculate that the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2024/25 (excluding Parish precepts) is **£6,098,192**.
- 3 That the following amounts be calculated by the Council for the year 2024/25 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended (the Act): -
 - (a) **£48,346,300** being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act;
 - (b) **£40,702,615** being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act;
 - (c) **£7,643,685** being the amount by which the aggregate at 3(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 3(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its Council Tax requirement for the year (item R in the formula in Section 31a (4) of the Act);
 - (d) **£252.47** being the amount at 3(c) divided by the amount at 1(a) (item T), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of Council Tax for the year (including Parish precepts);
 - (e) **£1,545,493** being the aggregate amount of all special items (Including Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act (see **Appendix B**);
 - (f) **£201.42** being the amount at 3(d) less the result given by dividing the amount at (e) by the amount at 1(a) calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of council tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its areas to which no parish precept relates;
4. That it be noted that for the year 2024/25 the Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) and the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Lincolnshire have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:-

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Council Tax 2024/25	A £	B £	C £	D £	E £	F £	G £	H £
Lincolnshire County Council	1,052.46	1,227.87	1,403.28	1,578.69	1,929.51	2,280.33	2,631.15	3,157.38
Police & Crime Commissioner for Lincolnshire	202.80	236.60	270.40	304.20	371.80	439.40	507.00	608.40

5. That having calculated the aggregate in each case the amounts at 3(h) and 4 above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the amounts shown in **Appendix D** as the amount of Council Tax for 2024/25 of the categories of dwellings shown.
6. **Appendix E** provides definitions for the formal Council Tax resolution.

In accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 a recorded vote was taken on each Budget decision. The vote was as follows:

For	Against	Abstain	Apologies
Councillor Alcock			Councillor Chapman
Councillor Ashby			Councillor King
Councillor Astill			Councillor M Le Sage
Councillor Avery			Councillor A Tennant
Councillor Barnes			Councillor A Woolf
Councillor Beal			
Councillor Bingham			
Councillor Booth			
Councillor Brewis			
Councillor Carter			
Councillor Casson			
Councillor Chauhan			
Councillor Eldridge			
Councillor Geaney			
Councillor Gibson			
Councillor Harrison			
Councillor J Le Sage			
Councillor Hasan			
Councillor Hutchinson			
Councillor Redgate			
Councillor Reynolds			
Councillor Scalese			
Councillor Sheard			
Councillor Slade			
Councillor E Sneath			
Councillor T Sneath			
Councillor Spencer			
Councillor Taylor			
Councillor Tyrrell			
Councillor Whitbourn			
Councillor Wilkinson			
Councillor Worth			

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91. **RENT SETTING 2024-2025**

Consideration was given to the report of the Assistant Director – Housing which sought Council approval for the proposed applicable rent increase allowable under The Direction on the Rent Standard 2023 for Council tenants and other housing tenures.

The Portfolio Holder for Communities and Operational Housing presented the report.

AGREED:

That the following rent increases are approved:

Social tenants of South Holland District Council, South Holland Homes and S106 units managed by the Council.	7.7%
Shared ownership rents (Leaseholders)	7.7%
Guest rooms and community centres for Council tenants	7.7%
Alarm monitoring charges	7.7%
Guest rooms and community centres for private hire	7.7%
Homeless accommodation for individuals and families	7.7%
Garages and garage plots	7.7%

92. **REVIEW OF THE SHELTERED HOUSING OFFER FOR THE HRA**

Consideration was given to the report of the Assistant Director – Housing which sought approval of recommendations and changes, including increasing the HRA establishment.

The Portfolio Holder for Communities and Operational Housing presented the report.

Members commented that they were pleased that a serious step was being taken to improve this service area.

DECISION:

- 1) That an increase to the HRA establishment is approved.
- 2) That a new service charge categories with an increase in these to sheltered tenants, of no more than £0.88 per week as attached at Appendix A be approved. Tenants would be formally consulted through service of statutory notice.

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93. **SOUTH AND EAST LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCILS PARTNERSHIP PERFORMANCE REPORT**

Consideration was given to the report of the Assistant Director – Corporate which provided a six-monthly update on Partnership performance.

The Leader of the Council presented the report.

DECISION:

- 1) That progress of the Annual Delivery Plan (ADP) 2023/24 (section 2) be noted.
- 2) That the Performance Framework 2024/25 (section 3) be noted.
- 3) That the Peer Challenge update (section 4) be noted.
- 4) That the updates from the Priority Partnerships (section 5) be noted.
- 5) That the Partnership Scrutiny update (section 6) be noted.

94. **IMPLEMENTATION OF REVISED HR POLICIES**

Consideration was given to the report of the Assistant Director – Corporate which sought Council approval for revised HR policies.

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate, Governance and Communications presented the report.

The following issues were raised:

- Members queried whether the Equality Act 2010 had been observed and considered when writing the policies.
 - The Portfolio Holder for Corporate, Governance and Communications confirmed that the policies had been updated to take guidance changes into account.

DECISION:

That the HR policies appended to the report be approved.

95. **CO-OPTED INDEPENDENT MEMBER(S) ON THE GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE**

Consideration was given to the report of the Assistant Director – Governance and Monitoring Officer which sought amendment of the Governance and Audit Committee's membership to include up to 2 Non-Voting Co-opted Independent

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Member(s) and authorisation for the Committee to make any appointment(s) to this position.

The Chairman of the Governance and Audit Committee presented the report.

DECISION:

- 1) That, in accordance with best practice and a recommendation from the Governance and Audit Committee, the amendment of the membership of the Governance and Audit Committee to include up to 2 Non-Voting Co-opted Independent Members be approved.
- 2) That the Governance and Audit Committee be authorised to co-opt Independent Member(s) to the Committee, each appointment (including any re-appointments) to be for a term up to 4-years.
- 3) That the Monitoring Officer be authorised to amend the Constitution as necessary to give effect to recommendations 1 and 2.

96. **INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL**

Consideration was given to the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel which submitted the Independent Remuneration Panel's recommendations for allowances for 2023-2027.

The report was introduced by the Monitoring Officer and the Chair of the Independent Remuneration Panel, Nikki Marzec, who clarified corrections to two of the recommendations:

- Recommendation I – this should refer to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.
- Recommendation N – this should refer to a payment of £650, not £550.

The following issues were raised:

- Members raised concern that an increase in allowances was not appropriate in the current financial climate and had put together an alternative proposal which had been sent to all members via email during the meeting.
- Members thanked the Independent Remuneration Panel for their work and the report presented.
- Members queried why Councillors were allowed to receive two special responsibility allowances and the need for two deputy leaders.
- Members felt that further awareness should be raised of the work that Councillors did.
- Members stated that Members could opt-out of receiving their allowance or receiving an increase if they wished to.

DECISION:

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That the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel as set out in Appendix A to the report and to include the associated financial implications in the 2024/25 budget be approved as follows:

- a. That the Basic Allowance be increased in line with the annual local government pay award percentage increase as agreed by the National Joint Council for local government services, effective from 1 April 2024.
- b. That the Leader's allowance be increased in line with the annual local government pay award percentage increase as agreed by the National Joint Council for local government services, effective from 1 April 2024.
- c. That one single allowance of £15,500 p/a be made to Deputy Leaders which would encompass both Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder responsibilities, effective from 1 April 2024.
- d. That the allowance for Portfolio Holders increase to £7,500 p/a, with effect from 1 April 2024.
- e. That the Chairmen of Licensing, Scrutiny and Governance & Audit Committee allowance increase to £5,000 p/a, with Vice-Chairman to receive 50% of Chairman allowance at a rate of £2,500 p/a, effective from 1 April 2024.
- f. That the Chairman of the Planning Committee allowance increase to £6,000 p/a, and the Vice-Chairman to receive 50% of allowance at a rate of £3,000 p/a, effective from 1 April 2024.
- g. That the Chairman of the Council allowance increase to £4,500 p/a with the Vice-Chairman to receive 50% of Chairman allowance at a rate of £2,250 p/a, effective from 1 April 2024.
- h. That the Leader of the main Opposition Group allowance increase to £6,000 p/a, effective from 1 April 2024.
- i. That a new SRA for the Deputy Leader of the Opposition be introduced at a rate of £1,000 p/a, effective from 1 April 2024.
- j. That the Political Group Leader payment allowance be increased to £500 p/a, effective from 1 April 2024.
- k. That all SRA's be increased in line with the annual local government pay award percentage increase as agreed by the National Joint Council for local government services, effective from April 2025.
- l. That payments to Directors of PSPS Limited be removed.
- m. That claims for childcare be increased to a maximum of £15 p/hr upon receipt from a registered childcare provider.

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- n. That a payment of £650 p/a be paid for any co-opted Independent Member of the Governance and Audit Committee.

97. **NOMINATIONS FOR COMMITTEES AND OTHER SEATS AND PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION.**

There were none.

98. **HEALTH SCRUTINY FOR LINCOLNSHIRE REPORT**

Consideration was given to the report of Councillor G Scalese which provided Council with an update following the latest meeting of the Health Scrutiny for Lincolnshire Committee.

Councillor Scalese presented the report.

The following issues were raised:

- Members asked what plans were in place for addressing the national problem of dentistry deserts.
 - Councillor Scalese confirmed that this issue was on the agenda for discussion at the next Health Scrutiny for Lincolnshire Committee meeting.
- Members queried whether a list of pharmacies providing the new service to diagnose seven common illnesses could be added to the new wellbeing map that the Council were producing.
 - Councillor Scalese confirmed that she would look into this.

DECISION:

That the report be noted.

99. **ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT**

There were none.

(The meeting ended at 8.48 pm)

(End of minutes)