

District Cllr's April Report 2024

DEVOLUTION UPDATE

The vote at LCC was very much on party Lines. The Administration For. The opposition either against or abstained - on the grounds that the Mayoral Role and Governance arrangements were not appropriate.

There was debate around the level of response of the consultation. The Tories felt than 4K+ responses t of a population of 1 Million was good [less that 0.5% participation] - the opposition disagreed.

Council sets balanced budget despite challenging financial settlement from central government.

West Lindsey District Council unanimously approved the budget for 2024/25 prioritising growth, sustainability and community well-being.

The community driven priorities underscore the Council's commitment to the district as it continues to plan to be become non-reliant on government funding in future.

At the full Council meeting last night (04/03/24), Councillors **approved a balanced budget of £18.499 million for the 2024/25 financial year. They also approved a Council Tax rise of £7.01 - or 13p a week for a Band D Property. It means the West Lindsey District Council Tax will be £241.55 for a Band D property.**

Leader of the Council, Cllr Trevor Young said the approach to setting priorities was shaped by the 'invaluable feedback from communities. He said: "As a new administration we have been able to include priority areas we feel will meet our vision for the district. We have approved the strategy to take legal action against the Home Office to protect investment, Economic Growth and Regeneration at RAF Scampton which will deliver £300m of investment and prosperity to the district.

"We believe this project has the potential to transform our district, creating opportunities for employment in some of the most exciting 21st century industries. We believe this project is worth fighting for."

The Council is committed to ensuing the investment brought in from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund is maximised. Cllr Young was pleased that the cinema project in Gainsborough is underway and was proud of how the Community Grant Scheme is being utilised.

He added: "As part of the Community Grant Scheme delivered from funding from the UK government alongside our own matched funding, we are awarding grants for projects across the district to improve

our community spaces, places and the activities available to residents. This includes play areas, refit of toilets for accessibility, solar panel projects, heritage projects and befriending services for elderly residents.”

Key priorities this year include:

Markets - when they flourish, they add vibrancy to public spaces, provide opportunities for social interaction and support the retail sector in our town centres. Gainsborough market place with its market is developed to become the centre of a thriving independent quarter of the town.

Culture and heritage - strive to develop successful partnerships around heritage, culture and the arts and use these partnerships to increase opportunities for our communities and help revive our town centres.

Increasing opportunities for participating in sport, leisure and cultural activities is a priority - reverse the decline in opportunities available for residents of West Lindsey. Recruit a sport and a cultural development officer. Work with our Leisure providers developing our programmes in Market Rasen and Gainsborough and explore options for our Leisure centre in Gainsborough to expand and improve this facility.

Ensuring the Council meets its duties and obligations under the 2021 Environment Act - prepare to deliver food waste collections across the district. Focus on enforcement and anti-social behaviour, increasing fines for fly tipping and recruit two additional enforcement officers.

Investing in green technologies - received £401,500 to make West Lindsey Leisure Centre in Gainsborough more energy efficient by investing in solar panels.

The Council has expanded its award-winning waste collection service to offer households the opportunity to hire an extra-large, commercial sized bin for times when more capacity is needed creating an alternative to skip hire. In addition, the council will be consulting with our residents on the green waste collection service to ensure this service best meets the needs of our communities.

Cllr Young recognised the ‘high level of financial expertise’ by council officers in supporting the budget setting. He added: “Members of the public will be very conscious that a large number of local authorities are struggling financially with the particular challenges and high costs that the energy crisis has thrown up and with the country slipping into recession, these challenges do not appear to be going away anytime soon. In the longer-term, government funding may reduce but we are in a good place to meet any challenges from a sound financial position.

“The 2024/25 Budget supports delivery of our Corporate Plan objectives, protects our award-winning services, improves our customers’ experience, delivers efficiencies and will continue to deliver value for money for the residents of West Lindsey. All of this is being delivered to the residents of West Lindsey for an average of £4.65 per week.”

Emma Foy, Corporate Services Director and 151 Officer at West Lindsey District Council, said the budget was guided by the Executive Business Plan and the Medium-Term Financial Plan.

She said: “Despite the 1-year settlement there remains ongoing uncertainty in relation to future funding levels as the Fairer Funding and Business Rate Retention Scheme reviews are still yet to take place as part of an overall review of Local Government funding. However, by working closely with Members over the last six months, supported by the reserves we have in place we have been able to deliver additional priorities requested by the New Administration maintaining a balanced budget.

“The Council’s capital investment programme totals some £36m over the medium term, £31m of which is currently projected to be delivered in 2024/25. This significant programme is enabled by £23m of grant funding and contributions with the balance coming from the Councils own resources and borrowing.”

The Governance and Audit Committee scrutinised the Treasury Management Strategy and the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee recommended the budget before it was approved by Council on Monday. Watch the Full Council meeting on our website <https://west-lindsey-public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

Court of Appeal date announced for RAF Scampton.

West Lindsey District Council has received confirmation that our appeal against the decision of Mrs Justice Thornton, where we challenged the Home Office’s decision to use RAF Scampton to house up to 2,000 asylum seekers, will take place on 11 and 12 June 2024.

This will also be heard alongside other appeals brought by Braintree District Council for the RAF Wethersfield on site and a resident from Wethersfield.

We understand the Home Office still plan to extend the temporary use of the site for at least a further three years by seeking planning permission through a Special Development Order (SDO) when their emergency permitted development rights (known as Class Q) expire in April.

Leader of West Lindsey District Council Cllr Trevor Young said: “We understand the SDO still has not been laid but is imminent with the expiration of Class Q on 13 April 2024. Given the Home Office have been working on this for more than 12 months, it is quite incredible that they have taken this approach leaving the matter to the very last minute and assume the SDO will be granted.

“The Council was given the opportunity to provide our comments on this process where we raised various concerns, including impact on Heritage as well as the lack of information provided and the failure to ensure meaningful engagement with stakeholders and the local community.

“We have received a letter from the Home Office in response to the SDO and it does not address the Council’s concerns. It also makes it clear that a further Environmental Impact Assessment screening direction is to be sought, this will be the fourth screening direction requested on this site within a year which is wholly inappropriate. The legislation doesn’t make provision for ‘rolling EIA’ assessments and this shows that in the Council’s view the development proposal to accommodate up to 2000 asylum seekers at RAF Scampton has never had appropriate planning consent.” The SDO letter we have received has now been published and is available to read on the planning application website. Search the Planning Application Database | West Lindsey District Council (west-lindsey.gov.uk)

Residents can keep updated on the asylum accommodation

West Lindsey District Council is calling for new traders to come and join Gainsborough Market.

There are a number of opportunities to trade in our historic Market Place on Tuesdays, Saturdays or our monthly Farmers and Craft market, or all three! Trading on the market is a great, risk-free way of trying out a new business idea or expanding from selling online.

You will be in good company and will join a wide range of traders on Gainsborough Market Place, some of who have been with us for years and some who have recently joined us.

Wayne Hill at CoolFish has been trading in Gainsborough for the last 25 years and has built a loyal customer base. He said: "I first started in the Foodhall and have gradually made our way onto the Market Place. I enjoy chatting away to our customers, selling fish and having a good gossip. I strongly recommend joining the market as a trader."

Kim Farrier at The Garden Tea Room recently joined several months ago and has found her experience positive, she said: "I'm a new trader and so far, I have found that the people of Gainsborough are really friendly. We love our customers, and we cannot wait to return for more markets!"

Wilcox Bakery has also been on the market for a long-time and always welcomes his customers with a friendly smile. Kevin said: "I'm very proud to say that Wilcox Bakery has been trading on the market now for a good 35 years! There are so many friendly faces on the market and our customers are so nice. Come and join the market, you won't regret it."

Hannah at Sugar Lips Cupcakes is one of the regular Farmers' and Craft Market traders with her delicious cakes and bakes the public know and loves. She said: "It's really enjoyable being here at Gainsborough as one of the regular traders It's a well organised market and we love our customers."

A market has been held in Gainsborough for over 800 years since King John granted the town its Market Charter in 1204. We are investing in our historic Market Place to make it once again part of the commercial and social heart of our town.

West Lindsey District Councillor, Jeanette McGhee, who represents the South-West Ward in Gainsborough said she would love to see more traders on the market.

She said: "Gainsborough market is special not only to us as a Council, but to our residents, visitors and shoppers. Joining the market place as a trader is a great way

to start a new business idea and Gainsborough Market place will always welcome new people with open arms!"

The Council's Towns Manager, Nicola Marshall said: "We have a friendly line-up of regular traders on our traditional retail weekly market and the monthly farmers and craft market. Now is a great time to get established on the market and take advantage of our incentives to trade.

“Trading on a market is ‘Low Cost, No Boss’ and it’s a great way to start or expand a business with very little risk. We have an exciting Young Traders’ market coming up in June – ‘Trade for a Tenner’ if you are between 16 and 30 years of age.”

It's easy to set up and there are incentives for both new and young traders.

If you are interested, please contact the Markets Officer by emailing market.officer@west-lindsey.gov.uk. For more information about Gainsborough Market – visit Gainsborough Market where you can also download a trader application form.

For further information contact: Katie Smith, Communications Officer at katie.smith@west-lindsey.gov.uk | 01427 676580

Two men prosecuted for illegal tree felling in West Lindsey.

West Lindsey District Council successfully prosecuted two men for the felling of six trees that were covered by Tree Preservation Orders (TPO).

The trees were felled at a property on Main Drive in Sudbrooke, in June last year.

The Council took action against Mr Bruce Haughton and Glen Barrett of Barrett Treecare, who both entered guilty pleas at Boston Magistrates Court on Monday, 11, March.

The Council were made aware that the offences had occurred and attended the site to investigate. Officers recognised that a number of trees had been felled or crowned that were covered by TPOs, without seeking consent from the Council.

TPOs form part of the land searches that property owners undertake when purchasing any property and these particular trees formed part of a larger woodland area within Sudbrooke, within which all the trees are protected.

Haughton, who was deemed to have been reckless in his actions, was fined £3,844 with a victim surcharge of £1,538 and costs of £994.70, making a total payable of £6,376.70.

Barrett, who was deemed to have been neglectful, was fined £1,600 with a victim surcharge of £640 and costs of £994.70 making a total payable of £3,234.70.

Chair of the Council’s Planning Committee at West Lindsey District Council, Cllr Matt Boles said “We are very pleased with the outcome of this case. I commend the members of the public who made the Council aware of this issue and in turn our officers for following it through to this successful outcome.

“Tree Preservation Orders are there for a reason and this outcome should serve as a warning to any landowner or businesses wishing to fell trees, to think twice, and check with the Council before doing so.”

The Council will be seeking to confirm the replanting of the trees to ensure that what was originally removed will be present again in the future.

Andy Gray, Housing and Environmental Enforcement Manager at the Council added “We hope that this demonstrates to the public that the Council takes wilful damage to our protected environment extremely seriously.

“Any person living on or owning land that contains trees needs to ensure that they have taken steps to understand whether they are protected or not and then where

they are aware they are protected, should not commence any works on them until they have obtained the necessary consent. If anybody is in any doubt, they should contact the Council in advance.”

For more information on Tree Protection Orders you can visit the Council’s website: <https://www.west-lindsey.gov.uk/planning-building-control/planning/conservation-environment/trees-hedges/trees-planning-permission>

Mobile Cameras

The Council currently has 3 mobile cameras that we use for fly-tipping enforcement, all 3 have to be cited together, so we can only cover one location at a time.

We deploy these in various areas around the district based on the intelligence we receive. We then have to assess the location to see if the cameras can be deployed effectively.

If you or the Parish Council are aware of any areas where fly-tipping is a concern then please let WLDC know and we will look at assessing the suitability of the site.

West Lindsey District Council are responsible for removing fly-tipping which is on public land, such as highways, grass verges or footpaths. We aim to collect any fly-tipped waste as soon as possible but within a maximum of 10 working days.

Any fly-tipped waste on private land is the responsibility of the land owner to arrange for its removal and to take steps to prevent it happening again

• If you discover fly-tipped waste:

- Phone:
 - **01427 676676**
 -
- do not touch the waste: fly-tipped waste can be dangerous - it may contain syringes, broken glass, asbestos, toxic chemicals or other hazardous substances.
- visually inspect the waste: try to determine what the waste consists of and how much there is. Note the contents.
- take note of its exact location: and also, whether it is in or near water, for example a stream, or a pond
- do not disturb the site: there may be evidence that could be used to bring as prosecution

Boat trips in Lincolnshire spark wave of new inventions for local business.

Burton Waters in West Lindsey has become a breeding ground for creative business ideas as couple use their imagination to design new products for boats.

Inspired by their own sailing trips, Bradley and Rachel Davis, owners of the Marine Innovations business, design and manufacture a range of products.

The business was launched at the beginning of 2023 at the Southampton International Boat Show and is based in West Lindsey.

Rachel and Bradley moved to Lincolnshire as an opportunity to re-evaluate their lives and start something new. Not knowing Lincolnshire at all, they put a pin in the map, moved to Burton Waters and bought their own boat, 'Fairline Sprint.'

Having spent time on their own boat they realised that life on board could be so much easier and enjoyable with the addition of new products - so, they set about creating them!

Rachel said the new innovations have changed the way they enjoy their boat, from both a pleasure perspective and a safety perspective. She said: "Bradley has always been an inventor so he will often come back from a boat trip on the Fosdyke and start designing a new invention."

Their inventions include:

- The Boat Bar
- The Rope Looper
- The Fender Slider
- Thermal Engine Blanket

Bradley said: "Our aim with all these inventions has been to bring relevant new ideas to what is a brilliant leisure activity, using the highest quality materials and making them as affordable as possible to everyone. All our products are manufactured in the UK and where possible through local companies in Lincolnshire."

The business has recently partnered with a local business in Saxilby, Callow Retail, which is now the official UK distributor of the Marine Innovations products.

"It has been exciting to collaborate with them. Our products can now be found on Amazon, eBay, and Callow Retail's own website," added Rachel.

The success of the business has prompted the couple to expand across industries and they are currently looking for a medical company take on their new product.

They have created the StomaBuddy, which is a medical device helping people who wear stoma bags.

Rachel said: “We were out one evening with a friend of ours who had recently been fitted with a stoma bag. It constantly distracted them, worried that it would burst (which it had done a few times previously).

“We told them they should get an alarm for it, and we could not believe it when they said they did not exist. Bradley came home that evening and immediately started to research alarms for stoma bags, and we could not believe that nothing like this existed. So, we set about inventing one!”

The device hangs over the stoma bag and is powered by a small watch battery. As the bag inflates an elastic cord stretches over the bag and activates a small pad which goes in the person's pocket and vibrates discretely, thus sending a warning that the bag needs emptying.

“We are looking for a medical company to take on this product so that we can start to make a difference to many more peoples' lives but if one does not come forward then we will look to go into full production ourselves in 2024, added Rachel.

Cllr Lesley Rollings, Chair of the Prosperous Communities Committee said she was fascinated to hear about the company and the products it makes.

She said: “It is fantastic to hear about products designed right here in the district and distributed by local businesses. The couple behind it all are truly inspiring. As someone enthusiastic about leisure activities and exploring, inventions like those produced by this company can truly enhance the experience of enjoying Lincolnshire’s waterways. It is a double advantage!”

For more information about Marine Innovations visit their website:

<https://www.marineinnovations.co.uk/>

Planning permission is granted at Whitton Gardens as work commences.

West Lindsey District Council has approved plans for the WC conversion at Whitton Gardens as part of the ‘Thriving Gainsborough’ regeneration programme of work.

Planning permission was approved by councillors at Planning Committee on Wednesday 18 February.

As previously reported, the Council was successfully awarded £10 million from Central Government as part of the ‘Levelling up’ Programme to regenerate the town, with work ongoing since 2022 as part of the Public Realm strategy.

The plans include transforming the public convenience block to a Café, with procurement announced in due course.

Improvement works have started at Whitton Gardens and will include:

- Tree works
- Shrubbery removal

- Installation of outdoor chess table
- Footpath improvements
- Painting and decorating
- Planting.

The park and car park are expected to be closed for nine weeks until Friday 26 April 2024 at the latest, for the work to be conducted in a safe and timely manner.

The site will be fenced off throughout the duration and closed to the public, however, the Riverside car park will remain open at full capacity throughout the duration of the works.

Leader of West Lindsey District Council, Cllr Trevor Young and Gainsborough ward member said:

“It’s great to see that not only has planning been granted for the WC conversion, but work has started on site. Enhancing our green spaces and transforming the WC into a café will be integral in our Thriving Gainsborough programme. We know how important Whitton Gardens is to both our residents and visitors and we cannot wait to see it in all its glory when completed.”

To keep up to date with all the Levelling-Up projects follow us @investGainsboro on Twitter or you can find out more information on the Invest Gainsborough website.

New layer of Government with tax-raising Mayor?

It seems the Government appear to want a new layer of Government, called a Combined Authority, including a tax raising Mayor in May next year. The minister, Michael Gove, says Mayors are “directly accountable local politicians with a mandate and a mission and a responsibility to deliver economic growth and improved opportunities for people in their area.” That is what our cross-party councils do now. Handing that instead, to a handful of people of one or at best, two parties, leaves you and your elected representatives out in the cold.

Money promises: These authorities can bid for funding with a good business plan “focused on improving the economy”. That’s the same as we do now. And we are currently spending not the £24m they suggest, but £360m on new transport projects in Lincolnshire alone. If we combine to form the huge area of Greater Lincolnshire, then we compete for funding with the freeports and failed industries of North and North-East Lincolnshire, while in rural Lincolnshire, enhancing the economy means more expensive housing and more solar industry. And we already have plenty of that.

Accountable? They say the Mayor will be more visibly accountable, but for what? Which council will be responsible for which part of transport, of housing or education? There are already 19 “devodeals” covering over 33 million people and no two are the same. In my book, that is less transparent and less accountable

Council launches big bin hire service for residents.

West Lindsey District Council is launching a new service aimed at providing residents with a convenient solution for managing excess waste.

For those residents who need to have a major clear out or a big 'Spring Clean' and cannot feasibly get to the Household Recycling Centre – then this new service could be just for you.

Starting April 2024, residents will have the option to hire large, wheeled bins for a period of one week for general waste items. This service is exclusively for householders and is not intended for commercial waste.

Cllr Lesley Rollings, Chair of the Prosperous Communities Committee at West Lindsey District Council welcomed the news. She said: "I am so pleased to introduce this innovative service, which will help provide residents with a convenient solution for managing excess waste.

"This is really useful if you have too much waste to take to your local Household Waste

Recycling Centre but not quite enough to hire a big skip. Also, not everyone has access to a car to take their waste to a household waste recycling centre, so many people will welcome this opportunity. This initiative reflects our commitment to meeting the evolving needs of our community while promoting responsible waste management practices."

This service offers two bin sizes: an 1100 litre bin priced at £60, and a 660-litre bin priced at £50. Residents can select their preferred delivery and collection dates within a 48-hour slot, providing flexibility and convenience.

Cllr Rollings explained that the service is designed for general waste items and not aimed at recyclable materials.

She added: "We continue to encourage residents to prioritize reuse and recycling whenever possible. Our recycling bins at home, charity shops, and Household Waste Recycling Centres remain valuable resources for reducing waste and promoting sustainability."

It is important to note that certain items are excluded from this service, including:

- Tyres
- Hazardous waste
- Electrical items.
- Detailed information on prohibited items can be found in our terms and conditions available on our website. <https://www.west-lindsey.gov.uk/bigbinhire>
- Detailed information on prohibited items can be found in our terms and conditions available on our website. <https://www.west-lindsey.gov.uk/bigbinhire>
- Businesses seeking waste solutions are encouraged to explore our Commercial Waste Service options through our website or by contacting us directly. www.west-lindsey.gov.uk/commercialwastesolutions.gov.uk, emailing cws@west-lindsey.gov.uk or by phoning 01427 675124.

For more information and to book your large bin hire service, please visit the Council's website
<https://www.west-lindsey.gov.uk/bigbinhire>

PDJ Howitt-Cowan

District Cllr for the Hemswell Ward

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