

COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting held at the Council Offices, Narborough

TUESDAY, 27 FEBRUARY 2024

Present:-

Cllr. Cheryl Cashmore (Chairman)
Cllr. Nick Chapman (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr. Shabbir Aslam	Cllr. Hannah Gill	Cllr. Dillan Shikotra
Cllr. Lee Breckon JP	Cllr. Nigel Grundy	Cllr. Mike Shirley
Cllr. Nick Brown	Cllr. Paul Hartshorn	Cllr. Roger Stead
Cllr. Adrian Clifford	Cllr. Richard Holdridge	Cllr. Ben Taylor
Cllr. Luke Cousin	Cllr. Mark Jackson	Cllr. Matt Tomeo
Cllr. Tony Deakin	Cllr. Becca Lunn	Cllr. Bob Waterton
Cllr. Roy Denney	Cllr. Antony Moseley	Cllr. Bev Welsh
Cllr. Alex DeWinter	Cllr. Les Phillimore	Cllr. Jane Wolfe
Cllr. Susan Findlay	Cllr. Terry Richardson	Cllr. Maggie Wright
Cllr. Janet Forey	Cllr. Ande Savage	Cllr. Neil Wright
Cllr. Helen Gambardella	Cllr. Tracey Shepherd	

Officers present:-

Julia Smith	- Chief Executive
Sarah Pennelli	- Executive Director - S.151 Officer
Louisa Horton	- Executive Director - Communities and Monitoring Officer
Nick Brown	- Finance Group Manager
Lisa Boland	- ICT & Transformation Group Manager
Mike Connell	- IT Business Partner
Katie Brooman	- Elections and Governance Manager
Nicole Cramp	- Democratic & Scrutiny Services Officer
Isaac Thomas	- Democracy Support Officer

Honorary Alderman in attendance:-

Iain Hewson & Guy Jackson

Apologies:-

Cllr. Royston Bayliss and Cllr. Stuart Coar

244. DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS FROM MEMBERS

No disclosures were received.

245. MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on 30 January 2024, as circulated, were approved and signed as a correct record.

246. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair, Cllr. Cheryl Cashmore made announcements in respect of the following:

- Attended a planned visit from Mrs Henrietta Chubb - the High Sheriff of Leicester and Leicestershire. During the visit, Mrs Chubb visited the users and staff at A Place To Grow, attended a coffee morning and visited the Chair's charity – Leicester Animal Aid.

247. LEADER'S STATEMENT

Cllr. Mark Jackson arrived to the meeting during the consideration of this item.

The Leader of the Council, Cllr. Terry Richardson, presented his statement in respect of the following:

- Kirby Muxloe Gas outage
- New Lubbesthorpe milestones
- Community Awards
- Landfill gas works at Enderby
- Latest update on Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange
- Storm Henk financial support
- Great start for exercise scheme
- Residents survey
- Revised Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan adopted
- Rogue taxi driver prosecuted
- Carbon impacts examined

248. PUBLIC SPEAKING PROTOCOL

No requests were received.

249. QUESTION UNDER COUNCIL RULES OF PROCEDURE

Cllr Paul Hartshorn raised the following question, to Cllr. Nigel Grundy – Neighbourhood Services & Assets Portfolio Holder.

“The Huncote Leisure Centre BMX track was a much loved public facility used by Huncote Hornets, which is a BMX race club that has produced bikers of international standard in the past. Can the portfolio holder please tell me why the track remains closed despite reopening the surrounding path in August 2023? Keeping young people away from digital gadgets and getting exercise and fresh air is something this council should be encouraging, so please tell me and the Huncote Hornets club and all its numerous fans when the track will re-open. “

Response from Cllr. Nigel Grundy – Neighbourhood Services & Assets Portfolio Holder:

“As all members are aware, the whole of the Huncote Leisure Centre site was closed in November 2021 due to the discovery of high levels of methane gas associated with its historic use as a landfill site.

We implemented an active gas management system on the site to reduce the levels of landfill gas and manage a very complex historic landfill site, this work remains ongoing. We undertook significant upgrades to the monitoring and management of gas levels at the leisure centre itself and I am pleased to say we were able to reopen the building in October 2022.

We were then able to reopen the public land to the far rear of the site in August 2023 and reinstate the public footpath and bridleway as landfill gas levels in these locations had been significantly reduced.

The last part of the site which is currently under increased monitoring and management due to changing gas levels is on the area to the rear of the leisure centre including the land on which the BMX track sits. This section has proved to be more complex, with landfill gas levels fluctuating, meaning it has been much more challenging to reduce the gas levels to a consistent and acceptable range.

Additional works in this area were needed to be undertaken in November and December 2023 and monitoring of their impact is ongoing. In addition that area is still recovering, the grass has not re-seeded yet so it is currently very boggy and slippery, which is a further health and safety concern requiring the wider area to the rear of the Leisure Centre to remain closed.

As to be expected following an incident of this nature we are now reviewing the use of the site as a whole to ensure safety. The safety of site users, whoever they are, is our absolute priority and we will continue to ensure this

is the case and continue our monitoring and management to this end. We can only apologise for the impact on the community's use of the land but we must protect our residents from harm. If landfill gas remains at potentially hazardous levels in an area then we can not reopen that to public use – it simply would not be safe.

Cllr Hartshorn also asks that we advise Huncote Hornets Ltd when the track will reopen, I can confirm that we are in legal discussions with the Club and as you would imagine on that basis I can not comment further on those discussions.”

250. CHANGE IN ORDER OF AGENDA

Under Part 4, Section 1, Paragraph 13 of the Council's Constitution, the Chair, Cllr. Cheryl Cashmore, moved that Agenda item 15, Exclusion of Press and Public and Agenda item 16, Future ICT Provision: Options Appraisal would be taken before Agenda item 7.

251. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Considered – A proposed resolution to exclude the public from the meeting.

Following consideration of this item the Chair, Cllr. Cheryl Cashmore announced that the livestream would pause to allow the item to be considered in closed session.

That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item on the grounds that the item involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the said Act.

Agenda Item 16: Future ICT Provision: Options Appraisal – Exempt Report

Exemption Category: 3

252. FUTURE ICT PROVISION: OPTIONS APPRAISAL (EXEMPT)

Considered – Report of the Transformation Group Manager, presented by Cllr. Ben Taylor, Planning Delivery and Enforcement & Corporate Transformation.

The Decision is Restricted in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the said Act.

253. CORPORATE ACTION PLAN 2024/25

Considered – Report of the Performance & Information Service Manager, presented by Cllr. Terry Richardson - Leader of the Council.

DECISION

That the annual priorities for the Blaby District Plan be approved.

Reason:

The Blaby District Plan, approved by Council in November 2023, sets out the priorities for the Council for the period 2024- 28. An annual plan sets out the aspirations and intent of the Council for the year ahead.

254. GENDER PAY GAP REPORT 2023

Considered – Report of the HR Service Manager, presented by Cllr. Maggie Wright, Deputy Leader and Finance, People & Performance Portfolio Holder.

DECISION

That the Gender Pay Gap Report for the year 31 March 2023 be noted.

Reason:

The Council is required by law to carry out Gender Pay Reporting under the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties & Public Authorities) Regulations 2017 and this enables the Council to monitor pay differentials by gender throughout the Council.

255. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CABINET EXECUTIVE: QUARTER 3 CAPITAL PROGRAMME REVIEW 2023/24

Considered – Report of the Accountancy Services Manager, presented by Cllr. Maggie Wright, Deputy Leader and Finance, People & Performance Portfolio Holder.

DECISIONS

1. That the report be accepted.
2. That the latest Capital Programme for 2023/24 totalling £11,760,992 be approved.

Reasons:

1. To ensure the Council has adequate resources in place to meet its capital expenditure commitments.
2. To reflect additions or other changes to the Capital Programme that have occurred in the 3rd quarter of the year.

256. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CABINET EXECUTIVE: 5 YEAR CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024/25 TO 2028/29

Considered – Report of the Finance Group Manager, presented by Cllr. Maggie Wright, Deputy Leader and Finance, People & Performance Portfolio Holder.

DECISIONS

1. That the 5 Year Capital Programme for 2024/25 to 2028/29 be approved.
2. That the application of capital resources of £3,826,900 for 2024/25, including a borrowing requirement of £1,665,938, be approved.
3. That the Capital Strategy 2024/25 to 2028/29 be approved.

Reasons:

1. To obtain approval for the proposed level of capital expenditure in 2024/25 and the suggested method of financing that expenditure.
2. To provide a longer-term forecast of capital expenditure and financing requirements for the period 2024/25 to 2028/29.
3. To ensure compliance with the Prudential Code.

257. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CABINET EXECUTIVE: PRUDENTIAL INDICATOR & TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2024/25

Considered – Report of the Finance Group Manager, presented by Cllr. Maggie Wright, Deputy Leader and Finance, People & Performance Portfolio Holder.

DECISIONS

1. That the capital prudential indicators and limits for 2024/25 to 2028/29 be approved.

2. That the Treasury Management Strategy for 2024/25 and the treasury prudential indicators be approved.
3. That the Investment Strategy for 2024/25 be approved.
4. That the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement for 2024/25 be approved.
5. That delegated authority be granted to the Executive Director (Section 151), in consultation with the portfolio holder for Finance, Performance, and People, to decide whether to redeem its holding in the Lothbury Property Trust, or to transfer its investment to the proposed merger outlined at paragraph 4.3 of the report.

Reasons:

1. The Local Government Act 2003 and supporting regulations requires the Council to “have regard to” the CIPFA Prudential Code and the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice to set Prudential and Treasury Indicators for the next three years to ensure that the Council’s capital investment plans are affordable, prudent, and sustainable.
2. The Act requires the Council to set out its treasury strategy for borrowing and to prepare an Annual Investment Strategy. This covers the Council’s criteria for choosing investment counterparties and limiting exposure to the risk of loss.
3. The Act also requires the Council to undertake an annual review of its policy for calculating the minimum revenue provision (MRP) for repayment of external debt.
4. The timing of the proposed merger of the Lothbury Property Trust with an alternative property fund is such that the Council will only have a short window of opportunity to make its decision regarding the future of its property fund investment.

258. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CABINET EXECUTIVE: GENERAL FUND BUDGET PROPOSALS 2024/25

Considered – Report of the Executive Director (Section 151 Officer), presented by Cllr. Maggie Wright, Deputy Leader and Finance, People & Performance Portfolio Holder.

In accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, the vote was recorded as follows:

For	Against	Abstain
Cllr. Shabbir Aslam		
Cllr. Lee Breckon		
Cllr. Nick Brown		
Cllr. Cheryl Cashmore		
Cllr. Nick Chapman		
Cllr. Adrian Clifford		
Cllr. Luke Cousin		
Cllr. Tony Deakin		
Cllr. Roy Denney		
Cllr. Alex DeWinter		
Cllr. Susan Findlay		
Cllr. Janet Forey		
Cllr. Helen Gambardella		
Cllr. Hannah Gill		
Cllr. Nigel Grundy		
Cllr. Paul Hartshorn		
Cllr. Richard Holdridge		
Cllr. Mark Jackson		
Cllr. Rebecca Lunn		
Cllr. Anthony Moseley		
Cllr. Les Phillimore		
Cllr. Terry Richardson		
Cllr. Ande Savage		
Cllr. Tracey Shepherd		
Cllr. Dillan Shikotra		
Cllr. Mike Shirley		
Cllr. Roger Stead		
Cllr. Ben Taylor		
Cllr. Matt Tomeo		
Cllr. Bob Waterton		
Cllr. Bev Welsh		
Cllr. Jane Wolfe		
Cllr. Neil Wright		
Cllr. Maggie Wright		

DECISIONS

1. To have regard to the comments of the Executive Director (Section 151 Officer) in paragraph 4.7 of the report in respect of the requirements of the Local Government Finance Act 2003.
2. That the 2024/25 General Fund Revenue Account net expenditure budget of £15.394m be approved.

3. That delegated authority be given to the S151 Officer in consultation with the Portfolio Holder to make amendments to the Budget should it be necessary.

Reasons:

1. It is a requirement for the Cabinet Executive and Council to take into account the requirements of the Local Government Finance Act 2003 in relation to the robustness of the budget and the adequacy of reserves.
2. Cabinet and Council are required to consider and approve the General Fund Revenue Account budget proposals in order to set the budget and Council Tax for the forthcoming financial year.
3. Delegated authority is sought in order to make any amendments to the Budget should any new information become available following approval by full Council.

259. **RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CABINET EXECUTIVE: COUNCIL TAX 2024/25**

Considered – Report of the Finance Group Manager, presented by Cllr. Maggie Wright, Deputy Leader and Finance, People & Performance Portfolio Holder.

In accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, the vote was recorded as follows:

For	Against	Abstain
Cllr. Shabbir Aslam		
Cllr. Lee Breckon		
Cllr. Nick Brown		
Cllr. Cheryl Cashmore		
Cllr. Nick Chapman		
Cllr. Adrian Clifford		
Cllr. Luke Cousin		
Cllr. Tony Deakin		
Cllr. Roy Denney		
Cllr. Alex DeWinter		
Cllr. Susan Findlay		
Cllr. Janet Forey		
Cllr. Helen Gambardella		
Cllr. Hannah Gill		

Cllr. Nigel Grundy		
Cllr. Paul Hartshorn		
Cllr. Richard Holdridge		
Cllr. Mark Jackson		
Cllr. Rebecca Lunn		
Cllr. Anthony Moseley		
Cllr. Les Phillimore		
Cllr. Terry Richardson		
Cllr. Ande Savage		
Cllr. Tracey Shepherd		
Cllr. Dillan Shikotra		
Cllr. Mike Shirley		
Cllr. Roger Stead		
Cllr. Ben Taylor		
Cllr. Matt Tomeo		
Cllr. Bob Waterton		
Cllr. Bev Welsh		
Cllr. Jane Wolfe		
Cllr. Neil Wright		
Cllr. Maggie Wright		

DECISIONS

1. The Council Tax Requirement for 2024/25 be set at £6,526,402.
2. The District Council Band D Council Tax is set at £189.14, reflecting an increase of 2.99% (£5.49), all other bands being determined in accordance with the relevant Sections of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended.
3. The precepts and Band D Council Tax for Leicestershire County Council*, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC), the Combined Fire Authority, and the various Parish Councils within the District, be determined as set out in the following report, with all other bands being determined in accordance with the relevant Sections of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended.

Reason:

The Council is statutorily required to determine its own Council Tax Requirement and to determine the Council Tax for the 2024/25 financial year, after considering precepts set by the other preceptors.

THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 7.09 P.M.