

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

TUESDAY, 16 NOVEMBER 2021

ADDITIONAL PAPERS

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Agenda Item 3 - Questions for the Police and Crime Commissioner

Question Submitted By	Questions in order they were received
Elliott Allman Snibston North	<p>(1) I have a family member who is a police officer. He often works 14 hours a day with compulsory overtime. With a young family to also look after. It is my view that this sort of management of time will drive out well-experienced and highly skilled police officers. What are we doing to make sure we keep our finest officers in work, working what we would call acceptable hours and conditions?</p> <p>(2) Internet and social media hate crime is on the rise, something that we are all becoming more aware of. I am sad to see though that police officers are being assigned to cases of petty name calling on social media for children. Whilst this is very sad and something that should not be condoned, surely this is the job of the parents? Who prioritises these cases?</p>
John Clarke Ibstock West	<p>(3) Speeding traffic is a major concern of the residents of NWL. Why do the police not listen to us and put camera vans and police with hand held radar guns in areas of concern to us. The vans always are in the usual areas. Yet we have recorded speeds of 80+ mph in a forty limit. Every Sunday and Thursday evening we are subject to motorcycles using Ibstock and Heather as a racetrack. We complain but nothing is done. If we contact the police following a burglary we are given a number for insurance purposes but never see an officer. The public find it difficult to respect the police because they are hardly ever seen. What can you do to reverse the public support for the force and our faith in the police?</p>
Councillor Robert Ashman Oakthorpe & Donisthorpe	<p>(4) I would like to ask whether you would reconsider allowing the speed limits within village boundaries to be reduced to 30. Speeding is the biggest issue raised by local residents and one of the main issues is the number of speed signs within villages. In some cases, there are 30 mph to 60mph to 30mph within half a mile. There is also confusion where there are 40 to 30 to 40 limits within villages. The proposal is that within the village boundaries and on some feeder roads, we can reduce the speed limit to 30 across the whole village.</p>
Councillor Russell Johnson Hugglescote St John's	<p>(5) When will the police act on speeding vehicles through Hugglescote and Donington Le Heath? The Parish Council of which I am Chairman are concerned at the lack of a beat bobby in our community as well as attending our monthly Council meetings. This lack of visibility is not good enough for tax payers.</p>
Councillor Ray Morris Worthington & Breedon	<p>(6) Following Brexit it is even more essential that we should support British manufacturing and employment as much as possible. I have observed that many of our police vehicles are of foreign manufacture. Are you able to favour or influence the purchase of British manufactured vehicles, where possible, of which there are excellent choices right across the range of requirements?</p>
Councillor Sean Sheahan Measham South	<p>(7) Measham Parish Council has also expressed concerns about a lack of police visibility in Forest Beat. Residents in North West Leicestershire want to see more police in their neighbourhood. Who can blame them – local people say you never see police on the beat any more. They feel unsafe going out after dark. This is the price of years of central government</p>

	cuts to neighbourhood policing. Your predecessor increased police numbers year on year and left you with a sustainable plan to restore police numbers to 2010 levels. Have you abandoned this plan?
Councillor David Everitt Thringstone	(8) During my life I have known many police officers. They were all fine, caring people with a strong sense of duty and fairness. However, there has always been a small group of racist, homophobic, sexist bullies who have only contempt for sections of the public, as is repeatedly revealed in the shocking cases that appear from time to time in the media. What can be done to remove these dinosaurs?
Councillor Michael Hay Castle Donington Park	(9) There is barely a mention of Equality and Diversity in your draft Police and Crime Plan despite this being a statutory obligation under the 2010 Equalities Act. Where do you stand on this important issue?
Councillor Carol Sewell Daleacre Hill	(10) According to a recent report by HM Inspector of Constabulary, three-quarters of all domestic abuse cases, including sexual assaults, are closed early without the suspect being charged, and just 1.6% of rape allegations in England and Wales result in someone being charged, something the government has said it is 'deeply ashamed' about. What is your view on this and how will the police respond?
Councillor Dave Bigby Ashby Willesley	(11) Despite having been in office less than a year, Mr Matthews has dispensed with the three most senior civil servants in the OPCC team. Why did he do this and what was the cost to the local taxpayer, severance, redundancy, ex-gratia payments, additional recruitment costs etc?
Councillor John Legrys Coalville West	(12) You are on the record as stating, 'I will ask the Chief Constable to move towards making Rutland a Local Policing Unit (LPU) in its own right, with personnel, resources and facilities set at an appropriate level and provided by Leicestershire Police to meet the needs of Rutlanders in cooperation with Leicestershire Police.' Why Rutland? Your enthusiasm for diverting precious police resources from the City of Leicester is quite clear, but why focus on an obscure corner of the shire with a population that is barely larger than Coalville?
Councillor Dr Terri Eynon Hugglescote St Mary's	(13) Richard Lewis, chief constable of Cleveland police, has concluded that it is time to end the so-called 'war on drugs', believing that framing the crisis as a criminal justice problem has not simply been unhelpful, but counterproductive. The production, sale and use of recreational psychoactive substances has become almost normalised in this area and this unregulated economic activity is having an adverse effect on our communities. How does the Police and Crime Commissioner frame the problem of non-medical drug-use and drug-addiction and how would he solve the problem in North West Leicestershire?
Councillor John Geary Snibston South	(14) What are your plans for supporting the Safer North West Leicestershire Partnership?

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QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR J LEGRYS TO COUNCILLOR A WOODMAN

“Foul water discharges into watercourses during storms

I have been contacted by residents who are concerned about foul water being discharged by Severn Trent Water during storms into their local watercourse.

Can the Portfolio Holder please inform me:

1. of the location of each discharge foul water point throughout North West Leicestershire
2. of the water quality results in our watercourses, as measured by this Council's Environmental Health Team, particularly during storms
3. if the regular discharge of untreated foul water is affecting the Environmental Protection Orders for the Mease Catchment Zone
4. of the measures being put in place, as part of the Local Plan Review, to stop fouled storm water entering watercourses.”

REPONSE FROM COUNCILLOR A WOODMAN TO COUNCILLOR J LEGRYS

“I fully understand residents' concerns about the watercourses in the district and potential foul water discharges, but the council has no role in such matters. Any discharge into a water course or pollution of a water course is the responsibility of the Environment Agency to investigate. Residents need to report a pollution incident directly to the Environment Agency by calling 0800 80 70 60.

I can confirm that the issue of stopping foul storm water entering watercourses from new development will be addressed as far as possible by the inclusion of policy as part of the local plan review.”

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QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR T EYNON TO COUNCILLOR K MERRIE

“Retrospective Planning Applications – Coalville Town Centre Car Parks

Can the Portfolio Holder inform me why it has taken over a year to force the private landowner and third-party operator to apply for Planning Permission for equipment erected without authorisation?”

REPONSE FROM COUNCILLOR K MERRIE TO COUNCILLOR T EYNON

“The Councils Planning Officers were made aware that ticket machines and cameras had been erected in the Belvoir Centre car park at the end of June this year. Officers determined that planning permission was required to retain the ticket machines and cameras and the owner of the site was asked to submit a retrospective planning application to regularise the development straight away.

The applicants planning consultant required time to prepare all the necessary information to support the retrospective application which was submitted in the middle of October. The application has been subject to consultation with the public and all comments received will be carefully considered before any decision is made.”

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QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR A BLACK TO COUNCILLOR A WOODMAN

“Part of my election pledge was to tackle the growing concerns over pollution levels within my ward of Bardon. Can the Portfolio Holder please give an update on the progress of installing equipment and monitoring air pollution in key areas within the district, in particular along Bardon Road. Also, can he make available any measurements and data collected from said monitors so the findings can be reviewed by the relevant Scrutiny Committee. This is particularly in focus now as residential and commercial developments continue at an exponential rate and we need to be showing the public that their council is taking responsible actions to prioritise the health of the residents.”

RESPONSE FROM COUNCILLOR A WOODMAN TO COUNCILLOR A BLACK

“The Environmental Protection Team has taken delivery of two zephyrs for monitoring air quality in Coalville as agreed at the Cabinet in June this year. These are currently being commissioned and one has been installed on Bardon Road on Tuesday 9 November. Officers are still finalising a suitable location for the second monitor but aim to have it installed by the end of the calendar year. Once installed they will be in situ for a full 12 months. The data from this year of monitoring will then be analysed and a single report compiled. This report will be presented to a Scrutiny meeting for comments in advance of Cabinet’s consideration thereafter.”

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QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR D BIGBY TO COUNCILLOR K MERRIE

“In a supplementary Portfolio holder question on Ashby’s derelict Royal Hotel on 17th November 2020, I asked, “Given the failure to date of the owners to progress their plans to refurbish the Royal Hotel and their apparent reluctance to even carry out the bare minimum works needed to avoid an Urgent Works Notice, is it not time that this council considers starting the process of moving towards a CPO?”

Cllr Ashman’s reply included the statement, “At the current time and in view of the approach being taken, officers are not of the view that the need for permanent repair has accumulated to the point where there is potential for serious harm. If the situation persists once the planning application has been determined or during regular monitoring of the building’s condition, the Council still have the ability to pursue a repairs notice and potentially a CPO if this was the appropriate route to follow at that time”.

Twelve months later - there has still been no update to the outstanding 2019 planning application, members have not received any of the promised monthly inspection reports since the one dated 28th July, and English Heritage have found it necessary to place the Royal Hotel on its At Risk Register, describing its condition as “poor”, only one category above the worst “very bad”, with the comment “Slow decay; no solution agreed”.

Could the portfolio holder please provide an update on the planning department’s progress on negotiations with the owners of the Royal Hotel, the date and outcome of the latest condition survey (previously promised monthly), and comment on whether he believes that the Compulsory Purchase Order route may now be appropriate?”

REPONSE FROM COUNCILLOR K MERRIE TO COUNCILLOR D BIGBY

“I can confirm that progress is being made on the continuing discussions and negotiations with the owners of the hotel and we are close to receiving a revised package of information relating to the proposed enabling development works connected with the planning application. The package of information will also include amended designs for the proposed buildings either side of the hotel and will be subject to formal re-consultation in the near future.

I’m sure members may appreciate that that the issues around enabling development are both complex and time consuming and officers continue to spend a considerable amount of time in progressing matters.

The last condition report was sent to the Ashby members on 31 August and not 28 July as Cllr Bigby has suggested in his question and I’m aware that officers have now re-sent Cllr Bigby a copy of this report. The hotel was visited again on 4 November and this was delayed slightly as the owner could not attend the originally agreed date in October. An updated condition report following the visit on 4 November will be circulated to members in due course.

Offices have advised that there is currently no need for a further urgent works notice to be served, and while the planning application continues to progress, the Compulsory Purchase Notice route is not appropriate at this stage, but would not be ruled out if necessary as the previous Portfolio Holder advised last year.”

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MOTIONS

2) Motion received from Councillor S Sheahan

Following the publication of the agenda, a couple of minor errors were identified in the wording for the motion. The amended wording is detailed below.

“This Council

- Recognises the continuing impact of the cost of living crisis on the residents of our district.
- Through data gathering, case studies and liaison with partner agencies, undertakes to highlight the difficulties many of the least well-off are facing due to increases in food and fuel prices, benefit cuts and planned tax rises. (Inflation is forecast to average 4% next year, fuel prices are expected to increase by a further 30% in April on the back of a substantial rise in October, National Insurance will go up by 1.5 percentage points in April and the 50% of Universal Credit claimants who are unemployed or cannot work will not benefit from the reduction in the taper.)
- Pledges to carry out a review of its own services eg fees and charges, support for debt and benefits advice, to mitigate the impact wherever possible.
- Commits to lobby Government to do more to help those in the greatest need.”

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COUNCIL – 16 NOVEMBER 2021**Agenda Item 12 - Special Expenses Briefing Note**

Item 12 on the agenda is for the approval of the special expenses policy. At present there is no formal policy in place, and this has led to confusion on what items of expenditure can be legally funded from special expenses (i.e air pollution monitoring and equipment).

Under Section 35 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 expenditure can only be treated as a special expenses if the Council has made resolutions to that effect. In the past this has been completed as part of the annual budget setting process, however, to allow changes in the year without going back to Council for approval a policy has been developed.

The policy is the governance behind what types of expenditure can be classed as a special expense. It does not change our current position just makes it clearer for everyone to understand which will aid officers and members when decision making.

The policy covers all existing special expenses areas in the district:

- Appleby Magna
- Coalville
- Coleorton
- Hugglescote and Donington-le-Heath
- Lockington cum Hemington
- Measham
- Oakthorpe, Donisthorpe & Acresford
- Ravenstone
- Stretton-en-le-Field
- Whitwick

The policy has been considered at the following meetings:-

Meeting	Date	Purpose
Coalville Special Expenses Working Party	15 June 2021	Considered the policy and made a recommendation to Cabinet for its meeting on 21 September
Corporate Scrutiny	1 September 2021	Provided comments to Cabinet for its meeting on 21 September
Cabinet	21 September 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considered the comments from Scrutiny • Made a recommendation to Council for its meeting on 16 November 2021
Council	16 November 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the views of Cabinet • Consider the report and whether to agree the Policy

This agenda item does not approve the special expenses budget or precept. This will be done as usual through the budget setting process as set out below.

For Coalville Special Expenses only an expenditure sub group has been established to review the income and expenditure for the Coalville Special Expenses. The sub group have arrived at a view on a precept increase and this will be presented along with the draft budget for consideration and/or comment to Coalville Special Expenses Working Party on 14 December. These views will be fed into Cabinet at its meeting on 11 January 2022 who will recommend to Council for approval on 24 February 2022.

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