

**MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**  
**TUESDAY, 10 SEPTEMBER 2024**

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## **COUNCIL – TUESDAY, 10 SEPTEMBER 2024**

### **QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

#### **QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR N SMITH TO COUNCILLOR K MERRIE**

“I am disappointed that the recent decisions made by the Labour Government as stated by Deputy Prime Minister to amend the NPPF will increasing house building figures across NWL.

Our Local Plan review house building figures have gone from a starting point of 357 houses per year to 621 per year as discussed at the last local plan committee. This does not take in to account any extra houses from the Labour Leicester City Council’s unmet needs which the Council may need to provide for.

We could also potentially see an increase in solar panel farms and wind turbine numbers across NWL and this is not what the residents want.

This change in the NPPF appears to be punishing those Councils who have met their previous Local Plan requirements whilst rewarding those who have failed.

Can I ask what actions the portfolio holder and the council intend to take.”

#### **REPOSENSE FROM COUNCILLOR K MERRIE TO COUNCILLOR N SMITH**

“Members will be aware that the matter raised by Cllr Smith was fully debated at Local Plan Committee on 14<sup>th</sup> August last month. At the meeting, a number of members expressed concern about the potential increase in the numbers of houses that this Council would have to provide for per year under the government’s new standard method.

At the meeting, the officer report advised to continue to plan for now for 686 dwellings each year, and a minimum of 13,720 dwellings over the plan period of 2020-2040 as set out in the Statement of Common Ground for the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area agreed in June 2022, but that the matter would be kept under review.

However, Members also resolved that North West Leicestershire District Council condemns the government’s decision to increase the allocation of housing and request the Member of Parliament to make urgent representation to the housing minister expressing our grave concerns. As such, a letter on behalf of the committee, has now been sent to the MPs representing North West Leicestershire residents requesting that they make representations to the government expressing their grave concerns about the significant impacts that this level of growth would have on our local communities.

I’m aware that the Chancellor announced that footnotes 57 and 58 to paragraph 163 of the existing NPPF, which placed additional tests on onshore wind schemes, including demonstrating proven community support, would no longer apply to decisions. The government is of the view that in effect, this created a very high bar for consent to be granted and led to very significant under-delivery of onshore wind schemes. This may result in some proposals in NWL which, if acceptable in planning terms, could help with the climate emergency. However, if the Council is faced with a number of new applications for renewable energy proposals, these will be dealt on their planning merits and the Planning Committee would still have the ability to refuse applications where proposals are not considered appropriate, for example where there might be an unacceptable visual impact or where residents amenity might be affected.”

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## **COUNCIL – TUESDAY, 10 SEPTEMBER 2024**

### **QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

#### **QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR R MORRIS TO COUNCILLOR K MERRIE**

“As many local people are, I am disappointed that the Labour Government as announced by the Chancellor has scrapped the” Restoring Your Railway Programme” which has effectively brought to a halt the restoration of the Ivanhoe Line after many years of hard work by all stakeholders.

The reopening of the Ivanhoe line would have provided a valuable commuting route especially given that this Council may have to provide for some of the unmet housing need from the Labour council in Leicester.

Can I please ask what the Portfolio holder is doing to address this situation?”

#### **REPOSENSE FROM COUNCILLOR K MERRIE TO COUNCILLOR R MORRIS**

“In July, Councillor Richard Blunt said in a press release to the Coalville Times that he was very disappointed to learn of the Chancellor’s decision to cancel the Restoring Your Railway Programme, particularly as North West Leicestershire District Council has been supportive of the huge amount of work done by partners, including the Campaign to Reopen the Ivanhoe Line (CRIL), Network Rail and other local councils, to reinstate this historically significant branch line.

I fully endorse those comments and as this is a major setback for this long-awaited project, I will be writing to the new MP to ask her to lobby Government to review its position. I will also ask for her support for the reopening of Ivanhoe Line as an individual Restoring Your Railway project when the Transport Secretary undertakes her transport infrastructure review in the autumn to identify any projects where the benefits may justify replacement funding being made available.

As we all know, reopening the Ivanhoe line would be hugely beneficial for local residents, making it easier to travel across the district for work or leisure, and increasing investment from tourism in the area.”

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**COUNCIL – TUESDAY, 10 SEPTEMBER 2024**

**QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

**QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR R JOHNSON TO COUNCILLOR K MERRIE**

“Could the Portfolio Holder please update Council on what engagement this Council’s representative, Cllr Lee Windram, has had with the volunteers of Coalville Town Football Club since its reforming of the club?”

**REPONSE FROM COUNCILLOR K MERRIE TO COUNCILLOR R JOHNSON**

“The appointment of a Council member to support community bodies is one that is requested by the community body. Following the change of chairmanship at Coalville Town FC, the club requested that the meetings with the member be suspended until the season started. Now the season has started and changes have been embedded within the club, officers will contact them to enquire as to whether they wish to resurrect the member liaison role and meetings”

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**COUNCIL – TUESDAY, 10 SEPTEMBER 2024**

**QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

**QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR J LEGRYS TO COUNCILLOR A WOODMAN**

“Which community groups are currently hosted at the Moira Replan building and what social return on investment do they bring to the Ashby Woulds area?”

**RESPONSE FROM COUNCILLOR A WOODMAN TO COUNCILLOR J LEGRYS**

“17 Ashby Road Moira has been occupied by Moira Replan Charity since 1992 with the Charity being a commercial tenant of the Council. Under the terms of the lease the Charity may use the building for purposes which further the aims and objectives of Moira Replan Charity (as set out in their constitution). Throughout their occupation the range of uses hosted by Moira Replan Charity at the premises has varied. NWLDC, as landlord, has no information on the social value of these uses.”

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**COUNCIL – TUESDAY, 10 SEPTEMBER 2024**

**QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

**QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR E PARLE TO COUNCILLOR A WOODMAN**

“How much did it cost to bring the EPC rating of the Moira Replan building up from a G to an F and which organisations funded these improvements?”

**RESPONSE FROM COUNCILLOR A WOODMAN TO COUNCILLOR E PARLE**

“The alterations to 17 Ashby Road Moira (Moira Replan building) which we understand have improved the EPC rating from a G to an F were undertaken and paid for by Moira Replan Charity who have not shared the cost and funding information with the Council, as landlord.”

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## **COUNCIL – TUESDAY, 10 SEPTEMBER 2024**

### **QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

#### **QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR T EYNON TO COUNCILLOR A WOODMAN**

“Would the cost of bringing the Moira Replan building up to a lettable standard pass the government’s 7-Year Payback test and, if so, what are the barriers and enabler to funding such improvements?”

#### **REPONSE FROM COUNCILLOR A WOODMAN TO COUNCILLOR T EYNON**

“Energy consumption at the property and the associated cost is determined by the tenant through the way in which they use the building and the energy supply contracts they enter into. Because of this it is not possible for the landlord to determine whether improvements within the building will meet the Government’s 7 year test.

What is clear however is that future changes to the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (to achieve a rating of B by 2030) will prove challenging to achieve at this property. As landlord we have engaged with Moira Replan Charity to begin to explore the short and long term impacts of changing Energy Efficiency legislation.”

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**COUNCIL – TUESDAY, 10 SEPTEMBER 2024**

**QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

**QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR D COOPER TO COUNCILLOR A WOODMAN**

“Which Committee made the decision to serve Moira Replan with a Section 25 notice?”

**RESPONSE FROM COUNCILLOR A WOODMAN TO COUNCILLOR D COOPER**

“Under the Constitution officers have the delegated authority to serve statutory notices. I was briefed about the matter, prior to the notice being served.”

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**COUNCIL – TUESDAY, 10 SEPTEMBER 2024**

**QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

**QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR C BECK TO COUNCILLOR A WOODMAN**

“What are the barriers and enablers to Moira Replan taking up a grant to install EV charging in its car park?”

**RESPONSE FROM COUNCILLOR A WOODMAN TO COUNCILLOR C BECK**

“The installation of EV charging at 17 Ashby Road Moira would require submission of details of the EV proposal for landlord’s approval which may include:

That the connection of a considerable additional electrical load to the wiring network within the property did not present any risks of overloading.

That the location of EV charging points did not present any additional fire risk to the property.  
That the installation of EV chargers did not lead to our insurers declining to cover the building or increasing the premium.”

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## **COUNCIL – TUESDAY, 10 SEPTEMBER 2024**

### **QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

#### **QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR A MORLEY TO COUNCILLOR K MERRIE**

“Equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) in the workplace is not a new concept. Indeed, it is now a given that EDI is integral to the ethos of all organisations and authorities, in an aim to ensure that those in control of decision making, are representative of the communities which they serve.

At corporate scrutiny on 29<sup>th</sup> August 2024, a report was considered which presented an EDI policy review document, the action plan which accompanied this policy evidenced how the policy would be delivered. It was recognised in this document that the current NWLDC workforce is representative of the local district population, and it also recognised the importance of the wider regional profiles being more representative by 2028.

My question relates to why the alliance member leaders of NWLDC seem to be exempt from this goal and expectation. Surely the leaders should have the aspiration to be representative of the local district population as a formal objective.

I must note objectively that all current members of the alliance administration: and specifically, the senior roles of Chair, Deputy Chair, Leader of the Council and six other cabinet members are all white male. I feel that this falls woefully short of being inclusive of the local district population and the communities we collectively serve.

I therefore ask the Portfolio Holder, in light of the current all- white Leadership of the Council, whether it is intended to introduce any new EDI targets to ensure the leadership strives to be more representative of the NWLDC community, and indeed workforce, now or in the future?”

#### **REPONSE FROM COUNCILLOR K MERRIE TO COUNCILLOR A MORLEY**

“I thank Councillor Morley for her question. The Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy is scheduled to go to Cabinet for decision later this month. If agreed the policy will apply to this Council’s services and workforce. I cannot speak for all members, but I would hope there would be cross party support for this updated policy and action plan which is absolutely the right way forward.

The arrangements for the selection of councillors are not part of the Council’s EDI policy and action plan.

Each political party has its own rules and processes for selecting individuals to run for election on to the Council.

We have also seen choices by community-minded individuals to stand as independent Councillors and this also has an influence on the demographics and make up of this chamber.

There have been efforts across political parties at all levels to make politics more representative of the communities we serve.

There is no doubt that more needs to be done by all to seek to encourage wider participation in our Council chambers across the whole of the local government sector. This is not a unique situation for this Council.

At local level, we have (or the Conservative Group) adopted a collaborative approach in building an alliance with our Liberal Democrat and independent members and this has helped to improve the representation of the different views of our communities. My party will continue to seek to further improve representation through its selection processes in the future wherever possible at a local level.

Other parties may wish to consider their own selection arrangements for candidates.

In terms of the current Cabinet, The Constitution says that The Leader shall appoint a Deputy Leader, who shall be a Cabinet Member and deputise for the Leader and carry out the functions delegated to the Leader in periods of their incapacity or absence and, Cabinet Members to cover one of the specific portfolio responsibilities (other than those reserved to the Leader). The Cabinet comprises the Leader and at least two but no more than nine other Councillors, one of whom must be the Deputy Leader. The Leader considers their executive arrangements each year following their appointment, and these are announced to Council. The current Leader has decided that the Executive responsibilities will be exercised collectively by Cabinet and has chosen his portfolio areas and Cabinet members from the Alliance based on areas of expertise, interest, and availability for the role.

## COUNCIL – TUESDAY, 10 SEPTEMBER 2024

### QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

#### QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR R SUTTON TO COUNCILLOR N RUSHTON

“Ahead of budget setting, could the Portfolio Holder please supply figures for the years 2019 to 2024 to illustrate the income dependency of this Council on Business Rates and New Homes Bonus as compared to Council Tax, outlining against each income stream the main risks and opportunities of this dependency for the District budget as a new government approaches the matter of Local Government Funding policy and the 2025-26 Settlement?”

#### REPOSENSE FROM COUNCILLOR N RUSHTON TO COUNCILLOR R SUTTON

“The table presented below outlines the specifics of the Council's primary funding allocations spanning the financial years 2019/20 through to 2024/25. Additionally, the potential risks linked to these sources of funding are duly noted in the subsequent paragraphs. Changes in the finance settlement often include adjustments to the core spending power of local authorities, which is a measure of the resources available to them for service delivery.

Additionally, the settlement encompasses various grants and revenue streams, such as the New Homes Bonus, which can influence individual funding allocations.

	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2019/20</b>
	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>
<b>New Homes Bonus</b>	0.918	1.220	2.218	2.452	3.411	3.068
<b>Council Tax</b>	6.052	5.796	5.795	5.426	5.550	5.430
<b>Business Rates</b>	8.620	8.716	8.625	7.611	6.882	6.387
<b>Revenue Support Grant</b>	0.096	0.090	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
<b>Other Grants</b>	1.724	1.265	0.367	0.550	0.000	0.000
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>17.410</b>	<b>17.087</b>	<b>17.005</b>	<b>16.039</b>	<b>15.843</b>	<b>14.885</b>

#### Council Tax Income Risks

- **Economic Downturns:** Economic downturns can lead to higher unemployment and reduced household incomes, making it harder for residents to pay their council tax. This can result in lower collection rates and reduced income for local authorities.
- **Revaluation Risks:** If the Government implements a property value-based tax, fluctuations in property values could lead to unpredictable council tax revenues. Areas with declining property values might see a reduction in income, while those with rising values could face increased resistance from taxpayers.
- **Population Changes:** Changes in population size and composition can affect council tax income. An aging population might lead to more households qualifying for discounts or exemptions, reducing overall revenue.

- Reform Uncertainty: Potential reforms to council tax could create uncertainty. If reforms are not well-received or are delayed, it could lead to instability in revenue projections and planning.

There are also risks associated with referendum limits on council tax increases which is significant. These limits can constrain local authorities' ability to generate additional revenue needed to fund services, especially in the face of rising costs and increased demand. The imposition of referendum thresholds can lead to a situation where local authorities are unable to adequately respond to financial pressures without the consent of a local referendum, which can be a time-consuming and uncertain process. The Local Government Association has argued for the abolition of the council tax referendum limit, suggesting that local communities should have the autonomy to decide on the funding of their services, with democratic accountability ensured through local elections.

### Business Rates Income Risks

- Business Closures: Economic instability can lead to business closures or relocations, reducing the business rates income for local authorities.
- Rate Appeals: Businesses can appeal their rateable values, and successful appeals can lead to significant refunds and reduced future income. This creates financial uncertainty for councils.
- Reliefs and Exemptions: Policies providing reliefs or exemptions to certain businesses can reduce the overall business rates income.
- Reform of Business Rates: The Government has discussed replacing business rates with a different form of taxation. This transition period could create uncertainty and potential revenue shortfalls as new systems are implemented.
- Business Rates Reset: The reset involves reassessing the value of commercial properties to reflect current market conditions. A reset can lead to significant changes in the amount of revenue a local authority receives from business rates. Local authorities often rely on predictable revenue streams for long-term planning and investment. The reset may involve redistributing business rates income between local authorities. This can lead to some authorities losing out on revenue they previously depended on, while others may gain. The Council has reflected the impact of a business rates reset in its Medium-Term Financial Plan.
- East Midlands Freeport: Freeports offer significant business rates relief to attract businesses. This means that local authorities may see a reduction in business rates income from properties with the freeport area. Businesses might relocate to the freeport to benefit from the tax reliefs, leading to a loss of business rates income from other areas with the local authority's area.

### New Homes Bonus Risks

The New Homes Bonus (NHB) scheme, while designed to incentivise housing growth, presents several key risks to local authorities:

- Financial Uncertainty: The NHB is not a guaranteed source of income, and its future beyond annual allocations is often uncertain. This makes long-term financial planning challenging for local authorities. The New Homes Bonus (NHB) scheme has undergone several changes since its inception, including
  - **Reduction in Payment Period:** Initially, the NHB payments were made for six years. This was reduced to four years from 2017/18.

- **Introduction of a Threshold:** A baseline threshold for housing growth was introduced, below which the NHB would not be paid. This change aimed to ensure that only significant housing growth would be rewarded.
- **Consultations for Further Reforms:** In 2021, the government launched a consultation to explore further reforms to the NHB. The proposals included options such as raising the baseline percentage, rewarding improvement on average past housing growth, and introducing a premium for modern methods of construction.
- **Final Allocations for 2023-2024:** The most recent allocations for the NHB were published for the 2024-2025 financial year. These allocations continue to reflect and incentivise housing growth, with additional payments for affordable homes.

These changes reflect ongoing efforts to refine the NHB scheme to better target housing growth and support local infrastructure needs.

- **Inequitable Distribution:** The NHB tends to favour areas with higher housing growth, such as NWL, potentially disadvantaging regions that cannot support large-scale development due to geographical or economic constraints.
- **Infrastructure Funding Gaps:** While the NHB rewards housing growth, it does not necessarily provide sufficient funds for the infrastructure required to support new developments. This can lead to inadequate infrastructure and increased pressure on existing facilities.

Maintaining financial sustainability is crucial for the Council, as it ensures that the Council can continue to provide essential services to the community without compromising its financial health over the long term. The Council has taken significant steps to support this goal. The Council raised Council Tax in 2024/25 as part of a broader strategy to establish a more resilient financial framework, acknowledging that a modest rise in council tax can contribute substantially to the Council's revenue, thereby reducing the dependency on unpredictable sources like business rates growth.

The shift from relying on business rates growth to support the revenue budget to using the business rates reserve to fund the capital programme represents a strategic reallocation of resources. This move is designed to finance long-term investments in infrastructure and services that can stimulate economic growth and community development. By assuming council tax increases over the medium term, the Council is taking a proactive approach to manage financial risks and ensure a steady stream of income.

The Council's recent actions, including the council tax increase, reflect a commitment to financial prudence and sustainability. These measures are essential in an environment where local authorities face financial uncertainties and pressures. By carefully planning and implementing these financial strategies, the Council is working to secure its financial future and continue serving its residents effectively.

Historically, changes to the local government finance funding regime have always resulted in winners and losers. This is because the allocation of funding is inherently tied to assessments of need and the capacity to raise revenue, which vary significantly across different councils. As such, when the funding formulas are updated, some councils may receive more funding while others may receive less. The challenge is to balance the need for efficiency with the stability of funding for local authorities, ensuring that those facing reductions in funding can manage the transition without severe disruption to services. The new Government has promised a multi-year funding settlement for local government which is crucial for local authorities as it provides them with the financial stability and

predictability necessary to plan and deliver services effectively. With a clear understanding of their budget for the coming years, local authorities can make strategic decisions, commit to long-term projects, and allocate resources in a manner that maximises efficiency and impact.

Moreover, multi-year settlements can help local authorities to leverage funds more effectively, entering into contracts and partnerships with confidence, and potentially securing more favourable terms. It also enables them to plan for the sustainable development of infrastructure and community projects that require consistent investment over time.”



## **COUNCIL – 10 SEPTEMBER 2024**

### **ITEM 12 – APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES**

#### **1.0 NOMINATIONS**

- 1.1 Following the publication of the report a nomination was received from Councillor R Johnson to take the seat on the committee. No further nominations were received.
- 1.2 As only one nomination has been received an amended recommendation is set out below.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

**THAT COUNCILLOR R JOHNSON BE APPOINTED TO THE FILL THE VACANT SEAT ON THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE 2024/25 CIVIC YEAR**

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## Council Procedure Rules – Motions and Amendments

### What members can do

- When seconding a motion, a member may reserve their speech until later in the debate (rule 15.3).
- Members may only speak once on a motion or amendment whilst it is being debated (rule 15.5, 15.5.1).
- Members may also move a further amendment if the motion has been amended since they last spoke (rule 15.5.2).
- Members can exercise a right of reply, raise a point of order or make a personal explanation during debate (rule 15.5.4, 15.5.5 and 15.5.6).
- Members can speak on the main issues if their first speech was on an amendment (rule 15.5.3).
- The mover of a motion has a right of reply at the close of debate on the motion, before it is put to the vote (rule 15.15).
- The mover of a motion has a right of reply at the close of debate on any amendment (rule 15.16).

### What members can't do

- Members cannot make a speech until a motion has been seconded (rule 15.1).
- Members cannot speak again whilst a motion is being debated, except to exercise a right of reply, raise a point of order or make a personal explanation (rule 15.5).
- Members cannot speak for more than 5 minutes without the consent of the Chairman (rule 15.4).
- The mover of a motion may not speak on an amendment, other than to exercise his right of reply (rule 15.16).
- The mover of an amendment has no right of reply at the close of debate (rule 15.17).

## Motions and Amendments – Flowchart

