

MINUTES of a meeting of the COUNCIL held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Coalville on TUESDAY, 24 FEBRUARY 2015

Present: Councillor J Bridges (Deputy Chairman) (in the Chair)

Councillors R D Bayliss, R Blunt, A Bridges, N Clarke, P Clayfield, J Cotterill, D De Lacy, D Everitt, J Geary, T Gillard, J Houlton, P Hyde, R Johnson, G Jones, C Large, J Legrys, L Massey, C Meynell, T Neilson, T J Pendleton, V Richichi, J Ruff, N J Rushton, A C Saffell, S Sheahan, N Smith, A V Smith MBE, M Specht, L Spence, D J Stevenson, R Woodward and M B Wyatt

Officers: Mr S Bambrick, Mr R Bowmer, Ms C E Fisher, Mr G Jones, Mr C Lambert, Mrs M Meredith, Mr J Newton, Mr P Padaniya, Mrs M Phillips, Mr J Richardson and Miss E Warhurst

50. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R Adams, G A Allman, J G Coxon, R Holland and D Howe.

The Deputy Chairman advised that he had been in contact with Councillor G A Allman and he was due to be released from hospital imminently. On behalf of all members he extended best wishes and support to Councillors R Adams, D Howe and their families. He wished them a speedy return to health.

51. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Councillor S Sheahan declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 9 – Budget and Council Tax 2015/16, as a member of Leicestershire County Council.

Councillor J Legrys declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 9 – Budget and Council Tax 2015/16, as a volunteer at Hermitage FM.

Councillor M B Wyatt declared a non-pecuniary interest in any items relating to Coalville in item 9 – Budget and Council Tax 2015/16, as an owner of a local business.

Councillor T Neilson declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 9 – Budget and Council Tax 2015/16, as a secretary of DE12 SK8, being one of the groups which had received funding from the £20,000 for seven initiative.

52. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Deputy Chairman reminded members of the civic charity dinner taking place at Yew Lodge, Kegworth on Thursday, 23 April 2015. He added that the event would be very worthwhile and entertaining, and would raise a good amount of money for the Chairman's charities. He urged all members to attend.

The Deputy Chairman referred to the 'get well soon' cards that had been circulated prior to the meeting for Councillors R Adams, G A Allman and D Howe. He invited any members who wished to sign the cards to do so following the meeting.

53. LEADER'S AND PORTFOLIO HOLDERS' ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor R Blunt echoed the best wishes to members as conveyed by the Deputy Chairman.

Councillor R Blunt referred to the Pick and Shovel application, for which permission had been granted in January, and development would commence at the end of March. He

Chairman's initials

commented that the Council had provided additional funding to ensure the development went ahead. He added that this would remove an eyesore, improve a gateway site in the town centre, and would provide 14 new good quality homes.

Councillor R Blunt highlighted the shop fronts scheme, whereby the Council would be investing in improving the shop fronts on Hotel Street. He added that this was just the first phase, and would be a shop by shop, street by street way of improving Coalville. He stated that the scheme would be rolled out further in Coalville and other town centres going forward.

Councillor R Blunt announced that Ruth Mulvany and Jacqui Sykes were shortlisted at the Keep Britain Tidy awards and were highly commended for their work. He highlighted that Friends of Thringstone had won an award and he congratulated all involved.

Councillor R Blunt referred to the £20,000 for seven scheme which had provided funding for 17 community projects; 7 of which had received £20,000 and a further 10 had received £10,000. In particular he highlighted the project for a skate park submitted by Measham Parish Council, which had received £20,000 funding and had now been ordered; and the new pavilion at Castle Donington which was scheduled to be completed in April. He added that all schemes would have a big impact.

Councillor R D Bayliss highlighted two recently approved housing policies which would have very positive implications for the district. In November, Cabinet approved the Council's Tenancy Policy to continue to offer two types of tenancy – a 12 month introductory tenancy for new tenants, followed by a lifetime secure tenancy. He stated that the Localism Act had provided the opportunity to consider offering fixed term tenancies, and this was a matter of balance and not a straightforward decision. However he had decided to recommend to Cabinet to continue with the principle of lifetime secure tenancies as it was his view that a transient population should be avoided and tenants should not be treated as commodities. He added that by offering lifetimes tenancies, the Council was helping to foster stable communities.

Councillor R D Bayliss advised that earlier this month, the Council had also approved an Acquisitions Policy which would allow the Council to purchase assets, be it land or housing or other buildings. This policy would see the Council buying land or existing housing to bring into use as affordable housing. He drew attention to the fact that an additional £400,000 was proposed in next year's budget for the provision of affordable housing, meaning that the Council would be investing over £1.3 m next year towards increasing the supply of affordable housing in the District, which would allow people in housing need on the Housing Register to be rehoused into high quality homes.

Councillor R Woodward added his congratulations to Friends of Thringstone, especially Nita Pearson who chaired the group. He stated that the idea had originated from Councillor P Clayfield in 2005 and the group had gone from strength to strength since then, and was supported by the current ward members as well as himself and Councillor P Clayfield. He extended thanks to the group and to Nita Pearson for what they had done for the local community.

Councillor J Legrys thanked the Leader for his kind words about two of his colleagues. He stated that unfortunately this morning, social media had been rife with the news that Councillor D Howe had passed away. He assured members that he had spoken with Councillor D Howe and he was very much alive and was due to be released from hospital imminently. He also passed on best regards from Councillor R Adams.

Councillor J Legrys stated that Friends of Thringstone, in particular Nita Pearson, were out every day picking up many dozens of bags of litter. He added that it was unfair to blame

communities for litter when the likes of KFC and McDonalds made no efforts to clear up the messes they made.

As the ward member, Councillor J Legrys welcomed the Pick and Shovel initiative; however he stated that there would unfortunately be some difficulties with the construction phase. He asked that the Coalville and Snibston ward members be involved in discussions in detail with Leicestershire County Council about minimising disruption when the works commenced. He commented that the last thing he wanted to see was Memorial Square being turned into a works area.

Councillor J Ruff stated that any additional affordable housing was most welcome for the district as there had been a shortfall for many years. She commented that the SHMA stated that 35% of all development should be affordable housing, and to get this action was very good news. She also felt that it was better for tenants to have long term tenancies and felt the government was wrong to recommend a fixed term of 5 years as this was not good for tenants.

Councillor D De Lacy stated that he had had the privilege of attending the ceremony for the £20,000 for seven scheme and it had been a great experience. He added that Labour had always believed that some of the money from home building should go back to the community, and Steve Peace had been a great advocate of that. He congratulated the Leader for acknowledging that this spending had come from a planning windfall and was the result of an idea from the officer.

Councillor D De Lacy commented that the SHMA states that over a third of all housing should be affordable. He welcomed this policy but highlighted that there had been other policies which had reduced the level of affordable housing, and some developments had been permitted with 0% affordable housing. He requested a report to the Local Plan Advisory Committee on whether the Council was anywhere near the target figure for affordable housing, as he felt this would really inform decisions on the Local Plan.

Councillor D De Lacy stated that he was surprised by the announcement on the Pick and Shovel as he was not aware that the Leader had been involved in the initiative. He highlighted the recent comments on a Liberal Democrat leaflet on the scheme.

54. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

There were no questions received.

55. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

Councillor J Legrys put the following question to Councillor R Blunt:

“How many negative comments, formal complaints, threats of litigation and/or actual litigation have tenants made against this Council and/or its Contractors regarding housing since the commencement of the Decent Homes Contract?”

As the question related to the Housing portfolio, Councillor R Blunt invited Councillor R D Bayliss to respond on his behalf. Councillor R D Bayliss gave the following response:

“As at 31 January 2015 we had completed decent homes improvement works to 3,468 properties through our partnership with Kier and Lovell. The vast majority of this work has been both complex and disruptive and has been undertaken around tenants and their families within their homes. The programme has included replacing:

- kitchens to 2,011 homes;
- bathrooms to 1,520 homes;

Chairman's initials

- new heating systems to 988 homes;
- full electrical rewiring to 536 homes;
- new doors or windows to 3,117 homes;
- new roof to 415 homes.

Since September 2012 when the contracts commenced, 1,065 tenants have returned questionnaires upon the completion of work, with 97% indicating that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the service. Only 29 tenants indicated some form of dissatisfaction. During this period there have been 85 complaints, one housing ombudsman enquiry (for which a decision is still pending). To date £27m has been invested in improving the Council's stock and recompense of £2,156 has been paid to tenants for issues relating to the service".

As a supplementary question, Councillor J Legrys stated that he was aware of at least two people in his ward who he had been told were taking litigation against the Council and its contractor due to their dissatisfaction with the Decent Homes Improvement Programme. He thanked officers for providing these statistics, however he stated that he had not been given an answer and asked again how many people were taking litigation against the Council or its contractors.

Councillor R D Bayliss responded that he was unable to expand upon the answer which had already been given. He added that if Councillor J Legrys was convinced that there were two people who were taking litigation against the Council, he would make it his business to find out who they were and what the likely outcome was. He reiterated that as far as he was concerned, no one was taking litigation against the Council or its contractors.

Councillor J Geary put the following question to Councillor A V Smith:

"Three anaerobic material lagoons have been constructed on land belonging to Hall Farm at Piper Lane Ravenstone. These lagoons take waste from anaerobic treatment plants and other liquid organic waste which is then stored in the open lagoons until required for agricultural use. The County Council, as the Waste Disposal Authority have deemed that the lagoons are Agricultural Permitted Development and do not require Planning Permission. The Environment Agency has granted temporary waste storage licences for the site.

The lagoons now radiate strong smells and odours resulting in many complaints from residents in the current Snibston, Hugglescote, Ravenstone/Packington and Valley Wards.

As an affected resident, I ask what is this Council doing to insist that the owner of these lagoons takes steps to mitigate and eradicate the smell under its Environmental Health Controls".

Councillor A V Smith gave the following response:

"The Council is aware of the construction of the Ravenstone lagoons and following complaints of odour nuisance has been in regular liaison with the Environment Agency (EA).

The EA have agreed a permit for the land spreading of specified waste for agricultural benefit for specific fields in the local area. The permit allows for the import of specified waste and temporary storage of this waste in the lagoons prior to spreading at the appropriate times. This permit lasts for a year and expires on 10 September 2015.

The permit holder who undertakes the spreading of the waste has a generic odour management plan which mainly relates to minimising odours produced at the time of spreading.

However, as the storage of waste in the lagoons has started to prompt reports of odours in the local area, they have been asked by the EA to produce a site specific odour management plan.

The EA are the primary Authority for the site and as such all complaints are being reported to or re-directed by NWLDC to the EA and there is an incident hotline number for such complaints which is 0800 807060.

The District Council however does have powers under statutory nuisance and is currently logging all complaints received, compiling evidential reports and liaising with complainants to assess the extent of the problems. The District Council cannot exercise its power in relation to statutory nuisance without the approval of the Secretary of State and has previously requested a joint meeting with Leicestershire County Council and the Environment Agency to ensure a considered and joined up approach to any proposed action on this matter. Once that meeting has taken place I would be happy to update Councillor Geary”.

Councillor J Geary thanked Councillor A V Smith for a full and comprehensive answer. He stated that those who live in the country expected to put up with country smells, especially where livestock was concerned. However he stated that effluent was being stored and transferred to the lagoons in Ravenstone and this was now an industrial scheme. He added that those who lived downwind had concerns as it was impossible to work outside for any length of time. He stated that he was pleased to see the contact number in the response and that a meeting was planned. As a supplementary question, he requested a designated officer contact for dealing with the logging of complaints.

Councillor A V Smith responded that as a resident of Ravenstone herself, she was aware of this issue. She agreed to provide the contact details of the officer. She commented that lagoons were becoming a problem in North West Leicestershire and the Council would continue to work with the Environment Agency to resolve this.

56. PETITIONS

No petitions were received.

57. MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 11 November 2014.

It was moved by Councillor J Bridges, seconded by Councillor T Gillard and

RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 November 2014 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

58. BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX 2015/16

Councillor N J Rushton presented the report to members. He stated that fantastic efforts had been made with spending in Coalville. He added that this had been a period of austerity; however for the sixth year in a row, front line services had been protected and Council Tax had been frozen. He stated that continuing to increase efficiency had ensured a balanced budget. He outlined the initiatives in next year's budget, including

Chairman's initials

£400,000 to acquire sites for affordable housing projects, £150,000 to pump-prime sustainable transport between the north and south of the district, and £100,000 to extend free Wi-Fi in towns. He added that this was on top of over £3,000,000 of projects made possible through underspendings in previous years, as outlined in the Cabinet report at Appendix 1, which included £1,000,000 to support affordable housing, £500,000 for a business bidding fund, £360,000 to improve the environment in Coalville and around the district, £350,000 for investing in our communities, £300,000 for phase two of Improving the Customer Experience (ICE), £250,000 for round two of £20,000 for Seven, and £216,000 for rural broadband. He stated that he was proud that the General Fund reserve had increased from £1,137,000 to £2,414,000, which reflected some of the current risks. He added that under a Labour government, the New Homes Bonus would be stripped, so the reserve needed to be maintained in order to prepare for dealing with a loss of £2,400,000. He felt that members should be proud of what the Council was doing in terms of long term assured tenancies, and added that tenants would be pleased with this. He highlighted that the Housing Revenue Account budget for 2015/16 required a rent increase for tenants next year, however in return for this they had seen a massive investment in improvements to their homes bringing them up to the Decent Homes standard, which would be maintained through continued investment each year.

Councillor J Legrys sought to raise a point of order in that he found some of the terminology used by Councillor N J Rushton with respect to the opposition to be offensive.

The Deputy Chairman reminded Councillor N J Rushton to confine his comments to the matter under debate. He asked him to conclude his speech as he had spoken for almost five minutes.

Councillor N J Rushton summarised that this was a sound budget, and a great budget to present to the electorate in the run up to the elections. He moved the recommendations as set out in the report.

Councillor R Blunt seconded the motion and reserved his comments.

The Deputy Chairman referred to the amendment submitted by Councillor D De Lacy which had been circulated in the additional papers. He invited Councillor D De Lacy to put forward his amendment.

Councillor D De Lacy commented that it was a shame that Councillor N J Rushton did not take the same credit for the County Council's budget. He referred to the planned increases in car parking charges and the staff redundancies, which had been retracted due to the increases in underspend. He commented that the Council's finances were in good shape; however he questioned whether this was due to the competence of the Conservative administration or the massive unbudgeted increase in planning income as a result the lack of a five year housing land supply.

The Deputy Chairman reminded Councillor D De Lacy to confine his comments to the amendment.

Councillor D De Lacy stated that the income from planning fees this year had been £1,250,000 instead of the £500,000 which had been budgeted for. He referred to Councillor N J Rushton's comments on the New Homes Bonus.

The Deputy Chairman asked Councillor D De Lacy to conclude his speech.

Councillor D De Lacy stated that the Council was in a situation where reserves needed to increase because of possible reductions in the New Homes Bonus. He added that if Leicestershire County Council got their way, the New Homes Bonus and business funding would be taken away. He concluded that the proposals put forward by the Labour group

were fairly moderate and clearly affordable, however they would make a big difference to families in North West Leicestershire. He moved the amendment as set out in the additional papers.

Councillor T Neilson seconded the motion and reserved his comments.

Councillor R Blunt thanked Councillor D De Lacy for saying that the Council was in good financial shape. He added that he was very proud of this and it was a real credit. He reminded members that the five year housing land supply was brought in by the previous Labour government and was not a Conservative policy. He stated that the proposed amendment was disappointing and felt that an alternative budget should have been put forward. He commented that to make a couple of amendments to score points was disappointing. He stated that he would be opposing the amendment and he hoped his colleagues would do so also.

Councillor S Sheahan stated that free swimming was one of the last policies brought in by the previous Labour government and was tragically one of the first things cut. He stated that Councillor T J Pendleton had been quoted as saying that the funding cut from central government was very disappointing as the scheme had been very popular. He highlighted the health benefits of swimming and stated that there was evidence that swimming could reduce the prevalence of asthma symptoms. He made reference to the number of children suffering from asthma and the number within the district who were rushed into hospital each year following an asthma attack. He added that swimming gave children something to do during the holidays and there was a good chance that this would reduce antisocial behaviour. He concluded that free swimming was a great idea, and if the Council could afford it, it should be reinstated.

Councillor N J Rushton stated that most of the amendments proposed by the Labour group took money from the reserves. He commented that with an election coming, he would have thought a full, properly costed budget would have been put forward.

Councillor M B Wyatt stated that he would not be supporting the amendment as it was nothing but a hypocritical attempt to tackle the parking fiasco. He invited the members who took the opportunity to receive a free parking permit to justify this. He also asked the Monitoring Officer to give her view on declaring interests in this matter.

The Deputy Chairman stated that it was unfair to bring this matter forward now, and commented that it would have been helpful to raise it sooner to enable a response.

Councillor N Clarke stated that he was a big advocate of the living wage and he emphasised his support for the amendment. He added that research suggested that nearly 25% of workers were earning less than the living wage, and these people would also be claiming benefits to top up their income. He commented that it was unfair on taxpayers having to subsidise employers in this way. He added that little or nothing had been done to enforce employers paying the minimum wage, let alone the living wage. He stated that a task group could be set up and the Council could become an accredited living wage employer by getting contractors to sign up to the scheme. He added that the Council should be leading the way on this issue and promoting prosperity for all.

Councillor J Ruff highlighted the benefits of free swimming, which could be an absolute lifesaver. She commented that there were plenty of under 16s who were carers. She added that if you had no money to do activities, being able to go swimming was a must. She stated that the benefits of free swimming, especially for poorer children, could not be emphasised enough. She added that there was a need and for this and it should be supported.

Councillor A V Smith pointed out that the Council ran Club Activ8 and the Leisure Link scheme, both of which offered free swimming and other activities. She added that an estimated 6,500 children were currently in receipt of free swimming in the district.

Councillor J Legrys referred to the amendment in respect of the proposed allocation for the provision of free Wi-Fi. He acknowledged that times were tight but he added that it was not known what would happen with the New Homes Bonus, which was the reason that such a low amount had been proposed in the amendment. He stated that as a member of the Coalville Special Expenses Working Party, he felt that more money needed to be put in for events such as picnic in the park, particularly if £100,000 could be found for something as frivolous as free Wi-Fi, which was already provided by many businesses. He added that this money should be used to ensure such events took place and to secure better cohesion with communities. He also felt that there should be a thorough investigation of the car parking situation, and this needed to be reviewed with traders and the people of the town.

Councillor M Specht stated that he could not support the amendment. He referred to the rates of car parking charges elsewhere and felt that the charges in Coalville were more than reasonable. He highlighted the availability of Wi-Fi via hotspots and businesses.

Councillor D Everitt stated that he felt Councillor M B Wyatt's comments were entirely petty and he was quite happy to have free parking; however he had never claimed for travelling expenses in all his time as an elected member. He commented that the Conservative group had always been quite happy to go along with Labour's proposals in the past and they were trying to let people know that there was still a political party that still cared about people. He stated emphatically that swimming really did save lives. He stated that the amendment showed the Labour group supported the living wage and spending money sensibly. He added that people did not share the same enthusiasm about how they had been treated.

Councillor J Geary acknowledged that it had been the Labour group who had introduced car parking charges. He added that at this time, the Council was facing large bills for maintaining and resurfacing, and it was felt to be only right that the people who were using the car parks contributed to this. He commented that he was surprised that Councillor M B Wyatt, who had always opposed car parking charges, could not set out where he stood and what he wanted to do about this issue. He stated that car parking charges were having an impact upon footfall in the town centre, and last year the Town Team came up with an innovative scheme to subsidise car parking charges. He added that businesses needed to be engaged to establish if this was the way forward in terms of reappraising the situation.

Councillor T J Pendleton stated that as the Portfolio Holder at the time, he was proud to champion the Activ8 scheme, as it involved children with swimming and was done through the school curriculum. He added that the Conservative group supported the living wage, but was not happy to meddle with how other companies paid their employees. He commented that free Wi-Fi in village halls would be welcome. He added that car parking charges in the district had not been increased and the charges were reasonable. He stated it should be asked who broke the bank in the first place, and it would be more prudent to save first rather than spend at the first piece of good news. He added that it was not known what was on the horizon.

Councillor T Neilson commented that this had been a good debate and the transformative benefits of free swimming had been expertly outlined. He added that he believed the people who would benefit from this would find it an exciting proposition and he was disappointed that this was not supported by the Conservative group. He welcomed the living wage, which had been introduced by the Conservative group; however the Labour group had said at the time that they wished it could go further, hence the proposed

amendment. He expressed disappointment that Councillor M B Wyatt did not see fit to support the proposed amendment in respect of car parking charges. He suggested that he might also want to declare an interest in this matter as a trader. In respect of free Wi-Fi, he commented that there were many businesses that attracted people due to offering free Wi-Fi. He added that the Conservative group's proposal would remove that commercial opportunity and also encourage people to contact the Council to complain if the free Wi-Fi was not working. He explained that it was proposed to use this money for community events, which would actually increase footfall for businesses. He concluded that he was happy to support the amendment and he hoped that others saw fit to do so.

Councillor D De Lacy commented that the Labour group's proposals would increase the reserves from £1,100,000 to £2,340,000, and he felt that it was important for people to understand this. He added that the Labour group was conscious that finances could be very volatile going forwards, as it was not known what the funding settlement would be. He commented that if the Conservative County Council had their way, the New Homes Bonus would be taken away. He stated that it was imperative that people understood the Labour group were not proposing a budget with a lot of spending commitments, and he did not accept the allegation of irresponsibility. He reiterated that whilst the Labour group recognised that the Council's finances were good, this was as a result of a free for all feeding frenzy for developers. He added that the spending as a result of the increase in planning income was not sustainable. He also made reference to the removal of waste recycling credits. He summarised that the proposal was clearly affordable, was responsible, and he hoped members would support it.

The Deputy Chairman then put the motion to the vote.

A recorded vote being required in accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, the voting was as follows:

For the motion:

Councillors N Clarke, P Clayfield, D De Lacy, D Everitt, J Geary, P Hyde, R Johnson, J Legrys, L Massey, T Neilson, J Ruff, S Sheahan, L Spence and R Woodward (14).

Against the motion:

Councillors R D Bayliss, R Blunt, A Bridges, J Bridges, J Cotterill, T Gillard, J Hout, G Jones, C Large, C Meynell, T Pendleton, V Richichi, N J Rushton, A C Saffell, A V Smith, N Smith, M Specht, D J Stevenson and M B Wyatt (19).

The motion was declared LOST.

The Deputy Chairman then directed members to the debate on the substantive motion, as set out in the report.

Councillor T Neilson stated that this was the first stage in presenting their manifesto on 14 March, and the Labour group had tried to put forward a moderate budget. He commented that the Council had been riding the coattails of the developer free for all and relying on the New Homes Bonus. He stated that this blatant last gasp election spending spree was too late to win the votes of residents, especially in Coalville. He made reference to some of the literature which had recently been circulated and Leicestershire County Council's decision to increase Council Tax. He commented that the Conservative group were clearly trying to rely on the worst kind of screensaver politics. He concluded that the Labour group were no longer in a position to support the recommendations.

Councillor J Legrys referred to the shop front improvement scheme which had been delayed due to the lamented loss of the Council's conservation officer. He highlighted the inaccuracies in the report and the amount of money which had been wasted on projects such as the monorail. He stated that the Council had wasted almost £5,000,000 in the

last eight years. He commented that £1,500,000 had been wasted on the failed Core Strategy, which could have been spent on gritting, as Leicestershire County Council refused to do this, and the money wasted on the proposed move to the Stephenson College site could have provided many a free swim. He added that the £5,000,000 which had been wasted could have been spent or put into the reserves.

Councillor J Ruff stated she could not support the proposed rent increases, as they were well above inflation and would have a massive impact upon the standard of living for working families. She added that this was just a step too far and was too great an increase. She acknowledged that rent rises were inevitable, but these were too steep. She questioned the 10% increase in heating charges when energy costs were reducing. She commented that it was a sad fact that this was why many families were choosing between heating and eating.

Councillor N Clarke stated that Councillor R D Bayliss had made it clear his legacy was the improvements made through the Decent Homes Improvement Programme. He questioned how long residents were going to have to pay for the mismanagement of this project through rent increases. He concluded that he could not support the proposals.

Councillor J Geary made reference to the shop front improvement scheme and the similar scheme which had been a success in previous years. He hoped that this project would also be a success. He asked how much the expertise from Leicestershire County Council was costing.

The Deputy Chairman advised that this information would be provided after the meeting.

Councillor J Geary referred to the recent meeting of Policy Development Group, the purpose of which was discussing the proposed budget. He commented that unfortunately the Corporate Portfolio Holder was unable to attend due to other commitments. He stated that it was imperative for the lead member to attend such meetings, and he hoped that if he was unable to do so in future, the meeting would be rearranged.

Councillor D De Lacy stated that he would be voting against the budget because the amendment had not been accepted. He referred to the Council Tax funding cut of 10% which had been passed on to those residents who could least afford it, and it was clear that this Council had not needed to do so. He added that this would have been incorporated into the proposed budget, however officers had advised that it was too late to do so. He added that this would be done once the Labour group was in power. He stated that if you were on benefits in the district, you would have had them reduced; however if you were a millionaire, you would have gained. He added that when you took into account the rent increase, this was much more than the average for a lot of people. He stated that the Labour group did not agree with this and would certainly be looking at this for next year's budget as the group did not feel these increases were justifiable to tenants. He expressed grave concerns about the leadership of the District Council, a party which supported the recommendation from Leicestershire County Council that 80% of the New Homes Bonus should be removed. He added that there seemed to be a growing conflict of interest with Leicestershire County Council and he felt that it was wrong for Councillor R Blunt and Councillor N J Rushton to hold the positions they did, whilst supporting proposals that would destroy the Council's finances.

Councillor R D Bayliss referred to the comments made in respect of the rent increases and commented that these were necessary as a result of the Labour group not charging the economic rate for years. He added that this had resulted in 70% of the housing stock being non-decent before the recent improvement programme. He commented that if the electorate were ever foolish enough to allow the Labour group to undermine this rent policy, it would quickly condemn tenants to living in non-decent homes as the investment could not be maintained. He stated that the budget included £9,000,000 provision for the

Decent Homes Improvement Programme, maintenance and affordable social housing. He commended the budget, particularly the measure for achieving convergent target rents in the next financial year. He stated that the business plan was sustainable, would defend against the unknown over the next 27 years, and would pay off debts.

Councillor N Smith commented that the Labour group were expressing pity for the poor tenants; however they did not feature in their amendment. He stated that the Conservative group were the only ones who cared about tenants.

The Deputy Chairman called for order at this point in the meeting.

Councillor D J Stevenson commented that he had been an elected member of the Council for 42 years, and most of this time had been under a Labour administration, who had got the housing stock into the terrible state it was previously in. He added that tenants were now thankful for the changes that had been made. He stated that the Labour group wanted to pull the rug from underneath them and this was hypocritical. He declared vehemently that the Labour group did not dare put forward a budget.

The Deputy Chairman called for order at this point in the meeting.

Councillor D J Stevenson commented that the electorate could see through the lies. He added that the Labour group had never spent a penny on Coalville during his time as an elected member.

Councillor R Blunt stated that he would like to hear the Labour group's scheme for Coalville. He commented that the Conservative group had done the things that the Labour group should have. He stated that buying in the expertise from Leicestershire County Council was a good use of the Council's money. He made reference to the economic downturn and the situation over the past four years, adding that the Council had been run prudently in that time. He stated that officers were crucial to this. He added that everyone understood the logic of the New Homes Bonus, and the £20,000 for Seven project was a result of this. He stated that Coalville was crucial to the Conservative group's plans and he was proud of this. He added that it was morally imperative to lead on this issue. He reminded members that one of the first decisions made by the Conservative group had been to cancel the proposed transfer of the housing stock, as tenants had been terrified. He commented that homes had been restored one by one. He stated that services had been retained in house and the Council had been run economically and sensibly. He commented that he felt sure the electorate would agree.

Councillor N J Rushton made reference to Councillor J Geary's comments in respect of the Policy Development Group meeting and explained that he had only been informed on the morning of the meeting. He apologised that he had been unable to attend. He concluded that this was a considered, targeted budget which invested in our houses, our future, our economy and our people.

The Deputy Chairman then put the motion to the vote.

A recorded vote being required in accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, the voting was as follows:

For the motion:

Councillors R D Bayliss, R Blunt, A Bridges, J Bridges, J Cotterill, T Gillard, J Houlst, G Jones, C Large, C Meynell, T Pendleton, V Richichi, N J Rushton, A V Smith, N Smith, M Specht and D J Stevenson (17).

Against the motion:

Councillors N Clarke, P Clayfield, D De Lacy, D Everitt, J Geary, P Hyde, R Johnson, J Legrys, L Massey, T Neilson, J Ruff, A C Saffell, S Sheahan, L Spence, R Woodward and M B Wyatt (16).

The motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED THAT:

1. The Section 151 officer's comments on the robustness of the estimates and adequacy of reserves be noted.
2. The district Council Tax for 2015/16 be frozen.
3. The transfer of any surplus income over expenditure in 2015/16 to the General Fund balance at 31 March 2016 be approved.
4. The HRA rent increase for 2015/16 be approved.
5. The increase in the rent of garages for 2015/16 be approved.
6. The increase in the HRA service charges for 2015/16 be approved.
7. The ground rent increase at Appleby Magna caravan site be approved.
8. The increases in lifeline charges be approved.
9. The General Fund and Housing Revenue Account budgets for 2015/16 be approved.
10. The special expenses budgets for 2015/16 be approved.
11. The special expenses precepts for 2015/16 be approved.
12. The proposed Coalville Special Expenses and HRA Capital Programmes for 2015/16 and planned financing be approved.
13. Capital expenditure in 2015/16 and capital expenditure in 2016/17 for the vehicle replacement programme only be approved.
14. The remainder of the Capital Programmes 2016/17 to 2018/19 be approved as indicative only at this stage.
15. The following amounts be approved for the year 2015/16 in accordance with Section 31b of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended:
 - (1) 29,664 being the amount calculated by the council, in accordance with Regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012, as its Council Tax Base for the year.
 - (2) The amounts specified in table 1 of this report being the amounts calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as the amounts of its Council Tax Base for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.
16. The following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2015/16 in accordance with Sections 31a and 31b of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended:

Chairman's initials

- (1) District / Parish Gross Expenditure
£60,294,940 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31a (2) of the Act.
 - (2) Income
£53,542,411 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in section 31a (3) of the Act.
 - (3) District / Parish Net Expenditure
£6,752,529 being the amount by which the aggregate at 16(1) above exceeds the aggregate at 16(2) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31a (4) of the Act as its Council Tax requirement for the year.
 - (4) Basic Amount of Tax (Including Average Parish Precepts)
£227.63 being the amount at 16(3) above, divided by the amount stated as the Council Tax Base in parts of the Council's area, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31 b of the Act as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year.
 - (5) Parish Precepts/Special Expenses
£ 2,048,344 being the aggregate amount of all special items referred to in Section 35(1) of the Act.
 - (6) Basic Amount of Tax (Basic Council Tax – District)
£158.58 being the amount at 16(4) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 16(5) above by the amount as stated as the Council Tax Base for the whole of the Council area, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no special item relates.
 - (7) Basic Amount of Tax (Parished Areas)
The amounts listed in column 5 of table 2 to this report, being the amounts given by adding to the amount at 16(6) above, the amounts of the special item or items relating to dwellings in those parts of the Council's area mentioned, divided in each case by the amount stated as the Council Tax Base in parts of the Council area, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act as the basic amounts of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.
 - (8) District /Parish Council Tax Rates
The amounts set out in table 3 to this report being the amounts given by multiplying the amounts at 16(6) and 16(7) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwelling listed in different valuation bands.
17. Major Precepting Authorities
It be noted that the amounts set out in table 4 to this report are the amounts notified by Leicestershire County Council, Leicestershire Police and Crime Commissioner and the combined Fire Authority in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as their precepts for 2015/16 for each of the categories of dwellings listed.

18. Council Tax Rates – All Bands

Having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 16(8) (table 3) and 17 (table 4) above, the Council in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 hereby sets the amounts of Council Tax for the Council's area for the year 2015/16 for each of the categories of dwellings as shown in table 5.

19. Referendums Relating to Council Tax Increases

It be noted that the relevant basic amount of Council Tax for 2015/16 is not excessive.

20. Treasury Management Strategy

The Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2015/16, Prudential Indicators 2014/15 (revised) and 2015/16 – 2017/18, and annual minimum revenue provision statement 2015/16 be approved.

59. STREET TRADING POLICY

Councillor A V Smith presented the report to members. She stated that the Council's first street trading policy had been introduced in 2009 to create a street environment which complimented premises-based trading, to provide diversity and consumer choice and to enhance the character and safety of the local environment. She advised that a significant review of the content of the policy and procedures had been carried out in 2013, which included a change from a zonal approach to the whole district being a consent area. She added that the changes previously made had a positive impact; however a further review had been carried out. She highlighted the proposed changes to the policy.

Councillor T Neilson stated that he was happy to serve on the Licensing Committee and was therefore well versed in the development of the policy. He commended the Portfolio Holder and officers as the process had been very transparent and he was happy to see that all comments from the Licensing Committee had been taken on board. He added that the changes would make a big difference and would have an impact. He expressed concerns about decisions being delegated to officers, and stressed the importance of open and transparent decision making. He felt that recommendation 3 was contrary to that principle. He moved that recommendation 3 be removed from the motion.

The Deputy Chairman stated that he had been advised that this did not constitute an amendment as it negated the position in the recommendations.

Councillor T Neilson stated that he believed the main thrust of the recommendations was to adopt the policy, and the amendment did not impact upon the policy.

Councillor S Sheahan stated that all that the amendment was seeking was for the status quo to be maintained. He could not see how this negated the motion and he felt this seemed entirely reasonable.

Councillor D De Lacy referred to the Constitution which stated that an amendment could remove words. He added that the main thrust of the changes set out in the recommendation were being supported and he felt the amendment did not negate the motion.

The Deputy Chairman stated that he would put the amendment to the vote. The motion was declared LOST.

The Deputy Chairman referred members to the substantive motion as set out in the report.

Councillor M Specht congratulated officers and members on a very transparent policy. He stated that he was happy to support it.

Chairman's initials

It was moved by Councillor A V Smith, seconded by Councillor M Specht and

RESOLVED THAT:

- a) The draft Street Trading Policy at Appendix 1 be approved.
- b) The Head of Service in consultation with the Portfolio Holder be delegated authority to amend the list of mandatory conditions within the Street Trading Policy.
- c) The Head of Service in consultation with the Portfolio Holder be delegated authority to approve changes to the Street Trading Policy.

60. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSONS

Councillor N J Rushton presented the report to members. He advised it would be in the Council's interests to extend the term of office, as a joint county-wide recruitment process would take place next year.

Councillor T Neilson stated that he was happy to support the recommendation.

It was moved by Councillor N J Rushton, seconded by Councillor R Blunt and

RESOLVED THAT:

The term of office of the independent persons be extended to the end of the 2015-2016 municipal year.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm

The Deputy Chairman closed the meeting at 8.27 pm