

MINUTES of a meeting of the COUNCIL held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Coalville on THURSDAY, 23 FEBRUARY 2017

Present: Councillor J Cotterill (Chairman)

Councillors R Adams, G A Allman, R Ashman, R D Bayliss, R Blunt, R Canny, J Clarke, N Clarke, J G Coxon, D Everitt, T Eynon, F Fenning, J Geary, S Gillard, T Gillard, L Goacher, D Harrison, G Hault, J Hault, R Johnson, G Jones, J Legrys, S McKendrick, K Merrie MBE, T J Pendleton, P Purver, V Richichi, N J Rushton, S Sheahan, N Smith, A V Smith MBE, M Specht, D J Stevenson and M B Wyatt

Officers: Mr S Bambrick, Ms C E Fisher, Mr A Hunkin, Mr G Jones, Mrs M Meredith, Mr P Padaniya, Mrs M Phillips and Miss E Warhurst

#### **41. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R Boam, J Bridges and A C Saffell.

#### **42. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

Councillors T Eynon and S Sheahan declared a non pecuniary interest in item 12, High Speed Rail (HS2) Phase 2: Consultation in respect of proposed route from West Midlands to Leeds - response of North West Leicestershire District Council, as the proposed route went through land purchased by Leicestershire County Council.

Councillor J G Coxon declared a pecuniary interest in item 12, High Speed Rail (HS2) Phase 2: Consultation in respect of proposed route from West Midlands to Leeds - response of North West Leicestershire District Council, as the proposed route went through his land and close to his house.

Councillor R Ashman declared a non pecuniary interest in item 12, High Speed Rail (HS2) Phase 2: Consultation in respect of proposed route from West Midlands to Leeds - response of North West Leicestershire District Council, as an employee of a political party for which HS2 was party policy.

Councillor M B Wyatt declared a non pecuniary interest in item 10, Budget and Council Tax 2017/18, as an owner of two businesses in Coalville.

Councillor R Blunt declared a pecuniary interest in item 12, High Speed Rail (HS2) Phase 2: Consultation in respect of proposed route from West Midlands to Leeds - response of North West Leicestershire District Council, as the proposed route went through land owned by his family in Coleorton.

Councillor T J Pendleton declared a pecuniary interest in item 12, High Speed Rail (HS2) Phase 2: Consultation in respect of proposed route from West Midlands to Leeds - response of North West Leicestershire District Council, as his daughter owned a house in Measham which fell within the compensation zone.

Councillor S McKendrick declared a non pecuniary interest in item 10, Budget and Council Tax 2017/18, as a trustee of Moira Furnace.

#### **43. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman referred to the numerous events he had attended since the previous meeting of the Council and thanked the Deputy Chairman for his assistance.

#### **44. LEADER'S AND PORTFOLIO HOLDERS' ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Chairman's initials

The Leader made reference to the Syrian refugee resettlement programme and informed the Council that in November 2016, 2 families had been welcomed to Castle Donington. He praised the local community who had given the families a warm welcome. He felt that this said a great deal about the fairness and kindness of this country. He added that he had met the families personally and they had explained how grateful they were to the people of North West Leicestershire for making them so welcome. He reported that the Council had agreed to receive a further two families a year as part of the wider scheme. He wished the two families all the best for the future.

The Leader provided an update on the progress of the appointment of the Chief Executive. He reported that following the closing date a total of 31 applications had been received from a very strong field of candidates from a wide range of organisations. He explained that 10 candidates would now progress to the next stage and following this a shortlist of candidates would be produced, all of whom would be appointable. He advised that the Appointments Committee would interview the candidates and would make a recommendation to Council on 21 March. He emphasised that the final decision on the appointment would be made by all members.

The Leader informed members of a recent incident which demonstrated the dedication and care of the housing management and central control teams. A concerned neighbour had contacted central control about a tenant who had not been seen that day. As the tenant had no next of kin, the central control operative contacted the housing officer who immediately visited the property. After no one answered the door, the officers entered using the key safe to find the tenant collapsed on the floor in a distressed state. The officers immediately contacted the emergency services and checked and cleared the tenant's airways. Without their selfless actions the tenant would not have made it to hospital. The Leader stated that he would be formally writing to the central control operative to thank her for her contribution and he commended the housing officers for their actions. He presented the housing officers with a staff award.

Councillor N Smith welcomed the announcement in respect of the Syrian refugees and felt that the programme was a real attribute for the Council. He commented that it would be tremendously difficult to replace the Chief Executive.

Councillor T Gillard extended his congratulations and those of his Whitwick colleagues to the housing officers. He commented that they cared passionately about their work and their actions did not surprise him. He wished the 10 candidates in the recruitment campaign good luck as they had a hard act to follow.

Councillor D Harrison expressed his pride for the people of Castle Donington who had opened their arms and hearts to people in need of help and support.

Councillor R Canny commented on the positive progress of the Syrian refugee children in the local school.

Councillor J Legrys shared his pride in having refugee families in the district. He expressed thanks on behalf of the Labour Group to the housing officers. He commented that people who worked in public service always went beyond what they were expected to do and he felt it was important to praise people for that. He stated that the Chief Executive would be a hard act to follow.

Councillor M Specht commented that a hard headed person would be needed to replace the Chief Executive. He congratulated her and wished her all the best for the future.

Councillor V Richichi commented on his own experiences coming to this country and his pride at being a citizen of the United Kingdom. He felt that even more could be done to help refugees.

Councillor R D Bayliss commended the housing officers for their actions. He stated that they had truly lived up to his expectations and the award was truly deserved. He made reference to the Syrian refugee resettlement programme and stated that the Council could be proud of joining the programme which was entirely voluntary.

Councillor J G Coxon thanked the Chief Executive for the work she had undertaken to build a good working relationship with Ashby Town Council. He added that the Town Council had prospered with her help and would be sorry to see her leave.

The Housing Portfolio Holder announced that on 10 March construction would commence on 17 new council homes at Linford and Verdon Crescent, Coalville and 7 on the Willesley estate, Ashby. He commented that this had been an ambition and aspiration for a long time. He also highlighted a recent acquisition of a right to buy property in Castle Donington which had served a number of purposes including adding to the Council's housing stock. He expressed full commitment to developing the housing service and continuing to build new homes in the best interests of home seekers on the waiting list.

Councillor M Specht welcomed the house building programme and commented that it had been a long time coming. He commended the Director of Housing for his work.

#### **45. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION**

There were no questions received.

#### **46. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

Councillor D Everitt put the following question to Councillor R Blunt:

“Since last year’s Cabinet meeting held on February 19<sup>th</sup> 2016 there have been 11 Cabinet meetings. At these meetings decisions are announced by the six Cabinet members. No meaningful debate takes place.

During the same period of time there have only been 7 full Council meetings in which Councillors of all parties have the right to question and discuss councillor business on behalf of the electorate.

Does the Leader recognise the importance of constructive criticism or support when making decisions, and is he aware of how lack of meetings is perceived by interested observers, and how does this serve democracy?”

Councillor R Blunt gave the following response:

“The Local Government Act 1972 gives the Council discretion as to how many Council meetings it holds in any year. The number of Cabinet meetings is entirely at my discretion. In the interests of effective administration the dates of the Cabinet and Council meetings are set in advance to ensure that they are timed to fit in with the regular business of the Council e.g. the performance monitoring, the budget etc. Other reports for decision are then added to these dates thus ensuring that meetings are not being held for meetings’ sake as I appreciate how busy members are and I know they would not thank me for arranging additional Cabinet meetings to discuss individual matters. Hence why we have an Executive Decision Notice which gives elected members and the public advance notice of all forthcoming reports for decision. These have been carefully timed to fit into the meetings timetable, thus ensuring effective and timely decision making. The Executive

Chairman’s initials

Decision Notice is included in the agenda papers for every meeting of the Policy Development Group and allows members to see the decisions which are planned over the forthcoming months. Members also have the ability to call in decisions made by Cabinet where they have evidence which suggests that the Cabinet did not take the decision in accordance with the decision making principles laid down in the Constitution.

In terms of serving democracy, each Council meeting has provision to enable debate and every Cabinet and Council meeting provides for questions by members and the public. Advance notice is given of the deadlines for submitting motions and questions. I do not see how spreading the business of the Council over more meetings, diluting the content of each meeting and calling on the services of elected members and officers more frequently would make the decision making process more efficient. I am therefore satisfied that in North West Leicestershire we serve democracy well and the number of Council and Cabinet meetings held each year is appropriate to the needs of the business of the Council.”

Councillor D Everitt stated that he was not happy with the answer to his question and felt it was not a good situation when scrutiny was limited. He sought to make a speech.

The Chairman reminded Councillor D Everitt to confine his comments to a supplementary question only.

As a supplementary question, Councillor D Everitt asked if the Leader believed that democracy had to be seen to be done, and if he realised that scrutiny was as much in the interests of the ruling party as the opposition.

The Leader responded that the present Leader and Cabinet model had been introduced by the Labour administration and had been retained. He stated that he believed the system in place was good and fair. He added that reasonable requests for members to speak and ask questions at Cabinet were accepted. He commented that good scrutiny was the responsibility of those members on the scrutiny committee and he felt that scrutiny was in a good place under the current Chairman. He emphasised his strong belief in democracy.

#### **47. MOTIONS**

No motions were received.

#### **48. PETITIONS**

No petitions were received.

#### **49. MINUTES**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 8 November 2016.

It was moved by Councillor J Cotterill, seconded by Councillor V Richichi and

RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 November 2016 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

#### **50. BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX 2017/18**

Councillor N J Rushton presented the report to members, drawing their attention to the amended report in the additional papers. He highlighted the changes to the underlined amounts in recommendations 20(1) to 20(3) of the report and the tables. He emphasised that there was no overall impact upon the final Council Tax calculation.

Councillor N J Rushton referred members to the draft General Fund and Special Expenses budget proposals at Appendix 1 which were considered by Cabinet on 7 February and were recommended to Council for approval. He highlighted the summary of the proposed budget set out on page 33 of the agenda. He stated that with discussions ongoing about the future of Business Rates and the pending reductions in New Homes Bonus and Revenue Support Grant, this was a prudent budget which held a necessarily high level of reserves due to the risks involved.

Councillor N J Rushton was pleased to recommend a freeze in Council Tax for the eighth year running which equated to a saving over the 8 year period of £27 for a Band D property. He added that North West Leicestershire was the only district council in Leicestershire which had frozen its Council Tax for 8 years. He announced that for 2017/18 town and parish councils would be given the same amount of Local Council Tax Support as the previous year, however this would be reduced in future years due to the phasing out of the Revenue Support Grant from central government.

Councillor N J Rushton referred members to section 3 of the report which provided details of the projected outturn for 2016/17 and explained the forecast under spend of £1.3 million which was mainly due to additional business rates and planning income arising from the unprecedented growth taking place in North West Leicestershire. He advised that it was recommended to transfer the under spend to a special projects reserve. He highlighted that both the end of year position and the projected budget for 2017/18 relied heavily upon business rates income and therefore in order to be prudent it was recommended to wait until the business rates were finalised in May before making any commitments as to how the under spend should be utilised.

Councillor N J Rushton highlighted the General Fund, Special Expenses and HRA Capital Programmes set out at Appendix 3, the Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2017/18 and Prudential Indicators set out at Appendix 4, and the recommendations for setting the Council Tax at section 4 of the report.

Councillor N J Rushton noted the amendments submitted by the Labour Group. He commented that the Activ8 scheme already provided for free swimming and he felt that the proposals to employ additional resource for the Policy Development Group and planning enforcement were a waste as the Council already employed a sufficient number of highly qualified people. He added that the proposal to fund this from under spend was not the right thing to do before the end of the financial year. He stated that the administration would not fund pet projects at the last minute without any reliable evidence to support them.

Councillor N J Rushton moved the recommendations set out in the report. This was seconded by Councillor R Blunt.

Councillor R Blunt made reference to the freeze in Council Tax and stated that he was proud to be able to support the residents of the district in this time of pressure. He welcomed the building of much needed council homes and commended the Director of Housing for his work. He reiterated his commitment to freezing Council Tax for the remainder of the administration.

The Chairman referred to the amendment to the motion which had been circulated in the additional papers. He invited Councillor F Fenning to put forward his amendment.

Chairman's initials

Councillor F Fenning spoke to his amendment, thanking the staff who had worked on the proposals. He also thanked the Cabinet for their work however he expressed concern for the future of the Council. He highlighted that over the last 6 years the freeze in Council Tax had saved him £20. He felt however that he could have afforded an extra £5 a year to preserve and improve the Council services that everyone took for granted. He expressed pride in the staff.

The Chairman reminded Councillor F Fenning to confine his comments to the amendment only.

Councillor F Fenning stated that the first amendment would indicate that the Council was serious about the wellbeing of residents and would encourage younger people and families into exercise. He paid tribute to the superb surplus-generating leisure team. He made reference to the proposals in relation to leisure services.

The Chairman reminded Councillor F Fenning again to confine his comments to the amendment only.

Councillor F Fenning stated that the second amendment indicated the Labour Group's dissatisfaction with scrutiny at the Council. He felt that half hour Cabinet meetings and 5 Policy Development Group meetings a year was not effective scrutiny of a Council managing nearly £200 million of assets. He added that the Labour Group wanted to scrutinise the inability of the Council to spend budgets properly.

Councillor F Fenning stated that the third amendment highlighted a planning department which was under immense pressure to protect residents from landowners and property developers.

Councillor F Fenning made reference to the savings made from freezing Council Tax and questioned the cost to the future of the Council. He formally moved the amendment.

This was seconded by Councillor J Legrys who reserved his comments.

Councillor T Eynon referred to the proposals to introduce free swimming and commended the Activ8 scheme, however she felt this could be extended. She highlighted the number of complaints she had received relating to planning enforcement issues such as mud on the road and felt there was scope for improvement. She expressed concerns in respect of the disabled facilities under spend.

The Chairman reminded Councillor T Eynon to confine her comments to the amendment only.

Councillor T Eynon made reference to the lightbulb project, which she considered to be of considerable significance across the county, and stated that the lack of mention of it in the budget demonstrated the need for greater support for Policy Development Group.

Councillor J Geary expressed concern at the way in which the proposal relating to planning enforcement had been dismissed. He made reference to his recent experience working with the enforcement team and it became apparent that the team were unable to cope with the workload. He accepted that enforcement was not a statutory service, however considering the amount of development taking place in the district he felt that it made sense to have an efficient and effective planning enforcement function.

Councillor M Specht reminded members that mud on the road was not a matter for the district council. As Chairman of the Policy Development Group he reiterated that every member of the group had an opportunity to raise concerns and he highlighted some of the recent work undertaken. He stated that money should not be wasted on providing another

Chairman's initials

officer as Policy Development Group was adequately supported by the Director of Resources.

Councillor D Harrison commented that the proposals were indulgent and an utter waste of waste of time and resources.

Councillor J Legrys sought to raise a point of order and took great exception to the tone of Councillor D Harrison's comments.

The Chairman invited Councillor D Harrison to conclude his comments.

Councillor D Harrison concluded that the proposed amendments would not contribute to or enhance the budget.

Councillor A V Smith reminded members that all children who participated in Club Activ8 could access free swimming. She highlighted that a recent review had been undertaken of the planning enforcement function which was in the process of being implemented. She added that agency staff had also been employed to work on the backlog.

Councillor R Johnson commented that mud on the road often came from development sites where developers were not adhering to conditions. He referred to a white paper which revealed that local authorities would be able to increase fees by July this year if they were able to commit to investing the additional fee income into their planning department. He felt that this was a golden opportunity as the enforcement team was stretched. He made reference to the lengthy legal processes involved. He urged members to protect the public, and not treat them with disdain.

Councillor N Clarke commented that the Labour Group was looking to enhance the service for residents rather than the budget.

Councillor R Blunt stated that the fundamental problem with the proposal was utilising a potential one-off under spend to provide for an ongoing cost.

Councillor N J Rushton commented that the proposals may well have some merit, however considering them at this late stage was not appropriate, nor was funding them in the manner suggested. He reiterated the principle of not increasing taxes unless necessary.

Councillor J Legrys exercised his right of reply and stated that the reason for putting forward the amendment was simply to highlight the Labour Group's concerns about the Council. He commented that much had been said about saving people money, however the administration continued to take money from people who could not afford to pay and put this into reserves. He stated that the finances of the Council were precarious. He concluded that under spends should be spent on residents rather than put away in a bank account accruing very little interest.

The Chairman then put the amendment 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 Adams, N Clarke, D Everitt, T Eynon, F Fenning, J Geary, R Johnson, J Legrys and S Sheahan (9).

Against the motion:

Chairman's initials

Councillors G A Allman, R Ashman, R D Bayliss, R Blunt, J Clarke, J Cotterill, J G Coxon, S Gillard, T Gillard, L Goacher, D Harrison, G Houlton, J Houlton, G Jones, K Merrie, T J Pendleton, P Purver, V Richichi, N J Rushton A V Smith, N Smith, M Specht and D J Stevenson (23).

Abstentions:

Councillors R Canny, S McKendrick and M B Wyatt (3).

Therefore the motion was declared LOST.

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

Councillor M B Wyatt stated that he was unable to support the budget which failed to tackle the real issues in tackling the decline of Coalville town centre. However he welcomed the freezing of the Council Tax which was a welcome respite for many families struggling in the current climate of uncertainty. He highlighted the need to look again at the recent free parking scheme from 3pm. He stated that he had spoken to a number of local businesses and reported that the scheme had yet again had a detrimental effect upon local businesses and reduced footfall even further. He urged the Cabinet to look again at introducing a fairer, more practical scheme by supporting free parking on market days. He pointed out that this would not increase costs and would help to save small independent traders who were struggling. He also asked the Cabinet to consider publishing Councillors' expense claims individually to enable members of the public to see what elected members were claiming from the tax payer. He expressed grave concerns about expense claims which he was scrutinising.

The Chairman reminded members to confine their comments to the budget.

Councillor J Legrys stated that the Labour Group would support the budget due to the new Council housing, the reduction in rents and the increases on adaptations, which he could not vote against. He added however that he opposed the increases in service charges. He added that the Labour Group intended to hold the administration's feet to the fire.

Councillor K Merrie commended the budget and felt that it was a strong Conservative budget.

Councillor R D Bayliss welcomed the support of the opposition in respect of the items in the housing budget. He paid tribute to the Director of Resources for his conduct of treasury services and to the Director of Housing who had provided an inspiration for many of the projects. He also commended the Head of Housing who had been a source of inspiration and support. He made reference to the obligation to reduce Council house rents and the impact upon the business plan which had proven to be robust as the maintenance of the decent homes standard would continue for the foreseeable future whilst maintaining the service to tenants.

Councillor N J Rushton exercised his right of reply and stated that Coalville was not declining and resources were being concentrated on revitalising the town centre. He explained that Councillors' expenses were published each year. He welcomed the support of the opposition and he commended the budget to members.

The 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:

Chairman's initials



Councillors R Adams, G A Allman, R Ashman, R D Bayliss, R Blunt, R Canny, J Clarke, N Clarke, J Cotterill, J G Coxon, D Everitt, T Eynon, F Fenning, J Geary, S Gillard, T Gillard, L Goacher, D Harrison, G Houlton, J Houlton, R Johnson, G Jones, J Legrys, S McKendrick, K Merrie, T J Pendleton, P Purver, V Richichi, N J Rushton, S Sheahan, A V Smith, N Smith, M Specht and D J Stevenson (34).

Against the motion:

Councillor M B Wyatt (1).

Abstentions:

None (0).

Therefore the motion was declared CARRIED.

It was therefore

RESOLVED THAT:

- a) The level of reserves and assurance statement by the Deputy Section 151 Officer at Appendix 1 be noted;
- b) The transfer of the budgeted surplus income over expenditure in 2017/18 to an earmarked reserve be approved for further consideration after completion of the 2016/17 accounts;
- c) The transfer of the forecasted surplus income over expenditure in 2016/17 to the special projects reserve be approved;
- d) The General Fund Revenue Budget for 2017/18 be approved;
- e) The Special Expenses Budget for 2017/18 be approved;
- f) The Special Expenses precepts for 2017/18 be approved;
- g) The district Council Tax in 2017/18 be frozen;
- h) The decrease in Council house rents for 2017/18 by 1% be approved (average of 83 pence per week);
- i) The increase of 2% (13 pence per week) in garage rents for 2017/18 be approved;
- j) The reduction in central heating charges for 2017/18 by 10% be approved;
- k) The average increase of 1.03% (7 pence per week) in service charge for 2017/18 be approved;
- l) The ground rent increase at Appleby Magna caravan site of 2% (62 pence per week) be approved on the anniversary of each individual rent agreement in 2017/18;

Chairman's initials

- m) The lifeline charges increase of 8% (79 pence per week) for private customers and 2% for registered provider customers be approved from April 2017;
- n) The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget for 2017/18 at Appendix 2 be approved;
- o) The General Fund, Coalville Special Expenses and HRA Capital Programmes and planned financing for 2017/18 be approved;
- p) Capital expenditure in 2017/18 and capital expenditure in 2018/19 for the vehicle replacement programme only be approved;
- q) The remainder of the Capital Programmes 2018/19 to 2020/2021 be approved as indicative only at this stage.
- r) Authority be delegated to the Deputy S151 Officer in consultation with the Portfolio Holder (Corporate) to make any necessary amendments to the budget following receipt of the final government settlement.
- s) The following amounts be approved for the year 2017/18 in accordance with Section 31b of the Local Government Finance Act as amended;
- (1) 31,262 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 (Appendix 5) 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.
- t) The following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2017/18 in accordance with Sections 31a and 31b of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended:
- (1) District / parish gross expenditure  
£61,008,336 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31a (2) of the Act.
  - (2) Income  
£53,772,434 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  
£7,235,903 being the amount by which the aggregate at s(1) above exceeds the aggregate at s(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)  
£231.46 being the amount at s(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 31b of the Act as the basic amount of its Council tax for the year.

Chairman's initials

(5) Parish precepts/special expenses  
£2,278,424 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 20(4) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 20(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 t(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 t(6) and t(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.

u) 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 2017/18 for each of the categories of dwellings listed.

v) Council Tax rates – all bands

Having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at t(8) (Table 3) and u (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 2017/18 for each of the categories of dwellings as shown in Table 5.

w) Referendums relating to Council Tax increases

It be noted that the relevant basic amount of Council Tax for 2017/18 is not excessive.

x) Treasury management strategy

The Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2017/18, Prudential Indicators 2016/17 (revised) and 2017/18 – 2019/20, and annual minimum revenue provision statement 2017/18 be approved.

## 51. ALLOCATION OF SEATS ON COMMITTEES (POLITICAL BALANCE)

Councillor T Gillard presented the report to members.

Chairman's initials

Councillor J Legrys proposed that in addition to the recommendations, Councillor S Sheahan replace Councillor F Fenning as a substitute on the Planning Committee.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

- a) The changes to the political proportionality of the Council be noted;
- b) Councillor R Adams be appointed to the Labour seat left vacant on the Appointments Committee with Councillor J Legrys being the substitute;
- c) Councillor S McKendrick be appointed to the seat currently allocated to Councillor R Adams on the Audit & Governance Committee;
- d) Councillor D Everitt be appointed as replacement Labour Group substitute member on the Investigatory committee and Local Plan Advisory Committee;
- e) Councillor S Sheahan be appointed as replacement Labour Group substitute member on the Policy Development Group;
- f) No changes be made to the membership of the Electoral Review Working Party, with the exception of Councillor F Fenning no longer being a Labour group substitute;
- g) Councillor S Sheahan replace Councillor F Fenning as substitute member on the Planning Committee.

**52. HIGH SPEED RAIL (HS2) PHASE 2: CONSULTATION IN RESPECT OF PROPOSED ROUTE FROM WEST MIDLANDS TO LEEDS - RESPONSE OF NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Having declared a pecuniary interest, Councillors R Blunt, J G Coxon and T J Pendleton left the meeting prior to consideration of the subsequent item and took no part in the discussion or voting thereon.

Councillor A V Smith presented the report to members on behalf of Councillor T J Pendleton. She made reference to the current consultation on the proposed changes to the HS2 route in the district. She reminded members that the Council had previously resolved the object to the route in 2014 on the basis that the district would be negatively impacted without any real gain. She advised that it was now suggested that the Council should no longer object outright to the project, but instead offer qualified support recognising the significant economical potential generated by the HS2 project. She outlined the potential benefits including better journey times allowing for much improved business and employment links between towns and cities, increased capacity on the existing network leading to improved train services, opportunities for more economic development, particularly around East Midlands Airport and opportunities to develop improved transport networks linked to HS2 hubs. She emphasised however that concerns remained, which were set out clearly in the documents appended to the report. She summarised the concerns as follows:

The logic of no longer proposing a tunnel under East Midlands Airport was acknowledged, however Kegworth would need to be compensated for the lack of recreation space and the delivery of the Kegworth bypass should not be put at risk.

The lack of a station in the district was disappointing and an opportunity had been missed to link closer to East Midlands Airport or the Parkway station.

Chairman's initials

The proposed route change to run the line to the east of Measham would have a severe detrimental impact upon the villages of Appleby, Measham and Packington and a route should be sought which protected important jobs within the district but avoided the negative impacts of the eastern route around Measham.

Councillor A V Smith commented that whatever route was eventually decided upon, HS2 was coming to the district and the Council had an important role to play in supporting communities and businesses affected by the proposals. She reiterated the importance of making the most of the benefits that HS2 would bring to the district, but also ensuring that HS2 heard the voice of our communities.

Councillor S Sheahan proposed an amendment to the motion which was circulated at the meeting. He stated that since the Council published its report a lot of people had written in and some of them were present at the meeting. He added that much of what they had written was informative and well written. He stated that the amendment sought to ensure the Council could give the strongest possible response to HS2. He made reference to a piece of work which had been undertaken in respect of employment which he felt should be included and some figures released by Leicestershire County Council in respect of the number of houses affected by the proposals. He urged members to make use of this information and ensure the Council's consultation response was as strong as it could be.

The amendment was seconded by Councillor J Geary who reserved his comments.

Councillor A V Smith commented that members needed to see the information before they could agree to include it. She urged members to vote against the amendment.

Councillor J Legrys expressed bitter disappointment that an agreement could not have been reached in respect of the amendment which sought to address concerns in respect of the wording of the recommendations.

Councillor S Sheahan made a point of clarification and commented that this issue of members not having seen the representations before agreeing to their inclusion in the consultation response could be resolved by delegating authority to the Director of Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder. He requested a short adjournment to consider this and see if an agreement could be reached. He expressed concerns that local people were being shut out.

It was not agreed to adjourn the meeting.

Councillor J Geary expressed bitter disappointment as he felt the amendment would strengthen the recommendations. He commented that surely adding weight to the case could only be positive.

The Chairman then put the amendment to the vote. The amendment was declared LOST.

The Chairman directed members to the substantive motion as set out in the agenda.

Councillor S Sheahan expressed concern in the change in stance from opposing HS2 to supporting it. He commented that HS2 was not inevitable and he felt the business case was flawed being based on unproven journey saving times. He added that councils and other bodies who had changed their stance had heavily caveated their support with conditions relating to connectivity to cities, which was the Achilles heel of HS2 in the East Midlands. He highlighted the risk of losing valuable custom to the East Midlands mainline. He felt that the benefits were questionable and when weighed against the impacts on schools and jobs, would result in a disbenefit to the district.

Councillor T Eynon stated that she was broadly supportive of the attempt to mitigate the adverse effects on North West Leicestershire and the strategy document. She believed that the concerns of local residents should be taken into account and the benefits to Coalville had been overstated. She expressed concerns that public transport times would increase.

Councillor N Smith stated that he was totally opposed to HS2 and the impact it would have upon Packington, as the proposals would cause untold harm and were already causing problems. He commented that to suggest people were not being listened to was wrong, as there was a mechanism in place whereby people could express their views. He concluded that he would support the recommendations as he felt this was the way forward.

Councillor D Harrison welcomed the comprehensive assessment and concurred with the concerns set out in the report. He accepted the potential benefits and welcomed economic development however he expressed concerns in respect of the impact particularly on Ashby de la Zouch, Packington and Measham. He commented that if the proposed route was pushed through, it was clear the people of Appleby would be paying a very heavy price. He added that one of the fundamental principles of HS2 had been wherever possible to follow existing corridors and he questioned why this principle had not been followed in North West Leicestershire.

Councillor J Clarke stated that initially he was totally opposed to HS2 and commented that never in the field of public transport would so much money have been spent to benefit so few. He added that the villages and people whose lives would be blighted forever would be the ones who paid the price. He hoped that the proposals would not proceed and felt that the timings suggested were neither relevant nor sustainable.

Councillor G Hoult stated that she was pleased to see the report did not support the proposal to move the line east of Measham as there were no benefits to the village. She commented that the proposed route would blight Measham by going against HS2's own rules and making an island of the village. She added that the proposals were already causing confusion and distress to residents and HS2 needed to find an alternative route that did not have such a detrimental impact upon the area.

Councillor T Gillard stated that it had been implied that the Council was supporting HS2. He clarified that this was not the case and referred members to the recommendations set out in the report.

Councillor M Specht added that members were voting for or against the recommendation on page 100 of the agenda, and not the proposed route

Councillor S Sheahan commented that the recommendation was to adopt the strategy which stated that the Council was broadly in support of the concept of HS2.

Councillor A V Smith thanked members for their comments and drew their attention to the bullet points on page 102 of the agenda which addressed the points made.

It was moved by Councillor A V Smith, seconded by Councillor R D Bayliss and

RESOLVED THAT:

- a) The HS2 strategy for the district appended to this report be agreed;
- b) Officers be authorised to negotiate with HS2 Ltd to maximise the local benefits arising from HS2 including improving connectivity from the district to the HS2 stations;

Chairman's initials

c) The response to the HS2 consultation as appended to this report be agreed and the Director of Services be authorised to submit the comments as the Council's official response to the HS2 consultation;

d) The Council's proactive role in seeking to support businesses and residents across the district who may be affected by the HS2 proposals be supported

### **53. FUTURE EXTERNAL AUDIT ARRANGEMENTS**

Councillor N J Rushton presented the report to members.

It was moved by Councillor N J Rushton, seconded by Councillor M Specht and

RESOLVED THAT:

Council approves the opting in to the PSAA Framework for appointing external auditors in accordance with the Local Audit (Appointing Person) Regulations.

Councillor D J Stevenson left the meeting at 8.32pm during the discussion on item 12 - High Speed Rail (HS2) Phase 2: Consultation in respect of proposed route from West Midlands to Leeds - response of North West Leicestershire District Council. He returned to the meeting at 8.34pm.

Councillor F Fenning left the meeting at 8.35pm during the debate on item 12 - High Speed Rail (HS2) Phase 2: Consultation in respect of proposed route from West Midlands to Leeds - response of North West Leicestershire District Council. He returned to the meeting at 8.37pm.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.50 pm