

MINUTES of a meeting of the CABINET held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Coalville on TUESDAY, 29 MARCH 2022

Present: Councillor R Blunt (Chairman)

Councillors R Ashman, R D Bayliss, T Gillard, K Merrie MBE, N J Rushton and A C Woodman

Officers: Mrs B Smith, Mr A Barton, Miss E Warhurst, Mrs A Crouch, Mrs C Hammond, Ms R Haynes, Mr M Murphy, B Walford and Mr P Wheatley

98. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies were received.

99. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No interests were declared.

100. MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on 15 February and 1 March 2022 were considered.

It was moved by Councillor T Gillard, seconded by Councillor K Merrie and

RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the meetings held on 15 February and 1 March 2022 be confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings.

Reason for decision: To comply with the Constitution.

101. PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

No questions were received.

102. EMPTY HOMES POLICY

The Community Services Portfolio Holder presented the report, outlining the council's policy which aimed to unlock the potential of vacant sites and empty homes.

Members were informed of the council's approach to bringing empty properties back into use and some of the successes to date were highlighted.

Members wholeheartedly supported this policy, which saw more homes brought into use, and consequently more families obtain "a roof over their heads".

It was moved by Councillor A Woodman, seconded by Councillor R Bayliss and

RESOLVED THAT:

The revised Empty Homes Policy be approved by Cabinet.

Reason for decision: To continue to work on private sector empty homes.

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103. NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE ECONOMIC GROWTH PLAN 2022

The Business and Regeneration Portfolio Holder presented the report, highlighting the strengths and opportunities available to the authority to support economic recovery and growth.

It was noted that the current plan was a refresh of the original 2019 plan and incorporated elements of the 2020 Economic Recovery Plan. Members were informed that the plan had been shaped by feedback from the Community Scrutiny Committee and by other partner organisations.

Members praised the very comprehensive report and thanked the Community Scrutiny Committee for their feedback.

It was moved by Councillor T Gillard, seconded by Councillor K Merrie and

RESOLVED THAT:

1. The final draft of the refreshed North West Leicestershire Economic Growth Plan 22-25 and the associated evidence base be reviewed and the comments of the Community Scrutiny Committee be considered.
2. The adoption of the refreshed North West Leicestershire Economic Growth Plan 22-25 be approved.

Reason for decision: For Cabinet to provide feedback and adopt the refreshed North West Leicestershire Economic Growth Plan ahead of publication.

104. 2022/23 COUNCIL SURPLUS PROPERTY LIST

The Housing and Customer Services Portfolio Holder presented the report outlining assets on the 2022/23 Surplus Property List.

The Portfolio Holder outlined the two items which were on the Surplus Property List, those being the Market Hall, which was no longer in use, and the current council offices which would become surplus to requirements following the planned move to Whitwick Business Centre. This was in line with the authority's disposal policy which was adopted last year.

It was moved by Councillor R Bayliss, seconded by Councillor T Gillard and

RESOLVED THAT:

The North West Leicestershire District Council Surplus Property List 2022/23 be approved by Cabinet.

Reason for decision: To comply with the requirements of the Council's Corporate Disposals Policy.

105. APPROPRIATION OF AREA OF LAND AT HOWE ROAD CURRENTLY USED AS OPEN SPACE TO HOUSING

The Housing and Customer Services Portfolio Holder presented the report, highlighting the area of land that was originally purchased by the authority for the development of housing.

Members were informed that the piece of land was acquired in the late 1980s, and the houses built around it were completed in 1991. The land was being used informally for

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dog walking and leisure pursuits but was now required for housing. Therefore, the authority had consulted widely before bringing the decision forward to Cabinet.

It was noted that a number of objections had been raised from local residents, however, the local ward member had no objections. Members believed the objections received were not insurmountable and utilisation of the land would give the authority 15 much needed retirement bungalows.

Councillor T Gillard informed the meeting that he had received some comments about the potential development but it was highlighted that the need for affordable housing outweighed the concerns raised.

It was moved by Councillor R Bayliss, seconded by Councillor N Rushton and

RESOLVED THAT:

The appropriation of land at Howe Road for housing purposes for the delivery of new residential properties be approved by Cabinet.

Reason for decision: To seek approval from Cabinet to the appropriation of land at Howe Road to deliver new council housing.

106. 2021/22 QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Leader presented the report, providing members with information on the performance and progress made against the Council Delivery Plan actions.

Progress been made against the Council's 5 key priority areas.

Members were invited to comment.

Councillor A Woodman offered the meeting his observations and updates. With regard to the Newmarket, members were informed that 68 businesses had traded from there including a new permanent food trader. Footfall in March was markedly increased. Events are planned and it is picking up well and had received good feedback. It was noted that the Newmarket would be a long journey but that it had made strong positive progress.

A member offered a personal observation on the positive impact of the new Whitwick and Coalville Leisure Centre, which had received good feedback and was noted to be very well attended.

Members were updated on the Zero Litter Campaign, and informed that the "Wombles" had been invited to attend joint meetings with the authority whereby long-term strategies had been jointly discussed. Members offered full support in any effort to reduce litter as it continued to be a noticeable problem.

In respect of the Zero Carbon target, it was noted that waste vehicles now run on HVO fuel using 90% less CO₂.

Councillor T Gillard informed the meeting that despite the ongoing pandemic, the Economic Development team continued to provide key frontline services to support businesses and informed members that businesses had participated in training, supported by the team, which led to improved sales and customer engagement. Members congratulated the team on the work they had done and thanked them for their efforts.

Councillor R Bayliss updated members on the planned objectives for delivering council homes, which had been below target. However, it was noted that this was due to

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complications beyond the authority's control and that several sites had been earmarked for new developments in the coming months.

It was noted that customer services had been steadily improving and that customer satisfaction had also improved, with the use of online forms and the number of online accounts having risen.

It was moved by Councillor R Blunt, seconded by Councillor T Gillard and

RESOLVED THAT:

Progress against the corporate objectives and performance indicators for Quarter 3 2021/22 be noted.

Reason for decision: To report Quarter 3 Council Delivery Plan performance.

107. FORMER TENANT RENT ARREARS, CURRENT TENANT RENT ARREARS, COUNCIL TAX, NON DOMESTIC RATES AND SUNDRY DEBTOR WRITE OFFS

The Corporate Portfolio Holder presented the report.

Councillor N Rushton drew members' attention to the section of the report which illustrated any write offs under £10,000 and additionally to a paragraph in the report explaining the reasons why some debts are written off. It was noted that it was good accountancy practice to write off debts, however if the authority could recoup debts at a later date, it would endeavour to do so.

It was moved by Councillor N Rushton, seconded by Councillor R Bayliss and

RESOLVED THAT:

1. Non-domestic rates write offs over £10,000 be approved.
2. The information contained within the summary report as a true representation of write offs undertaken during 2021/22 to date under delegated powers be approved.

Reason for decision: To comply with proper accounting practices.

The meeting commenced at 5.00 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 5.21 pm