

MINUTES of a meeting of the COUNCIL held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Coalville on TUESDAY, 15 NOVEMBER 2022

Present: Councillor R Boam (Chairman)

Councillors J Bridges, E G C Allman, R Ashman, R D Bayliss, C C Benfield, D Bigby, A S Black, R Blunt, A J Bridgen, R Canny, J Clarke, D Everitt, T Eynon, M French, J Geary, L A Gillard, S Gillard, T Gillard, D Harrison, B Harrison-Rushton, M D Hay, G Houl, J Houl, R Johnson, J Legrys, R L Morris, V Richichi, N J Rushton, A C Saffell, C A Sewell, S Sheahan, J G Simmons, N Smith, J Windram, A C Woodman and M B Wyatt

Officers: Mr J Arnold, Mr A Barton, Mrs C Hammond, Mr G Hammons, Thomas, Mrs R Wallace and Miss E Warhurst

33. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor K Merrie.

34. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no interests declared.

35. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman referred to the sad passing of Her Majesty the Queen and the honour of reading the proclamation for the District. Following the forward of the District's condolences to the Palace, the Chairman announced that a signed card of thanks had been received from His Royal Highness the King.

36. LEADER'S AND PORTFOLIO HOLDERS' ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader of the Council, Councillor R Blunt made the following announcements:

The new Customer Centre was now complete and would open later in the month. The next stage was the relocation of staff to Whitwick Business Centre and the final part was the refurbishment of Stenson House into a new Civic Hub. The work on Stenson House was due to start in the next few months and the plan was to have works completed before the Annual Council meeting in May next year. He thanked the Strategic Director for his work on the project and although it was acknowledged there would still be challenges ahead, he was confident that all was moving in the right direction.

In relation to what the Council was doing to address the Cost-of-Living Crisis, Councillor Blunt acknowledged the work of the Fuel Poverty Task and Finish Group and referred to the information now available on the website, the bids being made under the Decarbonisation Fund and the ECO4 Scheme.

Plans were moving forward with Marlborough Centre with the Council in the process of submitting a planning application in relation to the frontages and apartments above.

In relation to the former Hermitage Leisure Centre, demolition was expected in the new year and then further decisions would be taken on the site.

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To conclude, Councillor Blunt announced that work was progressing on the Royal Hotel in Ashby with a planning application expected imminently. As a key part of the town, Councillor Blunt felt it was important to get the building back in to use as soon as possible.

In response to comments and questions, Councillor Blunt shared the view that much had changed in national Government since the last Council meeting, and he would be monitoring how the difficult decisions to come would affect Local Government Finances. In relation to the proposed Cinema in Coalville, Councillor Blunt confirmed that progress was still being made and gave a brief update on the current process for advertising the sites as available for leisure use.

Councillor T Eynon thanked Councillor Blunt for noting the work of the Fuel Poverty Task and Finish Group and thanked all involved in recent weeks. She encouraged Members to support the recommendations made by the group.

37. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

There were no questions received.

38. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

There were four questions asked which are set out below together with the responses. Each member who asked a question was invited by the Chairman to ask one supplementary question which is also set out together with the response.

Question by Councillor J Geary

"How much have the costs to NWLDC been to clear sites up after traveller trespass?"

Response by Councillor A Woodman

Council services in the form of housing, car parking, street cleansing, parks and property have not historically collected this data but will be doing so henceforth starting with the most recent trespass onto Council land at Silver Street Car Park. Listed below are the incidents over the past five years.

Date	Site location
10 May 2018	Coalville Park London Road Coalville
24 Jun 2018	Greenhill Park Cropston Drive Coalville
30 Jun 2018	A511 Stephenson Way Coalville
31 Jul 2018	Recreation Ground Ashburton Road Hugglescote
02 Aug 2018	Hermitage Leisure Centre Silver St Whitwick
17 Oct 2018	Bridge Street Car Park Coalville
08 May 2019	Covert Place Albert Village
06 Jun 2019	Hermitage Leisure Centre and Recreation Ground Whitwick Coalville

08 Sep 2019	Bridge Road Car Park Coalville
10 Sep 2019	A5324 Ashby Road Long Whatton
12 Oct 2019	Bridge Road Car Park Coalville
21 Oct 2019	Car Park Cropston Drive Greenhill Coalville
25 Oct 2019	NWLDC Visitor Car Park London Road Coalville
13 Nov 2019	Bridge Street Car Park Coalville
14 Nov 2019	Cropston Drive Coalville
21 Nov 2019	Bridge Road Car Park Coalville
07 Jun 2020	Scotland's Playing Fields Car Park Forest Road Coalville
17 Aug 2020	Hermitage Leisure Centre Silver St Whitwick
10 Sep 2020	Hermitage Leisure Centre Playing Fields Hermitage Road Whitwick
23 Dec 2020	Rear Car Park Covert Place Albert Village
06 May 2021	Garage Site Coronation Avenue Moira
14 Jun 2021	Recreation Ground Cropston Drive Coalville
05 Sep 2021	Waterworks Road Coalville
28 Oct 2022	Hermitage Leisure Centre Silver Street Whitwick

Supplementary question and response

Councillor Geary asked if it was possible for him to have the figures for the latest incident on Silver Street once they had been collated. Councillor Woodman informed members that there was not a legal requirement to keep this information, but he felt that it was useful for the authority to have. He was happy for all members to receive the information once available.

Question by Councillor J Legrys

"I am struggling to keep myself informed of staff movement due to promotion, resignation/retirement, joint working with another LA or internal move. I am aware that the Council have employed consultants/agency staff in many unfilled posts.

I would appreciate if the Portfolio Holder could provide regular update on staff changes please.

I would like to know which posts are filled by consultants/agency employees, and the number of unfilled posts?"

Response by Councillor R Ashman

“An updated copy of the current management structure to team manager level with names has been added to the members’ hub for information. This also indicates the posts at those levels currently occupied by consultants/agency staff. It is always our preference to employ people directly as a first option, but when this has not been possible, we do use interims and consultants to support the Council’s operations. Currently, all posts in the management structure to team manager level are either filled by a permanent member of staff or an interim worker.

Updates on key staff changes are regularly added to the members hub to help members to keep up to date.”

Supplementary question and response

Councillor Legrys thanked all involved in providing the information and urged Officers to keep it up to date. He asked if members could be regularly emailed with staff updates rather than just being placed on the Members Hub. Councillor Ashman encouraged members to use the Members Hub as there were lots of information provided and it was the best way to keep up to date. He added that if any assistance was required in accessing it, Democratic Services and ICT would be happy to help.

Question by Councillor C Sewell

“I would like to ask this Council to liaise more closely with LCC Highways to change conditions surrounding parking provision required for planning applications, both new builds and change of use for domestic properties: i.e. change of use to HMOs where no, or insufficient parking exists.

My understanding is that Leicestershire County Council Highways will only object on the grounds of ‘safety’ and my own personal experience is that shortfall in parking spaces is not considered to be a ground for refusal for an application, although it does indeed make the highway less safe, e.g. parking close to junctions and on corners, thus reducing visibility. Also, residents are being greatly inconvenienced when refuse/recycling cannot be collected due to parked cars blocking access.

What can this Council do about this?”

Response by Councillor R Ashman on behalf of Councillor K Merrie

“I am aware that the Council’s Head of Planning and Infrastructure has been in contact with Leicestershire County Council (LCC) Highways about this matter and they have confirmed that they currently do not have any standards covering parking requirements for HMO’s although they do now rely on information from the 2021 census, which includes evidence for HMO’s for the first time. As such, they will consider each application on its own merits and will advise whether the proposals will have an adverse impact on highway safety. They will also consider the advice contained in Paragraph 111 of the National Planning Policy Framework which states that “Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

I can assure you that where issues are raised by the Parish Council and neighbouring residents, the Council’s Planning Officers will challenge LCC Highways on the response they have given. Ultimately, if there is no objection on highway grounds from the Council’s professional advisors, this is the position officers will need to take account of when making a decision or recommendation on the application.

However, I am aware that LCC Highways are in the process of reviewing the Leicestershire Highway Design Guide, which includes parking standards, and the

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Council's Planning Team will be invited to feed into this process at which time they can raise the issue of on street parking resulting from HMO's and the need to consider whether parking standards for these types of property is appropriate."

Supplementary question and response

Councillor Sewell asked how much this 'loophole' in the planning process was costing the authority as well as requested refuse collection data including the number of collections that were missed due to inaccessibility as a result of on street parking in new developments. Councillor Ashman asked that Councillor Sewell submit her requests in writing to the Strategic Director who would provide a full response.

Question by Councillor S Sheahan

"In October, the BBC published figures about hazardous faults in private rented properties. The BBC had asked Councils in England how many hazards (category 1 or 2) they had recorded in the last 5 years.

Of the 60% of councils analysed, a total of 135,687 hazards were recorded, including 42,654 category one hazards - deemed to pose an immediate risk to safety.

In the same period, formal action was only taken by councils on 25,243 occasions, while less than 1% of the registered faults led to a prosecution.

What are the corresponding figures for this Council?"

Response by Councillor A Woodman

"For the period between 1 April 2021 and the end of October 2022, I can confirm that there have been no formal notices served. However, I would highlight that during this period the Council received and investigated 172 housing standards' complaints, which have resulted in works being carried out by landlords of the properties, whilst others have resulted in advice to the tenants. All the investigations are carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Housing Act 2004 and the Council's General Enforcement Policy and follow a graduated approach to enforcement and engagement with landlords. The vast majority of cases are resolved informally through discussion and negotiation with the landlord. The rare exception to this is where officers find Category 1 hazards where there is imminent risk to life. In these circumstances, we would either serve an emergency prohibition notice or a normal prohibition notice."

Supplementary question and response

Councillor Sheahan did not feel that his question had been answered accurately and believed the figures provided were incorrect. Councillor Woodman agreed to check the figures with officers and obtain a more concise answer outside of the meeting.

39. MOTIONS

No motions were received.

40. PETITIONS

No petitions were received.

41. MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 6 September 2022.

It was moved by Councillor R Boam, seconded by Councillor J Bridges and

RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 September 2022 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

42. APPOINTMENT OF PARISH REPRESENTATIVE TO THE AUDIT & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Councillor N J Rushton presented the report to members.

It was moved by Councillor N J Rushton, seconded by Councillor S Gillard and

RESOLVED THAT:

- a) The nomination process be received and noted.
- b) The appointment of Councillor Nick Antill-Holmes to the vacant Parish Representative seat be approved.

43. APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES ON COMMUNITY BODIES

Councillor R Ashman presented the report to members.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

Councillors E Allman and K Merrie be appointed as representatives to serve on the Ravenstone Hospital Charity.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 7.05 pm