

MINUTES of a meeting of the COUNCIL held in the Forest Room, Stenson House, London Road, Coalville, LE67 3FN on TUESDAY, 14 NOVEMBER 2023

Present: Councillor R L Morris (Chair)

Councillors K Horn, M Ball, A Barker, D Bigby, M Blair-Park, R Blunt, R Boam, M Burke, R Canny, D Cooper, D Everitt, T Eynon, M French, J Geary, T Gillard, R Johnson, S Lambeth, P Lees, J Legrys, K Merrie MBE, A Morley, P Moul, J Page, E Parle, G Rogers, N J Rushton, R Sutton, A C Saffell, C A Sewell, S Sheahan, J G Simmons, N Smith, A Wilson, J Windram, L Windram, A C Woodman and M B Wyatt

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

43. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

44. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Councillors A Barker, D Everitt, M French, R Johnson, J Geary, J Legrys J Page, E Parle, N J Rushton, N Smith and A Wilson declared a non-registerable interest in item 7 – Motions, in relation to a motion submitted regarding Leicestershire Local Government Pension Scheme as previous employees of Leicestershire County Council.

45. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair announced the sad death of John Coterill, an ex-councillor and former Chairman of the Council who passed away on 3 October. The Chair then invited all to stand and a minute silence was observed.

Under his initiative to celebrate the success of staff, the Chair announced that he had recently presented the Chair's award to Rebecca Elliott who worked in the Legal Services Team.

The Chair referred to a recent episode of the television series Countryfile which was set in Heather Wood in the District and followed the journey of a young boy who had been supported by the Chair's chosen charity 'Steps'. The hard and successful work of the charity was acknowledged. The Chair announced that there would be further charity events in the coming months to raise funds for the charity and the details would be to follow.

46. LEADER'S AND PORTFOLIO HOLDERS' ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor K Merrie, Infrastructure Portfolio Holder, welcomed the recent government announcement in relation to HS2 which meant that local businesses and communities could plan for the future. Councillor S Sheahan concurred with Councillor K Merrie in relation to the announcement.

Councillor M B Wyatt, Communities Portfolio Holder, highlighted the achievements of the Council to date in relation to the Carbon Net Zero targets and pledged to continue the journey as detailed within the Council Delivery Plan.

Councillor R Blunt, Leader of the Council, announced a change to Councillor M B Wyatt's Portfolio title to 'Community and Climate Change Portfolio Holder'.

Chairman's initials

47. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

There were no questions received.

48. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

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

Question from Councillor T Eynon

‘I am interested in understanding whether the Leicestershire Local Government Pension Scheme has any milestones and timelines set to monitor the progress of their engagement with fossil fuel companies to ensure that they reduce their fossil fuel production by at least half by 2030.

What criteria (if any) has this authority set to assess achievement of these milestones?’

Response from Councillor N J Rushton

‘Leicestershire County Council Pension Fund (the Fund) agreed a Net Zero Climate Strategy in March 2023 following extensive consultation with over 1700 scheme members and employers. The Strategy outlines the Fund’s approach to climate risk and opportunities. It also details it’s four-step engagement plan to engage with and challenge underlying companies and the Fund’s investment managers to achieve net zero by 2050, with an ambition for sooner.

The Fund doesn’t have specific targets for fossil fuel companies. However, it has nine targets which will aim to support real-world emissions reduction and alignment of companies towards net zero. One of these targets is to have 90% of assets in material sectors (such as fossil fuels, mining, and cement) classified as achieving net zero, aligned or aligning by 2030. Every year the Fund will report against progress towards the targets set in the Net Zero Climate Strategy. The next report is due in December and will highlight progress towards the targets as agreed by the Local Pension Committee.

The Fund is also a part-owner of LGPS Central, the asset pool of which the Fund is a participating member. Central have a clear Net Zero Strategy which is based on emission-reduction and engagement targets from 2025 to 2050. As part of the strategy Central are committed to engage with the highest emitters within the portfolio that have not set credible net zero target, this includes sectors such as agriculture, electricity, and gas sectors.

LGPS Central has set out a number of milestones within its Net Zero Strategy including engagement targets. At individual engagement level they will also set up key performance indicators for each direct engagement on how companies holistically transition to net zero, this will likely involve changing production patterns.

The Fund considers engagement activity of partners such as LGPS Central, the Local Authority Pension Fund Forum and investment managers every quarter, like with Central these partners often lead and participate in engagement with fossil fuel companies, to support a just transition to net zero by 2050.

The Leicestershire Local Pension Committee has the responsibility for the management of the Leicestershire Pension Fund. This fund covers staff of District Councils, Leicester City Council, Loughborough and De Montfort Universities as well as the County Council. Membership consists of 5 County Councillors, 2 City Councillors, 2 District Councillor, 1 university representative, and 3 employee representatives. NWL does not have representation on the committee.

The County Council has established joint arrangements with eight Midlands-based Local Government Pension Funds (Leicestershire, Cheshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, West Midlands, Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire and Worcestershire) to form the Local Government Pension Scheme Central Investment Pool. A joint committee has been established in accordance with section 102 of the Local Government Act 1972 to enable representatives from the eight authorities to meet, ask questions of the operator of the Investment Pool and challenge the performance of investments and investment managers.

Councillor T Eynon did not wish to put forward a supplementary question.

Question from Councillor J Geary

'As a member of The Snibston Heritage Trust I understand that there is a headstock winding wheel currently being stored at the Snibston Mine site by the Leicestershire Museums Service on the understanding that this authority intends to find a use for it as a gateway marker for Coalville.
What progress has been made on this project?'

Response from Councillor R Blunt

'NWLDC was fortunate to be offered a headstock winding wheel that we understand would otherwise have been disposed of by Leicestershire Museum services. The council is now investigating opportunities to re-locate the wheel in one of the existing or future projects that will be delivered under the Coalville Regeneration Framework, ensuring it remains part of Coalville's heritage.'

Supplementary question and response

Councillor J Geary requested that the collection of the wheel be arranged for later in the week as it was impacting the storage facility at the centre. Councillor R Blunt explained that this was not possible as it belonged to Leicestershire County Council, but he would discuss the matter further with officers to devise a plan to move forward.

Question from Councillor A Morley

'On 17 November 2022, as part of the Chancellor's Autumn Statement, the government announced an additional £1 billion of funding to help households with the cost of essentials. In England a further £842 million is being provided to extend the Household Support Fund by a further 12 months from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024. The additional funding will be used by local authorities to support vulnerable households.

How has this funding been allocated in North West Leicestershire?'

Response from Councillor N J Rushton

'The purpose of this grant is to provide support to households, who would otherwise struggle to buy food or pay essential utility bills or meet other essential living costs, to help

them with significantly rising living costs. The grant of £842m will be paid to upper tier and unitary authorities.

Leicestershire County Council (LCC) were allocated a sum of £7.240m for the 2023-24 financial year. The grant allocation is based on an authorities' share of low-income households, which can be used to support those most in need within the scope of the grant determination.

As a lower tier authority, NWL has not received a grant allocation.

The local authorities who have received the grant funding are expected to work with delivery partners such as district councils, charitable or third-party organisations, to ensure that the fund reaches those who need it most.

LCC stipulated that it would not accept direct applications from residents, they must come from a professional support worker or agency. This included referrals from district and borough councils.

During the period 1 April 2023 – 8 November 2023, the Council has made 1,119 referrals. The costs of administering these referrals have been met from existing NWL budgets, despite a request to LCC utilise the grant funding to support administration costs.

Supplementary question and response

Councillor A Morley was pleased to hear that there had been 1,119 referrals. She asked how many of these referrals had been successful and what the total financial award for the district had been out of the £7.240m LCC grant allocation. Councillor A Morley also hoped that as the scheme had been extended, that it was being promoted appropriately across the whole district. Councillor N J Rushton explained that he did not have the financial details but would make sure a response would be provided outside of the meeting.

Question from Councillor G Rogers

'I've been approached by a number of my constituents in relation to events occurring at Cattows Farm, Heather, which I understand is a venue licensed by the Council.

These events are causing chaos in the village with roads being grid locked in all directions. Apart from the massive inconvenience caused to local residents, in the event of an accident or an emergency it is unlikely that Ambulances, Fire Engines or Police would be able to get through or would at the very least be seriously delayed in attending.

Can the Portfolio Holder explain what he is intending to do in relation to the licensing of future events?

Response from Councillor M B Wyatt

'I am aware that a broad range of events take place at Cattows Farm in Heather.

The majority of these events, such as the Halloween events, pumpkin picking and the Ashby Show can take place without a premises licence under the Licensing Act 2003. Traffic related issues at these non licensed events would be dealt with by the Highway Authority at Leicestershire County Council.

The fireworks event which took place on 4th and 5th November was licensed primarily because an element of the event contained live music and a number of bands.

The licence is a permanent licence which is subject to conditions and covers the sale/supply of alcohol as well as regulated entertainment for the tea rooms and restaurant. The licence also covers the farm's larger events.

Where the licence is required, the event organiser is required to comply with the licence conditions relating to traffic management which involves devising a traffic management plan and submitting to Leicestershire County Council Highways and Leicestershire Police for their comment and agreement.

To date (8 November) the Council's Licensing department has not received any complaints relating to traffic problems at the fireworks event from members of the public, however a district councillor and two parish councillors have made contact about these issues.

A debrief of the fireworks event will be scheduled by the Council's Licensing team to both better understand the extent of the traffic issues and clarify the reasons for the problems as well as potential solutions if these are necessary.

Officers will encourage the event organiser / venue to arrange a consultation meeting with residents and Parishes where any issues can be discussed.

Supplementary question and response

Councillor G Rogers explained that the parking issues were becoming a major concern and asked for reassurance that the matter would be addressed. Councillor M B Wyatt gave his reassurances that he would work with officers and the various agencies to try and resolve the matter.

Question from Councillor R Sutton

'As the district in which the East Midlands Airport is located, this Council is not only the relevant Planning Authority but it has a vital role in ensuring that economic, employment and environmental development and regulation are optimised for residents, especially those living in adjoining parishes, and in influencing the Airport's own governance and statutory duties to be a good neighbour. Please supply full details of the Council's representation and attendance at meetings of the Independent Consultative Committee of the Airport since 2019, a period that has covered increased night-time operation and vital consultations on the Noise Action Plan 2024-28 and the Future Airspace Programme to name but two important consultations.'

Response from Councillor K Merrie

Thank you for your question Councillor Sutton. I can confirm the following:

The Council appoints the Chair of Planning Committee to the Independent Consultative Committee, which meets 3 times a year. The Deputy Chair of Planning Committee is appointed as a substitute for the Chair.

Civic Year	Appointed Representative	Attendance
2019 – 2020	Councillor Smith (Councillor Boam sub)	No attendance – There were no meetings between March 2020 and May 2020
2020 - 2021	Councillor Smith (Councillor Boam sub)	No attendance – There were no meetings between May 2020 – January 2021
2021 - 2022	Councillor Smith (Councillor Boam sub)	No attendance
2022 - 2023	Councillor Morris (Councillor Boam sub)	No attendance
2023 - 2024	Councillor Boam (Councillor Morris sub)	No attendance

Further information on the Independent Consultative Committee can be found here <https://www.eastmidlandsairport.com/community/consultative-committee/>

Supplementary question and response

Councillor R Sutton felt that the lack of attendance was a ‘neglect of duty’ and that since there had been no subsequent update following the consideration of the airport masterplan by Cabinet in 2014, he take the seat rather than the Planning Committee Chair due to the urgency of the issue. Councillor K Merrie confirmed that he had discussed the future meeting dates with the Planning Committee Chair and he would attend subject to no clashes with Council meetings.

49. MOTIONS

The Chair referred Members to the motions as detailed within the agenda papers and invited each Councillor who made a submission to speak to their motion in turn in the order that they had been received.

Motion A - Leicestershire Pension Fund and fossil fuel investment

Councillor M B Wyatt spoke to and then formally moved the motion as detailed within the agenda. It was seconded by Councillor R Blunt. The motion was then put to the vote.

The motion was CARRIED.

RESOLVED THAT:

The Council commits to –

- 1) Call on the Leicestershire Local Government Pension Scheme to urgently put in place and act on:
 - a) A public commitment to divest from the top 200 companies involved in fossil fuel production by 2027.

Chairman's initials

- b) A transparent process y which they will carry out this divestment.
 - c) Urgently review its Net Zero Climate Strategy to:
 - i) Use robust measure which do not enable the companies it invests in to greenwash themselves,
 - ii) Include a clear and effective escalation process, culminating in divestment from companies they invest in who fail to act to reduce their carbon emissions.
- 2) Work with other local authorities and councillors in Leicestershire and Rutland, as well as other relevant employers in the pension scheme, to call on our shared Pension Fund to urgently and publicly end their investment in fossil fuel producing companies.

Motion B – Ivanhoe Line

The Chair announced that following the submission of the motion, an alteration to the motion and an amendment to the motion had been received. Both the alteration and amendment were clearly set out in the additional papers. The Chair then went on to explain the process to deal with the motion for clarity.

Councillor M B Wyatt spoke to and then formally moved the altered motion. It was seconded by Councillor A Woodman who at that point accepted his opportunity to address the Chamber and spoke in favour of the motion.

Councillor T Eynon spoke to and formally moved the amendment to the motion. It was seconded by Councillor A Morley.

A discussion ensued in which Members spoke both in support and against the amendment to the motion, including the accuracy of the facts available and opportunities to have a fully functioning line.

Using her right of reply, Councillor T Eynon spoke passionately about the Ivanhoe Line and urged Members not to lose this opportunity for a line in the District.

The amendment to the motion was put to the vote. A recorded vote having been requested; the voting was as detailed below.

The motion was LOST.

The Chair referred Members to the original altered motion as moved and seconded. No further comments were received.

The original altered motion was put to the vote.

The motion was CARRIED.

RESOLVED THAT:

The Council welcomes the progress being made to finally see the Ivanhoe Line reaching the next stage, but strongly encourages the Department for Transport and Network Rail to continue exploring the opportunities to complete the second phase of the Ivanhoe Line from Coalville to Leicester and to also assess the feasibility of adding a station in Moira following the cancellation of the eastern leg of HS2.

Amendment to Motion B - Ivanhoe Line as detailed in the additional papers (Amendment)	
Councillor Ray Morris	Against
Councillor Kenny Horn	Against
Councillor Mike Ball	Against
Councillor Anthony Barker	For
Councillor Dave Bigby	For
Councillor Murrae Blair-Park	For
Councillor Richard Blunt	Against
Councillor Russell Boam	Against
Councillor Morgan Burke	Against
Councillor Rachel Canny	Against
Councillor Doug Cooper	For
Councillor David Everitt	For
Councillor Dr Terri Eynon	For
Councillor Marie French	Against
Councillor John Geary	For
Councillor Tony Gillard	Against
Councillor Russell Johnson	For
Councillor Simon Lambeth	For
Councillor Paul Lees	Against
Councillor John Legrys	For
Councillor Keith Merrie MBE	Against
Councillor Alison Morley	For
Councillor Peter Mout	For
Councillor June Page	For
Councillor Elizabeth Parle	For
Councillor Guy Rogers	For
Councillor Nicholas Rushton	Against
Councillor Ray Sutton	For
Councillor Tony Saffell	Against
Councillor Carol Sewell	For
Councillor Sean Sheahan	For
Councillor Jenny Simmons	Against
Councillor Nigel Smith	Against
Councillor Avril Wilson	For
Councillor Jake Windram	Against
Councillor Lee Windram	Against
Councillor Andrew Woodman	Against
Councillor Michael Wyatt	Against
Councillor Ray Morris	Against (Casting Vote)
Rejected	

50. PETITIONS

No petitions were received.

51. MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2023.

It was moved by Councillor R Morris, seconded by Councillor K Horn and

RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2023 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

52. COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN

Councillor K Merrie presented the report to Members and moved the recommendations. It was seconded by Councillor R Blunt.

A full discussion ensued on the level of detail within the plan, and some comments were also made on the lack of supporting documents which made it hard to see the full picture. The cross-party discussions on the proposed plan were acknowledged but concerns were raised that further work was required to make it the kind of Delivery Plan that the Council deserved. The Portfolio Holder confirmed that there was more work to be undertaken and further details would be shared in due course. The Leader of the Council stressed the importance of having a Delivery Plan in place and urged cross party support.

RESOLVED THAT:

The Council Delivery Plan 2023-28 be adopted.

53. REVIEW OF LICENSING ACT 2003 STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY

Cllr M B Wyatt presented the report to Members and moved the recommendation. It was seconded by Councillor N Smith.

Members welcomed the report and thanked officers for their hard work out in the District.

RESOLVED THAT:

The Licensing Act 2003 Statement of Licensing Policy be approved.

54. APPOINTMENT OF PARISH REPRESENTATIVES TO THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Cllr N J Rushton presented the report to Members moved the recommendations. It was seconded by Cllr T Gillard.

RESOLVED THAT:

- 1) The appointments of Parish Representatives as detailed at paragraph 2.1 of the report be approved.
- 2) The next steps required to appoint to the remaining vacant Parish Representative seats be noted.

55. URGENT DECISIONS TAKEN BY CABINET

Cllr R Blunt presented the report to Members and moved the recommendations. It was seconded by Councillor M B Wyatt.

RESOLVED THAT:

The report be noted.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 7.40 pm