

MINUTES of a meeting of the COUNCIL held in the Forest Room, Stenson House, London Road, Coalville, LE67 3FN on TUESDAY, 18 JUNE 2024

Present: Councillor K Horn (Chair)

Councillors R L Morris, M Ball, A Barker, C Beck, 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 Moulton, 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

## **19. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

## **20. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

Councillor K Merrie declared an Other Registerable Interest in item 10, East Midlands Freeport Update, as a Member of Leicestershire County Council and the District Council representative on the Freeport Board.

Councillors T Gillard and N Rushton declared an Other Registerable Interest in item 10, East Midlands Freeport Update, as Members of Leicestershire County Council.

## **21. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chair made the following announcements:

Whilst the Leader acknowledged Councillor C Beck as the new Member for the Snibston South Ward, it was not formally recognised at the last meeting, the Chair apologised and formally welcomed Councillor C Beck to the Chamber.

The Chair announced the recent passing of David Smith who was a key member of the remembrance planning group and civic events for 43 years. Condolences were sent to David's family at this difficult time.

An update was provided on the North West Leicestershire District Council's 50th anniversary plans and Members were encouraged to put forward nominations for the Legacy Awards.

Several events had already taken place in recent weeks including Moira Canal Festival and D-Day celebrations, both with large turnouts. The 125th anniversary of Coalville Park celebrations would be taking place later in the month, further information was to follow.

The Chair's chosen charity was announced as 'Steps'. The Chair invited Rosemary Conley, the patron and trustee of the charity to speak on the work undertaken by the Charity and the support provided to families during difficult times. The Leader said a few words in support of the work of the charity.

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

The Leader of the Council made the following announcements:

Chair's initials

In relation to the Leader's Executive Arrangements as announced at the previous meeting, the Planning Policy element of Councillor A Saffell's Planning Portfolio had been moved to Councillor K Merrie's Infrastructure Portfolio.

The success of this year's Download Festival held in Castle Donington was celebrated. New plans had been introduced to successfully mitigate the issues experienced last year and officers were thanked for their hard work. Several Members spoke in support and echoed the Leader's comments.

Following cross party discussions, it was announced that during the European Football Championships, the England and Scotland flags would be flown at Stenson House when the national teams were playing.

### **23. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION**

There were no questions received.

### **24. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

There were three questions asked which are set out below together with 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 J Legrys

"Council has recently made appointments to outside bodies, at its recent Annual Meeting. Could the Portfolio Holder please explain the process which the Council follows in seeking nominations for and making appointments to outside bodies?"

Response from Councillor N Rushton

"Thank you for your question Cllr Legrys. The Council considers and makes appointments to outside bodies each year at the Annual Council meeting. As part of the preparation for the meeting, the Democratic Services Team carry out an annual review by contacting each outside body (either directly or through any Council officer who liaises with the outside body) which the Council appointed to at the previous annual meeting to confirm whether they still require the Council to appoint a member representative to the body and what the details of the appointment are, for example whether the body requires a ward member, portfolio holder, skills/experience required, frequency and location of meetings.

Once the review is complete, Democratic Services contacts Group Whips and other members to seek nominations for the bodies that still require representation. Those nominations are considered and decided by the Annual Council meeting. After Annual Council, Democratic Services writes to those members appointed with the details of the appointment and notify the outside body or the liaising Council officer, of the appointed member and their contact details."

Supplementary question and response

Councillor J Legrys thanked Councillor N Rushton for his response and the Monitoring Officer for her support with drafting the question. He asked for the issue to be kept under review and taken through the Constitution Working Group this year. Councillor N Rushton confirmed it would be included in the annual review of the Consttution.

Question from Councillor J Geary

“Had it not been for the prompt action of the local Police Force travellers would have set up camp on The Scotland’s Playing Field last month. Should they have succeeded this Authority would have once again incurred cost of evicting them along with the costs of cleaning up the site and repairing damage caused to the grounds.

When I submitted a question enquiring when this Council would have a warden-controlled site for the travel community in our district back in November 2018, Councillor Pendleton replied, “The need to make provision for gypsies and travellers is something which the Council is aware of. We have been working to identify potential sites” and went on to say, ‘to date over 500 sites have been looked at’.

This is now the sixth time I have asked this question at Council meetings and am now hopeful of a positive answer.

When will this Council have a warden-controlled site to accommodate Gypsies and Travellers passing through our District?”

Response from Councillor K Merrie

“I recognise the concern raised by Cllr Geary in relation to the time it has taken to deal with the matter of gypsy and traveller sites and I’m sure he will recognise the significant difficulties in finding suitable sites in the district. I can confirm that Officers are currently investigating options for addressing the issue of transit accommodation in respect of both permanent and temporary sites as the Local Plan Review progresses. The intention is for Officers to bring forward a report to members of the Local Plan Committee before the end of the year.

I have asked Officers to keep Cllr Geary updated on progress and to make him aware when the issue is to be reported to Local Plan Committee.”

Supplementary question and response

Councillor J Geary acknowledged the difficulties for officers in identifying an appropriate site, however he reminded Members that it was a legal requirement to have a transient site. As he had received a similar response each time he asked this question, he requested that an item be considered by Scrutiny for further discussions. Councillor K Merrie also acknowledged the difficulties and assured the matter would be considered by the Local Plan Committee as soon as possible.

Question from Councillor Moulton

“I would like to ask the leader of the council if he is recommending that Glyn Rennocks ex chair of Coalville Town football club be recognised for all the hard work and dedication in the accomplishment of achieving Football League status at Level 3 in the town of Coalville.

Glyn has over a period of nearly 50 years not only invested a huge sum financially but also he has spent valuable time in building the club from humble beginnings.

Through his vision and forward thinking since moving to the Owen St venue in Coalville, the club has developed facilities off the field including changing rooms, a boardroom but also stands with seating. The club only recently installed a 3G all-weather pitch after raising over £1Million for the project, this has without a doubt raised the profile of Coalville and the wider community. The club achieved great success not least an appearance at Wembley in the final of the 2011 FA Vase final losing narrowly three two and with a modicum of good fortune had one of the two goal efforts which had hit the inside of the post who knows what further achievements could have been achieved on the back of that success. I know that many people from the area were privileged to have been present that day, I know I was.

More recently Coalville Town football club achieved success in the world's oldest cup competition the FA Cup by beating teams with Football League experience like Notts County and Chesterfield also playing teams like Charlton Athletic Grimsby town who are both currently playing in league football.

Glyn leaves Coalville Town F.C. having supported the local community and left a wonderful legacy with the youth and ladies football teams set up which has been run separately, I hope I can count on the leader's support and acknowledge Glyn with the recognition he so rightly deserves.”

Response from Councillor Blunt

“The Council recognises the significant contribution that Glyn has had on Coalville, including helping improve the health and wellbeing of residents, supporting the local economy, putting Coalville on the map because of the level of football and developing the facilities at Owen Street Recreation Ground. I would personally like to go on record to thank Glyn for what he has achieved and brought to Coalville and I hope Cllr Moulton will take the opportunity to encourage the local ward member to nominate Glyn for a North West Leicestershire 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Legacy Award for making such a positive contribution to the community. I would also encourage all councillors to put forward a member of their community for consideration under this award so that we can celebrate their contributions to the district, together.”

No supplementary question was asked.

## **25. MOTIONS**

No motions were received.

## **26. PETITIONS**

No petitions were received.

## **27. MINUTES**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 7 May 2024.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 May be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

Chair's initials

## **28. EAST MIDLANDS FREEPORT UPDATE**

Councillor K Merrie, the Infrastructure Portfolio Holder, presented the report to Members and moved the recommendations. It was seconded by Councillor A Woodman.

Prior to discussion, a Member commented that due to the nature of the report and that it was the pre-election period for the general election, it was felt that the item should be deferred. The Portfolio Holder explained that the report was not political and it was business as usual at a local authority level.

During discussion, comments were made regarding the risks of fraudulent and money laundering activity and business displacement, and the portfolio holder was asked what measures were being put in place. The Portfolio Holder stated that he would be meeting with the Freeport Board later in the week and would raise these points.

RESOLVED THAT:

- 1) The latest position on respect of the East Midlands Freeport.
- 2) Subject to the approval of the Freeport Business Rates Relief Policy, the finalisation of the member's agreements, articles of association and documents/agreements necessary to facilitate the incorporation of East Midlands Freeport Company, be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder.

## **29. ANNUAL MEMBER CONDUCT REPORT**

Councillor K Merrie, as Infrastructure Portfolio Holder, presented the report to Members and moved the recommendations. It was seconded by Councillor R Blunt.

Councillor D Everitt was invited to speak to the report as the Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee during the period covered within the report.

Several Members commended the work undertaken by the Monitoring Officer with investigating conduct complaints, due to the difficulties of subject and the time required.

During discussion, the lack of detail in relation to the subject matter and learning outcomes was raised. The Monitoring Officer explained that in accordance with the adopted arrangements for dealing with complaints, which was aligned with the Local Government Association's Guidance on complaints handling, details of complaints were not published due to the sensitive nature. However, it was agreed that an explanation to be included in future annual reports to make that clear.

RESOLVED THAT:

The Member Conduct Annual Report 2023/24 be endorsed.

## **30. AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24**

Councillor N Rushton, as Corporate Portfolio Holder, presented the report to Members and moved the recommendations. It was seconded by Councillor P Moulton.

Councillor Moulton as current Audit and Governance Committee Chair was invited to speak to the report.

Councillor R Sutton addressed the Committee and requested his comments be recorded. He expressed his opinion that audit matters were not understood by the authority and not taken seriously by the Committee as there were no independent members appointed and

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still a vacancy on the Committee. He also had major concerns with the delays in signing off the annual accounts and that this was a risk to the authority.

Some Members expressed concerns that although the scope of the committee was to remain apolitical, this was not the case.

The Portfolio Holder reassured Members that the Audit and Governance function was taken very seriously with no obstructions from the administration, in relation to the delays with the annual accounts, there had been several external and internal factors impacting this and it was the aim to deliver as soon as possible.

RESOLVED THAT:

The Audit and Governance Committee Annual Report 2023/24 be noted.

**31. APPOINTMENT OF PARISH REPRESENTATIVES TO THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

Councillor K Merrie, as Infrastructure Portfolio Holder, presented the report to Members and moved the recommendations. It was seconded by Councillor T Gillard.

RESOLVED THAT:

Parish Councillors Mike McIntyre and Ray Woodward be appointed as Parish Council representatives to the Audit and Governance Committee.

**32. APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES**

Councillor K Merrie, as Infrastructure Portfolio Holder, presented the report to Members and moved the recommendations. It was seconded by Councillor T Gillard.

RESOLVED THAT:

- 1) Councillor R Blunt be appointed to represent the Council on East Midlands Council.
- 2) Councillor K Merrie be nominated to submit an expression of interest in being a member of the Regional Employers Board.
- 3) Councillor Woodman be nominated to submit an expression of interest in being a member of the regional Migration Board.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 7.34 pm