

MINUTES of a meeting of the COUNCIL held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Coalville on TUESDAY, 12 SEPTEMBER 2017

Present: Councillor V Richichi (Chairman)

Councillors R Adams, G A Allman, R Ashman, R D Bayliss, R Blunt, R Boam, J Bridges, 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 Hoults, J Hoults, R Johnson, G Jones, J Legrys, S McKendrick, K Merrie MBE, T J Pendleton, N J Rushton, A C Saffell, S Sheahan, N Smith, A V Smith MBE, M Specht, D J Stevenson and M B Wyatt

Officers: Mr A Hunkin, Mr G Jones, Mrs M Long, Mrs M Meredith, Mrs B Smith and Miss E Warhurst

29. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor P Purver.

30. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Councillor S Sheahan declared a pecuniary interest in item 7, Motions, due to the proximity of his house to the now declared route of HS2.

Councillor R Blunt declared a pecuniary interest in item 7, Motions, as the HS2 route went through land owned by his family.

Councillor T J Pendleton declared a pecuniary interest in item 7, Motions, due to the proximity of his daughter's accommodation to the route.

Councillor J G Coxon declared a pecuniary interest in item 7, Motions, as the route went through land in his ownership.

31. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

With great sadness, the Chairman announced the recent passing of former Councillor Ted Purver. A one minute's silence was observed in his memory.

Councillor R Blunt spoke in memory of Councillor Ted Purver. He recounted his energy during his time as Chairman of the Council and recalled his enthusiasm, passion, curious mind and sparkle of mischief in his eye, which had not lessened with age. He added that this rare quality was a lesson to all. He commented that Councillor Ted Purver was a person of a life well lived and he would be very sadly missed.

Councillor J Legrys spoke in memory of Councillor Ted Purver and expressed deep sadness at his passing. He recalled his welcoming and polite nature, and that he was a true old fashioned gentleman, who did not take political stature into account and was genuinely there for local people. He added that he would be sadly missed.

Councillor S D Sheahan commented that Councillor Ted Purver was a decent man and his family could be proud of him and what he did for the Council.

Councillor D Everitt spoke in memory of Councillor Ted Purver. He recalled his lack of dogma, his interest in people and in making things better. He stated that he would be missed.

Councillor M Specht spoke in memory of Councillor Ted Purver. He recalled the support he had given him when standing to be elected for the Bardon ward and the confidence he had instilled in him. He stated that he would be sadly missed by all.

Councillor N Smith stated that he was honoured to be able to say a few words about Councillor Ted Purver who was a good friend and a fellow Councillor. He recalled that as far as Ted was concerned, group decisions were none existent as he voted for what he felt was right for his constituents and would not toe the party line if he thought it was wrong. He recounted his achievements in sprinting and construction engineering and stated that his family could look back on these with pride.

The Chairman thanked all members who had attended the recent charity dinner which had been very well attended.

The Chairman announced that Max Nissons would be shaving his head on 24 September at the Co-Operative in Ashby de la Zouch in aid of Macmillan and the fire and rescue service. He urged members to offer their support.

32. LEADER'S AND PORTFOLIO HOLDERS' ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor R Blunt stated that Bev Smith had settle in very well since her appointment as Chief Executive and was a breath of fresh air. He referred to the appointments taking place for senior management positions and added that a period of uncertainty was coming to an end.

Councillor R Blunt made reference to the major investment in the Ashby cultural quarter in conjunction with Ashby Town Council. He stated that this space would be a multipurpose area and demolition would be commencing shortly. He advised that liaison with neighbours and car park users was ongoing.

Councillor R Blunt announced that new plans for Marlborough Square were being progressed in conjunction with Leicestershire County Council. Members would be briefed in detail in the coming week. He added that the private sector were becoming more interested in Coalville than ever before.

Councillor R Blunt reported that plans for the former bus depot on Ashby Road had stalled, however alternative plans were being progressed.

Councillor R Blunt announced that the Colour Run would be taking place on Sunday 17 September with an increased number of participants than in the previous year.

Councillor R Blunt welcomed the news that work had commenced on the start of the construction of the Kegworth bypass. He referred to the great change this would make to the village.

Councillor M Specht expressed admiration for the Chief Executive for attending a recent parish council meeting.

Councillor T J Pendleton welcomed the Leader's comments in respect of the Kegworth bypass and added that the work was being completed at no cost to ratepayers.

Councillor S D Sheahan stated that he was pleased the Chief Executive was committed to working with all members. He emphasised the importance of ensuring due diligence was undertaken in respect of the former bus depot site.

Councillor R Blunt responded that in reality, anybody could purchase a piece of land in Coalville and the council could only encourage progress by seeking to engage with land owners.

Councillor A V Smith made reference to the report to Cabinet in March relating to the withdrawal of recycling credit payments. She advised that officers had put together an in-house bid with the objective to retain the income from the sale of materials. She announced that the council had been successful in securing a 7 year contract which would generate £7,000,000 worth of income over the life of the project.

Councillor N Clarke welcomed the news that the council had secured the recycling contract and felt it was important to recognise the work of the officers who had put together a bid at quite short notice.

In response to a question from Councillor R Blunt, Councillor A V Smith advised that to her knowledge, North West Leicestershire was the only district council which had been successful in making a bid.

Councillor M Specht congratulated the Portfolio Holder and the officers on winning this contract.

33. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

There were no questions received.

34. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

Councillor T Eynon put the following question to Councillor T J Pendleton:

“Residents in my ward, living in Coalville and Hugglescote's traditional Victorian terraced properties, rely on finding on-street residential parking for the vehicles they need to participate in the local economy.

"Residents are experiencing the loss of public garage spaces and on-street residential parking due to new housing developments.

"I understand from County Highways that the Planning Authority is responsible for determining local planning policy regarding the loss on on-street parking and its mitigation.

"What options for retaining, replacing or improving access to on-street residential parking are available to this Authority and what are the barriers and enablers to adoption?"

Councillor T J Pendleton gave the following response:

“The Council as local planning authority takes in to account issues relating to highway safety when determining proposals for development. This is not just about the access to a site but what impact will the proposed development have on the wider highway network. In forming a view on this matter, regard is had to the comments of the County Council as the highway authority. A planning application can only be refused for evidenced, legitimate planning reasons. Possible reasons to refuse a planning application therefore might include highway safety. Where no issues have been raised by the highway authority it would be extremely difficult to successfully defend a reason for refusal on planning grounds.

On-street parking might be lost as a result of creating a new access where vehicles currently park or where it is necessary, in highway safety terms having regard to the views of the highway authority, to introduce restrictions (for example double yellow lines). It

should be appreciated that there is no right to be able to park on the highway. It may, in some circumstances, be possible to secure the provision of off-street parking for existing residents as part of a proposed new development, for example through the provision of rear accesses to existing properties. In instances where proposals would result in the loss of on-street parking, this would need to be a balanced against all other considerations, and it would be inappropriate to have a blanket approach to such cases as it will depend upon the circumstances of the application, for instance the scale, shape, levels or layout of the site may not facilitate the provision of any additional off-street car parking.

It is worth bearing in mind that some of the older residential areas were built at a time when car ownership was not widespread, and particularly in terraced streets this can result in on-street parking pressure. Changes to the built environment, which take place over time and on their own do not make much difference, can nonetheless have a cumulative impact on the availability of parking. One example of such a change is a growing trend for subdivision of houses, to accommodate multiple households. There are planning and other mechanisms to manage the impacts of this, and we will carefully consider the optimal policy approach as part of a review of the local plan. Robust empirical evidence concerning these issues is not available, and until it is, we are not able to implement a policy”.

Councillor T Eynon stated that she was surprised at the quality of the response. As a supplementary question, she asked if the Portfolio Holder was aware of the requirements in the guidance note published by the Chartered Institute of Highways Engineers in 2014 and the National Planning Policy Framework which required local authorities to implement a residential parking policy and to take account of expected car ownership levels and opportunities for public transport in setting the policy. She commented that the lack of empirical evidence had not prevented other local authorities from implementing a policy.

Councillor T J Pendleton responded that he was well aware of the requirements set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, however evidence was still being gathered and he assured Councillor T Eynon that once enough evidence had been gathered, the Planning Department would be considering further methods to control the particular parking issue she was referring to. He added that he would continue to liaise with Leicestershire County Council on this matter.

Councillor J Legrys put the following question to Councillor A V Smith:

“Mantle Lane Rail Bridge Coalville – Improvement to Environment

Despite previous questions relating to poor environmental outlook on Mantle Lane in the vicinity of the rail bridge and cuttings, there is little improvement that the public can see.

I accept that the bridge, retaining walls & highway belong to Network Rail & Leicestershire County Council. But litter, overgrowing vegetation, vermin mess and general deterioration leaves this key access into Coalville Town Centre an unpleasant and off-putting feature for all.

I am asking the Portfolio Holder to seek out third party grants to fund (at least) removal of vegetation, jet wash the bridge structure and internal tiling. Also, could funding found to paint the bridge structure with suitable bright colours showing Coalville Town Centre features?”

Councillor A V Smith gave the following response:

“I agree that Coalville should benefit from the best possible entrances to town, and that includes along Mantle Lane. It is the case that there is no easy fix to the issues that you have identified in your question, I am sure you will agree that periodic action is required to improve and maintain the quality of the environment related to the bridge.

Chairman's initials

The Council has been working with Network Rail in relation to the condition of the area around Mantle Lane Bridge since 2010. The Council has undertaken a number of initiatives which are summarised below:

- The Street Environment Officers arranged a big clean-up of the steps including removal of rubbish and cutting back of shrubs etc.
- Liaison with Network Rail resulted in Network Rail undertaking various works in the autumn and winter months of 2013. It culminated in the bridge being treated with a pigeon deterrent chemical (this makes the bridge look like it is on fire to the pigeons) and also the footpath side of the bridge being totally enclosed to prevent pigeons roosting under the bridge and fouling the footpath below. The final part of this enclosure work was completed in November 2013 and the bridge was monitored for a period of a few months after this to ensure the pigeons had not returned. At the time it appeared that the work had been very successful and the footpath had never looked so clean
- The Big Spring Clean organised by the Street Environment Officers, which has taken place over the last 2 years, always includes Mantle Lane Bridge steps and surrounding area of Thornborough Road and Baker Street
- The Environmental Protection Team has been working with East Midlands Housing in 2017 to improve the housing area frontage, leading up to the bridge from the clock tower as bins were being left out
- To cleanse the area under the bridge requires traffic management and in March 2017 during the Spring Clean the road was closed so that street cleansing operatives were able to clean the area
- Community Focus staff visited a number of local businesses prior to the Spring Clean 2017, to encourage them to get involved, but unfortunately no such support was forthcoming
- Discussions have taken place with Network Rail with a view to brightening up the area including planting hanging baskets which was well received, but never progressed by Network Rail

There are things that Network Rail can still do to brighten up the area including the plants or painting the bricks.

The current position is that we have been working behind the scenes to secure some improvements, however we have recently received some information about the Litter Innovation Fund (LIF), is a £450,000 programme, funded by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) which aims to reduce litter by funding innovative approaches to pilot, implement and evaluate small scale local research projects that could be replicated more widely.

<http://www.wrap.org.uk/content/litter-innovation-fund>

If you are interested to apply to the grant, we can support you to put an application together”.

Councillor J Legrys thanked Councillor A V Smith for the positive response to his question. He expressed support for the new initiatives such as the Litter Innovation Fund.

Chairman's initials

As a supplementary question, he asked when an application to the Litter Innovation Fund could be progressed.

Councillor A V Smith thanked Councillor J Legrys for his question and agreed that the state of the bridge was appalling. She advised that a litter pick and clean-up of the bridge had been arranged before the next large event in the town centre on remembrance Sunday. She added that officers would work to support the Coalville Special Expenses Working Party to make a grant application.

35. MOTIONS

Having declared a pecuniary interest in this item, Councillors R Blunt, J G Coxon, T J Pendleton and S Sheahan left the meeting and took no part in the discussion or voting thereon.

Councillor N Clarke moved the following motion:

“That this Council –

- a) Reviews its position on HS2 in light of the declared final route through North West Leicestershire and Government’s decision not to proceed with electrification of the Midland Mainline, north of Kettering.
- b) Commits to engage with affected communities, businesses and other organizations along the North West Leicestershire section of the route, to help co-ordinate bids for community level mitigation or compensation.”

Councillor N Clarke spoke to the motion and stated that it had been well publicised that North West Leicestershire would gain little from HS2 however would benefit from the electrification of the Midland Mainline. He felt it was important that the council review its position in light of the decision not to proceed with the electrification. He emphasised the importance of the facilitation and co-ordination of bids for compensation.

Councillor A V Smith seconded the motion and reserved her comments.

Councillor M Specht stated that he was somewhat surprised by the motion and made reference to a presentation received by the Policy Development Group. He expressed support for the motion however he felt the points raised were already being addressed.

Councillor D Everitt expressed concerns about the erosion of transport services in general and that the HS2 project may never come to fruition.

The Chairman reminded Councillor D Everitt to confine his comments to the subject of the motion only.

Councillor T Eynon expressed support for the motion. She made reference to the information received by the Policy Development Group and in particular the table which highlighted that a journey from Coalville to London would take 1 hour and 9 minutes longer following the implementation of HS2. She felt it was important to refer to the electrification of the Midlands Mainline and the lack of connectivity which would leave Coalville further behind. She added that mitigating measures needed to be considered.

Councillor J Legrys welcomed the support for the motion from all sides. He felt strongly that elected members should represent their communities on this matter and he felt it was right and proper that the council took the lead.

Councillor G Hoult offered her sincere thanks to the Chief Executive for her prompt actions in arranging a meeting to discuss and identify mitigation measures for the communities affected when the final route was announced.

Councillor N J Rushton stated that the council's policy was to support HS2 because of the ultimate benefits, however the economic benefits in the whole of Leicestershire relied upon the electrification of the Midlands Mainline. He stated that the need for mitigation measures had been recognised and felt the council's policy was sound.

Councillor A C Saffell expressed support for the motion and agreed with the comments made by Councillor N J Rushton. He added that electrification of the Midlands Mainline would be preferable to HS2.

Councillor A V Smith agreed with the comments made in respect of the electrification of the Midlands Mainline. She highlighted that the council had been in touch with approximately 40 businesses affected by the proposals and meetings were taking place.

The motion was then put to the vote and declared CARRIED. It was therefore

RESOLVED THAT:

This Council –

- a) Reviews its position on HS2 in light of the declared final route through North West Leicestershire and Government's decision not to proceed with electrification of the Midland Mainline, north of Kettering.
- b) Commits to engage with affected communities, businesses and other organizations along the North West Leicestershire section of the route to help co-ordinate bids for community level mitigation or compensation.

Councillors R Blunt, J G Coxon, T J Pendleton and S Sheahan returned to the meeting.

36. PETITIONS

No petitions were received.

37. MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 27 June 2017.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 June 2017 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

38. INTERIM REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES

Councillor N J Rushton presented the report to members. He advised that the next review of polling districts and polling places was not due to be completed until May 2020 after the next district council elections and therefore members were asked to support an interim review which was aimed to be completed by November 2018.

Councillor T Eynon stated that she wholly supported the interim review and referred to the comments made regarding access at a recent meeting of the equality group. She stated that she was pleased this would take place before the next elections.

Councillor S D Sheahan supported the comments made relating to access issues and added that consideration needed to be given to communities isolated from their polling places and felt a pop up polling station would be useful in such communities.

Councillor J Legrys expressed support for the review and emphasised the importance of informing the community and maximising publicity.

Councillor N J Rushton stated that the access issues would be considered and he would undertake to advertise the consultation as widely as possible.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

- a) An interim review of polling districts and polling places for North West Leicestershire be commenced;
- b) The final recommendations be considered by Council no later than November 2018;
- c) The revised polling districts and polling places order be implemented ahead of the 2019 local elections.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 7.30 pm