

MINUTES of a meeting of the CABINET held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Coalville on TUESDAY, 11 JANUARY 2022

Present: Councillor R Blunt (Chairman)

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

In Attendance: Councillors

Officers: Mrs B Smith, Mr J Arnold, Mr A Barton, Mr D Bates, Miss E Warhurst, Mrs C Hammond, Ms R Haynes and Mr M Murphy

67. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence received.

68. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

69. PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

No questions were received.

70. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2021 were considered. It was moved by Councillor T Gillard seconded by Councillor K Merrie and

RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2021 be confirmed as an accurate record of proceedings.

Reason for decision: To comply with the Constitution.

71. DRAFT BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX 2022/23

The Corporate Portfolio Holder presented the report, which had been considered by the Corporate Scrutiny Committee on 8 December 2021, setting out the draft General Fund, Housing Revenue Account, Special Expenses and Capital Programme.

Due to the short timescales between the January and February Cabinet, the Chairman of the Council agreed to an exemption from the Council's Scrutiny Procedure rules in relation to the call-in of the decision on the item. It allowed officers to launch the consultation earlier and run a longer consultation as a result.

It was noted that the New Homes Bonus had been extended and that Tax and Rates base increased by more than that of other authorities. NWL were also one of the fastest growing districts in the country for Business Rates, all of which were very positive.

Members commented that the budget balanced and that the authority was currently in a good position, however it was crucial that the Council now made a meaningful start with the progression on the Journey to Self Sufficiency(J2SS).

Chairman's initials

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

RESOLVED THAT:

1. The 2022/23 Draft Budget proposals for statutory consultation be agreed.
2. The S151 assurance statement given in Section 5 be noted.
3. The Council's risk register be noted.

Reason for decision: Required as part of the 2022/23 budget process.

72. COUNCIL TAX BASE 2022/23

The report was presented by the Corporate Portfolio Holder, to determine the Council Tax Base and to advise members of the process for calculating the NNDR amounts due to the Council for the 2022/23 financial year.

No decision was required except that the report be noted.

It was moved by Councillor N Rushton seconded by Councillor R Ashman and

RESOLVED THAT:

1. The calculation of the Council Tax Base for each parish and Special Expense area for each parish and special expense area for the financial year 2022/23, as detailed in Appendix 2, be approved and recommended to Council for adoption.
2. In accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012 SI 2012/2914, it be noted that the amount calculated by North West Leicestershire District Council as its Council Tax Base for the financial year 2022/23 shall be 35,581.
3. The delegated authority held by the Section 151 Officer to submit the calculations of non-domestic rating income and other amounts required by the Government by 31 January each year be noted.

Reason for decision: Statutory requirement to facilitate the setting of Council Tax for the forthcoming financial year.

73. CUSTOMER SERVICE STRATEGY

The report was presented by the Housing, Property and Customer Services Portfolio Holder, in order to seek Cabinet approval of the new Customer Experience Strategy 2022-2025.

It was noted that Covid had had an impact on the way that customers interacted with the authority and that the majority were now preferring to make contact via 'phone, email or website. Members commented that with the advent of the new customer service centre however, that could change, as it would be easier for customers to initiate face to face contact.

Members felt that web chat was a good mode of contact but noted that in their personal experience, they had found chat bots to be unsatisfactory. The Chief Executive confirmed that web chat would form a part of the Customer Service Strategy going forward, but stressed that the authority would remain mindful of the importance of customers always having the opportunity to contact the Council in person.

Chairman's initials

It was moved by Councillor R Bayliss seconded by Councillor R Blunt and

RESOLVED THAT:

1. The Customer Service Experience Strategy 2022-2025 be approved.
2. The draft action plan contained in Annex 4 be approved and authority to finalise it, post the accommodation move of the Customer Services Centre be delegated to the Director with responsibility for Customer Services.

Reason for decision: The previous Customer Service Strategy has expired and to ensure the Council retains its focus of putting the customer at the heart of everything we do. A new strategy is needed to set a clear commitment and plan for the organisation and our customers.

74. APPOINTMENT OF CONTRACTOR TO COMPLETE GREEN HOMES GRANT PHASE 1B EXTENSION WORKS TO 30 PROPERTIES

The report was presented by the Housing, Property and Customer Services Portfolio Holder, outlining the proposed procurement of a contractor to carry out the energy measures to be delivered to local homes following the successful bid by the Authority to the Government. It was noted that the report was a formality as it was to reappoint a trusted contractor for the second phase of the work. Members acknowledged the high standard of work that the contractor had already carried out and agreed that the authority should continue to work with them.

Members also wished to commend the Housing Team for their success in gaining more grants and building more houses.

The approval of the Chairman of the Council was given to the exemption of the Council's Scrutiny Procedure rules in relation to the call-in of the decision on the item, since any call-in would prejudice the ability of the Council to appoint the contractors to undertake the works required by the deadline, as set by BEIS in their grant offer.

It was moved by Councillor R Bayliss seconded by Councillor K Merrie and

RESOLVED THAT:

The award of the Green Homes Grant Phase 1B extension works contract to Aaron Services Limited be approved.

Reason for decision: The level of expenditure on the proposed contract exceeds the authority level in the Scheme of delegation.

75. ZERO LITTER CAMPAIGN STRATEGY

The report was presented by the Community Services Portfolio Holder and outlined the need to reduce littering, fly tipping and dog fouling across the district.

It was noted how rapidly the authority responded to reports of fly tipping and that, various strategies were being employed to counter and deter offenders.

Members wished to put on record their thanks to volunteer litter pickers across the district who, throughout 2021, picked 48,000 bags of litter.

It was moved by Councillor A Woodman seconded by Councillor K Merrie and

Chairman's initials

RESOLVED THAT:

The Zero Litter Campaign and Action Plan be approved.

Reason for decision: To ensure the reduction of littering, fly tipping and dog fouling across the district.

The meeting commenced at 5.00 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 5.23 pm