

MINUTES of a meeting of the CABINET held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Whitwick Road, Coalville, LE67 3FJ on TUESDAY, 10 JANUARY 2023

Present: Councillor R Blunt (Chairman)

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

Observer: Councillors J Legrys

Officers: Ms A Thomas, Mr J Arnold, Mr A Barton, Miss E Warhurst, Mr G Hammons, Mrs C Hammond, Ms R Haynes and Ms S Thirkettle

48. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor T Gillard.

49. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No interests were declared.

50. PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

No questions were received.

51. MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 8 November 2022.

It was moved by Councillor N Rushton, seconded by Councillor K Merrie and

RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 November 2022 be approved and signed as a correct record.

Reason for decision: To comply with the Constitution.

52. MINUTES OF THE COALVILLE SPECIAL EXPENSES WORKING PARTY

The Corporate Portfolio Holder presented the report and highlighted the challenges expressed by the working party in establishing a balanced budget. It was noted that they had worked closely with officers to understand where savings or additional income could be generated for the future. Members of the working party had stated that they would welcome advice or support from Cabinet. It was noted that the working party had deferred the making of any recommendations to Cabinet pending further budget and financial details.

The Corporate Portfolio Holder proposed a new recommendation that the working party be requested to produce a balanced budget without any increase in precept. This was supported by the Leader, who wished to add that much of the budget was used for cutting grass and that in support of biodiversity, many other authorities had reduced the amount of grass cutting which they carried out and suggested this could be a policy considered by North West Leicestershire District Council.

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

Chairman's initials

RESOLVED THAT:

1. The minutes of the Coalville Special Expenses Working Party be noted.
2. Any recommendations made by the Coalville Special Expenses Working Party be noted.
3. A balanced budget from the Coalville Special Expenses Working Party without any increase in precept be expected.

Reason for decision: So that the decisions of the Coalville Special Expenses Working Party can be considered.

53. DRAFT ROBUSTNESS OF BUDGET ESTIMATES AND ADEQUACY OF RESERVES

The Corporate Portfolio Holder presented the statutory report of the Section 151 Officer. It was noted that the report set out key risks and specific actions to ensure financial stability, the most important being to implement a medium term financial plan to bridge the forecast funding gap in the General Fund over the medium term. Risks were highlighted, including inflation and the possible loss of business rates in the future.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

The S151 Officer's advice set out in Section 7 be noted and the content of this report as part of proposing the draft budget for consultation be considered.

Reason for decision: To ensure the Council meets its statutory requirements when considering its budget.

54. DRAFT CAPITAL STRATEGY, TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS

The Corporate Portfolio Holder presented the report and outlined the proposed changes for the Capital Strategy and minimum revenue provision to delay the revenue impact of the Capital Programme. The proposal to split the Capital Programme into two elements was summarised, these included separating active capital schemes and non-active capital schemes, which would allow for greater scrutiny. The second change entailed how the capital programme would be financed. It was noted that new schemes starting from 2023/24 would see no new borrowing

It was moved by Councillor N Rushton, seconded by Councillor K Merrie and

RESOLVED THAT:

The Draft Capital Strategy, Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators for Statutory Consultation be agreed.

Reason for decision: Required as part of the 2023/24 budget setting process.

55. DRAFT GENERAL FUND BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX 2023/24

The Corporate Portfolio Holder presented the report, and highlighted the impact of inflationary pressures, which had been impossible to predict. It was noted that there would be a proposal not to increase council tax again next year which had been a huge achievement given the financial pressures faced. It was observed that the council tax

Chairman's initials

freeze is something of which the administration was proud and was the longest of any council tax freeze ever, as confirmed by the House of Commons library.

The financial success attained by the provision of more new homes and more new jobs was highlighted and this was attributed as the reason behind not needing to raise additional funds by raising council tax.

It was moved by Councillor N Rushton, seconded by Councillor A Woodman and

RESOLVED THAT:

1. The 2023/24 Draft General Fund Revenue, Capital and Special Expenses Budget, the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2023/24 to 2027/28 and the budget proposals contained within the report and the proposed fees and charges for the 2023/24 for statutory consultation be proposed.
2. The statutory requirement to set a balanced budget for the special expenses accounts be acknowledged.
3. Direction on the balance between increasing council tax and reducing costs for the special expense accounts be provided
4. The Council's key risks to the budget be noted.
5. Revised funding figures following the announcement of the provisional local government finance settlement be noted.
6. Comments from Corporate Scrutiny be noted.

Reason for decision: Required as part of the 2023/24 budget setting process.

56. DRAFT HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET AND RENTS 2023/24

The Housing, Property and Customer Services Portfolio Holder presented the report, and highlighted the rent income as the major source of income to this account. It was noted that central government had issued a rent cap of 7% and that the proposal was to set it at this level. It was noted that those in receipt of benefits had been protected as benefits had risen at the rate of inflation and that those with affordable housing had been protected by the local rent allowance. This had maintained tenant's safety in terms of affordability. The proposed budget was recommended on the basis that the programme be delivered as planned but with a reduced budget.

Attention was drawn to the loan which had been taken out in 2012 to improve housing and it was noted that this loan was on schedule to be fully repaid on time by 2042.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

1. The Draft 2023/24 Housing Revenue Account Budget
2. The Rent increase
3. The Draft MTFP for 2023/24 to 2027/28
4. The Draft 2023/24 budget proposals
5. The Draft 2023/24 Fees and Charges

as contained within this report be consulted upon.

Reason for decision: Required as part of the 2023/24 budget setting process.

57. COUNCIL TAX BASE 2023/24

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The Corporate Portfolio Holder presented the report and noted that this was a statutory report which calculated the Council Tax Base.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

1. The calculation of the Council Tax Base for each parish and special expense area for the financial year 2023/24, as detailed in Appendix 2 be recommended to Council for adoption at its meeting on 23 February 2023.
2. In accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012, the amount calculated by North West Leicestershire District Council for the financial year 2023/24 shall be 36,394 be noted.
3. The S151 Officer be delegated authority to submit the calculations on non domestic rating income and other amounts required by government by the 31 January 2023 for the forthcoming financial year.

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

58. KEGWORTH PROJECT

The Community Services Portfolio Holder presented the report and outlined the investments and grants which had been made from various organisations towards the Kegworth Public Realm Project. It was noted that a funding contract has now been prepared and would need to be formally agreed and accepted by Cabinet in order to benefit from the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP) grant.

It was moved by Councillor A Woodman, seconded by Councillor R Blunt and

RESOLVED THAT:

1. The £500,00 grant from LLEP business rates pool funding be accepted.
2. The available budget of £786,587 to be added to the Capital Programme Development Pool and agreed at Council in February 2023 as part of the budget be approved.
3. The Head of Property and Regeneration be delegated authority to spend the LLEP £500,000 grant on Kegworth Project works and to enter into any necessary agreements to proceed with the project.

Reason for decision: Acceptance of LLEP grant funding requires Cabinet approval.

59. COALVILLE REGENERATION FRAMEWORK

The Leader presented the report and described how the plan set out an ambitious future for the town, showing the direction of travel and the vision which could inform the vision of future projects and investment opportunities.

The key regeneration projects were described, and the key areas of work were highlighted. A member emphasised that it was very positive to see the improvements start to happen and that the schemes coming to fruition would be something to look forward to.

Councillor Robert Ashman noted that much of the scheme had been enabled by private investments and stated that this had been indicative of the confidence of private businesses in the potential represented by Coalville.

Thanks were extended to the Labour Group for their support with regards to the plans for the regeneration of Coalville and also to Leicestershire County Council for their continued support with the project.

It was moved by Councillor R Blunt, seconded by Councillor K Merrie and

RESOLVED THAT:

1. The document appended to this report be adopted as the Regeneration Framework for Coalville.
2. The Strategic Director (in consultation with the Portfolio Holder) be delegated authority to make any minor changes to the document required, prior to publishing.

Reason for decision: The Council Delivery Plan for 2021 – 2022 identified that a Regeneration Framework Document would be produced during that financial year.

60. 2022/23 QUARTER 1 AND 2 PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Deputy Leader presented the report and updated the meeting with information the progress made over the first two quarters in comparison the delivery plan. It was noted that continuing progress had been made in the Council's key priority areas. The meeting was informed that observations made by the Corporate Scrutiny Committee would be picked up by officers, particularly with regards to delays in the housing repairs programme.

The Community Services Portfolio holder highlighted that the Newmarket now housed 17 new businesses and had again seen an increase in footfall. It was also noted that North West Leicestershire had one of the best leisure offerings in the country and that memberships had almost doubled since the start of the pandemic. The correlation between the increase in memberships and the benefits in promoting the health and wellbeing agenda was pointed out.

With regards to litter, it was noted that the Council is still committed to making NWL a cleaner and tidier district, and the good work of the local litter pickers, who had collected over 100,000 bags of litter was highlighted, as was the Council's response in collecting this litter. In terms of dog fouling, it was felt that improving this situation would still require some work, however, the Council was committed to tackling the problem.

The Housing, Property and Customer Services Portfolio Holder highlighted the notable improvement in letting times and noted that the Council was very close to achieving its target of 28 days. The meeting was informed that the target for the production of new homes had been exceeded.

In terms of Customer Service, Cabinet was advised that telephone service had been the weakest point, but that the head of service would be taking steps to improve this going forward. Online contact had been very successful and had attained the targets set. The success of the new Customer Service Centre was highlighted and it was noted how busy it had been following the move to a more accessible location for local residents.

It was moved by Councillor R Ashman, seconded by Councillor R Blunt

RESOLVED THAT:

The progress against the Council Delivery Plan Actions and Performance Indicators for Quarters 1 and 2 of the financial year be noted.

Chairman's initials

Reason for decision: The report provides Members of the Cabinet with information on the performance and progress made against the Council Delivery Plan actions and performance indicators for Quarters 1 and 2 of the financial year (April to September 2022)

The meeting commenced at 5.00 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 5.36 pm