

MINUTES of a meeting of the COUNCIL held in the Forest Room, Stenson House, London Road, Coalville, LE67 3FN on TUESDAY, 20 JUNE 2023

Present: Councillor R L Morris (Chair)

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

Officers: Mrs A Thomas, Mr J Arnold, Mr A Barton, Miss E Warhurst, Mr G Hammons, Mrs C Hammond, Mrs A Crouch and Mrs R Wallace

19. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Ball, D Cooper, E Parle, R Sutton and A Wilson.

20. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no interests declared.

21. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair made the following announcements:

As well as the annual event celebrating success of staff, it was announced that a quarterly event would be introduced where Councillors could award excellence with a certificate from the Chair, for those who had gone above and beyond in their job.

The Chair referred to his previous announcement regarding the introduction of a coffee morning and following further thoughts, this would be changed to an afternoon tea to fit in with availability of Councillors. Further information would 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 to support families. The Chair thanked Rosemary for giving her time to attend the meeting.

Finally, the Chair referred Members to the additional item as detailed within the additional papers which would be considered at the end of the agenda. He also announced a change in the order of business, due the subject matter of the amended motion as detailed within the additional papers and the link to agenda item 10 – Community Governance Review Process, the motion item would now be considered immediately after item 10.

22. LEADER'S AND PORTFOLIO HOLDERS' ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader of the Council announced his aspirations for joint working between the Alliance Group and the Opposition Group, and invited the shadow portfolio holders to attend joint briefings, particularly on key projects. He hoped an approach could be agreed to support continuity going forward should there be a change in administration.

The Labour Group Leader thanked the Leader of the Council for the invitation but as he still had several concerns, he was not prepared to move forward with anything at this time.

The Communities Portfolio Holder announced the Council's participation in the recent 'Big Green Week' which was the UK's biggest celebration of community action taken to tackle

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climate change and protect nature. He highlighted the actions taken to date to contribute to the Council's carbon zero ambitions and to help create a greener district for everyone.

23. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

There were no questions received.

24. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

There were four questions asked which are set out below together 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

'Has the Coalville mobile NHS Breast Screening service, which formerly used the London Road NWLDC car park, been reinstated?'

Response by Councillor A Woodman

The Council has offered the NHS free usage of the London Road car park, as a site for the NHS Mobile Breast Screening unit.

Officers are currently discussing with NHS colleagues when they may want to bring the mobile unit to Coalville and checking to ensure that the site remains suitable for their needs.

Supplementary question and response

Councillor T Eynon stated that she would pursue the issues with the Leicestershire County Council and the NHS as she was concerned that women were not accessing the breast screening services. Councillor A Woodman shared those concerns and asked to be kept informed if Councillor T Eynon any information was received.

Question from Councillor J Legrys

'Part of the Right of Way has been closed to the public for some considerable time. Following advice from the Council's Building Control Team, a closure Order was agreed with LCC as several brick-built boundary walls were unstable and a danger to pedestrians.

The Right of Way forms a boundary between the Coalville West and Coalville East Wards.

As Ward Member I have been fully briefed and I have been working jointly with Cllr Smith CC on trying to get a resolution to reopen the Public Right of Way.

I understand that due to the cost, complex legal responsibilities and required resources, neither LCC nor NWLDC want to take the lead on the re-opening of this Right of Way.

Can the Portfolio Holder please inform me and the local community when and how this Council intends to require the owners of the unstable structures to take action so that the Right of Way can be re-opened?'

Response by Councillor A C Saffell

As you know, the footpath was closed by Leicestershire County Council early last year. At that time, following discussions between officers from NWL and LCC, it was agreed that

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LCC would exercise their powers under the Highways Act 1980, which are similar to those in the Building Act 1984, to serve notice to remove a 'danger', in this case to the footpath which is an LCC asset. As such, LCC should be taking such measures to contact the owners of the properties on Bakewell Street that run along the section of the footpath that remains closed with a view to getting any dangerous wall made safe by those owners or they will take such measures to undertake the work in default.

You will be aware that the Council took immediate action last year to take down the dangerous section of wall at the rear of Bakewell Court, a property that NWL own and erected a temporary fence in lieu of a more permanent solution. I understand that LCC commissioned a full report into all other sections of the wall and the report last year concluded that there were three other areas of concern which prevented the footway being reopened. The report recommended that periodic monitoring of the tilting sections of wall be undertaken to help gain a clearer understanding of the rate of movement in the walls and, if required allow an evidence-based repair strategy.

I accept it is disappointing that the footpath has remained closed for so long and our officers have requested updates from LCC on the matter on a number of occasions. In addition, I can confirm that the Infrastructure Portfolio Holder, Cllr Merrie, has contacted his counterpart at LCC to see if some pressure can be exerted on LCC officers to progress this matter to a conclusion in a timely manner and this has already been passed onto the Director of Environment and Transport at LCC.

I can confirm that the matter is being dealt with by LCC and we have now been advised that all adjacent landowners of three worst sections of wall which require repair have been notified and to date one section has been repaired by an adjacent landowner. LCC continue to monitor the leaning sections and press for repairs where necessary with the adjacent landowners. Unfortunately, LCC cannot give a date at this time when the footpath will reopen but I've asked Cllr Merrie if he could continue to liaise with his counterpart at LCC so they can provide us more certainty as to when the footpath will reopen.

I will of course keep Councillor Legrys update on this issue moving forward.

Supplementary question and response

Councillor J Legrys felt that both could agree that the issues were not unique to Coalville and frustrations are were shared. He asked to be kept updated with any progress. Councillor A C Saffell stated that he would keep pushing the issue along with the Infrastructure Portfolio Holder and he would keep Councillor J Legrys informed.

Question from Councillor C Sewell

Background:

Every year the Download Festival at Donington Park, near East Midlands Airport, Castle Donington causes congestion on nearby roads and gridlocks adjacent villages during arrival and departures to and from the festival. Residents have got used to this now and expect to be marooned in their close-by villages on arrival days and when the venue closes on the Monday.

However, this year saw the 20th Anniversary of the event taking place and 1 extra day of performances was planned, with Headliners Metallica performing on the first day, Thursday 8th June. Normally festival traffic arrives over 2 days, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, but this year as the festival started on the Thursday all the campers who stay over the whole period only had a small window in which to arrive, on the Wednesday 7th June, and gates weren't open officially until 12 noon (although local knowledge states the gates might have been opened earlier due to large numbers queueing). The large

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numbers arriving in a short space of time caused prolonged and widespread road traffic congestion, centred on the venue and according to news and social media bulletins, this affected an 18-mile radius, with people marooned in cars and gridlocked traffic for many hours. HGVs trying to gain access the SEGRO site and the M1 were stationary. This had a huge impact on local residents, people endeavouring to transverse the area, airport users, workers, businesses, schoolchildren, and festival goers. It seems feasible that the venue should have opened on the Monday 5th or Tuesday 6th to allow festival goers adequate time to access the site – bearing in mind a record number of tickets were sold for this year's event. Normally 100,000 people are expected to descend on the already congested area and claims are that double this amount attended this year.

'With safety issues at the forefront here, ie people trapped in stationary traffic for hours on end in sweltering temperatures, and the roadsides being used as public toilets, amongst other things, was it the conditions of the licence, provided by NWLDC, which prevented early opening of the venue, and did the organisers in fact ask for a sufficient extension of the licence to allow this to happen, if so did NWLDC refuse the request or is there another explanation?

Response by Councillor M B Wyatt

The festival this year created an unprecedented level of travel disruption to residents, visitors, travellers and businesses across the district and beyond. The Download Festival operates under a permanent licence granted by this Council in 2005 under the Licensing Act 2003. The event organiser is responsible for complying with the licence conditions which relate to public safety, crime and disorder, public nuisance and the protection of children from harm.

Technical advice is provided to the event organiser through the NWL Safety Advisory Group (NWLSAG) which is chaired by North West Leicestershire District Council. Each agency provides advice relating to their area of expertise so for example Leicestershire County Highways, Leicestershire Police and National Highways advise on traffic management, Leicestershire Police advise on crime and disorder and the fire service advise on fire safety. This Council advises on its area of expertise in the form of noise control, food hygiene, licensing, infection control, health and safety as well as water and sanitation.

The event organiser informed agencies at a meeting of the NWLSAG in January that the 2023 event would have four entertainment days starting on the Thursday and were considering opening the campsites on the Tuesday, a day earlier than in previous years. These proposed changes to the event were all permissible within the current licence, therefore a formal amendment to the licence was not required. The event organisers asked if any agency had an objection or concern relating to the proposal. No concerns or objections were raised.

At a meeting of the NWLSAG in February the event organiser informed agencies that their plans had changed. The arena would open on Thursday providing an additional day of entertainment within the arena, however the carparks and campsites would not open until midday on Wednesday. The event organiser held a multi-agency traffic management planning meeting in March to scrutinise and develop the plans. No concerns were raised by agencies relating to traffic management at the NWSAG meeting in April.

The event organiser will be setting up a multi-agency debrief focussed on traffic management in order to fully understand the causes of the disruption to the road network this year and to take the learning forward to minimise the impact on the local road network in 2024.

Supplementary question and response

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Councillor C Sewell reported that festival goers had been complaining about the lack of health and safety provision including lack of water points, no shaded areas or medical support. She was also disappointed that the parish Council was not consulted this year. She asked how the Council would ensure that the health and safety measures, as well as the highway issues, were better for future events. Councillor M B Wyatt concurred with the comments made and ensured that maximum pressure would be applied to the event organisers in future to avoid these issues. He also confirmed that the parish council would also be consulted.

Question from Councillor D Bigby

'This question is seeking clarity on the administration's current net zero target for its Council homes in light of the Council's latest bid for Eco4 funding for uprating the heating efficiency of our housing stock appearing to have been unsuccessful. Could the portfolio holder explain where that leaves the council in terms of the following points please.

- The number of Council homes that have been uprated in the last 4 years (since the Council declared a climate emergency) and the number that still require uprating over the next 7 years to 2030 to meet the Council's net zero carbon targets and the likely availability of funding between now and 2030
- is it still the aim for our Council stock to achieve an overall reduction in annual carbon emissions from some 15ktCO₂e in 2016 to less than 2ktCO₂e by 2030, as set out in the adopted 2019 roadmap, or is it that all Council homes reach an EPC rating of C by 2030 which now seems to be the regularly quoted metric, and, if the latter, what difference will this make to the Council's total carbon emissions by 2030 (in ktCO₂e) when compared with the original target?

Response by Councillor A Woodman

On first glance this seems a simple question; how many homes have we improved the SAP or EPC rating on in the past four years?

However, it is not that simple as it requires tracking all works, pre and post with a full assessment and this is then set against a moving definition of the prime measure of EPC assessment.

I can tell you how many homes have had improvement work done, but this is not the answer to the question you have asked.

In order to answer the real question, we need to conduct a thorough Stock Condition and Quality Survey. This is currently being undertaken and as we begin to receive more robust data and enter it into our new intelligent energy performance management software (Sava) a full analysis will be done and the results shared. This data will be key in developing the new Housing Asset Management Strategy which will be developed over the next year.

We are in the midst of a three-year asset plan, and we are on track with our ambitions set out in the Zero Carbon Roadmap and graphics and data appended to the Zero Carbon Annual Report are taken from our Sava system.

The detailed answer to the second question relies on the same data from the survey above.

But in summary the Council is indeed signed up to the climate emergency and has a target of becoming carbon neutral by 2030. We have a regulatory target of reaching EPC C or above on all properties by 2028; so there are two targets we are working to.

Once we have the outcome of the stock survey we can calculate the required reduction that will be achieved via the Asset Management Plan. It will then be for the Council

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through the Asset Management Plan, the HRA business plan and budget setting to make decisions regarding the best way to reach both targets. Scrutiny, Cabinet and Council have a role to play in all these decisions and I am sure members will look forward to those debates at the appropriate time.

Supplementary question and response

Councillor D Bigby felt that the first part of the question had not been answered and there repeated it. Councillor A Woodman referred to a meeting scheduled for the following day with Councillor D Bigby and Housing Officers, and hoped that more information on the matter would be provided. He invited Councillor D Bigby to contact him to arrange a meeting along with Senior Officers to collaborate on this matter.

25. PETITIONS

No petitions were received.

26. MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2023.

It was moved by Councillor R Morris, seconded by Councillor J Legrys and

RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2023 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

27. COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW PROCESS

The Leader of the Council presented the report to Members and put forward an amendment to the second recommendation

It was moved by Councillor R Blunt, seconded by Councillor M B Wyatt and

RESOLVED THAT:

- a) The process for carrying out the Community Governance Review be noted.
- b) It be noted that a report would be brought to a future meeting of Council to seek to commence a Community Governance Review and agree the terms of reference for that review, with a view to completing the CGR process no later than December 2026

28. MOTIONS

The Chair referred Members to the amendment to the original motion as detailed within the additional papers and invited Councillor J Legrys, who submitted the motion, to speak to it.

Councillor J Legrys reported that the matter was something raised a lot by local people during the election period and therefore felt it should be addressed. He felt that the third tier of governance was missing in the area to deal with many localised matters and as the Coalville Special Expenses Working Party was not fit for purpose, as well as a boundary review being long overdue, action was required. Therefore, Councillor J Legrys moved the motion as amended in the additional papers. This was seconded by Councillor M

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Blair-Park, who as a Member of Ashby Town Council, valued the impact a parish council could make for local engagement.

Following a full discussion on the advantages of having a Parish Council and pursuing a Community Governance Review, Councillor R Blunt concurred that the Coalville Special Expenses Working Party was not fit for purpose and having moved the recommendations on the previous item, which was seconded by Councillor Wyatt, he hoped that all colleagues would be in support of it.

A further debate was had on the timescales and some concerns were shared that without time boundaries the matter could drift and not be ready to elect members in the 2027 elections.

The Chair put the original motion to the vote and

RESOLVED THAT:

The Chief Executive:

- prepares to commence a Community Governance Review (CGR)
 - after the completion of the current LGBCCE review of electoral arrangements
 - and no later than November 2025
- the terms of reference of the review to include
 - a review the boundaries of all existing Parishes as necessary
 - consideration of the most suitable way of representing people living in the unparished areas of
 - Broom Leys
 - Bardon ward
 - Castle Rock
 - Coalville East
 - Coalville West
 - Greenhill
 - Snibston North
 - Snibston South
 - Thringstone
 - to complete no later than December 2026
 - so that elections to any proposed Town or Parish Councils can be held in May 2027
- and schedule the programme for the Electoral Review Working Party accordingly.”

29. APPOINTMENTS TO COMMUNITY BODIES

The Infrastructure Portfolio Holder presented the report to Members.

It was moved by Councillor K Merrie, seconded by Councillor T Gillard and

RESOLVED THAT:

- a) Councillor R Blunt be appointed to represent the Council on East Midlands Council.
- b) Councillor K Merrie be nominated to submit an expression of interest in being a member of the Regional Employer’s Board.
- c) Councillor A Woodman be nominated to submit an expression of interest in being a member of the Regional Migration Board.

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30. APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES

The Business and Regeneration Portfolio Holder presented the report to Members.

It was moved by Councillor T Gillard, seconded by Councillor C Sewell and

RESOLVED THAT:

- a) Councillor C Sewell be appointed to the Planning Committee to replace Councillor S Lambeth for the remainder of the 2023/24 civic year.
- b) Councillor R Morris be appointed to the vacant substitute position on the Appointments Committee.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 7.28 pm