

MINUTES of a meeting of the CABINET held in the Abbey Room, Stenson House, London Road, Coalville, LE67 3FN on TUESDAY, 22 APRIL 2025

Present: Councillor M B Wyatt (in the Chair)

Councillors T Gillard, K Merrie MBE, A C Saffell and A C Woodman

In Attendance: Councillors J Legrys, P Moulton and S Sheahan

Officers: Mrs A Thomas, Mr J Arnold, Mr P Stone, Ms K Hiller, Mr T Devonshire and Mr P Wheatley

134. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor R Blunt and N Rushton.

135. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no interests declared.

136. PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

There were no questions received.

137. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 March 2025 were considered.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 March 2025 be confirmed as an accurate record of proceedings.

138. FUTURE OF WASTE SERVICES

The Communities and Climate Change Portfolio Holder presented the report.

The Chair invited Councillor S Sheahan to address the Cabinet.

Councillor Sheahan asked the following question, as set out in the additional papers:

“Given the UK Government investigation into the sustainability of HVO fuels, questions around the robustness of the certification process and the tariff situation between the US and China, does the Council have contingency plans, in the event of HVO supply shortages; for example, at what point would the Council revert to diesel and what difference would this make to the Council's position on electric and hydrogen powered vehicles?

Note - Council position on the use of palm oil, as recorded in the minutes of the Scrutiny Committee, 01/09/21’

The Chair, in his capacity as Communities and Climate Change Portfolio Holder, provided the following response, as set out in the additional papers:

Chair's initials

'The Council is confident about the HVO fuel supplier it uses, and they provide a robust declaration that the fuel sourced is used cooking oil from China, processed in the USA and there is no palm oil. They provide certification to which is recognised by Renewable Fuels Assurance Scheme.

Officers are not aware of any potential HVO stock availability issues and have confidence in our suppliers that we would be advised in plenty of time if this was on the horizon. If this were to arise, HVO is a drop in fuel so, whilst not ideal from an emissions perspective, the fleet can revert to diesel with no modification to any vehicles if there are any unexpected shortages.

The Council's supplier has confirmed that at present there are no solid plans for tariffs to be placed on HVO from the US. They do have alternative suppliers from non-US sources that will be available if things change in the future. This however does come at a higher rate than the US based product.

In 2022 the UK lifted some EU anti-dumping and countervailing measures on the import of HVO from the US. This lift meant that importing HVO from the US was more feasible in the UK than imports from mainland Europe.

At present time, all trade lines are being monitored by suppliers very carefully to ensure they are proactively reacting to any measures being implemented. All contracts with suppliers are in place to support the volume requirements for 2025, so therefore they do not expect any interruptions to supply at this time.

The position on HVO would not impact on the existing electric fleet. The Council is operating a fleet of fifteen electric vehicles, including a housing trial. There is electric vehicle charging available at Linden Way Depot, Whitwick Business Centre and Parks Depot.

Under the Council's 2021 Fleet Management Strategy, there is a clear ambition to explore alternative options to combustion engine vehicles wherever possible. Electric options are considered at the point of procurement but vehicles are proving significantly more expensive and may not provide the range required for a rural district or towing capability. Further investment in electric charging infrastructure at the depots will be required with electric fleet expansion.

With regard to hydrogen, this is not a solution the Council is currently considering but officers are aware of and following trials in other local authorities.'

Councillor Sheahan's supplementary question was as follows:

'Can you explain to me whether you are denying that there are serious issues that could adversely impact Asia's supplies and prices, including allegations of widespread fraud, potential regulatory backlash, and tariffs between China and the United States. Is he conceding that there is a problem with the HVA market in China, Indonesia and Malaysia? Or has he allowed himself to be persuaded that this Council is immune to it?

The Chair, in his capacity as Communities and Climate Change Portfolio Holder, thanked Councillor Sheahan and said that a written response to his supplementary question would be provided outside of the meeting.

It was moved by Councillor M Wyatt, seconded by Councillor A Woodman and

RESOLVED THAT:

Chair's initials

1. Agreement to implement and resource the new twin bin recycling container system be approved;
2. Subject to Council approving required changes to the Capital Programme, the award of a contract for the provision of 19 waste collection vehicles up to the value of £4,708,000 be approved;
3. It be recommended to Council that £1,674,000 is added to the Capital Programme for the provision of new recycling containers;
4. The award of a contract for the delivery of new recycling containers and the collection of existing containers up to the value of £235,000 be approved;
5. The award of a contract for project management services for up to three years up to the value of £196,500 if required be approved.
6. The award of a contract for the delivery of leaflets/letters to households up to the value of £116,800 be approved;
7. Authority be delegated to the relevant Strategic Director in consultation with the Section 151 officer and the Portfolio Holder for Communities and Climate Change to finalise the award of the contracts and enter into all necessary agreements, including, but not limited to any variations required to the contract with Leicestershire County Council; and
8. There is a requirement to realise savings and/or generate new income streams effective from 1 April 2026 in order to meet the additional ongoing revenue savings outlined in section 4 of the report, be noted.

Reason for decision: there are key decisions which require consideration by Cabinet. Firstly, this is a significant proposed change in the Council's waste and recycling collection service affecting every household in the district. Secondly, any change will result in significant capital and revenue expenditure.

139. HOUSING REPAIRS PROGRESS REPORT 2025

The Housing, Property and Customer Services Portfolio Holder presented the report.

A Member commended the work of the Housing Improvement Board and encouraged them to keep up the valuable work.

The Chair was glad to see the progress on clearing the backlog but noted that further work was required.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

1. The progress made to deliver the housing recovery plan focused on housing repairs be noted.
2. The housing improvement board to continue its work be endorsed.

Reason for decision: Cabinet is responsible for ensuring that proper arrangements exist for the effective and efficient management of the Council's executive affairs and the delivery of policy and strategy including oversight of the Council's Landlord function regarding Social Homes.

140. AWARD OF WARMER HOMES FUNDING

The Housing, Property and Customer Services Portfolio Holder presented the report.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

Chair's initials

1. Council be recommended to amend the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme Carbon Zero element, as set out in section 2.0 below, at its meeting on 13 May 2025; and
2. Subject to Council amending the Capital Programme under recommendation one, the grant of up to £8,069,584.00 from the Warmer Homes Fund from Government be accepted, and the Strategic Director with responsibility for Housing, in consultation with the Monitoring Officer and S151 Officer, be authorised to enter into all necessary agreements to receive the grant as set out in the report.

Reason for decision: To gain Cabinet approval to the Grant acceptance in line with the Constitution and Contract Procedure Rules.

141. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was moved by Councillor M Wyatt, seconded by Councillor T Gillard, and

RESOLVED THAT:

In pursuance of Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting on the grounds that the business to be transacted involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act and that the public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Reason for decision: To enable the consideration of exempt information.

142. AWARD OF CONTRACTS - ELECTRICITY AND GAS SUPPLIES

The Housing, Property and Customer Services Portfolio Holder presented the report.

It was moved by Councillor A Woodman, seconded by Councillor T Gillard, and

RESOLVED THAT:

The recommendation contained within the report be approved.

Reason for decision: Energy supply contracts have a short and fixed period of time in which they can be accepted or will lapse. It is not practical to obtain a supply quote and gain Cabinet approval to enter into the contract within the period during which the supply quote is valid. Delegated Authority is required from Cabinet.

The meeting commenced at 5.00 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 5.16 pm