



CABINET - FRIDAY 13 SEPTEMBER 2024

ORDER PAPER

ITEM DETAILS

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Mr. N. Rushton CC and Mr. O. O'Shea CC.

1. MINUTES (Pages 5 -10)

Proposed motion

That the minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2024 be taken as read, confirmed, and signed.

2. URGENT ITEMS

None.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members of the Cabinet are asked to declare any interests in the business to be discussed.

4. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY - BUDGET MONITORING AND MTFS REFRESH (Pages 11 - 62)

The report was considered by the Scrutiny Commission on 4 September and its comments are attached to this Order Paper, marked '4'.

Proposed motion

- a) That the significant financial challenges faced by the County Council be noted;
- b) That the Period 4 monitoring position from the current financial year be noted and the use of the projected £6.4m net underspend to increase the capital programme risk contingency be approved;
- c) That the proposed approach outlined in the report to updating the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) be approved;
- d) That the revised Capital Programme for 2024/25 to 2027/28, as set out in Appendix C to the report, be approved;

- e) That the marketing of the Quorn Solar Farm site with the benefit of planning and the grid connection as a leasehold or freehold disposal be approved;
- f) That the Director of Corporate Resources, following consultation with the Cabinet Lead Member for Resources, be authorised to identify and proceed with the most economically advantageous option for the Quorn Solar Farm site.

5. LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24 (Pages 63 - 110)

The Annual Report was considered by the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 3 September, which gave its support to the report.

Proposed motion

That the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership (LRSCP) Annual Report for 2023/24 be noted.

6. LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND SAFEGUARDING ADULTS BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24 (Pages 111 - 150)

The report will be presented (via MS Teams) by Seona Douglas, the Independent Chair of the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Adults Board.

The Annual Report was considered by the Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 2 September, which gave its support to the report.

Proposed motion

That the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Adults Board (LRSAB) Annual Report for 2023/24 be noted, particularly in relation to the business of the County Council.

7. CORPORATE COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24 (Pages 151 - 178)

Proposed motion

That the Corporate Complaints and Compliments Annual Report, covering the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, be noted.

8. CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE STRATEGY 2024-2028: PROPOSED CONSULTATION (Pages 179 - 200)

Proposed motion

That the Customer Experience Strategy be approved for consultation.

9. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION STRATEGY 2024-2028 (Pages 201 - 260)

Proposed motion

- a) That the outcome of consultation on the Council's draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2024-2028 be noted;
- b) That the County Council, at its meeting on 25 September 2024, be recommended to approve the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2024-2028 and associated Action Plan.

10. IMPROVING PASSENGER TRANSPORT THROUGH A REFRESHED BUS SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN (Pages 261 - 340)

A report was considered by the Highways and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 5 September and its comments are attached to this Order Paper, marked '10'.

Proposed motion

- a) That the financial implications and ongoing funding requirements arising from implementing the National Bus Strategy (NBS) and associated Leicestershire Bus Service Improvement Plan, and the County Council's longer-term Bus Service Improvement Plan funding requirement be noted;
- b) That the Leicestershire Bus Service Improvement Plan (LBSIP 24), attached as Appendix A to the report, be approved;
- c) That it be noted that, pending any changes in legislation/guidance from the Government, implementation of the LBSIP 24 will proceed as planned.

11. ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING STRATEGY (Pages 341 - 454)

Proposed motion

- a) That the feedback from the engagement on the Council's draft Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy (EVCS) be noted;
- b) That the EVCS be approved;
- c) That the Director of Environment and Transport, following consultation with the Cabinet Lead Member, be authorised to review and amend the EVCS, to reflect changes in legislation and good practice, and in light of the outcomes from the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) Pilot Project and the availability of funding, to ensure the EVCS remains fit for purpose.

12. PROPOSED RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION ON THE NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (Pages 455 - 502)

Proposed motion

- a) That the County Council's response to the consultation on the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), set out in paragraphs 47 to 96 of the report, and the Appendix, be approved;
- b) That the Cabinet notes that whilst there are some potential positive aspects to the proposed changes to the NPPF, there are concerns, particularly from a transport perspective that they fail to address significant challenges faced in enabling housing delivery and economic growth; and some of the proposed changes are unhelpful to the expedient and proper consideration of the transport impacts of planning applications through the development management process;
- c) That the potential implications arising from the proposed planning reforms be noted, in particular in the short term regarding the preparation of Local Plans over the next eighteen months;
- d) That the Chief Executive, following consultation with the Acting Leader, be authorised to make any further amendments to the detailed response in alignment with the agreed overarching response prior to submission before the end of the consultation period on 24 September 2024.

13. RESPONSE TO THE HINCKLEY AND BOSWORTH REGULATION 18 DRAFT LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION (JULY 2024) (Pages 503 – 508 and supplementary agenda pages 3-72)

Proposed motion

- a) That the County Council's response to Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council's new draft Local Plan consultation, set out in paragraphs 39-90, and the appendices to the report, be noted and approved;
- b) That the significant challenges and uncertainties Local Plan making is increasingly facing in Leicestershire, particularly in respect of reliance on interventions on the Strategic Road Network and the ongoing commitment to work to resolve these be noted;
- c) That the Chief Executive, following consultation with the Acting Leader, be authorised to make any further amendments to the detailed response in alignment with the agreed overarching response prior to submission before the end of the consultation period on 27 September 2024.

14. PROBATION HEALTH TRAINER SERVICE - OUTCOME OF ENGAGEMENT AND PROPOSED DECOMMISSION (Pages 509 – 538)

Proposed motion

- a) That the outcome of the engagement on the proposed decommission of the Probation Health Service across Leicestershire be noted;
- b) That the Probation Health Service be decommissioned as of 31 March 2025.

15. ITEMS REFERRED FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

None.

16. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN HAS DECIDED TO TAKE AS URGENT

None.

17. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Proposed motion

That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 3 and 10 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act and that, in all circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information:

Proposed M69 Junction 2 / Stoney Stanton Strategic Development Area.

Officer to contact

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SCRUTINY COMMISSION – 4 SEPTEMBER 2024**MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY – BUDGET MONITORING AND MTFS
UPDATE****MINUTE EXTRACT**

The Commission considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources the purpose of which was to provide an update on the County Council's short and medium term financial position in light of the current economic climate. The report also detailed the changes to the previously agreed 2024-2028 capital programme following the latest review and covered the specific revenue budget monitoring position as at the end of period 4 (the end of July). A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 8' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion, the following points were made:

Revenue

- (i) Appendix E to the report outlined those savings which were under development and which had not yet been included in the current MTFS. Members noted that in some cases, departments had been able to identify an estimated saving and where there was sufficient assurance over delivery, they had been rated green. However, not all had been fully costed. The savings had been RAG rated to demonstrate the current level of confidence regarding delivery and most were currently amber or red rated. These were the areas that required more work before they could be included in the MTFS as savings to be delivered.
- (ii) The Lead Member commented that the Council had made significant savings over the last decade and its choices on where further savings could be made was very limited. Only 10 of the 59 savings under development identified had been rated green which demonstrated the level of work still required to address the potential forecasted £100m funding gap.
- (iii) Escalated spending controls put in place last year including recruitment controls and the introduction of a new procurement board to consider contract matters, would remain in place for the foreseeable future. These had worked well and whilst the current years position had improved, it was considered prudent for these to continue to help manage future budget pressures.
- (iv) The Council's dedicated schools grant deficit continued to rise despite its involvement in the Department for Education's (DfEs) Delivering Better Value (DBV) programme. In response to questions raised, the Director confirmed that whilst savings have been identified, these were not sufficient to close the deficit completely and were largely as a result of the Council's Transforming SEND programme rather than as a direct result of the DBV programme. However, given the level of data now submitted to

the DfE, there was a growing sense of acceptance of the difficult position many local authority SEND services were in. In particular the need for greater inclusion within mainstream schools and therefore the need for adequate school funding to accommodate this. Inclusion did not currently form part of the Ofsted inspection programme, but this might change in future years which could have a positive impact.

- (v) The Council had received £1m in funding from the Government as part of the DBV programme. This had been used to support the diagnostic work undertaken with Newton Europe as part of the Transforming SEND in Leicestershire Programme.
- (vi) If the Council DSG deficit continued to rise there was a risk it would be moved into the DfE Safety Valve programme which was reserved for those authorities with the highest deficit. The Director confirmed that at current levels, the Council was likely to be two years away from entering this programme.
- (vii) It was noted that there was still much uncertainty regarding future grant funding levels. This would be made clearer following the Governments Spending Review in October 2024. However, until completion of the Governments more in depth multi-year spending review which was due to be completed in Spring 2025, it was likely that revenue grant and capital funding allocations would only be confirmed for the 2025/26 financial year. A Member suggested that it would be helpful for the Director to provide an all member briefing following the Government Spending Review, outlining its impact on the Council's budget. Members noted that an MTFS training session had also been planned for November for all Members in preparation for the next MTFS refresh.

Capital

- (viii) Members noted that action was being taken to mitigate and reduce the rising costs relating to the delivery of the Melton Mowbray Distributor Road. A contingency had been included within the capital programme, but this did not cover all of the forecasted overspend. Discussions with the contractor were ongoing and the position would be monitored. In response to questions raised the Director provided assurance that the scheme would continue to be delivered.
- (ix) Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) grant funding had been received for 2023/24 and 2024/25 and this was being spent in line with agreed plans.
- (x) The Council had two allocations of network north funding which had been accounted for within the MTFS. Future years funding which had been expected had been removed from the budget as this was now considered more uncertain. Whilst the funding could still be allocated, it was not clear when and how this would be received or what conditions might apply. The Council had therefore taken a prudent approach until the new Government's position regarding the funding had been made clear. This

was expected as part of the Spending Review in October 2024 but could be delayed until completion of the Governments more in depth in year spending review due in Spring 2025.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Council's short and medium term financial position in light of the current economic climate, and the specific revenue budget monitoring position as at the end of period 4 (end of July) be noted;
- (b) That the proposed changes to the previously agreed 2024-28 capital programme following the latest review be noted;
- (c) That the Director be requested to provide an update by way of an all member briefing following the Government Spending Review, when it would be clearer what impact this might have on the Council's MTFS.

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**HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE – 5 SEPTEMBER 2024**

**IMPROVING PASSENGER TRANSPORT THROUGH A REFRESHED
BUS SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

MINUTE EXTRACT

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Environment and Transport which informed members of work associated with the refresh of the Leicestershire Bus Service Improvement Plan. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 9' is filed with these minutes.

Members welcomed the work undertaken on the Plan, noting that timescales had been tight, and commended it as cohesive and aspirational. It was noted that the extent of delivery would be dependent on the level of Government funding available, with an estimated £100 million required to support the ongoing delivery of the full ambitions in the Plan.

Members also welcomed the use of Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) and were pleased to note that there were anecdotal success stories alongside constructive feedback of the pilot with Fox Connect. Service users had welcomed the flexibility and ability to connect with clubs and other social activities that they would otherwise have been unable to attend. It was suggested that some case studies should be used to promote the use of DRT.

The Lead Member for Highways and Transport welcomed the report and supported Members comments on the success of DRT. He felt that the current funding model did not enable long term planning and this could cause challenges.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the comments made by Members of the Committee be presented to the Cabinet in September 2024.
- b) That the report be noted.

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