

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
HELD AT COUNTY HALL, GLENFIELD ON WEDNESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY
2016**

PRESENT

Mr. E. D. Snartt CC (in the Chair)

Mr. I. E. G. Bentley CC, Mr. D. C. Bill MBE CC, Mr. R. Blunt CC, Mr. G. A. Boulter CC, Mr. S. L. Bray CC, Mrs. R. Camamile CC, Mr. M. H. Charlesworth CC, Mr. J. G. Coxon CC, Mrs. J. A. Dickinson CC, Dr. T. Eynon CC, Dr. R. K. A. Feltham CC, Mrs. J. Fox CC, Mr. S. J. Galton CC, Mr. D. A. Gamble CC, Mr. S. J. Hampson CC, Mr. G. A. Hart CC, Mr. Dave Houseman MBE, CC, Mr. Max Hunt CC, Mr. D. Jennings CC, Mr. J. Kaufman CC, Mr. A. M. Kershaw CC, Ms. K. J. Knaggs CC, Mr. P. G. Lewis CC, Mr. W. Liquorish JP CC, Mrs. H. E. Loydall CC, Mr. K. W. P. Lynch CC, Mr. M. T. Mullaney CC, Ms. Betty Newton CC, Mr. L. J. P. O'Shea CC, Mr. J. T. Orson JP CC, Mr. P. C. Osborne CC, Mr. I. D. Ould CC, Mrs. R. Page CC, Mr. B. L. Pain CC, Mr. A. E. Pearson CC, Mr. T. J. Pendleton CC, Mrs. P. Posnett CC, Mrs. C. M. Radford CC, Mr. J. B. Rhodes CC, Mr. T. J. Richardson CC, Mrs. J. Richards CC, Mr. N. J. Rushton CC, Mr. R. Sharp CC, Mr. S. D. Sheahan CC, Mr. R. J. Shepherd CC, Mr. D. A. Sprason CC, Mr. E. F. White CC, Miss. H. Worman CC, Mr. M. B. Wyatt CC and Mr. L. E. Yates CC

43. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Mr Roger Begy OBE

It was with great regret that the Chairman reported the death of Mr Roger Begy who had died on 1st February, aged 72.

Although Roger did not serve on the County Council many members present had known and worked with him in his capacity as Leader of Rutland County Council and as Rutland's representative on various partnership bodies.

Roger had played a key role in improving and developing relationships between the County Council and Rutland Council. He would be greatly missed.

A memorial service for Roger would be held in Oakham on Thursday, 17th March.

Those present joined the Chairman in standing in silent tribute to the memory of Mr Roger Begy.

Mr Geoff Welsh and Mr David Knaggs

The Chairman reported that Geoff Welsh and David Knaggs had been unwell and had been admitted to hospital.

Members joined the Chairman in extending best wishes to both for a speedy recovery.

Stonewall Workforce Equality Index 2016

The Stonewall Workforce Equality Index ranks organisations across the UK for their efforts to create an inclusive workplace for their lesbian, gay and bisexual employees.

The Chairman reported that Leicestershire County Council had achieved its highest ever placing at 7th place in the country, and was the top local authority. It was also reported that the County Council had been joined in the top 100 by two other county organisations - Leicestershire Police and De Montfort University.

This had been a tremendous achievement and the Chairman was sure all members were rightly proud of it.

Mr Andrew James

The Chairman reminded members that this would be the last Council meeting before Andrew James retired.

Andrew had been with the County Council since February 1979 when he joined as Senior Assistant Solicitor.

Andrew had over the years been involved in advising members on a range of issues but would always be remembered and respected for his knowledge and expertise on planning and highways matters.

Those present joined the Chairman in placing on record their appreciation to Andrew for his hard work, professionalism and integrity and wished Andrew well for a long and happy retirement.

Visitors

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting all visitors and guests of members and anyone who was viewing the meeting via the webcast.

44. MINUTES.

It was moved by the Chairman, seconded by Mr Liquorish and carried:-

“That the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 2nd December 2015, copies of which have been circulated to members, be taken as read, confirmed and signed.”

45. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

The Chairman invited members who wished to do so to make declarations of interest in respect of items on the agenda for the meeting.

All members who were members of District and Borough Councils declared a personal interest in relation to the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2016 -

2020 and the notice of motion concerning unitary status.

46. QUESTIONS ASKED UNDER STANDING ORDER 7(1)(2) AND (5).

(A) Mr Sharp asked the following question of the Leader or his nominee:-

“A recent resident letter to the Loughborough Echo criticised the ‘waste and duplication’ involved in having an ‘outdated middle tier of local government’ implying that Councillors were complicit in its continuation.

For complete transparency, could the Leader confirm:-

1. By Group, how many existing County Councillors are also registered as District/Borough Councillors?
2. How many of the seven District Leaders are also County Councillors?
3. How many of the seven District Leaders are also members of the County Council Cabinet?”

Mr Rushton replied as follows:-

- “1. 37 County Councillors are also members of District Councils of which 21 are Conservative members, 12 Liberal Democrat members and 4 Labour members.
2. Four.
3. Three.”

47. REPORT OF THE CABINET.

(a) Medium Term Financial Strategy 2016/17 - 2019/2020.

(A) Medium Term Financial Strategy 2016/17 to 2019/20

It was moved by Mr Rhodes and seconded by Mr Houseman:-

- “(a) That subject to the items below, approval be given to the MTFs which incorporates the recommended revenue budget for 2016/17 totalling £345.3m as set out in Appendices A, B and D of the report and includes the growth and savings for that year as set out in Appendix C;
- (b) That approval be given to the projected provisional revenue budgets for 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20, set out in Appendix B to the report, including the growth and savings for those years as set out in Appendix C thereto and to the undertaking of such preliminary work, including consultation and equality impact assessments, as may be necessary towards achieving the savings specified for those years including corporate savings under development;
- (c) That approval is given to the early achievement of savings that are included in the MTFs, as may be necessary, along with associated

investment costs, subject to the Director of Finance agreeing to funding being available;

- (d) That the level of earmarked funds as set out in Appendix I be noted and the use of earmarked funds be approved;
- (e) That the amounts of the County Council's Council Tax for each band of dwelling and the precept payable by each billing authority for 2016/17 be as set out in Appendix J (including the adult social care precept, 2%);
- (f) That the Chief Executive be authorised to issue the necessary precepts to billing authorities in accordance with the budget requirement above and the tax base notified by the District Councils, and to take any other action which may be necessary to give effect to the precepts;
- (g) That approval be given to the 2016/17 – 2019/20 capital programme as set out in Appendix E;
- (h) That the financial indicators required under the Prudential Code included in Appendix K, Annex 2 be noted and that the following limits be approved:-

	2016/17 £m	2017/18 £m	2018/19 £m	2019/20 £m
Operational boundary for external debt				
i) Borrowing	274.6	264.6	264.1	263.6
ii) Other long term liabilities	1.4	1.3	1.3	1.2
TOTAL	276.0	265.9	265.4	264.8
Authorised limit for external debt				
i) Borrowing	284.6	274.6	274.1	273.6
ii) Other long term liabilities	1.4	1.3	1.3	1.2
TOTAL	286.0	275.9	275.4	274.8

- (i) That the Director of Finance be authorised to effect movement within the authorised limit for external debt between borrowing and other long term liabilities;
- (j) That the following borrowing limits be approved for the period 2016/17 to 2019/20:
 - (i) Upper limit on fixed interest exposures 100%
 - (ii) Upper limit on variable rate exposures 50%
 - (iii) Maturity of borrowing:-

	<u>Upper Limit</u>	<u>Lower Limit</u>
	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
Under 12 months	30	0
12 months and within 24 months	30	0
24 months and within 5 years	50	0
5 years and within 10 years	70	0
10 years and above	100	25

- (k) That the Director of Finance be authorised to enter into such loans or undertake such arrangements as necessary to finance capital payments in 2016/17, subject to the prudential limits in Appendix K;
- (l) That the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and the Annual Investment Strategy for 2016/17, as set out in Appendix K, be approved including the following:-
- (i) The Treasury Management Policy Statement, Appendix K; Annex 4
- (ii) The Annual Statement of Annual Minimum Revenue as set out in Appendix K, Annex 1;
- (m) That approval is given to the Risk Management Policy and Strategy (Appendix G) subject to consideration by the Corporate Governance Committee on 19th February 2016 and that the Director of Finance be authorised to make amendments if necessary following consideration by the Corporate Governance Committee;
- (n) That the Capital Strategy (Appendix F) and Earmarked Funds Policy (Appendix H) to this report be approved;
- (o) That the Director of Corporate Resources following consultation with the Cabinet Lead Member for Resources be authorised to prepare and approve a separate Efficiency Plan, if specifically required by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) to accept a 4 year settlement.”

The Chairman indicated that a named vote would be recorded, as required by Government Regulations.

The vote was recorded as follows:-

For the motion

Mr Bentley, Mr Blunt, Mrs Camamile, Mr Coxon, Mrs Dickinson, Dr Feltham, Mr Hampson, Mr Hart, Mr Houseman, Mr Jennings, Mr Kershaw, Mr Lewis, Mr Liquorish, Mr Orson, Mr Osborne, Mr O’Shea, Mr Ould, Mrs Page, Mr Pain, Mr Pearson, Mr Pendleton, Mrs Posnett, Mrs Radford, Mr Rhodes, Mrs Richards, Mr Richardson, Mr Rushton, Mr Shepherd, Mr Snartt, Mr White.

Against the motion

Mr Bill, Mr Boulter, Mr Bray, Mr Charlesworth, Dr Eynon, Mrs Fox, Mr Galton, Mr Gamble, Mr Hunt, Mr Kaufman, Ms Knaggs, Mrs Loydall, Mr Lynch, Mr Mullaney, Ms Newton, Mr Sharp, Mr Sheahan, Mr Sprason, Miss Worman, Mr Wyatt, Mr Yates.

The motion was put and carried, 30 members voting for the motion and 21 against.

48. TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING NOTICE OF MOTION:-

(a) Local Government Reorganisation: Unitary Status.

It was moved by Mr Sharp, and seconded by Mr Hunt:-

“(a) That this Council notes:-

- (i) the significant financial pressures facing the County Council and District Councils in Leicestershire;
- (ii) a recent report commissioned by the County Council from consultants, Ernst and Young, highlighted the opportunities for making significant savings by moving to a unitary form of government which could be used to support frontline services to the public;
- (iii) a change in attitude within Central Government on the issue of local government reorganisation as evidenced by the provisions included in the Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill.

(b) That this Council believes that notwithstanding the establishment of a Combined Authority for Leicester and Leicestershire, a development to be welcomed, the time is now right for a fundamental review of the two tier local authority structures in Leicestershire on the basis that such review should be undertaken with no predicated outcome as to the number of unitary authorities but that the new structure should aim to:-

- (i) deliver a saving of at least £20million per annum after taking into account transition costs;
- (ii) provide strong, effective and accountable strategic leadership;
- (iii) better engage with local communities in Leicestershire.

(c) This Council therefore calls on the Leader of the County Council to:-

- (i) engage independent consultants to consider and prepare options and full business cases for new governance arrangements in Leicestershire which meets the aims outlined in b) (i) (ii) and (iii) above and to commit to engage and work with the independent consultants to deliver their report for public consultation by the end of the 2016;
- (ii) seek support for a full engagement with the Governance review from the Leaders of the seven district councils in Leicestershire;
- (iii) lobby Leicestershire MPs to seek their early support for the Governance review and its aims.”

An amendment was moved by Mr Rushton, and seconded by Mr White:-

“That parts (b) and (c) of the motion be deleted and the following be inserted in its place:-

‘(b) That the County Council, whilst recognising and accepting part (a) of the motion:-

- (i) believes that the Government would only give serious consideration to a proposal for a reorganisation of local government in Leicestershire if it were supported by at least a majority of the County and District Councils;
- (ii) believes that such a majority does not exist and therefore there is nothing to be gained by pursuing a proposal at the present time, which would in any event destabilise the good relationships which have enabled the Leicester and Leicestershire Combined Authority and Devolution Deal bid to proceed.’ ”

The amendment was put and carried, 30 members voting for the amendment and 20 against.

The substantive motion was put and carried.

2.30 pm – 4.51 pm
17 February 2016

CHAIRMAN