

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
HELD AT COUNTY HALL, GLENFIELD ON WEDNESDAY, 29 SEPTEMBER
2021**

PRESENT

Mr. D. Harrison CC (in the Chair)

Mr. R. G. Allen CC, Mr. R. Ashman CC, Mr. N. D. Bannister CC, Mr. T. Barkley CC, Mr. P. Bedford CC, Mr. D. C. Bill MBE CC, Mr. G. A. Boulter CC, Mr. S. L. Bray CC, Mr. L. Breckon JP CC, Ms. L. Broadley CC, Mr. B. Champion CC, Mr. N. Chapman CC, Mr. M. H. Charlesworth CC, Mr. J. G. Coxon CC, Dr. R. K. A. Feltham CC, Mr. M. Frisby CC, Mrs. H. J. Fryer CC, Mr. S. J. Galton CC, Mr. D. A. Gamble CC, Mr. K. Ghattoraya CC, Mr. T. Gillard CC, Mr. D. J. Grimley CC, Mrs. A. J. Hack CC, Mr. L. Hadji-Nikolaou CC, Mr. B. Harrison-Rushton CC, Mr. R. Hills CC, Mr. Max Hunt CC, Mr. P. King CC, Mr. B. Lovegrove CC, Mr. K. Merrie MBE CC, Mr. J. Miah CC, Mr. J. Morgan CC, Mr. M. T. Mullaney CC, Ms. Betty Newton CC, Mr. O. O'Shea JP CC, Mr. J. T. Orson JP CC, Mrs. R. Page CC, Mr. B. L. Pain CC, Mr T. Parton CC, Mr. T. J. Pendleton CC, Mr. L. Phillimore CC, Mr J. Poland CC, Mrs. P. Posnett MBE CC, Mrs. C. M. Radford CC, Mr. T. J. Richardson CC, Mrs H. L. Richardson CC, Mr. N. J. Rushton CC, Mrs B. Seaton CC, Mr. R. J. Shepherd CC, Mr. C. A. Smith CC, Mrs D. Taylor CC, Mr. G. Welsh CC, Mrs. A. Wright CC and Mrs. M. Wright CC

23. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Mr Barry Garner

The Chairman reported with great sadness the death of former Chairman of the County Council, Mr Barry Garner.

Mr Garner served on the County Council from 1997 to 2013, representing the Narborough Electoral Division. He was Chairman of the County Council during the 2006 – 2007 municipal year.

He served mainly on scrutiny committees relating to Adult Social Care and Health matters, the Development Control and Regulatory Board and the Standards Committee.

Mrs Joan Snartt

The Chairman reported the very sad passing of Mrs Joan Snartt, wife of David Snartt, a Past Chairman and Honorary Alderman. Joan was a great support to David during his year as Chairman and as a civic couple they were greatly respected.

Members joined the Chairman in silent tribute to Barry Garner and Joan Snartt.

Mr David Bill, MBE CC

The Chairman reported that Mr David Bill, MBE CC had completed over 40 years continuous service, having been first elected to the Council in 1981.

Members joined the Chairman in showing their appreciation for Mr Bill's many years of continuous service within the Authority.

Recent Highlights

Since the Council meeting in July the Chairman had begun to attend a number of events representing members and the County Council. A few highlights had been the unveiling of a Green Plaque for Jack Gardner, a former boxer from Market Harborough, welcoming the Earl and Countess of Wessex to Harborough Museum and the Duke of Gloucester to the 1620 Manor House at Donington-le Heath. On the following day, the Chairman would be in Hinckley to unveil a Green Plaque for Captain Gee who was awarded a Victoria Cross in the First World War as well as serving as a Member of Parliament for Bosworth.

24. MINUTES.

It was moved by the Chairman, seconded by Dr Feltham and carried:-

“That the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 7 July 2021, copies of which have been circulated to members, be taken as read, confirmed and signed.”

25. 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 declared a personal interest in the Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel (minute 28(a) refers).

Mr Phillimore declared a personal interest in the position statement from the Cabinet Lead Member for Resources (minute 27 refers) as it referred to Special Educational Needs, an area in which his wife was employed.

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

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

“Could the Leader please update me on progress of the weed spraying programme in across Hinckley and Bosworth? A number of residents in my division have contacted me concerned about weeds in gutters, concerned at the impact this will have on surface water drainage as the autumn weather approaches, as well as being an eyesore. Can the Leader please assure me this will be completed soon?”

Mr O'Shea replied as follows:

“Early in the season the treatment programme was put on hold whilst the use of alternative methods and treatments were investigated in response to requests to halt the use of glyphosate. After consideration it was decided that the most cost effective and efficient way to treat weeds in a highway setting was to continue with the use of glyphosate. Our first of two Countywide treatments would normally have started in May, but due to the earlier suspension we were not able to start until early July when the outcome of the review was known. At that point, the contractor also had commitments with other authorities so could only offer a reduced resource and their workforce has also been further affected by Covid Isolation rules.

The treatment has now been completed in Charnwood, Melton, Harborough, Blaby, Oadby and Wigston, with Hinckley and Bosworth the most recent Borough to be completed on 15th September. The contractors have now moved into North West Leicestershire and this should be completed by the end of September.”

Mr Bray asked the following supplementary question:

“Could I just ask the Lead Member if he would undertake to have a look at the job that's been done because, I have to say, in my patch, there are still quite a lot of areas that are an eyesore?”

Mr O'Shea replied as follows:

“Currently, Hinckley and Bosworth Borough is in the process of being done.”

(B) Mrs Hack asked the following question of the Leader or his nominee:

“In light of the recent article in the Leicester Mercury about a young person being unable to access his specialist school due to delays in funding for his transport, please could Members have an update on:

1. The number of students who are not able to attend their special school due to the reported backlog?
2. The impact of the delays in terms of average school days lost for this cohort of young people?
3. How this backlog will be avoided in future years?”

Mr O'Shea replied as follows:

- “1. At the start of the term 1,703 Special Educational Needs (SEN) transport applications had been processed with 125 approved, but not yet provided with transport. Of those 125 without transport, 112 were received late (i.e. after the application deadline date), nine were as a result of Personal Travel Budget (PTB) appeals and four were late being processed.

There were an additional 92 applications for PTBs awaiting processing, 85 of which were received late. Of the remaining, four were delayed by the school/college placement and three required further information.

As of 24th September, 1,987 SEN transport applications had been processed with only 37 late applications outstanding. Overall, 574 applications were received late.

2. The average number of school days lost is extremely difficult to calculate given that many schools have varying start dates, some students have part-time timetables and further transport arrangements have been put in place on a daily basis since the start of term. The vast majority of the 1,828 students, whose applications were received by the Transport Service on time, had their applications processed and transport arrangements confirmed prior to the start of the school year. It should also be noted that a proportion of the late applications were due to a delay in school placements by Special Educational Needs Assessment and Commissioning Service (SENA) and those parents were contacted and advised of the assistance that was available.
3. The majority of the backlog was a result of late applications, late parent appeals, late notice of college timetabling, schools changing students site provision, parents changing from a PTB to traditional transport or moving house after the date of their application and after transport had been planned.

While it is very difficult for the County Council to control and therefore prevent the above scenarios, we do propose a further revision of communications around the application deadline date for next year. We will endeavour to make application deadlines as clear as possible for parents and carers. In addition, to help manage expectations, it will be emphasised in our communications that for late applications or, where the service does not have the necessary information to process transport such as college timetables, it is unlikely transport will be in place for the start of the school term and that it may take a number of weeks after that to put in place depending on the volume being dealt with at that time.

Whilst much of the above is outside the Council's control, this year there was also some delay due to late school placements. The SENA service has undertaken significant work to understand the peak times of demand and now have better planning mechanisms in place to ensure transition reviews are undertaken in a timely manner avoiding similar delays in future years."

Mrs Hack asked the following supplementary question:

"It is identified in the response that overall 574 applications were received late. I wonder whether or not those were foreseen delays? Secondly, it identifies in point two, the vast majority of the 1,828 students. Could we just get clarity on the number please?"

Mr O'Shea replied as follows:

"I will arrange for a full and comprehensive written reply."

[Subsequent to the meeting the following response was received:

Regarding the 574 late applications, delays can be caused by a number of factors such as:

- *Parents applying after the advised date;*
- *SENA late confirming school placements which delayed parent's applications;*
- *Colleges confirming / changing students timetables shortly before the college start date;*
- *Parents late in appealing their Post 16 PTB;*
- *Schools with split school sites moving students to different sites just before or after the start of term;*
- *Parents wanting to change from a PTB to traditional transport;*
- *Parents advising of a change of address shortly before the start of term.*

The majority of the above could not have been foreseen as they are in the control of others outside the Transport Operations service i.e. parents, schools and colleges.

In Point 2 of the previous response it was stated "The vast majority of the 1,828 students, whose applications were received by the Transport Service on time, had their applications processed and transport arrangements confirmed prior to the start of the school year." The actual number with transport in place at the start of term was 1,703.]

27. POSITION STATEMENTS UNDER STANDING ORDER 8.

The Leader gave a position statement on the following matters:

- County Deal;
- East Midlands Freeport;
- Cloud Hill Forest School.

The Lead Member for Resources gave a position statement on the following matters:

- Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022-26;
- Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service;
- Midland Parks Forum Conference.

The Lead Member for Covid Recovery and Ways of Working gave a position statement on the County Council's smarter working programme.

A copy of the position statements is filed with these minutes.

28. REPORT OF THE CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE.

(a) Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel on Member Allowances.

It was moved by Mr Rushton, seconded by Mrs Taylor, and carried:

- “(a) That the Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances be increased on annual basis, from 1st April 2022, for a two-year period, in line with the Local Government Pay Award;
- (b) That a further review of the indexation of the Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances be undertaken in 2023;
- (c) That the current levels of Travel and Subsistence Allowances remain unchanged;
- (d) That those members who have submitted an Annual Report be thanked for doing so;
- (e) That those members who have not submitted an Annual Report for the municipal year 2020/21 be requested to do at the earliest opportunity.”

29. TO MAKE THE FOLLOWING APPOINTMENTS IN ACCORDANCE WITH ITEMS 11 AND 12 OF STANDING ORDER 4:

(a) To appoint a parent governor representative to serve on the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Report of the Chief Executive.

It was moved by Mr Shepherd, seconded by Mr Charlesworth and carried:

“That Mr Robert Martin be appointed as co-opted member of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee (or other appropriate scrutiny committee dealing with Education) for the period ending May 2025).”

30. TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING NOTICES OF MOTION:

(a) COP26.

Mr Hunt with the consent of the seconder of the motion, sought the approval of the Council to move the following altered motion:-

It was moved by Mr Hunt, seconded by Mr Boulter, and carried:

“Leicestershire County Council has declared that climate change has become an emergency for all of us and therefore:

- (a) Notes that:
 - (i) The County Council has a strong Environment Strategy; significant progress is being made to fulfil its Action Plan in Tranche 1 within the Council’s direct sphere of influence across the county and the Council is working towards Tranche 2;
 - (ii) The UK has led the world through its system of carbon budgets

under the Climate Change Act in its requirement to increase renewable energy;

- (iii) The UK Climate Change Committee has set out a high level plan to meet the sixth Carbon Budget which has yet to be supported by policy;
- (iv) The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is calling for stronger measures in order to keep global temperature rises below a level of 1.5 degrees Celsius and above which life would become unsustainable in many areas of the globe.

(b) Remains concerned that:

- (i) The major world economies are still not acting with sufficient urgency;
- (ii) Mitigation measures, such as flood defences, will not hold back further climate change or the devastating effects on poor countries.

(c) Agrees to:

- (i) Write to the Prime Minister urging substantive proposals to meet targets set by and the UK Climate Change Committee and informing him that whilst the target of Net Zero Carbon on Leicestershire County Council activities can be met by 2030 the wider Leicestershire target of Net Zero Carbon by 2045 cannot be met without action by central Government;
- (ii) Hold an event in 2022 to support practical measures in support of the outcomes of COP26.”

(b) Prevention Services, Public Health and Cancer.

It was moved by Mr Mullaney, seconded by Mrs Richardson and carried:

“(a) This Council notes that:

- (i) Preventable disease and mortality continue to have a massive impact on the public’s health, the NHS and the economy. This has only come into sharper focus since the emergence of COVID-19, with preventable causes of cancer such as obesity being associated with a higher risk of adverse outcomes from COVID-19. Further disruption caused by COVID-19 has also had a detrimental effect on the diagnosis of cancer cases; Cancer Research UK estimates that 3 million fewer people were screened in the UK between March and September 2020.
- (ii) Investment in disease prevention and the public health grant must be a priority for the UK Government. The grant funds vital services and functions that prevent ill health, reduce health inequalities,

and contribute to the future sustainability of the NHS. Local authorities are responsible for improving the health of their populations and do this through services such as stop smoking services, tobacco control and action on diet, exercise, and obesity. But their ability to do so is compromised by continued reductions to the Public Health grant.

- (iii) In 2021/21, the public health grant was given a small uplift of £45 million by the UK Government – equivalent to a cash increase of 0.67%. In reality, however, this represents a 24% reduction, equivalent to £1 billion on a real term basis since 2015/16.
 - (iv) Taking funds away from prevention is a false economy. Without proper investment in public health, people suffer, demand on local health services increases, and the economy suffers. This uplift does not consider the impact of COVID-19 on local government budgets, nor their response to the unprecedented challenge of the pandemic. As well as working hard to safely deliver normal public health functions, councils have also had to respond to the pandemic by supporting national efforts to prevent the spread of COVID-19, protect vulnerable members of the community and support local businesses and communities. In consequence, local preventive action has suffered.
 - (v) Unless funding to improve public health is increased, our health and care system will remain locked in a ‘treatment’ approach, which is neither economically viable nor protects the health of residents. Deprived areas suffer the worst health outcomes, so it is also vital that areas with the greatest need receive sufficient funding to meet their local challenges. An estimated 27,000 cases of cancer a year in England are associated with socioeconomic deprivation.
- (b) This Council further notes that in Leicestershire, there are around 4,000 cancer cases per year, and around 2,000 deaths from cancer per year. Around four in ten cancers are preventable, largely through avoidable risk factors, such as stopping smoking, keeping a healthy weight and cutting back on alcohol. In 2017, smoking was estimated to account for 80,000 early deaths every year in England and it remains the largest preventable cause of cancer in the world. Smoking-related ill health costs local authorities £883.5 million every year in social care costs. Additionally, obesity and alcohol account for 30,000 and 7,000 early deaths each year respectively.
- (c) This Council therefore supports Cancer Research UK’s calls for increased and sustainable public health funding, which will also help to level up unfair health inequalities, bolster our health and social care system and the economy, and help us rebuild and recover from COVID-19. In turn, Leicestershire County Council will continue to support and fund locally-delivered prevention services and other public health initiatives to the best of our abilities - to prevent ill-health, reduce inequalities and support a health and social care system that is fit for the future.”

2.30 pm – 3.52 pm
29 September 2021

CHAIRMAN