

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
HELD AT COUNTY HALL, GLENFIELD ON WEDNESDAY, 18 MAY 2022**

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, Mrs. 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, Mrs. R. Page CC, Mr. B. L. Pain CC, Mr T. Parton CC, Mr. T. J. Pendleton CC, Mr. L. Phillimore 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

1. TO ELECT A CHAIRMAN.

It was moved by Mr Rushton, seconded by Mr Mullaney and carried:

“That Dr Kevin Feltham be elected Chairman for the period until the next Annual Meeting of the Council.”

Dr Feltham read out and signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office which was witnessed and signed by the Chief Executive.

Dr Feltham took the Chair and thanked his proposer and seconder and members of the Council for electing him.

The Chairman thanked Mr Harrison for his services to the County during his period of office as Chairman. Mr Rushton, Mr Mullaney and Mrs Hack each joined the Chairman in associating their Groups with thanks to Mr Harrison. Mr Harrison thanked members for their generous remarks.

Dr. K. Feltham CC (in the Chair)

2. TO ELECT A VICE CHAIRMAN

It was moved by Mr Rushton, seconded by Mr Mullaney and carried:

“That Mr Dan Harrison be appointed Vice-Chairman for the period until the next Annual Meeting of the Council.”

Mr Harrison read out and signed his Declaration of Acceptance of office which was witnessed and signed by the Chief Executive.

Mr Harrison thanked his proposer and seconder for their generous remarks and members of the Council for appointing him as Vice-Chairman.

3. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

The Chairman reported with sadness the death of former County Councillor Mr Clifford Stanley and former Chief Constable Simon Cole.

Mr Stanley

Mr Stanley was a member of the County Council from 2001 to 2009 and represented the Greenhill electoral division. He served mainly on the Children and Young Persons Scrutiny Committee and the Employment and Standards Committees.

Simon Cole

Simon Cole was the youngest and longest serving Chief Constable and we have lost an outstanding public servant whose main mission in life was to make our communities stronger and safer. During his 12 years as head of Leicestershire Police he earned the respect and admiration of everyone he worked with.

Members joined the Chairman by standing in silent tribute to Mr Clifford Stanley and Mr Simon Cole.

Falklands War Remembrance

On Tuesday, 14th June at 3.00 p.m. the Chairman would be holding a small remembrance service at Stand Easy to commemorate the ending of the Falklands War in 1982. The timing of the event would coincide with the Act of Remembrance which would take place at the 1982 Cemetery in Port Stanley, at 11.00 a.m. local time. All members were invited join him.

Armed Forces Day

As a prelude to Armed Forces Day, the Chairman would be hosting an Armed Forces Day Flag-Raising ceremony at the Stand Easy Memorial on Monday, 20th June at 10.30 a.m. Again, all Members were invited to join him.

On Saturday, 25th June, together with the Lord-Lieutenant and Lord Mayor of Leicester, the Chairman would be attending Armed Forces Day in Leicester City. There would be a parade of service personnel, veterans, and cadets through the streets of Leicester. Following the parade there would be an outside 'Drumhead Service' in Green Dragon Square. All Members, if they could, were invited to come into the City to watch the fitting tribute to the Armed Forces and veterans.

Summer Reception

The Chairman informed Members that he would be hosting a summer reception at Beaumanor Hall on Thursday, 26th July at 6.30 p.m. All

Members would receive invitations and further details in due course.

County Service

I will be hosting a County Service later in the year and all Members will receive an invitation in due course.

Domestic Abuse

The Chairman welcomed the range of exhibits about Domestic Abuse being displayed that day in the Members' lounge. This formed an Exhibition titled 'Expression of Freedom'- which ran at Stephenson College, Coalville in November. Developed by the Safer North-West Leicestershire Partnership, the showcase was an artistic collaboration between Leicestershire-based artists and groups supported by Leicestershire County Council's Children and Family Wellbeing Service.

A series of creative workshops had been commissioned by the Safer North-West Leicestershire Partnership to explore the context of abuse in relationships with a range of people and used art to reflect, heal and empower. There were plans to develop this project in 2022 and hold a County-wide exhibition during the national *16 days of action to eradicate abuse* campaign which would be in November.

Alongside the exhibition, a new game was being showcased called 'Talking Relationships'. This had been developed by young people from CYCLe and young people from Leicester City and Rutland with support from UAVA. The game was in the style of Top Trumps to enable conversations about elements of a relationships including Respect, Trust, Honesty, Compromise, Communication and Anger.

Visitors

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

4. MINUTES.

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

"That the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 17th February 2022, copies of which have been circulated to members, be taken as read, confirmed and signed."

5. 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.

No such declarations were made.

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

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

- “1. What involvement has the County Council had in this regeneration project involving Bedford Square, Ward’s End and Devonshire Square in Loughborough Town Centre?
2. What financial contribution to the scheme has been made, and what work has been done so far by the County Council?
3. Could you confirm that the County Council has previously adopted these streets and whether that has ceased?
4. When the project is completed, what maintenance responsibilities does the County Council expect to have, and will they be similar to those of Loughborough Market Place (including Cattle Market and Market Street)?
5. Has the County Council agreed the design of the project and specifically the choice of stone and the kerbs which are already spoken of as a hazard to pedestrians and cyclists?
6. Does the commendable 20mph limit conform throughout the town centre (e.g. High Street, Swan Street, Derby Square and within the Inner Relieve Road), if not, could this be considered for safety and uniformity?
7. Why is it that the Borough Council engages such highways projects in Loughborough when the County Council is the Local Transport Authority?
8. Are there any other recent examples of District Councils contracting similar highways projects?”

Mr O’Shea replied as follows:

- “1. Leicestershire County Council (LCC) is the Highway Authority (HA) for the roads named and as such requires a third party working on the highway to have an appropriate approval to do so. Charnwood Borough Council (CBC) has entered into a section 278 of the Highways Act agreement with LCC in order for them to be able to complete the project.
2. No financial contribution has been made by LCC. The project is being funded exclusively by CBC. As part of the s278 approval process, LCC officers have appraised the design submitted by CBCs design consultant against the standards contained within the Leicestershire Highways Design Guide (LHDG) in order to issue technical approval. Legal Services have prepared the s278 agreement.

During construction on the site, officers have inspected the works to

monitor the standard of workmanship and compliance with the approved drawings.

3. These streets are adopted public highway and continue to be. However, under the terms of the s278 agreement, CBC are responsible for maintaining their works until such time they have fully complied with the terms of the s278 agreement, and a final certificate is issued.
4. CBC will be responsible for maintenance of the site for a minimum period of 12 months upon substantial completion of the works. Upon issue of the final certificate, the road will then revert to be the maintenance responsibility of LCC.
5. As a standard process with all third party/developer promoted schemes, detailed design drawings are required to be submitted to the Highway Authority for technical approval. In preparing and submitting their proposals, the works promoter is expected to comply with the Authority's standards contained in the Leicestershire Highway Design Guide, or other local & national design standards (as appropriate). In issuing technical approval, LCC is not verifying the buildability of the works promoter's proposals, just that they have demonstrated compliance with relevant design standards. Any technical approval is provided with the caveat that the promoter may be required to change or amend their proposals to address their responsibilities under the terms of the Legal Agreement and in response to any matters raised within road safety audits carried out at various stages of a project and reflecting specifics of the local environment. For this project LCC gave technical approval for the original design submission in February 2021 e.g. compliance with the relevant design standards. As the works have progressed a number of issues have arisen, which CBC through their designer have been working to resolve in accordance with their responsibilities under the S278 agreement. It is the responsibility of the works promoter to ensure approval is in place before construction and that construction is undertaken in accordance with that approved design. Any variations will be inspected and, if necessary, defects will be addressed prior to the issuing of a final certificate.
6. The 20mph limit will only cover Wards End and the Cattle Market from the entrance of the Wards End car park to the junction with Granby Street. This was the extents that the works promoter CBC requested in order to facilitate the Public Realm scheme.

An extension to the 20mph limit could be considered by CBC or LCC, but this would be subject to a viability assessment and further funding, the extent of which could be significant should an assessment determine the need for speed reducing features to make it self-enforcing.

I have asked officers to let you have a plan of the extents of the 20mph limit.

7. As the aims and objectives of the scheme are to improve the public realm and promote regeneration, this is not the role of the Highway Authority and therefore this isn't a highway project, but a Public Realm

project delivered by CBC using funding available to them for town centre regeneration. I am aware that the project has had a lot of public criticism on safety grounds, which have come the way of the County Council as the Highway Authority. It does need to be made clear, as above, that it is a CBC project and public criticism, and concerns should be directed to them.

8. As per Q7, this type of scheme is driven by the aim of improving the public realm and regeneration of a particular area. North West Leicestershire District Council (NWLDC) is currently working towards delivering a similar type of project, and other district and parish councils are investigating the possibility of similar such projects.”

Mr Hunt asked the following supplementary question:

“I have a supplementary question on question 5 which relates to the public criticism of the safety of new paving being installed. I echo these concerns having spoken to a number of people who have tripped and fallen. Members will have seen a Leicester Mercury article of a cyclist who fell and injured his knee and I have spoken to an experienced cyclist who tripped while walking with her bike. The paving is clearly dangerous.

In the answer to question 5 the Lead Member refers to the Section 278 agreement. Given that there appears to be evidence that the works carried out by Charnwood Borough Council are causing concern and are a danger to the public could I be assured that the County Council will inspect the works carried out and if necessary, require any defects to be addressed before a final certificate is issued?”

Mr O’Shea replied as follows:

“I can assure Mr Hunt that the works will be inspected, and a final certificate will only be issued when the County Council is satisfied with the works carried out.”

(B) Mr Hunt asked the following question of the Leader or his nominee:

- “1. On 20th January 2022 the Director of Environment and Transport published a report stating that there were “a number of savings which are not yet currently developed enough to be able to quantify and build into the detailed savings schedules” and added that “Potential to see whether increasing wildflower populations on verges provides opportunities for reductions in grass cutting in urban areas. But on 6th May 2022 the Authority published a press release saying “a partnership with local wildlife charity NatureSpot, aims to improve biodiversity and encourage wildlife, by leaving wildflowers to flourish on urban roadside verges across Leicestershire”. I understand that “leaving wildflowers to flourish” also represents a cut in our grass cutting service. What is the previous and proposed number of cuts in these urban areas?
2. Which streets will this affect in Loughborough?

3. The press release suggests that the policy involves “volunteers and parishes giving up their time to restore the verges, including the sowing of native wildflower seeds”. When will the sowing begin and how will the locations be chosen?
4. Will restoration of verges include streets on former council estates, like Schofield Road?
5. Will those with a “licence to cultivate” be included in the scheme with a requirement to reduce grass cutting and substitute a wildflower initiative?
6. Given the importance of this policy and the pride that residents consistently show in well maintained grass verges, will the authority produce a suitable communication directly to residents?
7. What is the saving in the current financial year and why wasn't it included in the MTFS in line with good practice?
8. What other “savings are under development” are likely to be included in this financial year that were not included in the MTFS?”

Mr Pain replied as follows:

- “1. The current number of urban grass cuts is a minimum of six per year. For the sites included within this scheme there would be one cut in the autumn and collection of the grass from the site one week after cutting.
2. There are no Urban Wildlife Verges in the town of Loughborough, but several verges have been taken by individual parish councils in the Charnwood Borough Council area.
3. The purpose is not to ‘plant’ wildflowers but encourage natural regeneration through the reduction of cuts and allowing the natural ingress of wildflowers. Sowing of seeds is not necessary everywhere, only to give a boost to biodiversity in some areas where species content is low. This will also support existing species to thrive in the main summer season and re-seed in the autumn.
4. Verges are selected in places where the district council or parish council can support a contract or volunteers to deliver the later cuts and collection of arisings.
5. Individual residents can deliver the same approach as parishes by obtaining a ‘licence to cultivate’ outside their homes. Those who currently hold a licence to cultivate will not be required to substitute a wildflower verge.
6. Communications about specific verges being considered for the Urban Wildlife Scheme are issued via parish councils. We have a verge agreement that stipulates the need for consultation locally about any verges in the Urban Wildlife Verge scheme. The County Council publicises the benefits of the scheme, the Environment Policy and

Strategy Team have been offering workshops for Councillors, parish council staff and district and borough representatives willing to engage in the scheme, to explain the value of the scheme for nature and the process of entering and ways of managing. We also publish information here www.leicestershire.gov.uk/nature. 54 parish councils are participating in this 2022 season and there are already four additional expressions of interest for the 2023 season.

7. The sites included within this scheme represent less than one percent of the total number of verges that are treated each year therefore there will be no material cost savings in not cutting these sites.
8. At this present time, there are currently no savings 'under development' that are expected to be included in this financial year's MTFS.

Mr Hunt asked the following supplementary question:

"My question revolves around the confusion between reducing the number of cuts in urban areas which was announced in the MTFS as a project in hand and whether that applies to the wildflower project which was announced in a press release. I think we need very clear explanation of where these two schemes meet, if they meet at all, and what reduction in cuts in urban areas are being proposed or are likely to be proposed?"

Mr Pain responded as follows:

I believe the answer is exceedingly clear. The current number of urban cuts is a minimum of six per year.

7. POSITION STATEMENTS UNDER STANDING ORDER 8.

The Leader gave a position statement on the following matters:

- County Deal
- UKSPF and Levelling Up Fund
- Tackling the cost of living crisis
- Supporting Ukrainian refugees
- Supporting the economy and delivering economic growth
- Fair Funding
- Green Leicestershire
- Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge

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

8. REPORTS OF THE CABINET

(a) Leicestershire County Council's Strategic Plan 2022 - 2026

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

"That the Strategic Plan for 2022 to 2026, as set out in the Appendix A to the

report, be approved.”

(b) Leicestershire County Council's Communities Strategy - Our Communities Approach 2022 - 2026

It was moved by Mrs Posnett, seconded by Mrs Richardson and carried:

“That the Communities Strategy: Leicestershire County Council – Our Communities Approach 2022-2026, appended to the report, be approved.”

(c) Dates of Council Meetings 2022/23 and 2023/24.

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

“That Council meetings in 2022/23 and 2023/24 be held on the following dates: -

- Wednesday 6 July 2022
- Wednesday 28 September 2022
- Wednesday 7 December 2022
- Wednesday 22 February 2023 (to consider the budget)
- Wednesday 17 May 2023 (Annual meeting)
- Wednesday 5 July 2023
- Wednesday 27 September 2023
- Wednesday 6 December 2023
- Wednesday 21 February 2024 (to consider the budget)
- Wednesday 15 May 2024 (Annual meeting)”

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

(a) To appoint the Leader (and to note the members which the Leader proposes to appoint to the Cabinet)

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

“That Mr N J Rushton be appointed Leader of the Council for the period until the next Annual Meeting of the Council.”

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

“That it be noted that the Leader proposes to appoint the members named on List ‘1’ attached to the Order Paper as members of the Cabinet.”

A copy of List 1 is filed with these minutes.

(b) To appoint such Cabinet Support Members as the Council considers appropriate

It was moved by Mr Rushton, seconded by Mr Shepherd:

“That the following members be appointed as Cabinet Support Members until the next Annual Meeting of the County Council, as provided for in Article 7 of the Council’s Constitution: -

Mr R. Ashman CC
Mrs B. Seaton CC
Mr T. Parton CC
Mrs M. Wright CC”

The motion was put and carried, 40 members voted for the motion; 9 voted against.

(c) To appoint members of the Scrutiny Commission, Boards and Committees

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

Membership

“That the membership of the Scrutiny Commission, Boards and Committees as set out in List ‘2’ and the Chairmen Elect and Spokespersons named in List ‘3’ attached to the Order Paper be approved.”

Substitutes

“That the Chief Executive be authorised to make and terminate appointments to the Commission, committees, boards and other County Council bodies (not including the Cabinet) in accordance with the wishes of the Political Groups to whom the seat in question has been allocated, subject in the case of those bodies set out in List ‘2’ to the Group giving one day’s notice to the Chief Executive of its wishes.”

A copy of List ‘2’ and List ‘3’ is filed with these minutes.

10. TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING NOTICES OF MOTION:

(a) Cost of Living in Leicestershire

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

“1. That this Council notes: -

a) That many of the residents of the County:

- are now finding it very hard to meet their domestic fuel bills;
- are finding a rise in the price of ordinary commodities from food to household products;
- are facing escalating fuel costs at the petrol stations with no alternative options;
- will be receiving lower wages in real terms for the foreseeable future, including many working in the public sector;
- are struggling with the latest Council Tax and National Insurance tax rises.

- b) That the Bank of England officially forecasts an inflation rate of 10.2% in the fourth quarter of this year; this being based on a rise in fuel cap from £1,971 to £2,800 in October.
- c) That price rises are more likely to adversely affect those on low incomes living in deprived communities who will also be prey to the seductive loans which are often at exorbitant rates of interest.
- d) That the establishment of a Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR) wide group to be chaired by a representative from the Leicester Cathedral and comprising the County Council, City Council, District Councils, Rutland, voluntary sector, NHS and the DWP to address the impact of the cost of living crisis, be welcomed.

2. That this County Council requests: -

- a) That the LLR wide group referred to in (d) above develop an action plan to:
 - Improve debt advice and access to that advice through Contact Plus and other avenues.
 - Prioritise action to identify and contain illegal money lenders.
 - Widen interventions on child poverty.
 - Develop new initiatives to support struggling families.
- b) That this the County Council work with District Councils and others to explore ways to:
 - Optimise the distribution of the Household Support Fund.
 - Increase take up of Council Tax Support.
 - Identify any mitigation of financial risks to small businesses.”

(b) Ukrainian Refugees

Mr Mullaney, 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 Mullaney, seconded by Mr Galton and carried:

- “1. That this Council offers its solidarity with the people of Ukraine who are suffering the ongoing trauma of the unprovoked aggression of the Russian invasion.
- 2. That this Council welcomes the incredibly warm hearted and generous response from many Leicestershire residents who have taken Ukrainian refugees into their homes.
- 3. That this Council notes that a number of local authorities have already provided free bus passes to Ukrainian refugees living in their areas and calls on the Cabinet to consider a scheme to provide free bus

passes to those Ukrainian refugees coming to live in Leicestershire and, if necessary, to authorise the Chief Executive to exercise urgent powers after consultation with the Leader to implement an appropriate scheme or transport offer before the next meeting of the Cabinet.”

2.00 pm – 4.45 pm
18 May 2022

CHAIRMAN