



DATE: 19 September 2023
MY REF: RW/CCouncil
PLEASE ASK FOR: Mrs. R. Whitelaw
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Dear Sir/Madam

I summon you to the MEETING of the LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL to be held at COUNTY HALL, GLENFIELD on WEDNESDAY, 27 SEPTEMBER 2023 at 2.00 p.m. for the transaction of the business set out in the agenda below.

Yours faithfully



Chief Executive

AGENDA

1. Chairman's Announcements.
2. To confirm the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 5 July 2023. (Pages 3 - 16)
3. To receive declarations by members of interests in respect of items on this agenda.
4. To answer questions asked under Standing Order 7(1)(2) and (5).
5. To receive position statements under Standing Order 8.
6. To consider the following notice of motion:

(a) Ivanhoe Line - Mr. D. C. Bill CC

“Bearing in mind the time, money and effort expended by the County Council starting in the early 1980s this Council urges the Department for Transport and Network Rail to reconsider its decision not to restore a passenger service between Leicester and Coalville and Ashby.”



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**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
HELD AT COUNTY HALL, GLENFIELD ON WEDNESDAY, 5 JULY 2023**

PRESENT

Dr. R. K. A. Feltham CC (in the Chair)

Mr. R. G. Allen 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. L. Breckon JP CC, Mr. B. Champion CC, Mr. N. Chapman CC, Mr. M. H. Charlesworth CC, Mr. J. G. Coxon 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. B. Harrison-Rushton CC, Mr. D. Harrison CC, Mr. R. Hills CC, Mr. B. Lovegrove CC, Mr. K. Merrie MBE CC, Mr. J. Morgan CC, Mr. M. T. Mullaney CC, Ms. Betty Newton CC, Mr. O. O'Shea JP CC, Mr. J. T. Orson 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, 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

11. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Armed Forces Week

On Monday 19th June to mark the start of Armed Forces week Neale Millet, an RAF veteran and Chairman of the local Royal Air Forces Association, raised the Armed Forces Day Flag at a ceremony at Stand Easy.

On Saturday 24th June the Chairman, together with the Lord-Lieutenant and Lord Mayor of Leicester, attended Armed Forces Day in Leicester City. There was a parade through the City Centre which was made up of service personnel, veterans, and cadets. Following the parade there was a 'Drumhead Service' in Green Dragon Square: a very moving occasion.

County Service

The Chairman would be hosting a County Service later in the year and all Members would receive an invitation in due course.

NHS

The Chairman reminded Members that it was the 75th birthday of the NHS and invited them to look at the stand in the Members' Lounge which included photographs of the early days of the NHS and how local people were involved. He wished the NHS a Happy Birthday.

12. 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 May 2023, copies of which have been circulated to members, be taken as read, confirmed and signed.”

13. 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 non registrable interest in the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel on Members’ Allowances (minute 18(a) refers).

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

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

“Given the news that the County Council is to get an additional nearly £2 million towards bus service improvements, would the County Council please reconsider the decision to withdraw funding for the 159 bus service from Hinckley to Coalville? The Service was one that was used by people in many rural areas like Newbold Verdon, Market Bosworth and Barlestone as well as Hinckley and Coalville. Restoring the subsidy to get the 159 bus service running again would be welcomed by people in many towns and villages in the County.”

Mr O’Shea replied as follows:

“The County Council has been awarded £1.78m Bus Service Improvement Plan Plus (BSIP+) funding in the current financial year and as a result, the Passenger Transport Policy Strategy (PTPS) review work on the supported bus services has been paused to allow a light touch refresh of the PTPS approach that better reflects the Government’s aspirations for this additional funding.

Following that, the review of the current contracted services against this revised policy approach will restart from late 2023 into early 2024.

The objective is to continue to support services that align to our revised policy approach (reflecting the additional funding) while ensuring we do not continue to pay for the lowest value services. It is not our intention to reinstate any services already withdrawn or to revisit subsidy arrangements for services that have ceased prior to the BSIP+ funding award. The BSIP+ funding will allow us to retain our existing subsidised bus services, the cost of which significantly exceeds the current budget while giving us the opportunity to help reshape our public transport model to a more sustainable one appropriate for a rural county like Leicestershire.

A briefing on this matter was issued to members on 1st June and has been appended to the response to this question.”

Mr Mullaney asked the following supplementary question:

“I’m sorry that the 159 subsidy couldn’t be restored, it was a service that a lot of people used and appreciated in Hinckley and the villages. In the appendix that was part of the response to the question it does mention that there is to be a pause to the review of the 26 subsidised services, including the Hinckley to Nuneaton service that goes through my area. Can the Lead Member offer some specifics to the residents that use those services as to what the term pause actually means? Do we take it that the pause to the review is in effect a permanent pause and those services won’t be reviewed in future; is it a matter of next financial year; is it a matter of a few months? Could the Lead Member give any sort of specifics to residents who might be concerned as to what exactly that time frame mentioned there is?”

Mr O’Shea replied as follows:

“A pause is a pause: it means it’s going to start again. We have been given this money that will temporarily let us pause [the review], but then all services across the County will be reviewed again later on in the year because the money will not last beyond the year. It will be paused for a temporary period but we will be looking at it across the whole piece, so that we can look at what is best for the whole County. We don’t want to cut bus services at all, and you appreciate that, but we are guided by the finances that this Council gets from Government. We want to do the best for our citizens, that’s why we are pausing it, being able to have this money to look at it in more detail.”

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

- “1. Understanding that our school meals service, like others across the country, is under severe cost pressures, is this the opportunity to seize the moment and take another step to meet our Net Zero Carbon target by replacing red meat with alternative proteins?
2. What alternative proteins do we currently use to replace meat?
3. As well as helping to meet Net Zero, and the more healthy diet that climate change will impose on younger generations, do we know what cost savings might be achieved by such a switch?
4. Do these meet Government standards?”

Reply by MR BRECKON

“1.&2. Our current menu only includes red meat three times in the two-week cycle, this is organic beef mix which is used to create bolognaise, as well as pork in sausages and roast pork.

We already use alternative protein sources (lentils) to reduce our red meat content in our bolognaise recipes.

As part of our vegetarian option which is available daily to all schools (should they select it) we use a beef free mince (meat free product

made of soya) in items such as vegetarian bolognaise. However, we also offer a cottage pie which is produced with a creamy white sauce and vegetables.

We currently do not widely use mycoprotein ingredients because they are a more costly alternative.

Each week on our menu we offer a meat free day.

3. At this time, we do not believe there would be any significant cost saving benefit in further reducing our level of red meat – in part this is because of the infrequency of serving it and the comparative expense of certain alternative products.
4. All our menus meet the government standards, including our vegetarian options. As a Local Authority Provider, we will always ensure that this is the case. A meat free alternative would continue to meet these standards if the levels of protein met the standards.”

15. POSITION STATEMENTS UNDER STANDING ORDER 8.

The Leader gave a position statement on the following matters:

- Active Travel England;
- Greener Leicestershire Update;
- Local Nature Recovery Strategy;
- Supporting Veterans;
- Household Support Fund;
- Health in All Policies.

The Cabinet Lead Member for Children and Family Services gave a position statement on the following matters:

- OFSTED Focus Visit;
- Family Hubs;
- Holiday Activity Fund;
- Volunteers.

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

- Financial Position;
- Funding Reform;
- Decarbonisation Funding;
- Statement of Accounts;
- Director of Corporate Resources.

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

16. REPORT OF THE CABINET.

(a) Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange.

It was moved by Mrs Richardson, seconded by Mr O'Shea and carried unanimously:

"That the Relevant Representation of the County Council on the Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange proposal, as set out in Appendix A to the report, be noted."

17. REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY COMMISSION.

(a) Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2022/23.

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

"That the information contained in the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2022/23, attached as Appendix A to this report, on its activities, be noted."

18. REPORTS OF THE CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE.

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

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

- (a) That Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances be increased by 3.88%, for the period 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024;
- (b) That the Panel reconvenes in March 2024 to review the indexation of Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances from 1st April 2024;
- (c) That further research be carried out during 2023 with regard to the indexing of allowances in other local authorities."

(b) Appointment of Independent Members to the Corporate Governance Committee.

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

"That Mr G. Grimes and Mr A. Maxfield be appointed to serve as independent members of the Corporate Governance Committee for a term of two years up to the May annual Council meeting in 2025."

19. REPORT OF THE DEVELOPMENT CONTROL AND REGULATORY BOARD.

(a) Leicestershire County Council Country Parks Byelaws.

It was moved by Mr Phillimore, seconded by Mr Lovegrove and carried unanimously:

“That the Director of Law and Governance be authorised:

- (a) to make and seal Byelaws as appropriate for each of the Country Parks listed in accordance with the details set out in Appendix A to this report and to revoke all previous byelaws on those sites; and
- (b) to advertise the making of and to seek confirmation by the Secretary of State of these Byelaws.”

20. APPOINTMENTS IN ACCORDANCE WITH ITEM 11 OF STANDING ORDER 4:

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

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

“That Mr C Smith CC be appointed as Cabinet Support Member until the next Annual Meeting of the County Council, as provided for in Article 7 of the Council’s Constitution.”

38 members voted for the motion and 6 voted against.

2.00 pm – 3.40 pm
05 July 2023

CHAIRMAN

1st June 2023: 'Bus Service Improvement Plan Plus' Funding

The county council has been awarded £1.78m 'Bus Service Improvement Plan Plus' (BSIP+) funding in the current financial year as part of a Department for Transport (DfT) settlement to more than 60 local transport authorities in the country.

The Leicestershire allocation comes from a £80m national pot with the same amount available (£80m) in 2024/25, although allocations to individual authorities have not yet been confirmed for the second year of funding.

This short-term funding boost is welcome and presents a great opportunity to help better shape the public transport offer across the county, but it is vital that services offer value-for-money.

In using this additional money, we will ensure it is directed to offer greater connectivity for our communities rather than continuing to subsidise low value services.

It is therefore intended to pause the current Passenger Transport Policy and Strategy (PTPS) review of services which the council currently subsidises (see list attached).

This will allow us to fine tune our PTPS and better align it with the Government's aspirations, while ensuring continued emphasis on value-for-money service provision and access to essential services.

However, the receipt of this funding will not mean it being used towards the reinstatement of commercial bus services already withdrawn.

Following revision of our PTPS, it is anticipated that we will start to review the position on our contracted services from late 2023 into Spring 2024, with any planned changes being subject to a transparent engagement process with Local Members and affected communities.

The BSIP+ funding will allow us to retain our existing subsidised bus services, the cost of which significantly exceeds the current budget, while giving us the opportunity to reshape our PTPS into supporting a more sustainable rural public transport model.

To help us with this, we would also ask you to encourage your residents to make use of the DfT's current £2 fare cap which has been extended until the end of October this year, and rising to £2.50 for the rest of the year and into 2024.

Getting on a bus is a great way to get out and about and will help our work to reshape our public transport offer and understand where bus services are really valued by our communities.

For further enquiries, please email ptps@leics.gov.uk

Janna Walker,
Assistant Director, Environment and Transport
Leicestershire County Council

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COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 5TH JULY 2023

POSITION STATEMENT FROM THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Active Travel England

Over the past few months, the County Council has successfully worked with Active Travel England (ATE) to demonstrate further our commitment to Active Travel in Leicestershire and move us towards a position of being able to bid for capital funding to deliver walking and cycling facilities across the county. Earlier in June, ATE presented to members as part of their support to Leicestershire's work to encourage and enable communities to travel more actively by cycling, walking and wheeling (use of wheelchairs, mobility scooters, scooters etc. to travel at a pedestrian's pace). Having members in Leicestershire who are informed advocates of active travel is an essential part of our joint commitment with ATE to place us in the best position to secure future delivery funding for active travel schemes and Choose How You Move programmes that benefit our communities. Coupled with our ongoing work to develop Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans, we hope this positive relationship with ATE will bear fruits in funding for Leicestershire.

Greener Leicestershire Update

We continue to work towards the achievement of our commitment to a Cleaner Greener Leicestershire. Over the past few months, we've reached an important milestone of planting 250,000 trees towards our target of planting a tree for every resident. We've also launched a new booklet on ash dieback, added more highway verges to our scheme for improving biodiversity, and supported Great Big Green Week.

Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Leicestershire County Council has been formally appointed as the 'responsible authority' to lead on the development of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland. While we welcome this responsibility and understand we will be provided with new burdens funding to develop the Strategy, it will be important that we are also provided with adequate funding to support the delivery of the Strategy. Local Nature Recovery Strategies are one of the Government's flagship nature recovery measures and they will make an important contribution to delivering on the national environmental targets and those of the County Council, and in providing a cleaner and greener place for people to live, now and for future generations. They will also have an influence on future development and local plans, and in how we as a council have regard for nature recovery in delivering our services and functions.

Supporting Veterans

Further to your announcements, Chairman, I would like to say that we continue this year, as ever, to be proud to support those who serve in our armed forces, regular or reserve, as well as those who have previously served and those in our wider forces

family including cadets and adult cadet force volunteers, spouses, partners, carers and dependents.

During armed forces week Mrs Posnett, Tom Purnell and Lieutenant Colonel Field, Commanding Officer, Royal Yeomanry, were proud to publicly re-sign our Armed Forces Covenant, strengthening our support to the armed forces community both in our internal policy changes and also in our public advocacy for the cohort.

Within the Authority we continue to support veterans into our workplace and are making considerable strides towards enabling the transition to civilian life smoother and acknowledging and transferring valuable skills onto our workforce. To this end we have built links with both the Defence Military Rehabilitation Centre and the Career Transition Partnership.

We have a dedicated employee network for those with an armed forces family connection as well as veterans already in our employment who provide peer support and mentoring to service leavers joining the Authority.

In service provision we are pleased to be part of the partnership supporting the Veterans Wellbeing Hubs and continue to work in partnership with our colleagues in Heath around supporting the specific needs of veterans.

Household Support Fund.

I am pleased to report that we have a new £7.2 million pot of money, awarded by the Department of Work and Pensions, for residents who need support with rising food and energy costs. Eligible households can receive an average of £200 in vouchers.

This means that the Council has now made £22m of wide-ranging support available to help ease cost of living pressures. Over half-term, 14,000 children across Leicestershire were able to benefit from £15 school food vouchers. Our support also includes energy efficiency grants and advice and community fridges.

I am also pleased to report that last month, Richard Hunt, Head of Catering, Hospitality and Country Parks, represented the County Council as the only local authority invited to speak at the Work and Pension Committee at Westminster about the cost of living.

Health in All Policies

I hope members will join me in welcoming the approach being taken to embed Health in All Policies across the County Council. Health in All Policies is recognised internationally as an approach to tackle inequities in health, reducing inequalities and tackling the 'causes of the causes'. Committee reports will now make reference to health implications to ensure that they are considered as part of the decision making process. We are also delivering training to officers to ensure that they take into account the wider determinants that affect health outcomes, as well as considering how a proposal could have an impact on the social, economic and environmental living conditions that in turn affect health and mental wellbeing.

Mr N. J. Rushton
Leader of the Council

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 5TH JULY 2023
POSITION STATEMENT FROM THE CABINET LEAD MEMBER FOR
CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

OFSTED Focus Visit

In May this year, Ofsted undertook a Focus Visit in the Children and Families Services department to look at the local authority's arrangements for children in care, with a particular focus on, how we make decisions for children who come into care, Permanence planning for children in care, including all permanence options and the experiences of disabled children in care.

The inspectors examined documents, looked at case records, talked to parents, carers, and children, and met with frontline staff and senior leaders.

The letter that outlined the findings from the inspection was published on 16th June and recognised that significant improvements have been made since the last inspection in 2019.

In particular, the report highlighted that social work practice with children in care, including those with a disability, is consistently child focused, therefore impacting positively on children's life experiences and their physical and emotional wellbeing. They reported that social workers know their children well and speak with pride and affection about them. Children are visited regularly, and records of visits and work were described as being beautifully written.

Social workers spoken to during the visit were unanimously positive about working in Leicestershire and reported having manageable caseloads that enable them to spend time with children and showed an ambition to continuously improve the lives of children in Leicestershire.

Inspectors also complimented the strong political and corporate support within the County Council for children's services.

Family Hubs

I am pleased to share with Members that over the last two months we have begun to open our Family Hubs across the County. Family Hubs are a 'one stop shop' for parents and carers with 0 to 19 year olds or up to 25 for young people with special educational needs and disabilities. Leicestershire is one of 12 local authorities to receive a portion of the £12million grant from the DfE to transform the way services are delivered for families through the Family Hubs.

The Hubs will offer a broad and integrated range of early help services to support families and build stronger relationships through the delivery of family advice, support services and guidance on issues such as social care, education, mental and physical health.

The Family Hubs are also linked to two important national programmes; reducing parental conflict, a programme funded by the Department for Work and Pensions that raises awareness of the impact of unresolved parental conflict on children and develops practice models to respond to conflict in families; and Supporting Families, the DLUHC funded programme (previously Troubled Families) that provides targeted early help to families with multiple and complex issues.

The full network of Family Hubs, which will make use of existing spaces such as Children and Family Wellbeing Centres as well as libraries across the County, is expected to be open by spring 2024.

Holiday Activity Fund

The Holiday Activity Fund programme is a national programme that supports school age children and young people receiving free school meals. Leicestershire County Council was allocated around £1.5million in 2022/23 to deliver holiday activities and a meal during easter, summer, and winter school holidays. Over this period 4711 children accessed the programme and engaged in a range of physical and enriching activities as well as accessing a healthy meal.

This year we have been allocated a similar level of grant and programmes will be running over the summer, winter and easter holidays. This year we have more providers than ever offering sessions this summer and there is a wide range of exciting activities to take part in, such as zorbing, crafting, football, archery, nerfing, cooking, drama, and dodgeball.

In addition to this, we have introduced free gym passes and coaching sessions that give young people an opportunity to keep active, try new sports, and build on skills they may already have.

Volunteers

Finally, I am pleased to share that the Leicestershire Children and Family Wellbeing Service Volunteer Team has been awarded the 'Investing in Volunteers Award'. This award is the UK quality standard for good practice in volunteer management. The Children and Family Wellbeing Service has a range of volunteers who provide an invaluable role across a range of areas such as mentoring children, young people, and supporting parents, running stay and play centres, supporting our community fridges, being an appropriate adult for young people during a police interview and community panel members. We are very grateful for the support provided across the Department by our volunteers, they are a highly valuable resource and an integral part of the services we offer to children and their families.

Mrs D. Taylor CC
Cabinet Lead Member for Children and Family Services

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 5TH JULY 2023

**POSITION STATEMENT FROM THE CABINET LEAD MEMBER FOR
RESOURCES**

Financial Position

The County Council approved our budget in February, and now that we are a quarter of the way through the year, it felt an opportune time to provide an update.

The inflationary pressures impacting the Council and our residents have not yet reduced at the rate that we would have hoped. This is likely to drive requests from suppliers looking to pass cost increases onto us and is influencing the unions who are currently balloting for strike action in response to the national pay offer.

In the short term, whilst this is no comfort for mortgage customers, the Council is in the fortunate position of interest and business rate income being bolstered, allowing the extra cost to be largely offset. However, in the medium-term the inflationary pressures will be “baked” into our cost base, but the income benefits will fall away, as base rates reduce, and the business rate baseline is reset.

The economy has been more resilient than most commentators had expected, but if it does shrink significantly through a recession, it could introduce a new raft of income and cost challenges.

Although inflation is our main challenge, we cannot lose sight of the service pressures that we face. Social Care and Special Educational Needs continue to require additional financial resources and how we manage this remains the key influence on our long-term financial position.

In summary, our short-term position looks manageable, but demand for services keeps the medium-term position challenging. The level of uncertainty is higher than usual, with key reforms to funding and Adult Social Care postponed until the next Parliament. We must continue our approach of being prepared for bad news and solve our problems locally.

Funding Reform

Any update on finances wouldn't be complete without mentioning funding reform.

At the last meeting of this Council, the Leader provided an update on our meeting with the Chancellor that was kindly arranged and supported by the Leicestershire MPs.

Arrangements are still being made to meeting with Lee Rowley MP, the Minister for Local Government. We expect this to take place in the autumn.

I would like to share some items of positive news.

Decarbonisation Funding

The Energy Team has successfully bid for and been awarded £200,000 that will fund a project to help us to identify the best route to decarbonise the property estate and the anticipated costs. The plan will be used to produce a pipeline of capital projects that will allow us to prioritise our expenditure and put us in a great position to bid for further funding.

This is a tangible and real boost to progress towards net zero.

Statement of Accounts

There are regular articles in the local government press about problems in the local government audit market. By the start of this financial year only one in six English councils had their 2021/22 accounts signed off by their auditor. I'm pleased that we were part of exclusive group.

If members are interested the latest County Council accounts are now available on the website.

Director of Corporate Resources

At the last Council meeting the Chairman announced Chris Tambini's departure from the County Council. I am pleased to welcome Declan Keegan into the role of Director of Corporate Resources. Declan's promotion is well deserved. This left a vacancy in the Assistant Director of Finance position, which I am pleased to announce has been filled by Simone Hines, who currently works for Sandwell Council and is due to start with us in September. I am sure that members will join me in wishing Declan and Simone all the best in their new roles.

Mr L Breckon
Cabinet Lead Member for Resources