

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
HELD AT COUNTY HALL, GLENFIELD ON WEDNESDAY, 21 FEBRUARY
2024**

PRESENT

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

Mr. R. G. Allen CC, Mr. R. Ashman 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, 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. M. 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 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 and Mrs. M. Wright CC

35. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Sustainable Food Places Silver Award

The Chairman welcomed the news that the Good Food Leicestershire initiative had won a Sustainable Food Places Silver Award.

The initiative worked with cross-sector partners to tackle issues from reducing food poverty to diet related ill-health. It supported people, communities and businesses across Leicestershire to access healthy, nutritious food and over 50 projects and organisations, from farms to restaurants, were mentioned in the nomination.

Leicestershire County Council was the first Authority in the Midlands to receive silver food status, which was given to organisations for having a long-term food plan in place and who made significant positive change on a range of key food issues.

Members joined the Chairman in congratulating everyone involved in the initiative.

36. REPORT OF THE RETURNING OFFICER.

The Chief Executive presented the report of the Returning Officer on the election of the County Councillor for the Blaby and Glen Parva Electoral Division on 21 December 2023.

The Chairman welcomed Mrs Susan Patricia Jordan CC to the Council.

37. MINUTES.

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

“That the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 6 December 2023, copies of which have been circulated to members, be taken as read, confirmed and signed.”

38. 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 Councils declared a registrable interest in relation to the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Mr Pain CC declared a non-registrable interest in the MTFS in relation to passenger transport issues as his family operated a taxi business.

Mr Phillimore CC declared a non-registrable interest in the MTFS in relation to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) issues due to his wife's employment.

Mrs Hack CC declared a registrable interest in the MTFS as she worked for Advance Housing and Support, which provided services to the County Council.

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

The Chairman reported that he had not received any questions.

40. POSITION STATEMENTS UNDER STANDING ORDER 8.

The Leader gave a position statement on the following matters:

- Ratby/Kirby Muxloe Gas Outage;
- Flooding/Storm Update;
- Devolution;
- Members of Parliament;
- Biodiversity Net Gain.

A copy of the Position Statement is filed with these minutes.

41. REPORT OF THE CABINET.

(a) Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024/25 - 2027/28.

It was moved by Mr Breckon and seconded by Mr Shepherd:

“(a) That subject to the items below, approval be given to the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) which incorporates the recommended revenue budget for 2024/25 totalling £567.6m as set out in Appendices

A, B and E 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 2025/26, 2026/27 and 2027/28, set out in Appendix B to the report, including the growth and savings for those years as set out in Appendix C, allowing the undertaking of preliminary work, including business case development, engagement and equality and human rights impact assessments, as may be necessary to achieve the savings specified for those years including savings under development, set out in Appendix D;
- (c) That approval be 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 Corporate Resources agreeing to funding being available;
- (d) That the level of the general fund and earmarked reserves as set out in Appendix K be noted and the use of those earmarked reserves as indicated in that appendix 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 2024/25 be as set out in Appendix M (including 2% for the adult social care precept);
- (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 2024/25 to 2027/28 capital programme, totalling £447m, as set out in Appendix F;
- (h) That the Director of Corporate Resources, following consultation with the Lead Member for Resources, be authorised to approve new capital schemes, including revenue costs associated with their delivery, shown as future developments in the capital programme, to be funded from funding available;
- (i) That the financial indicators required under the Prudential Code included in Appendix N, Annex 2 be noted and that the following limits be approved:

	2024/25 £m	2025/26 £m	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m
Operational boundary for external debt				
i) Borrowing	220	219	243	273
ii) Other long term liabilities	1	1	1	1
TOTAL	221	220	244	274
Authorised limit for external debt				
i) Borrowing	230	229	253	283
ii) Other long term liabilities	1	1	1	1
TOTAL	231	230	254	284

- (j) That the Director of Corporate Resources be authorised to effect movement within the authorised limit for external debt between borrowing and other long-term liabilities;
- (k) That the following borrowing limits be approved for the period 2024/25 to 2027/28:

- (i) Maturity of borrowing:-

	<u>Upper Limit</u>	<u>Lower Limit</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

- (ii) An upper limit for principal sums invested for periods longer than 364 days is 20% of the portfolio.
- (l) That the Director of Corporate Resources be authorised to enter into such loans or undertake such arrangements as necessary to finance capital payments in 2024/25, subject to the prudential limits in Appendix N;
- (m) That the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and the Annual Investment Strategy for 2024/25, as set out in Appendix N, be approved including:
- (i) The Treasury Management Policy Statement, Appendix N; Annex 4;
- (ii) The Annual Statement of the Annual Minimum Revenue Provision as set out in Appendix N, Annex 1;

- (n) That the Capital Strategy (Appendix G), Investing in Leicestershire Programme Strategy (Appendix H), Risk Management Policy and Strategy (Appendix I), Earmarked Reserves Policy (Appendix J) and Insurance Policy (Appendix L) be approved;
- (o) That it be noted that the Leicester and Leicestershire Business Rate Pool will continue for 2024/25;
- (p) That the Director of Corporate Resources, following consultation with the Lead Member for Resources, be authorised to make any changes to the provisional MTFS which may be required as a result of changes arising between the Cabinet and County Council meetings, noting that any changes will be reported to the County Council on 21 February 2024;
- (q) That the Leicestershire School Funding Formula be subject to capping and scaling to continue to reflect the National Funding Formula for 2024/25;
- (r) That the Director of Children and Family Services, following consultation with the Lead Member for Children and Family Services, be authorised to agree the funding rates for early years providers for 2024/25;
- (s) That in light of the Council’s financial position, the proposal to revise the Council’s net zero targets for its own operations, from 2030 to 2035, and for the wider County, from 2045 to 2050, be approved;
- (t) That the proposed changes to the Recycling and Household Waste Site service as outlined at paragraph 37 of the report be noted, to be funded from the Service Investment budget, and subject to the outcome of further consultation.”

An amendment was moved by Mr Mullaney and seconded by Mr Bray:

- (i) That paragraph (a) of the motion be amended to read as follow

“(a) That subject to the items below, approval be given to the MTFS which incorporates the recommended revenue budget for 2024/25 totalling £567.6m as set out in Appendices A, B, and E of the report and includes growth and savings for that year as set out in Appendix C, as amended by paragraph (a) (i) below;”

- (ii) That the following be added after paragraph (a) of the motion:

“(a)(i) That the list of growth and savings proposals as set out in Appendix C of the report be amended as follows:

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Add new savings items as follows:				

Cease publication of Leicestershire Matters	-108	-108	-108	-108
Reduce Members' Allowances budget by the removal of a Cabinet Member	-22	-22	-22	-22
Amend new growth item as follows:				
Additional investment in public bus subsidies	130	130	130	130

(iii) That paragraph (b) of the motion be amended to read as follows:

“(b) That approval be given to the projected provisional revenue budgets for 2025/26, 2026/27 and 2027/28, set out in Appendix B to the report, including the growth and savings for those years as set out in Appendix C, as now amended, allowing the undertaking of preliminary work, including business case development, engagement and equality and human rights impact assessments, as may be necessary to achieve the savings specified for those years including savings under development, set out in Appendix D;”

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

The vote was recorded as follows:

For the Amendment:

Mr Bill, Mr Boulter, Mr Bray, Mr Charlesworth, Mr Galton, Mr Gamble, Mrs Hack, Mr Hunt, Mrs Jordan, Mr Miah, Mr Mullaney, Ms Newton

Against the Amendment:

Mr Allen, Mr Ashman, Mr Barkley, Mr Bedford, Mr Breckon, Mr Champion, Mr Chapman, Mr Coxon, Dr Feltham, Mr Frisby, Mrs Fryer, Mr Ghattoraya, Mr Gillard, Mr Grimley, Mr Harrison, Mr Harrison-Rushton, Mr Hills, Mr King, Mr Lovegrove, Mr Merrie, Mr Morgan, Mr O'Shea, Mr Orson, Mrs Page, Mr Pain, Mr Parton, Mr Pendleton, Mr Phillimore, Mr Poland, Mrs Posnett, Mrs Radford, Mr Richardson, Mrs Richardson, Mr Rushton, Mrs Seaton, Mr Shepherd, Mr Smith, Mrs Taylor, Mrs M Wright

The amendment was not carried, 12 members voting for the amendment and 39 against.

An amendment was moved by Mr Galton and seconded by Mrs Jordan:

(i) That paragraph (a) of the motion be amended to read as follows:

“(a) That subject to the items below, approval be given to the MTFS which incorporates the recommended revenue budget for 2024/25 totalling £567.6m as set out in Appendices A, B, and E of the report and includes growth and savings for that year as set out in Appendix C, as amended by paragraph (a) (i) below;”

(ii) That the following be added after paragraph (a) of the motion:

“(a)(i) That the list of growth and savings proposals as set out in Appendix C of the report be amended as follows:

	2024/25 £000s	2025/26 £000s	2026/27 £000s	2027/28 £000s
Add new savings items as follows:				
Reduce Members' Allowances budget by the removal of the four Cabinet Support Members	-33	-33	-33	-33
Reduce support to the Cabinet	-55	-55	-55	-55
Add new growth item as follows:				
Revenue costs associated with a new Capital Programme allocation of £1.5m p.a. for additional drainage schemes	88	88	88	88

(iii) That paragraph (b) of the motion be amended to read as follows:

“(b) That approval be given to the projected provisional revenue budgets for 2025/26, 2026/27 and 2027/28, set out in Appendix B to the report, including the growth and savings for those years as set out in Appendix C, as now amended, allowing the undertaking of preliminary work, including business case development, engagement and equality and human rights impact assessments, as may be necessary to achieve the savings specified for those years including savings under development, set out in Appendix D;”

(iv) That paragraph (g) of the motion be amended to read as follows:

“(g) That approval be given to the 2024/25 to 2027/28 capital programme, as now amended, totalling £453m, as set out in Appendix F;”

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

The vote was recorded as follows:

For the Amendment:

Mr Bill, Mr Boulter, Mr Bray, Mr Charlesworth, Mr Galton, Mr Gamble, Mrs Jordan, Mr Mullaney

Against the Amendment:

Mr Allen, Mr Ashman, Mr Barkley, Mr Bedford, Mr Breckon, Mr Champion, Mr Chapman, Mr Coxon, Dr Feltham, Mr Frisby, Mrs Fryer, Mr Ghattoraya, Mr Gillard, Mr Grimley, Mr Harrison, Mr Harrison-Rushton, Mr Hills, Mr King, Mr Lovegrove, Mr Merrie, Mr Morgan, Mr O’Shea, Mr Orson, Mrs Page, Mr Pain, Mr Parton, Mr Pendleton, Mr Phillimore, Mr Poland, Mrs Posnett, Mrs Radford, Mr Richardson, Mrs Richardson, Mr Rushton, Mrs Seaton, Mr Shepherd, Mr Smith, Mrs Taylor, Mrs M Wright

The amendment was not carried, 8 members voting for the amendment and 39 against.

On the original motion being put, 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 Allen, Mr Ashman, Mr Barkley, Mr Bedford, Mr Breckon, Mr Champion, Mr Chapman, Mr Coxon, Dr Feltham, Mr Frisby, Mrs Fryer, Mr Ghattoraya, Mr Gillard, Mr Grimley, Mr Harrison, Mr Harrison-Rushton, Mr Hills, Mr King, Mr Lovegrove, Mr Merrie, Mr Morgan, Mr O’Shea, Mr Orson, Mrs Page, Mr Pain,

Mr Parton, Mr Pendleton, Mr Phillimore, Mr Poland, Mrs Posnett, Mrs Radford, Mr Richardson, Mrs Richardson, Mr Rushton, Mrs Seaton, Mr Shepherd, Mr Smith, Mrs Taylor, Mrs M Wright

Against the Motion:

Mr Bill, Mr Boulter, Mr Bray, Mr Charlesworth, Mr Galton, Mr Gamble, Mrs Hack, Mr Hunt, Mrs Jordan, Mr Miah, Mr Mullaney, Ms Newton

The motion was put and carried, 39 members voting for the motion and 12 members against.

42. REPORT OF THE CORPORATE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE.

(a) Proposed Changes to the Contract Procedure Rules.

It was moved by Mr Barkley, seconded by Richardson and carried unanimously:

“That the proposed amendments to the Contract Procedure Rules, set out in Appendix A to the report of the Corporate Governance Committee, be approved.”

43. TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING NOTICE OF MOTION:

(a) Support for Care Experienced People.

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

“(i) This Council notes that:

- (a) Care experienced people face significant barriers that impact them throughout their lives;
- (b) Despite the resilience of many care experienced people, society too often does not take their needs into account;
- (c) Care experienced people often face discrimination and stigma across housing, health, education, relationships, employment and in the criminal justice system;
- (d) Care experienced people may encounter inconsistent support in different geographical areas;
- (e) As corporate parents, members have a collective responsibility for providing the best possible care and safeguarding for the children who are looked after by us as an authority;
- (f) All corporate parents should commit to acting as mentors, hearing the voices of looked after children and young people and to consider their needs in any aspect of council work;

- (g) Members should be champions of the children in our care and challenge the negative attitudes and prejudice that exists in all aspects of society;
- (h) The Public Sector Equality Duty requires public bodies, such as councils, to have due regard of the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation of people with protected characteristics.

(ii) This Council therefore resolves that:

- (a) It recognises that care experienced people are a group who are likely to face discrimination;
- (b) It recognises that co-production and collaboration can help ensure that the needs and aspirations of all people are at the heart of decision making;
- (c) Future decision, services and policies made and adopted by the Council should be assessed through Equality Impact Assessments to determine the impact of changes on people with care experience, alongside those who formally share a protected characteristic;
- (d) In the delivery of the Public Sector Equality Duty the Council will work towards including people with care experience in the publication and review of Equality Objectives and the annual publication of information relating to people who share a protected characteristic in services and employment;
- (e) This Council will treat care experience as if it were a protected characteristic whilst recognising that the needs of people with legally defined protected characteristics will need to take precedence if there is a conflict;
- (f) This Council formally calls upon other local authorities within Leicestershire to treat care experience as a protected characteristic until such time as it may be introduced by legislation;
- (g) To continue proactively seeking out and listening to the voices of care experienced people when developing new policies based on their views.”