Agenda Item 3

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL HELD AT COUNTY HALL, GLENFIELD ON WEDNESDAY, 28 JUNE 2017

PRESENT

Mrs. J. Richards CC (in the Chair)

Mr. P. Bedford CC, Mr. I. E. G. Bentley CC, Mr. D. C. Bill MBE CC, Mr. R. Blunt CC, Mr. S. L. Bray CC, Mr. L. Breckon JP CC, Dr. P. Bremner CC, Ms. L. Broadley CC, Mr. M. H. Charlesworth CC, Mr. J. G. Coxon CC, Mr. B. Crooks CC, Dr. T. Eynon CC, Dr. R. K. A. Feltham CC, Mrs. H. J. Fryer CC, Mr. S. J. Galton CC, Mr. T. Gillard CC, Mrs. A. J. Hack CC, Mr. D. Harrison CC, Mr. Max Hunt CC, Mr. D. Jennings CC, Mr. J. Kaufman CC, Mr. W. Liquorish JP CC, Mr. J. Morgan, Mr. M. T. Mullaney CC, Ms. Betty Newton CC, Mr. L. J. P. O'Shea CC, Mr. J. T. Orson JP CC, Mr. I. D. Ould CC, Mrs. R. Page CC, Mr. B. L. Pain CC, Mr T. Parton CC, Mr. A. E. Pearson CC, Mr. T. J. Pendleton CC, Mr J. Poland CC, Mrs. P. Posnett CC, Mrs. C. M. Radford CC, Mr. J. B. Rhodes CC, Mr. T. J. Richardson CC, Mrs H. L. Richardson CC, Mr. N. J. Rushton CC, Mrs B. Seaton CC, Mr. S. D. Sheahan CC, Mr. R. J. Shepherd CC, Mr. D. Slater CC, Mrs D. Taylor CC, Mr. G. Welsh CC, Mr. E. F. White CC, Mrs. A. Wright CC and Mr. M. B. Wyatt CC

13. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Jennifer, Lady Gretton DCVO JP and Mrs Pam Posnett MBE CC

Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Leicestershire, Lady Gretton, and County Councillor Pam Posnett, had been honoured in the Birthday 2017 Honours List. Lady Gretton had been made a Dame Commander of the Royal Victorian Order for her service to the Monarch and Pam had been made a Member of the Order of the British Empire for Services to Local Government.

The Chairman asked Members to join her in offering heartfelt congratulations to Lady Gretton and Pam Posnett for the awards which were richly deserved following years of loyal service to the County.

Visitors

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

14. MINUTES.

It was moved by the Chairman, seconded by Mr O'Shea and carried:-

"That the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 17 May 2017, copies of which have been circulated to members, be taken as read, confirmed and signed."

15. 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.

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

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

"In the climate of reducing funding, what are the full cost implications for the County Council running a full library service at Braunstone Town Library from the date the first community libraries transferred in late 2015 to the proposed transfer to Fabula in September 2017?"

Mr Blunt replied as follows:-

"The cost of running Braunstone Library in 2015/16 was £42,253

The cost of running Braunstone Library in 2016/17 was £35,762

The Cabinet report originally proposed a transfer date for Braunstone Library of March 2017. As this has been extended to September 2017 – the forecast cost for 2017/18 is approximately £16,781."

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

"As the Leader will be aware, legislation to allow local government to keep 100 per cent of its business rates has been shelved. The former Local Government Finance Bill was making its way through parliament before the General Election but was not reintroduced in the Queen's Speech. According to Lord Porter, Local Government Association Chairman, Councils face an overall funding gap of £5.8 billion by 2020. What assessment has been made of the implications for the County Council if the Local Government Finance Bill and the review of the funding formula are not taken forward?"

Mr Rhodes replied as follows:-

"I also understand the legislation to allow local government to keep 100% of business rates will not be taken forward in this parliament. In many respects the most important element of Local Government finance reform is the Fair Funding review. Although no mention has been made of this in the Queen's Speech we understand there could be a consultation this summer as primary legislation is not required to change the funding formula.

In any event we will continue with enthusiasm our Fair Funding campaign and the pressure on Government to change the current distribution of funding as it is far from fair.

Our MTFS income forecasts are prudent and did not assume that the council would receive increased income from the Local Government Finance Bill. We still anticipate that we need to save £66m over the next four years."

Mr Galton asked the following supplementary question:-

"In the light of recent events, does the Deputy Leader really think there will be an appetite for a change in the formula and would we not stand a better chance if we became the seventh county of Ulster?"

Mr Rhodes replied as follows:-

"Yes, I am very optimistic about this. When we had meetings with the Secretary of State before the Election he was very positive about our approach. We are the only Council in the country, as far as I am aware, to put forward a positive contribution and scheme for redistributing local government grant more fairly. No-one else has done that, and it is a scheme which has been examined by many people in other Councils, including Councils who would not do well out of it, and no-one has found fault with it. We will continue to press on with it and I am optimistic that it will succeed. I hope that the Liberal Democrat Group will support us in that in the months ahead."

(C) Mr Kaufman asked the following question of the Leader or his nominee:-

"Lately I have received a lot of complaints from families who have moved into Oadby and have been unable to get places for their children in local schools as they are all full. This wasn't the case just five years ago and has only recently become a major issue.

Is the Leader aware of this problem and does he have a plan to address it?"

Mr Ould replied as follows:-

"I am aware of the situation relating to availability of primary places for children moving into Oadby in-year. The reason for the changes from five years ago is that academies may set their own admission policy and criteria and are therefore no longer required to follow the local authority policy that requires schools to accept pupils moving into the catchment area.

Of the five primary schools in Oadby, three are academies; within the last five years all three have moved away from the local authority admission policy and no longer admit pupils above their admission number under any circumstances. In these cases places are offered at the next nearest school that has places in the relevant year group. Due to the popularity of the schools in Oadby, there are very few places available and it is also proving increasingly difficult to place siblings in the same school.

In anticipation of this situation and in consultation with the schools involved, we have already explored a number of measures to ease the pressure, however it is a very difficult situation to address as the law prohibits the

reservation of school places for potential in-year applicants. Due to the popularity of these schools any extra places provided are quickly filled by children from outside of the Oadby area, leaving very few remaining places for pupils moving into the area.

We are continually monitoring the situation and are considering a number of options with schools and academies including the provision of additional places in the greater Oadby area and raising awareness of the difficulties in securing places in-year at an Oadby school.

There are two local authority maintained primary schools in the area. Both are currently over their admission number and are unable to admit any additional children other than those moving into their catchment areas.

In terms of secondary provision, there are no current in-year issues due to the fact that all three schools have modelled their admission policies on the local authority's policy. However from autumn 2017 onwards all three Oadby secondary school will be operating under their new admission policies and will no longer admit pupils over the admission number in-year."

Mr Kaufman asked the following supplementary question:-

"In the third paragraph of the answer, the Lead Member said that "we have already explored a number of measures to ease the pressure" and I would like to ask if you could share with me what areas you have explored to overcome this really serious problem?"

Mr Ould replied as follows:-

"Over the next few weeks there will be a series of meetings, which all Councillors have been invited to attend, to look at the demographic profiles for each district or borough council. The first meeting took place today, for Melton, and I think that when we have the meeting for Oadby and Wigston, which I am sure Mr Kaufman will want to attend, we will be able to answer his question more comprehensively than I am able to do today."

(D) Mr Welsh asked the following question of the Leader or his nominee:-

"Following the Ofsted report on our Children and Family services earlier in the year, can the Leader please tell me when members will receive a detailed action plan to address the issues raised, with details including milestones and funding requirements?"

Mr Ould replied as follows:-

"We have developed a plan on a page and detailed action plan following the Ofsted inspection. An initial version has been presented to the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee. A final version will be presented to the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee in September covering all areas requested by Mr Welsh."

(E) Mr Galton asked the following question of the Leader or his

nominee:-

"In March, the Cabinet responded to a consultation issued by the Department for Education on the implementation of the National Funding Formula for Schools with concerns over how Leicestershire schools would be affected. An estimated 151 schools in Leicestershire were expected to lose out as a result. Has the Leader received any kind of response yet in terms of what the Government intends to do next? Are there any signs that they have taken these concerns on board?"

Mr Ould replied as follows:-

"Leicestershire is one of a number of authorities that have responded to the consultation. There has to date been no response from the DfE on the outcome of the consultation and on the proposed implementation of the National Funding Formula, neither has there been any indication on the timescale for any response."

(F) Mrs Broadley asked the following question of the Leader or his nominee:-

"1. At a recent MTFS briefing it was highlighted that there are a number of unfunded posts relating to the 2014 Care Act. What is the cost of these posts and what action does the Leader intend to take?

2. Does the Leader accept that the Dilnot proposals, that were put into law in the 2014 Care Act but never implemented, will now be abandoned?

3. In the Queen's Speech it was announced that there would be another Government consultation on social care. Does the Leader agree that this is just another delay and excuse for inaction?"

Mr Blunt replied as follows:-

"1. The Care Act 2014 was implemented on a phased basis with the wellbeing elements of the Act being implemented in April 2015 and the financial elements planned for implementation in April 2016. In the lead up to implementation the Government released additional monies to local government through the Better Care Fund and other specific grants to assist in the implementation and to meet the additional demands imposed by the Act. In anticipation of the implementation of the legislative reforms a number of staff were employed prior to April 2016 to undertake assessment and support planning. Following the decision to delay the implementation of the second phase of the Act, the Government withdrew some of the additional funding which left the Council in a position of having a number of unfunded posts.

As of April 2016 the Adults and Communities Department had identified a total of 48FTE posts which did not have permanent funding attached to them at a cost of £2.37m. In October 2016 the Department commenced a restructuring of the workforce. The result of this service restructure is that as of the start of this financial year the

Department had identified savings of £1.63m against departmental staffing budgets and had dealt with the majority of the posts which were unfunded. The remaining posts which do not have permanent funding are required to ensure that there is capacity to review all service users and to implement the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy over the next three years and will be subject to a growth bid by the Department for consideration by the Council for the next financial year.

2. The financial reforms were to be implemented as phase 2 of the Care Act in 2016, however the Government took the decision to delay the implementation for further consideration until 2020. The Queen's Speech indicated that there is to be a further national consultation on the funding of social care which may determine either that the approach suggested by Sir Andrew Dilnot should be taken forward or that a different approach should be adopted.

3. The future funding of adult social care is an important issue and one which requires careful thought and consideration. The outcome of any change to current funding arrangements will have a significant consequence on the people in receipt of care services, their families, local authorities, the NHS and the wider community. By announcing a consultation the Government are ensuring that social care funding remains a priority for consideration by Parliament."

Mrs Broadley asked the following supplementary question:-

"The Lead Member has answered my question 1 but the second paragraph reads: 'The result of this service restructure is that as of the start of this financial year the Department had identified savings of £1.63m against departmental staffing budgets and had dealt with the majority of the posts which were unfunded'. Can I have clarification of what 'dealt' means?"

Mr Blunt replied as follows:-

"I think you will realise from the reply that it is quite a technical issue and I would like to do a written response to Mrs Broadley."

(G) Mr Parton asked the following question of the Leader or his nominee:-

"Recently there has been a spate of vehicle thefts in a specific part of Loughborough South. One resident, despite being most security conscious, had his car taken from the driveway.
Upon calling the County Council for a replacement Residents' Preferential Parking Scheme Permit, he was advised that he must pay £50 for a new issue to be sent out. This is a higher amount for a resident who simply has changed their vehicle.

Given that vehicle thefts are distressing enough, please would the Leader either urgently address this issue and reduce the replacement fee, or waive the fee altogether?"

Mr Pain replied as follows:-

"Permit holders will be aware that the Council's policy states the cost for replacing a lost/stolen permit is £50.00. However, the Council will normally exercise discretion and re-issue a permit for a £10.00 administration fee if this is the first time it has happened. The £10.00 fee is the same as that charged for a vehicle change.

The only exception to this is that, where a generic permit has been issued, the £50.00 would continue to apply. Generic permits can be used in any vehicle and are issued in circumstances where a resident may use different vehicles, for example work purposes.

I would advise the resident to contact the Council's Notice Processing Unit with their crime reference number to discuss the specific details of this case."

17. POSITION STATEMENTS UNDER STANDING ORDER 8.

The Leader presented a position statement on the following matters:-

- Grenfell Tower Fire and Terrorist Attacks;
- Elections;
- MTFS and Transformation;
- Rolls Royce Investment in Loughborough;
- Transport for the East Midlands and Midlands Connect;
- All Member Briefings.

The Lead Member for Health presented a position statement on health and care integration.

The Lead Member for Environment and Highways presented a position statement on the condition of roads in Leicestershire.

The Lead Member for Children and Family Services presented a position statement on Supporting Leicestershire Families and Youth Offending.

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

18. REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY COMMISSION.

(a) Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2016/17.

It was moved by Mr Galton, seconded by Mrs Page and carried:-

"That the information contained in the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2016/17, attached as Appendix 1 to this report, on its activities, be noted."

2.40 pm – 3.45 pm CHAIRMAN
28 June 2017

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