

**ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 19 JANUARY 2023**

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2023/24 – 2026/27

MINUTE EXTRACT

Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023/24 – 2026/27

The Committee considered a joint report of the Director of Environment and Transport and the Director of Corporate Resources which provided information on the proposed 2023/24 to 2026/27 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) as it related to the Environment and Waste Management Services within the Council's Environment and Transport Department. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 9', is filed with these minutes.

The Chairman welcomed Mr. B.L. Pain CC, Cabinet Lead Member for Environment and Climate Change, to the meeting for this and other items.

Arising from discussions the following points were made:

- (i) Mr. G. A. Boulter CC raised concerns about the proposals to cease all SHIRE environment grants with effect from April 2023 and he asked whether this could be reconsidered. In response it was explained that due to the County Council's financial situation the department was required to make significant savings and there was only so much capital to spend. It was also noted that SHIRE grants sat under the communities portfolio which sat with the Chief Executive's Department therefore they were not entirely under the control of the Environment and Transport department.
- (ii) The County Council gave recycling credits to incentivise third parties/charity sector and district councils to recycle certain types of household waste that it did not direct disposal on. A member raised concerns that these credits would be reduced in 2023/24.
- (iii) Savings were projected to arise from a new waste disposal contractual arrangement commencing April 2023 and switching use of third-party (contracted) "waste to transfer" to the in-house operated site at Bardon. In response to a question about the risks of these savings not being delivered it was explained that government changes to the regulations were expected which could have an impact but the contracts had been designed to be flexible so they could adapt to changes in the regulations.

- (iv) Whilst £47,000 capital had been allocated for tree planting in the year 2023/24, the tree planting allocation for the remaining years of the MTFs was zero. It was explained that this was because the County Council had been successful in obtaining funding from the Forestry Commission for tree planting and would be bidding to appropriate funding sources when they arose to cover the whole MTFs period. There was a target to plant 700,000 trees over a 10 year period and other organisations were contributing to the target as well as the County Council. Currently tree planting was ahead of the trajectory to meet this target.
- (v) A query was raised as to why spending on the Ashby Canal formed such a large part of the capital programme when it only related to one part of Leicestershire. In response it was explained that this was a historic issue dating back many years, details of which were set out in a report considered by Cabinet on 25 November 2022. The canal needed constant replenishing with water and some of it was sourced from a former coal mine. Leicestershire County Council had a responsibility to make sure the water was cleaned before it was deposited in the canal. An application had been submitted to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for consent to transfer powers under the Transport and Works Act Order 2005 to the Ashby Canal Association which if successful would reduce the financial burden on the County Council.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report and information now provided be noted;
- (b) That the comments now made be forwarded to the Scrutiny Commission for consideration at its meeting on 30 January 2023.