

MEETING OF THE LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY, 24 SEPTEMBER 2024 AT 2.00 P.M.

ORDER PAPER

EVACUATION PROCEDURE

In the event of having to evacuate officers will be able to advise and be on hand to assist any disabled persons.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 1
CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The CHAIRMAN will make his announcements.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 2
MINUTES
(Pages 5 – 16)

The CHAIRMAN will move and MR SHEPHERD will second:

“That the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 10th July 2024, copies of which have been circulated to members, be taken as read, confirmed and signed.”

AGENDA ITEM NO. 3
DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The CHAIRMAN will invite members who wish to do so to make declarations of interest in respect of items on the agenda for this meeting.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4
QUESTIONS ASKED UNDER STANDING ORDER 7(1) (2) & (5)

(A) Question by MR BRAY

“I have reported on numerous occasions the problem of surface water flooding on Rugby Road, Hinckley opposite Domino's Pizza. This floods every time there is heavy rainfall, blocking the road in a busy part of the town centre. Could the Leader please give me a timetable for when work will be undertaken to resolve this long-standing issue?”

Reply by MR O'SHEA

“The County Council is aware of the drainage issue on Rugby Road in Hinckley. The highways teams have carried out cleansing and jetting of the highway gully and the drain connection that is understood to connect to the combined Severn Trent Water Sewer, but these works have not resolved the issues at this location.

An excavation on the drain connection was also undertaken to try and understand the cause of the flooding and performance issues with the drainage system

The County Council is now investigating an alternative solution and is engaging with Severn Trent Water seeking authorisation to connect the highway gullies to a different surface water sewer on Rugby Road.

The solution being investigated will need a road closure on Rugby Road and co-ordination with the affected businesses, the car park entrance, and the bus stops in Waterloo Road.

As soon as permission is granted to divert the highway drainage into an alternative sewer, co-ordination of the work will take place. This will include a planned road closure which requires 3-month notice period. In addition, the need to engage with a third party means a timescale for a permanent resolution cannot be given at this point in time, however it is likely to be in the early part of 2025.”

(B) Question by MR BRAY

“Thank you to officers for looking into the situation around access to Westfield Schools. I understand the need for surveys to be done to update data, however there is a real concern locally that more urgent action is needed. There have been a number of incidents including a person being knocked off a bike and other near misses that I have passed through to highways officers and I have spoken to the police to raise similar concerns. Would the Leader look at what immediate action can be taken, with partners, to ensure no injuries occur?”

Reply by MR O’SHEA

“On-street parking issues around the many schools in Leicestershire are not uncommon. These issues are often highlighted at the start of the new school term, particularly in the autumn/winter when temperatures decrease, and weather conditions worsen. Poor parking habits and behaviour at arrival and dispersal times, to some extent, occurs outside most schools across the Country.

Often, there is no easy solution to the parking problems being experienced with no one highway/traffic management solution yet to be found that entirely removes the parking issues that arise during school term times. There are ways to try and reduce parking pressures around schools which are developed through a partnership approach with the school. These solutions often lie within the local community through parents, school governors and school staff, together with Leicestershire County Council providing advice and support. These partnerships are particularly important to develop as the parking problems outside schools are localised, and the best solutions lie with the local community in reducing the number of vehicles attending the schools.

It is recommended that the school contacts the Sustainable Travel team, who may be able to provide further assistance with active travel to and from the school, which may reduce the number of cars accessing Ashford Road each day. The Sustainable Travel team may be contacted on the following email: ChooseHowYouMove@leics.gov.uk.

As Ashford Road (Hays Lane could be included) is an existing 'no through road' and not subject to through traffic, the school could request to take part in 'School Streets', which is a scheme where the road outside of a school is closed to vehicular access during drop off and pick up times. Marshalls stand at the end of the road closure to restrict access to certain vehicles i.e. those who live or work on the street, who will have to adhere to safety protocols, such as reduced speeds. This allows parents and children to travel to the school with a reduced chance of interaction with moving vehicles.

With appropriate permissions park and stride sites could be established at Clarendon Park or at the Hinckley Hub.

As Hays Lane is not publicly maintained highway, residents would need to seek legal advice on how they could close this route to traffic.

It is appreciated that the community centre has closed on Rosemary Way, which has removed the access for walking to the school using that route (additionally, parents used to park in the community centre's car park thus reducing vehicular traffic on the mentioned roads).

It is acknowledged that the reintroduction of pedestrian access previously provided through the community centre site could be replaced and this would provide some improvement to the situation. Both the Council's Children and Family Services and officers in Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council (HBBC) are looking for ways to achieve this.

The 'School Keep Clear' marking on Westfield Road has not been put forward by the school to be included in the School Keep Clear project which makes advisory markings mandatory giving the opportunity for enforcement. The Westfield Road markings therefore remain advisory (the marking on Ashford Road is mandatory and is included on the enforcement route).

Given the concerns raised and the various roles and responsibilities involved, there is a multi-agency meeting proposed on 26th September with officers from the Council, HBBC, the Police, the Fire Service and both schools. Interested parties will be advised of the actions taken forward from this meeting."

AGENDA ITEM NO. 5
TO RECEIVE POSITION STATEMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

(Note: Standing Order 8 provides as follows: -

- (a) A position statement may give rise to an informal discussion by the Council.
- (b) At the conclusion of the discussion a formal motion may be moved to the effect that a particular issue relevant to the statement be referred to the Cabinet, the Commission, a Board or a Committee for consideration. This shall be moved and seconded formally and put without discussion. No other motion or amendment may be moved.
- (c) The discussion of any position statement shall not exceed 20 minutes but the Chairman may permit an extension to this period.)

ACTING LEADER

The Acting Leader will make a statement.

LEAD MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND FLOODING

The Lead Member will make a statement.

AGENDA ITEM NO.6
REPORT OF THE CABINET
(Pages 17 – 76)

Principal Speakers:
Mover of motion (as appropriate)
Leader of the Opposition (Mr M Mullaney)

(A) EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION STRATEGY

MRS POSNETT will move and MRS RICHARDSON will second:

“That the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2024 – 2028 and associated Action Plan, set out in Appendix B to the report, be approved.”

AGENDA ITEM NO. 7
REPORT OF THE CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE
(Pages 77 - 82)

Principal Speakers:
Deputy Chairman (Mrs D Taylor)
Liberal Democrat Spokesman (Mr M Mullaney)

(A) APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSONS

MRS TAYLOR will move and MR POLAND will second:

- “(a) That Richard Gough, Gordon Grimes, Surinder Sharma, Pamela Roberts, John Pilgrim and Kimberley Kingsley be appointed to serve as Independent Persons for a term of four years ending on 30 September 2028;
- (b) That Ms T Herring and Ms H Kotecha be thanked for their valuable work in supporting the Monitoring Officer in the operation of the Members’ Code of Conduct complaints process over the last four years.”

AGENDA ITEM NO. 8
REPORT OF THE CORPORATE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
 (Pages 83 - 92)

Principal Speakers:
 Chairman (Mr T Barkley)
 Liberal Democrat Spokesman (Mr G A Boulter)

(A) CHANGES TO THE FINANCIAL PROCEDURE RULES

MR BARKLEY will move and MR RICHARDSON will second:

“That the proposed amendments to the Financial Procedure Rules, set out in Appendix A to the report, be approved.”

AGENDA ITEM NO. 9
APPOINTMENTS IN ACCORDANCE WITH ITEM 11 OF STANDING ORDER 4

(A) TO APPOINT SUCH CABINET SUPPORT MEMBERS AS THE COUNCIL CONSIDERS APPROPRIATE

MRS TAYLOR will move and MR POLAND will second:

“That Mr B Champion 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.”

AGENDA ITEM NO.10
TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING NOTICE OF MOTION

(A) WINTER FUEL PAYMENTS – MR M MULLANEY CC

Mr MULLANEY will move and MRS TAYLOR will second:

- “(a) That this Council notes the recent announcement by the Labour Government to end universal winter fuel payments and restrict eligibility to only those in receipt of Pension Credits and other benefits.
- (b) That, though many agree that universal Winter Fuel Payments are not necessary, this Council is deeply concerned that many pensioners on lower and middle incomes will now not receive the payments, and that across England and Wales the number of people eligible for winter fuel payments will fall by 10 million (from 11.4 million to only 1.5 million).
- (c) That, in Leicestershire the number of pensioners affected by the change in eligibility criteria is 129,537, which means that 92.5% of pensioners currently eligible for winter fuel payments will no longer be able to claim the payment from this winter onwards.
- (d) That this Council believes that the Labour Government has set the threshold at which pensioners do not qualify for Winter Fuel Payments far too low. Only those receiving a pension of less than £218.15 a week (or £332.95 a week for couples) are eligible for pension credits. This is significantly lower than the living wage rate.
- (e) That this Council is also concerned by the low take up of pension credit with only 63% of those eligible nationwide receiving them – and over 880,000 pensioners not doing so. This Council recognises the role it has to play to increase awareness of benefits such as Pension Credit to ensure people are aware of the support they are entitled to.
- (f) That this Council further notes that the Energy Price Cap is due to rise by 10% in October, which combined by the removal of Winter Fuel Payments will push thousands of local pensioners into fuel poverty.
- (g) That this Council supports the criticism from Age UK, the Countryside Alliance and other charities, highlighting the social injustice and potential health risks posed by this abrupt policy change and believes that decision to means-test Winter Fuel Payments, especially with such short notice and without adequate compensatory measures, is deeply unfair and will disproportionately affect the health and well-being of our most vulnerable older residents.
- (h) That, given the expected impact the withdrawal of the Winter Fuel Payment will have on vulnerable older people, and the analysis carried out by charities that 71% of disabled people will lose their entitlement,

despite their greater dependence on heating their homes, this Council is deeply concerned that the Government did not carry out an impact assessment before putting the matter to a vote.

- (i) That this Council is also concerned that the government is suggesting the use of the Household Support Grant to fill the gap, diverting much-needed funding away from children receiving Free School Meals.
- (j) That this Council therefore resolves to:
 - (i) Request that the Chief Executive of Leicestershire County Council writes to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, urging a review of the decision to means-test the Winter Fuel Payment and asking the government to ensure that vulnerable pensioners, particularly those who do not claim Pension Credit, are protected from fuel poverty.
 - (ii) Commit this Council to signing the 'Save the Winter Fuel Payment for Struggling Pensioners' petition being run by Age UK and write to all members offering them the opportunity to sign the petition themselves.
 - (iii) Encourage local efforts to promote Pension Credit uptake through council services and partnerships with local charities and community organisations to ensure that all eligible pensioners in Leicestershire are supported in claiming their entitlement.

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