



# **Rutland County Council**

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Minutes of the **TWO HUNDRED AND SEVENTIETH MEETING of the COUNCIL** held in the Council Chamber, Catmose, Oakham, Rutland, LE15 6HP on Monday, 26th February, 2018 at 7.00 pm

**PRESENT:**

Mr I Arnold	Mr G Brown
Mr N Begy	Mr K Bool
Mr E Baines	Mr O Bird
Mr B Callaghan	Mr W Cross
Mr J Dale	Mr R Foster
Mrs J Fox	Mr O Hemsley
Mr J Lammie	Mr A Mann
Mr M Oxley	Mrs L Stephenson
Mr A Stewart	Miss G Waller
Mr A Walters	Mr D Wilby

**APOLOGIES:**

Miss R Burkitt	Mr R Clifton
Mr G Conde	Mr R Gale
Mr C Parsons	

**OFFICERS**

**PRESENT:**

Mrs H Briggs	Chief Executive
Mr D Brown	Director for Places
Mrs D Mogg	Director for Resources
	(Monitoring Officer)
Mr S Della Rocca	Assistant Director - Finance
Mrs Natasha Taylor	Governance Manager

## **645 APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Mrs Burkitt, Mr Clifton, Mr Conde, Mr Gale and Mr Parsons.

## **646 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman confirmed that his engagements had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

The Chairman credited the work and professionalism of the emergency services in response to the explosion in Leicester City on Sunday 26 February 2018. He expressed sadness at the loss of 5 lives in the explosion, with others seriously injured and in hospital.

The Chairman also advised Members that it was his intention, with their approval, to write a letter of congratulations to Dr Sarah Furness who will take over the role of Lord Lieutenant of Rutland on 29 March 2018.

#### **647 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE LEADER, MEMBERS OF THE CABINET OR THE HEAD OF PAID SERVICE**

There were no announcements from the Leader, Members of the Cabinet or the Head of Paid Service.

#### **648 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Chairman reminded members of the guidance issued by the Monitoring Officer in relation to Council Tax setting.

Mr Oxley declared a pecuniary interest in item 7 (Fees and Charges Report) of the agenda.

#### **649 PETITIONS, DEPUTATIONS AND QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

There were no petitions, deputations or questions from members of the public.

#### **650 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**

There were no questions from members of the council.

#### **651 REPORT FROM THE CABINET**

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The Chairman reminded members of the mandatory requirement to record votes in relation to the Budget, setting Council Tax and issuing precepts.

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Report No. 44/2018 from the Cabinet was received to consider recommendations of the Cabinet referred to Council for determination and to note the Key Decisions made by Cabinet at its meetings held on 16 January 2018 and 30 January 2018.

- 1) Council **NOTED** the Key Decisions made by Cabinet since the publication of the agenda for the previous ordinary meeting of the Council on 15 January 2018.
- 2) **19 December 2017**  
**Decision NO. 473**  
**Report No. 213/2017**  
**FEES AND CHARGES 2018-19**

Mr Brown introduced and moved the recommendations in the report. Mr Begy seconded the recommendations.

During his introduction, Mr Brown, highlighted that these fees and charges represented a significant form of income for the Council and so it was important that they were set at the correct level. Some fees and charges were set at a statutory level, where the setting of fees was discretionary a 2% increase had been applied, unless there was business case to do something differently.

During debate of the recommendation, points raised included:

- i. Charges for residential care were not representative of the high fees paid by those in private residential care settings.

## **RESOLVED**

- a) To **APPROVE** the level of fees and charges for 2018/19 as set out in Appendices 1-4 of Report No. 213/2017.
- b) To **APPROVE** that the fees for local elections and referendum continue to be set in line with other Local Authorities from Leicestershire.

The above resolution was voted as follows:

FOR THE MOTION (19)

Mr Arnold, Mr Baines, Mr Begy, Mr Bird, Mr Bool, Mr Brown, Mr Callaghan, Mr Cross, Mr Dale, Mr Foster, Mrs Fox, Mr Hemsley, Mr Lammie, Mr Mann, Mrs Stephenson, Mr Stewart, Miss Waller, Mr Walters, Mr Wilby.

AGAINST THE MOTION (0)

ABSTAINING FROM VOTING (1)

Mr Oxley

### **3) 16 January 2018**

**Decision No. 517**

**Report No. 6/2018**

## **TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY AND CAPITAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2018/19**

Mr Brown introduced and moved the recommendations in the report. Mr Hemsley seconded the recommendations.

During his introduction Mr Brown gave a brief summary of the legislative requirements for these strategies and also highlighted the changes that had been made following feedback from Scrutiny.

## **RESOLVED**

- a) To **APPROVE** the Treasury Management Strategy in Appendix 1 (Report 6/2018) including the Investment Strategy, Borrowing strategy, Minimum Revenue Provision statement and Capital Expenditure Prudential indicators.
- b) To **APPROVE** the Capital Investment Strategy in Appendix 2 (Report 6/2018).

- c) To **APPROVE** the establishment of a £10m fund for commercial investments to be used in accordance with Commercial Investment Policy in Appendix 2, Annexe B1 (Report 6/2018).
- d) To **APPROVE** an increase in the Authorised Borrowing Limit to £33m (previously £28m) and the Operational Boundary to £28m (previously £23m).
- e) To **APPROVE** the use of £50k as a start-up fund from the Invest to Save reserve (as required) to fund any pre acquisition costs associated with potential investments.

The above resolution was voted as follows:

FOR THE MOTION (20)

Mr Arnold, Mr Baines, Mr Begy, Mr Bird, Mr Bool, Mr Brown, Mr Callaghan, Mr Cross, Mr Dale, Mr Foster, Mrs Fox, Mr Hemsley, Mr Lammie, Mr Mann, Mr Oxley, Mrs Stephenson, Mr Stewart, Miss Waller, Mr Walters, Mr Wilby.

AGAINST THE MOTION (0)

ABSTAINING FROM VOTING (0)

4) **20 February 2018**

**Decision No. 618**

**Report No. 43/2018**

**REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET 2018/19 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN**

Mr Hemsley introduced and moved the recommendations in the report. Mr Brown seconded the recommendations.

Mr Hemsley introduced the report as follows:

*Tonight we are recommending a budget that, despite the significant loss of government funding, remains ambitious for the type of place we want Rutland to be.*

*It is a budget that will increase the support that is available to people in our community who are more vulnerable.*

*It is a budget that will mean even more residents and businesses can access some of the fastest internet speeds in the UK.*

*It is a budget that will increase the investment going into special educational needs.*

*And it is a budget that will lay the foundations in delivering more affordable housing in Rutland... as well as helping businesses to grow.*

*Colleagues, with a heavy heart, we are having to recommend an increase in the main portion of our council tax bill of 2.99% which is just below inflation.*

*We are also passing on the Government's social care levy which will go a small way towards meeting the rising demand for services across children's and adult's social care.*

*Combined, we are proposing a council tax increase of 4.99% or £77 per year for the average Band D property.*

*People on low incomes will be shielded from much of this rise, instead paying an average of increase of £19.24 per year.*

*Nobody wants to increase council tax – it is in many ways the last resort.*

*Council tax has, after all, only increased three times in the past eight years.*

*For a very long time now – at least the last 10 years – council tax increases in Rutland have been well below inflation.*

*During that time local government has faced, in many ways, the perfect storm.*

*A perfect storm which has seen the biggest loss of government grant in a generation, coupled with significantly rising costs – particularly in areas like adult and children's social care.*

*This year the storm has become ever more intense:*

- Inflation is the highest it has been for some time at 3.1%*
- Government has cut out grant by 1.2%*
- Pension costs have gone up by 1%*
- And we face a pay award in excess of 2%*

*We are also paying more for adults and children's social care.*

*Protecting our more vulnerable residents is, after all, one of our primary responsibilities.*

*It is one that we take very seriously and nothing gives me more pleasure than seeing our looked after children thrive, or seeing Rutland maintain – as is the case – one of the best records in the country for helping older people get back on their feet when they are discharged from hospital.*

*Colleagues, the council tax increase that is proposed tonight does not meet the shortfall of these rising costs.*

*While we will be making some use of reserves, we will be doing what we have done for every year previous which is becoming more efficient in the way that services are delivered. By making every pound stretch further.*

*In fact, this year we will be making savings of £1.3 million.*

*Thanks to prudent financial management, since 20013, we have saved taxpayers £6.2 million.*

*We have done that by getting better value out of our contracts, by sharing staff with other councils and by reducing IT costs.*

*I realise that we are not through this storm yet. We face more difficult years and tough choices.*

*But we are in better shape than many councils.... and we are heading into the future by staying true to our principles of being ambitious for the people that we serve.*

*For example, we are deriving more income than ever from the Oakham Enterprise Park which is also helping to attract new businesses to the County.*

*Ambition and sensible growth goes hand in hand with financial sustainability.*

*It goes hand in hand with helping the next generation of people to live in Rutland.... which is why we in the early stages of exploring opportunities for development at the St George's Barracks.*

*And it goes hand in hand with making our county one of the best connected in the country which is why we will be continuing to roll out super-fast broadband. By the end of the financial year we expect 95% of people will have access to it.*

*Financial sustainability can and should mean improvements to the way many of our services are delivered because it is forcing us to think deeper... and wider.*

*Rutland is, in many ways, ahead of the game in the way that we work our partnership organisations, such as health colleagues and the police.*

*The future I see in front of us is more about a one public estate working in tandem to deliver services better – for example by continuing to bring health and social care together which will end the days of people being passed around the system from pillar to post.*

*Colleagues, we can and will embrace the future with optimism.*

*A future that will continue to see prudent financial management matched with ambition for the people and businesses that we serve.*

During debate of the recommendation, points raised included:

- i. Miss Waller had concerns that the Medium Term Financial Plan may not be achieved and reflect realistic assumptions. The pay award assumption of 1.5% for 2020/21 and beyond was queried in the context of the recent pay offer. Miss Waller also felt that the Council should be doing more to engage with members of the public to ensure that there was a clear understanding of the Councils financial position in relation to government funding and that the good work, value for money and savings achieved were highlighted as part of this engagement;
- ii. Mr Begy confirmed that a significant amount of work had been put into a Press Release which would provide the relevant budget information in a clear and understandable format. This press release was due to be released after the meeting.
- iii. Mr Hemsley confirmed that there was a communications plan which included work on presenting the information in a user friendly format using infographics and pictorial information. These would be widely displayed in public areas such as in libraries, on the website, through Parish Councils and on Social Media;

- iv. Mr Oxley requested that consideration be given to providing a simplified version of this information to households by including it in the Council Tax brochure sent out with Council Tax bills;
- v. Mr Bird agreed that engagement with the public needed to be improved, that lessons should be learnt from the level of responses to the Town Centre consultation and that the response to the budget consultation was similarly poor. Circulation of information and public engagement was very important;
- vi. Mr Begy highlighted the work being done to improve public engagement and understanding and requested that members feedback ideas on how the presentation of the information could be improved; and
- vii. Mr Bool suggested that Councillors could present information to Parish Councils in order to improve public engagement.

## **RESOLVED**

- a) To **APPROVE** the Revenue Budget for 2018/19 detailed in Appendix 1, section 3 of Report No. 43/2018.
- b) To **APPROVE** that the minimum level of general reserves remains at £2m.
- c) To **APPROVE** a Council Tax increase of 4.99% including a 2% social care precept.
- d) To **NOTE** the capital programme as detailed in Section 4 of Appendix 1 of Report No. 43/2018.
- e) To **NOTE** that additional revenue may be incurred in 2018/19 funded through 2017/18 underspends to be carried forward via earmarked reserves.
- f) To **APPROVE** a collection fund deficit of £80,000 for clawback of which £70,000 is the Rutland share.

The above resolution was voted as follows:

FOR THE MOTION (19)

Mr Arnold, Mr Baines, Mr Begy, Mr Bird, Mr Bool, Mr Brown, Mr Callaghan, Mr Cross, Mr Dale, Mr Foster, Mrs Fox, Mr Hemsley, Mr Lammie, Mr Mann, Mr Oxley, Mrs Stephenson, Mr Stewart, Mr Walters, Mr Wilby.

AGAINST THE MOTION (0)

ABSTAINING FROM VOTING (1)

Miss Waller.

## **652 COUNCIL TAX 2018/19**

Report No. 34/2018 from the Director for Resources was received to enable the Council to calculate and set the level of Council Tax for 2018/19 in accordance with legislative requirements.

The Leader, Mr Hemsley, introduced the report and moved the recommendations. Mr Brown seconded the recommendations.

## **RESOLVED**

- a) To **APPROVE** the formal Council Tax resolution shown at Appendix A of Report No. 34/2018;
- b) To **NOTE** no changes to the Local Council Tax Support Scheme (LCTS) for 2018/19; and
- c) To **NOTE** the changes to the empty homes discounts and long term empty premium for 2018/19.

The above resolution was voted as follows:

FOR THE MOTION (20)

Mr Arnold, Mr Baines, Mr Begy, Mr Bird, Mr Bool, Mr Brown, Mr Callaghan, Mr Cross, Mr Dale, Mr Foster, Mrs Fox, Mr Hemsley, Mr Lammie, Mr Mann, Mr Oxley, Mrs Stephenson, Mr Stewart, Miss Waller, Mr Walters, Mr Wilby.

AGAINST THE MOTION (0)

ABSTAINING FROM VOTING (0)

## **653 APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS**

The Chairman advised that this item had been withdrawn.

## **654 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLES SCRUTINY PANEL**

Nominations were invited for the office of Chair of the Children and Young Peoples Scrutiny Panel.

A nomination was received from Mr Hemsley who proposed the appointment of Mrs Burkitt. This was seconded by Mr Foster.

A nomination was received from Miss Waller who proposed the appointment of Mr Oxley. This was seconded by Mr Callaghan.

Mr Oxley gave a short speech with regard to his suitability for this role. He confirmed that he had been a Councillor since 2003 and had made a significant contribution at Scrutiny Panel meetings over the years. He would hope to work with the Portfolio Holder in order to ensure positive outcomes for the young people of Rutland.

In response to several points of order from members, the Chairman clarified that it was not relevant that Mrs Burkitt was not present at the meeting, nor that she was not currently a member of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel. The nomination could still stand. Political Balance would be re-visited at the next meeting following the outcome of the by-election, but this would not necessarily have any effect on the allocation of places on committees/scrutiny panels.

## **RESOLVED**



Mrs Burkitt was appointed as Chairman of the Children and Young Peoples Scrutiny Panel for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2017/18.

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**The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.47 pm.**

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