



# Rutland County Council

Catmose Oakham Rutland LE15 6HP.  
Telephone 01572 722577 Facsimile 01572 75307

Minutes of the **JOINT MEETING of the ADULTS AND HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEES** held in the Council Chamber, Catmose, Oakham, Rutland, LE15 6HP on Wednesday, 29th January, 2020 at 7.00 pm

**PRESENT:** Mr J Dale (Chairman)  
Mr P Ainsley  
Mrs W Cross  
Mrs S Harvey  
Mrs R Powell  
  
Mr A Lowe  
Mr N Begy  
Mr K Bool  
Miss G Waller  
Mrs S Webb

## **OFFICERS**

**PRESENT:** Mark Andrews Strategic Director for People  
Sav Della Rocca Strategic Director for Resources  
Dawn Godfrey Deputy Director for Children  
Andrew Merry Finance Manager  
John Morley Deputy Director – Adult Services  
Joanna Morley Governance Officer

## **IN**

**ATTENDANCE:** Mr G Brown Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Environment, Planning, Property, and Finance  
Mr O Hemsley Leader and Portfolio Holder for Rutland One Public Estate & Growth, Tourism & Economic Development, Communications, and Resources (other than Finance)  
Mr A Walters Portfolio Holder for Safeguarding – Adults, Public Health, Health Commissioning & Community Safety  
Mr D Wilby Portfolio Holder for Children’s Services and Education

## **497 APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillor Burrows, Councillor Fox and Councillor A Brown. Councillor Waller was in attendance for Councillor Burrows and Councillor Webb was in attendance for Councillor Brown.

#### **498 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Declarations of interest were made by Councillor Lowe who held power of attorney for a resident who received Council funding, Councillor Harvey who was the treasurer of a basketball team which received Council funding and Councillor Waller who was a Governor at a Rutland school.

#### **499 PETITIONS, DEPUTATIONS AND QUESTIONS**

No petitions, deputations or questions had been received.

#### **500 QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS**

No petitions, deputations or questions had been received.

#### **501 REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET 2020/21 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN**

Report No.03/2020 was received from the Strategic Director for Resources. The purpose of the report was to present a draft budget for consultation prior to the budget being formally set by Council in February 2020.

The Section 151 Officer and Strategic Director for Resources, Mr Della Rocca, gave a presentation to highlight key areas of the report.

During discussion the following points were noted:

- Councillors Lowe, Begy, Powell and Payne had asked questions directly of the Section 151 officer before the meeting and all had given permission that these questions and their answers could be circulated to Members and appended to the minutes.
- Although funding overall had gone up, the majority of increased income was from Council tax as Government funding, as a proportion of overall funding, continued to reduce.
- RCC had received a 17% increase in Spending Power since 2015/6 which given inflation, and increasing demands that the Council was facing, was deemed to be inadequate.
- Rutland received less per head than other unitary authorities who had the same amount of responsibilities.
- The funding formula, which decided the amounts allocated, had lost meaning as it has changed over time. Rutland received less than other Councils, in broad terms because the Government assessed the Council's relative needs as lower than other unitary councils and its relative resources as higher because Council tax base and Band D council tax level.
- The funding formula was under review and would be likely to change later this year.
- Mr Della Rocca was unsure whether any revenue streams would be unlocked following Brexit and whether these would be diverted to Local Government.
- The cap on how much Council tax could be increased could be removed in the future to allow Councils to generate more funds.
- Officers had made some preparations for an emergency budget in case the Council suddenly faced a massive shortfall of funds. This looked at which service

areas could be 'turned off' or "reduced" quickly if the need arose. This was work being done behind the scenes as part of sound financial management practices but ultimately any decision in that situation would be down to Members.

- Members asked about the Council's relative financial position. Based on information in the press, it is believed that there are many other Council's facing more financial difficulties than RCC.
- No cuts had been proposed at the moment because of the uncertainty over future funding.
- Provision had been made for a 3% increase in pay funding, although the national pay negotiations had yet to be decided.
- The budget could experience a large negative or positive impact depending on whether, for example, a large family moved in and placed huge demands on children services or Health picked up the bill for long term care of an elderly resident rather than adult social care.
- The proposed Council tax increase would mean that residents paying a Band D Council tax would pay £1.31 extra per week.
- The CCG had undertaken a large number of reviews to assess whether residents still merited health funding. Their decision that less funding was needed then impacted on the Council who had to pick up the extra need. Three regional directors of Adult Services had submitted a letter to the CCG to challenge this.
- A Local Authority could not challenge a health decision but an individual could. Although Council officers could support families making this challenge it was up to the family to be proactive.
- Councillor Harvey requested that officers ask the CCG to share their appeal figures.
- Different business models had been considered for Rutland's community provision. The Council considered that it was a better option to have their own provision that was opened up to neighbouring councils to make it viable, rather than having residents travel outside of the area to an external provider.
- Residents in care homes who ran out of money (depleted funds) became the responsibility of the Council. These care home rates tended to be at a higher level and therefore added an additional cost burden on the system as it was often considered dangerous to move residents to cheaper accommodation elsewhere.
- The Council was not allowed to take CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) monies from care homes but the distinction between a care home and a retirement village was not clear as some retirement villages had extra care facilities on site. In addition not all residents received care at the beginning of their tenure.
- Councillor Harvey was pleased to note that the Council was looking to extend the contract of the Armed Forces officer.

--o0o--

At 20.00 Councillor Hemsley left the meeting and did not return.

--o0o--

- The Council had very little jurisdiction over a schools budget as once funds were allocated schools were then free to spend it as they saw fit.
- There was a joint financial responsibility between the Council and schools for Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) costs, however, although Schools should be inclusive of SEND pupils there was nothing to incentivise them to do so, and this was made more difficult for schools if they were already over their budget.

- The Government had increased the High Needs Block allocation but it was not nearly enough to cover increasing costs.
- The Council were looking to increase the hourly rate payable to settings for Early Years.
- Councillor Gordon Brown had recently had a meeting with the new Rutland MP, Alicia Kearns, about fairer funding for rural councils and she would be taking forward the issue of SEND and Adult Social Care funding.
- The Council needed to consider whether it was going to remain in the voluntary scheme for unaccompanied asylum children and would have to weigh its moral responsibility versus the increasing costs. There was an increasing financial burden on the Council because the Government was not fully funding the scheme and also as the children grew up, as care leavers the Council continued to have responsibility for them.
- Officers clarified that they were specifically talking about children seeking asylum that were here because of the national scheme, not those who turned up in the county.
- Costs were lower if placements for foster children were with our own foster carers. Work was continuing to significantly improve the Council's fostering service and build up the fostering community.

## **RESOLVED**

The Joint Adults and Health, and Children and Young People Scrutiny Committees **NOTED** the Revenue and Capital Budget 2020/21 and the Medium Term Financial Plan.

## **502 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY AND CAPITAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2020/21**

Report No.05/2020 was received from the Strategic Director for Resources, the purpose of which was to set out the statutory reports expected in relation to treasury and capital investment operations for 2020/21, linked to the Council's Budget Medium Term Financial Strategy and the Capital Programme.

During discussion the following points were noted:

- The key change from the existing strategy was that the credit criteria had been amended. There was no change to the minimum credit criteria however should a situation arise where the counterparty ratings were only met from one of the credit ratings agencies the counterparty could still be used if other evidence suggested the counterparty was stable.
- The limits on the amount of money invested in banks had been increased from £5m to £7m as there were, at times, a limited number of counterparties with the appropriate credit rating to invest in.

## **RESOLVED**

The joint Adults and Health, and Children and Young People Scrutiny Committees **NOTED** the Treasury Management Strategy and Capital Investment Strategy 2020/21.

## 503 FEES AND CHARGES

Report No.04/2020 was received from the Strategic Director for Resources, the purpose of which was to set out the proposals for fees and charges for services provided by the Council for the financial year 2020/21.

During discussion the following points were noted:

- There would be a consultation with taxi drivers on a proposed increase to the fees and change to the fee structure. Following the consultation the proposals would be bought back for approval.
- Rutland was hoping to introduce a similar taxi scheme to the one introduced in Peterborough to make sure all vehicles were safe. In addition the Council would be offering training for taxi drivers to make them aware of the signs of child exploitation.
- The Council did not run any residential care provision itself and the rates outlined were those paid to providers. Self-funders paid more for a place than the Council and in effect subsidised council places. A care home may not be financially viable if it relied solely on the rates that the Council paid.

### **RESOLVED:**

The joint Adults and Health, and Children and Young People Scrutiny Committees **NOTED** the report on the proposed fees and charges for 2020/21.

---oOo---

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.40pm.

---oOo---