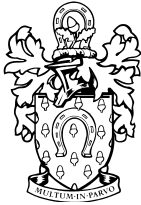


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Rutland County Council



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Minutes of the **MEETING of the COUNCIL** held via Zoom
<https://zoom.us/j/92649308367> on Monday, 9th November, 2020 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT:

Mr E Baines	Mr N Begy
Mr K Bool	Mr J Dale
Mr O Hemsley	Mr G Brown
Mr R Coleman	Mrs L Stephenson
Mr A Walters	Mr D Wilby
Mr P Ainsley	Mr D Blanksby
Mr A Brown	Mr W Cross
Mrs J Fox	Mrs S Harvey
Miss M Jones	Mr A Lowe
Ms A MacCartney	Mr M Oxley
Mrs K Payne	Mrs R Powell
Mr I Razzell	Miss G Waller
Mrs S Webb	Mr N Woodley

APOLOGIES: Ms J Burrows

OFFICERS PRESENT:

Mr Andrews	Interim Chief Executive
Mr S della Rocca	Director of Resources
Mr P Horsfield	Monitoring Officer
Mrs P Sharpe	Interim Strategic Director for Places
Mr J Morley	Director of Adult Services and Health
Ms D Godfrey	Director of Children's Services
Mrs E Powley	Governance Manager

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Burrows.

Councillor Baines' apologies were sent due to technical issues and as such, Councillor Begy, vice-chairman chaired the meeting, until such a time that Councillor Baines could join the meeting.

2 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Vice-Chairman informed Council that the Chairman's announcements had been circulated and noted that since the last Council on the 12th October, the Chairman had attended Service of Remembrance at the grounds of All Saints' Church, Oakham.

3 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE LEADER, MEMBERS OF THE CABINET OR THE HEAD OF PAID SERVICE

The Vice-Chairman informed Council that the Deputy Leader, wished to make an announcement.

Councillor G Brown updated Members and explained that discussions had continued on a tripartite agreement between Rutland County Council, Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) and Homes England on the terms and conditions of the General Distribution Agreement (GDA). He commented that the document was lengthy and detailed the conditions on which the Forward Funding Grant would be provided through the Council to the DIO to deliver the Infrastructure at St George's Barracks.

Alongside the GDA, Council were also discussing with the DIO a side agreement (called an Allocation Agreement) which would clarify the roles and responsibilities of the DIO and Rutland County Council from a legal perspective. Until progress had been made and being close to an agreement with Homes England on the GDA it would be difficult to finalise the Allocation Agreement.

Councillor G Brown reported that Homes England were seeking early agreement between the parties including the formal approval by their respective governance arrangements; the Council had made it clear that they would be being seeking approval of Cabinet and Council as agreed at the Council meeting on 20th January 2020.

DIO's consultants continued to prepare the work around the traffic assessment and other information which they would require for a future planning applications.

A copy of the St George's viability report would be provided and a link sent to Members.

At this juncture of the meeting, Councillor Baines entered the meeting and assumed the position of Chairman and notified Members that the Interim Chief Executive wished to make an announcement.

Mr Andrews informed Council that cases of Covid remained relatively high at 105 cases per 100,000. He noted that the Council had recently been obtained additional support for businesses and infection control measures and noted that the Government had very recently announced a winter package to provide support for children and families to help cover costs of food and bills. It was explained that whilst there had been progress with a vaccination the Council would continue to work closely with health professionals but recognised that this could be a lengthy process.

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interests.

5 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Council meeting held on the 12th October 2020 were agreed as a true record.

6 PETITIONS, DEPUTATIONS AND QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

The Chairman announced that five questions have been submitted by members of the public.

Jennifer Blockley was invited to ask her questions;

It is noted that the County Council appointed a young white male for the position of PM for the feasibility study. Could council members please comment on why the post was

not advertised and clarify how a female candidate or a candidate of ethnic minority might have applied?

In response, the Leader explained that he had noted that Ms Blockley had provided to all Councillors a copy of her complaint and the reply that the Council has provided in which it was stated that she would be intending to take her complaint further. Both you and Councillors would be aware that the process would include an independent view from the Local Government Ombudsman and therefore would not comment further until that process has concluded.

Ms Blockley asked a supplementary question which the Monitoring Officer explained was not an appropriate question as the Council meeting was not a forum for directing questions at officers of the Council.

Jennifer Blockley was invited to ask her second question.

Could the Council members please clarify how the £50,000 of taxpayer's money will be allocated?

The Leader stated that he was not prepared to answer the question until the local Independent Ombudsmen had made comment.

Ms Blockley asked a supplementary question as to how local tax payers were getting value for money.

The Leader repeated his previous statement that he was not prepared to answer the question until the local Independent Ombudsmen had made comment.

The Chairman invited Ms Blockley to ask her next question on behalf of Ms Sylvia Matthews who had nominated her

If the radio station feasibility study finds that it will go ahead, when and where will the post of station manager be advertised?

The Leader explained that it would be a decision for whatever organisation is formed to manage the platform. This would be independent of the Council.

The Chairman invited Ms Blockley to ask her next question on behalf of Ms Nurse who had nominated her.

Having allocated £50,000 of tax payer's money to a feasibility study to look into the viability of the setting up of a new radio station, how can the County Council justify this when an article in the Rutland Times states that a former presenter Jennifer Lee has been working on a project to create a new station for Rutland and Stamford since May without any county council funding?

The Leader responded explaining that the County Council was interested in working with everyone who wanted to see a Radio station that would provide truly local information for the County. He was aware that Ms Blockley had been invited to present her proposed business case to the independent board when established. The project that was started by the last Chief Executive was intended to ensure that such a Station can be re-created and this would hopefully involve all who would want to see this happen.

It was noted that two other questions had been submitted and a written response requested. These would be appended to the minutes and published on the website.

7 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

The Chairman confirmed that five questions had been submitted and that they would be taken in the order that they had been received.

Councillor Powell to the Leader:

At the September meeting of Full Council, the leader reported that 'following appeals to the MP and the Council, a project had been initiated to explore retaining a community radio station so local residents could continue to be kept informed of local events'. This followed an announcement on 28 August of the launch of this new project and the confirmation of the appointment of a project manager a few days afterwards on 3 September.

Rutland Radio will be sorely missed and I would certainly would support any initiatives to replace this valuable community resource.

My question is about communication and process in the decision to commit Rutland County Council budget of £50,000 to this initiative and the setting up of this project. Once again, there seems to be a lack of transparency with communication to fellow councillors following only after the decision had been made.

Can the leader confirm firstly what the precise process was in terms of approval of this project and its budget and secondly how such proposals for additional budgets, not already earmarked, will be dealt with in the future?

Response from Councillor Hemsley to Councillor Powell:

- 1. In terms of the process for the approval of this project, this was something that was established by the previous Chief Executive, who did consult with HR, Communications, the Leader and Deputy Leader. It was recorded on the Covid-19 Incident Record of Executive Delegated Decisions (82). This was a new project so there was no existing funding for it either from an external source or internally. A new budget had to be created for it, the money was from the Council's reserves as this was the only source that it could come from without impacting on other budgets. The budget was authorised by the previous Chief Executive using her delegated powers.*
- 2. The project is to assess the feasibility of a community based radio platform for Rutland and Stamford and as such is short term. There will not be any future budgets as this was a one off allocation of a budget for the costs of the project only. Therefore, even if the findings of the radio station feasibility project are that there should be a community based radio platform for Rutland and Stamford, it would be a decision for whatever organisation is formed to manage the platform as to how they would fund it, what, if any, posts there should be within that organization and how they will be appointed to.*

In response to a supplementary question, whereby Councillor Powell raised concerns about future use and allocation of council reserves not within the corporate plan and feasibility studies for commercial ventures, the Leader explained that he would explore ways to ensure more transparency in the allocation of funds.

Councillor A Brown to the Leader:

Can the Leader please explain why the issue of saying prayers at the start of each council meeting was not discussed at the last Constitutional Review Working Group despite the fact it was asked to be on the agenda by all three group leaders

Response from Councillor Hemsley to Councillor A Brown:

Thank you for the question Councillor Brown. The CRWG agenda reports had already been produced and the Officers did not have the capacity to produce a report for that meeting. I have asked the Monitoring Officer to ensure that this item is on the next agenda for CRWG. The meeting is scheduled for January. I have also asked the Monitoring Officer to

ensure that he discusses the matter with you prior to producing the paper to ensure that your thoughts are fully reflected.

Question from Cllr A Brown to Cllr G Brown

When is this Council going to have an open public meeting to discuss the Memorandum of Understanding with the MoD relating to the development of St George's Barracks, and how it was arrived at, the progress on the Housing Infrastructure Fund grant and the costs RCC has incurred on these thus far?

Response from Councillor G Brown to Cllr A Brown:

First of all, thank you Cllr Brown for your question.

As member's know my door is always open to meet with members and discuss such matters and therefore I am not really sure what the benefit is to Council this evening to raise the topic of a non-legally binding memorandum of understanding as I feel it achieves little at this time, especially when the documents which will really matter, the Grant Determination Agreement and the Allocation Agreement, will be coming forward to Council in due course as I explained earlier this evening.

However, I am happy to explain in some detail the background to the Memorandum of Understanding, how it came to be in place and who was involved in that process. I apologise to those councillors who had this explanation previously as it may take a few minutes to go through this background.

Councillors will recall that the Ministry of Defence, in late 2016, announced that they planned to close St George's Barracks and that, under clear direction from Government, they were required to bring the site forward for housing development.

From Rutland County Council's point of view, we had two choices either to engage with the Ministry of Defence and ensure that development was carried out in the best possible way for Rutland or take pot-luck and wait until a developer to bring forward a planning application for the 300 hectare Brownfield site. So, it was really a decision as to whether we had influence over what was to be developed or have very little control and leave it to the market to sort out.

Initial discussions took place in late 2016 and early 2017 between the Ministry of Defence and Rutland County Council including the Leader, the Deputy Leader and the Chief Executive and other officers of the Council. This resulted in a report to Cabinet in April 2017 recommending an application being made for One Public Estate funding to take forward two projects

The first project would focus on the potential future of St George's Barracks, building on the dialogue that was already in place between the MOD and RCC.

The second project was to bring forward the concept of a combined Hub for the blue light services and primary care, again building on the idea of a health and social care hub which had been previously discussed. Both projects were to be funded from the Government's One Public Estate programme the purpose of which was to explore options and feasibility for the rationalisation of the public sector estate.

In that same April 2017 report to Cabinet (77/2017), it was agreed that a Programme Board would be established to support the initial stages of the two projects. It was that Programme Board that approved the Governance arrangements for subsequent formation of the St George's and Hub Project Board including their membership.

The St George's Project Board first met on 9 May 2017 and the first item on the agenda was a discussion on a potential Memorandum of Understanding. Attendees at that meeting included the Leader Cllr Matthias, Deputy Leader Cllr Hemsley along with Cllr Gale Waller as the Ward representative plus officers from the County Council, the Defence Infrastructure Organisation and One Public Estate.

Further meetings of that project board during June, July and August with similar attendees and at each meeting the Memorandum of Understanding was discussed.

At the 12th September 2017 meeting of the SGB Project Board, the Board approved the final MoU document and agreed that it should be signed. The document having previously been circulated to Board members including a hard copy delivered to Cllr Waller.

Councillor Waller raised a point of order and stated that that the first she was aware of the MoU was August 2017 as the MoU was not on the agenda of the previous meetings she had attended and the version she saw in August was marked "final". Therefore, to state she was involved in any discussion of this document prior to seeing the final version was incorrect.

Subsequently the Memorandum of Understanding was signed by the Leader and Chief Executive on the 18th September 2017.

Moving to the question of costs, I am not certain to which costs Cllr Brown is referring, however, I will provide as much information as I can in this open public meeting.

On 9 July 2019, Councillors will recall that I gave a presentation to members, old and new, on the St George's Barracks Project, which included a breakdown of the costs from various sources. I cannot recall if Cllr Brown attended that particular briefing but for the record, I stated the following

One Public Estate funding paid for the feasibility work and the evolving Masterplan for St George's

Funding was received from Homes England to support the preparation of the HIF business case

Garden Community Funding has and will be used for the design work, governance considerations and the development of dementia friendly community. A further application for Garden Community Funding will be considered by Cabinet at the up-coming meeting on November 17th November.

Also at the meeting in April 2017 Cabinet also approved £100,000 of funding to support St George's barracks and Hub projects. To my knowledge at the end of the 2nd Qtr of the current financial year £92k of this money has been spent. The remaining £8k is committed to maintaining the website for the next 2 years.

In response to a supplementary question, whereby Councillor A Brown raised concerns about the overrunning of costs and other potential financial risks. Councillor G Brown explained that there was a General Distribution Agreement which was to be signed by all three parties and an Allocation Agreements and these would be brought back to a Cabinet and Council meeting in future.

Question from Councillor Cross to the Leader

Would the Leader please give a statement and read out his reply to Dr C H Sworn's letter dated 10th July 2020 and especially with reference to the final paragraph that reads:

"I contend that by restricting Rutland residents to making their representation on the web, you are thereby contravening the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, I trust that you will amend your proposals so as to allow residents on planning matters to Rutland County Council by whatever means they wish. Kindly acknowledge this letter, giving me case number and, in due course, I look forward to hearing your considered response".

Response from the Leader to Councillor Cross;

You will note that the Officer response to comments made on the consultation with regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights Article 19 states that: "The consultation was undertaken fairly and appropriately. The Council does not believe that there has been a breach of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights Article 19. The Council has undertaken a consultation and it is our view that this consultation is lawful". The Council takes its responsibilities regarding human rights very seriously and has undertaken this consultation in a thorough and robust manner.

In response to a supplementary question, whereby Councillor Cross raised concerns about the length of time taken to respond to the letter, the Leader further explained that it had been submitted to the Local Plan Team and following a reminder, the response was then drafted and sent.

Question from Councillor Cross to the Leader

Would the leader please explain as to why the PRE-SUBMISSION LOCAL PLAN REGULATION 19 REPRESENTATION RESPONSE FORM has been devised to be so complex and far too difficult for so many of our Rutland residents to complete without help from a professional.

Response from the Leader to Councillor Cross;

As this is a statutory consultation, the response form is based on the Planning Inspectorate model representation form for local plans which is available for use by local planning authorities at publication (Regulation 19) stage. It can be downloaded from: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-plansfollows>. This has enabled over 400 representations to be made on this consultation, most without the need for professional support. The Planning Policy team has been available throughout the consultation to answer any queries and to provide clarification from any citizens wishing to access the consultation or respond to this.

In response to a supplementary question, whereby Councillor Cross questioned why two rooms had not been used for viewing of the consultation document, the Leader stated that this had not been actioned due to a very low number of people requesting to see the document at Catmose.

8 REFERRAL OF COMMITTEE DECISIONS TO THE COUNCIL

There were none.

9 CALL-IN OF DECISIONS FROM CABINET MEETINGS DURING THE PERIOD FROM 12TH OCTOBER TO 9TH NOVEMBER 2020

There had been no call-ins of decisions.

10 REPORTS FROM THE CABINET

There were no reports from Cabinet.

11 REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL

There were no reports from Committees of the Council.

12 REPORTS FROM SCRUTINY COMMISSION / SCRUTINY PANELS

There were no reports from the Scrutiny Commission or Scrutiny Committees

13 JOINT ARRANGEMENTS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

Councillor Harvey explained that she and Councillor Waller had attended the joint Leicestershire, Leicester City and Rutland Health Scrutiny regarding the re-configuration of services – information was available on the RCC website.

Councillor A Brown attended the Larkfleet Conference and asked about the sustainability of garden villages.

Councillor Bool would be attending meetings of the Fire Authority in November and December 2020 and a briefing would be sent round once he had attended.

Councillor Hemsley mentioned that he had attended two Unitary Council network meetings on 14th and 28th of October focused on the Planning White paper and funding issues and attended Ministerial Briefings on 15th, 1st November, 3rd November and the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership on 6th November. This was partly around recovery and the pressures being faced by sectors of our businesses amongst other things. He reported that he had undertaken radio and television interviews around the second lockdown and the community.

The Chairman noted that he had recently attended the Rural Community Council and reported that the staff had agreed to take a percentage cut to their wage in an effort not to apply or furlough. He explained that there was a need for improvements in suicide awareness, which in the current climate should be something at the forefront of everyone's minds. Lastly, he noted that there were various local schemes where a small amount money is allocated annually to each elected member to donate to local institution of their choice; he requested that consideration be given to this for the next civic year as a means to recognise what is being done in the local area.

14 NOTICES OF MOTION

No motions were received.

15 PLACES DIRECTORATE - SENIOR MANAGEMENT

Councillor G Brown, as the Chair of the Appointment Committee interviewing for the role, elaborated on the report. It was noted that Ms Sharpe had been in post as Deputy Director had been to acting up since the previous Director left the role and was therefore, appointed as the Director on an interim basis. It was noted that following her interview on the 6th October 2020, the Chief Officer Appointment Committee had unanimously agreed to the appointment for ratification at Council.

The further recommendation was to delete the post of Deputy Director in the area following a review of the senior structure and funding from the deletion of the post would allow for any gaps to be filled in the service area.

In response to a question raised by Councillor Cross, Cllr G Brown stated that the Council had held a number of appointment panels for the role and a large number of people had been interviewed over the past 18 months and she had been considered to be the best candidate.

Upon a recorded vote there voted in favour:

Councillors Ainsley, Baines, Begy, Blanksby, Bool, A Brown, G Brown, Coleman, Cross, Dale, Fox, Harvey, Hemsley, Jones, Lowe, MacCartney, Oxley, Payne, Powell, Razzell, Stephenson, Waller, Walters, Webb, Wilby and Woodley.

No member voted against and no member abstained. The motion was carried;

RESOLVED:

1. That the recommendation of the Chief Officer Appointments Committee to appoint Mrs Penny Sharp (currently Acting Strategic Director Places) to the permanent position of Strategic Director Places be approved.

Upon a recorded vote there voted in favour:

Councillors Ainsley, Baines, Begy, Blanksby, Bool, A Brown, G Brown, Coleman, Cross, Dale, Fox, Harvey, Hemsley, Jones, Lowe, MacCartney, Oxley, Payne, Powell, Razzell, Stephenson, Waller, Walters, Webb, Wilby and Woodley.

No member voted against and no member abstained. The motion was carried;

RESOLVED:

2. That the deletion of the post of Deputy Director of Places be approved.

16 APPOINTMENT TO RUTLAND HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD, OUTSIDE BODIES AND RATIFICATION OF CHAIR OF SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Councillor Hemsley, as Leader of the Council, elaborated on the report and explained that at Annual Council various approvals were made to outside body and proposed that Councillor Ainsley be appointed as a trustee for Victoria Halls.

The appointment of the Chair of Scrutiny Commission was deferred at Annual Council to allow the Chairs of the Scrutiny Committees to discuss and propose a Chair of the Scrutiny Commission, Councillor Ainsley.

The third appointment was to the Health and Wellbeing Board which was noted as a statutory committee of the Local Authority. The Constitution states that we appoint two elected representatives and one of those will be the Portfolio Holder for Health and one to be nominated from the remaining councillors, Councillor Hemsley proposed Councillor Harvey as Chair of the relevant Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Woodley seconded the proposal.

Councillor Powell asked for clarification on the outside bodies and requested that reports include information with regards to previous appointments and the rationale for the proposed appointment.

Councillor Cross left the meeting.

Upon a recorded vote there voted in favour:

Councillors Ainsley, Baines, Begy, Blanksby, Bool, A Brown, G Brown, Coleman, Dale, Fox, Harvey, Hemsley, Jones, Lowe, MacCartney, Oxley, Payne, Powell, Razzell, Stephenson, Waller, Walters, Webb, Wilby and Woodley.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Harvey be appointed to the Rutland Health and Wellbeing Board.

Upon a recorded vote there voted in favour:

Councillors Ainsley, Baines, Begy, Blanksby, Bool, A Brown, G Brown, Coleman, Dale, Fox, Harvey, Hemsley, Jones, Lowe, MacCartney, Oxley, Payne, Powell, Razzell, Stephenson, Waller, Walters, Webb, Wilby and Woodley.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Ainsley be appointed to the position of Trustee of Victoria Hall Board as a representative on the Councils outside body.

Upon a recorded vote there voted in favour:

Councillors Ainsley, Baines, Begy, Blanksby, Bool, A Brown, G Brown, Coleman, Dale, Fox, Harvey, Hemsley, Jones, Lowe, MacCartney, Oxley, Payne, Powell, Razzell, Stephenson, Waller, Walters, Webb, Wilby and Woodley.

RESOLVED:

That the Chairman of the Scrutiny Commission be Councillor Ainsley.

17 POLITICAL BALANCE AND ALLOCATION OF SEATS TO POLITICAL GROUPS

Councillor Cross returned to the meeting.

Councillor Hemsley elaborated on the report and explained that there had been discussions with the Group Leaders to provide a solution that all were in agreement with. He further noted that there was one seat on the Conduct Committee held by Councillor Stephenson, which would be for Liberal Democrats and this would be taken by Councillor Waller. Councillor Razzell would be appointed to the Children and Young Peoples Scrutiny Committee following the removal of Councillor Coleman to that position.

Councillor Harvey seconded the report.

Councillor Oxley notified Council that Councillor Powell would go on to the Employment and Appeals Committee.

Upon a recorded vote there voted in favour:

Councillors Ainsley, Baines, Begy, Blanksby, Bool, A Brown, G Brown, Coleman, Fox, Harvey, Hemsley, Jones, Lowe, MacCartney, Oxley, Payne, Powell, Razzell, Stephenson, Waller, Walters, Webb, Wilby and Woodley.

There voted against the recommendation:
Councillor Dale.

RESOLVED:

1. That the changes to the make-up of the political groupings of the Council be noted.
2. That Council notes the allocation of seat(s) on relevant committee(s) appointed by Council to political groups

18 RUTLAND COUNTY COUNCIL EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY STATEMENT

Councillor Hemsley proposed the report which sought Council's agreement to approve the updated Equality, Diversity and Inclusion statement and the recommendation that it forms part of the Council's Policy Framework, and endorse essential Unconscious Bias training for all Rutland County Council members and employees as a key enabler in creating an anti-discriminatory environment.

Councillor Ainsley seconded the report.

Councillor Waller spoke in favour of the report and commended the celebration of diversity and welcomed the training but questioned whether it was sufficient and accessible for all.

Councillor Oxley as the Independent Group Leader supported the motion.

Members discussed the report and there were a number of personal experiences and instances of unconscious bias given by Members. Questions were raised about the effectivity of the online training.

Upon a recorded vote there voted in favour:

Councillors Ainsley, Baines, Begy, Blanksby, Bool, A Brown, G Brown, Coleman, Dale, Fox, Harvey, Hemsley, Jones, Lowe, MacCartney, Oxley, Payne, Powell, Razzell, Stephenson, Waller, Walters, Webb, Wilby and Woodley.

There voted against: Councillor Cross.

RESOLVED:

Council approved the updated Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Statement

Council approved the recommendation that the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Statement forms part of the Council's Policy Framework

Council endorsed the recommendation that annual Unconscious Bias training becomes mandatory for all staff and members.

19 UPDATE ON WASTE CONTRACT EXTENSION NEGOTIATIONS AND PROPOSED GREEN WASTE COLLECTIONS CHARGING FOR 21/22

The Chairman explained that the appendix to the report was exempt but noted that as a Council there was a need to be as open and transparent as possible and urged Councillors to have as much of the debate in public which included a discussion on the proposed charge. He stated that he was hopeful that Council could discuss the proposed recommendations within the report without making specific reference to the information in the appendix.

It was noted that as the contract covered two Cabinet Member portfolio's, the report would be proposed by Councillor G Brown and seconded by Councillor Stephenson, both of whom had responsibility for.

Councillor G Brown explained he had worked with the Head of Service on this matter and had some historical knowledge of the details. In May 2020 a number of contracts were extended under emergency powers following Covid. The process for getting the contract in place and officer were not fully aware of the financial impacts of the extensions. In 2018 Council took the decision to charge for green waste and it was set at thirty- five pounds per bin to cover the cost of collection. For three years there has been no increase in charges and now the costs have been more accurately assessed it has been considered necessary to increase charges.

It was noted that the responses to the consultation on Waste strategy had been very low in part due to the pandemic and therefore it has been proposed that an additional fifty thousand pounds be given for residual waste to ensure that waste was reduced and recycled where and when possible. Extensive negotiations had taken place with the current contractor and it was noted that the Council would only be recovering costs and not making profit and remained very much below costs compared to local

neighbouring Councils.

Members congratulated the work of officers for their hard work on the report and for the extensive amount of information given. It was considered a necessity for the Council to cover their costs. Some concern was raised that contracts were not being renewed and updated in a timely and effective manner. However, on the contrary some Members were pleased that this was being considered prior to the Environment Bill being passed which had the potential to cause the Council to be tied into an extension. Cabinet was asked that when the Waste Strategy Review was being undertaken that members of the public be consulted to feed into the process.

In response to questions asked, Councillor Stephenson explained that Civil Amenity sites were part of waste management and would be part of the review. The revenue for green bin waste off-sets the costs and no additional revenue could be gained as it was a non-statutory service. It was confirmed that residents would be consulted as part of the review and that it would also be presented to Scrutiny as it was an issue that affected every resident. It was anticipated that the waste strategy would be holistic in nature and it was hoped Members would be supportive in achieving this.

Upon a recorded vote there voted in favour:

Councillors Ainsley, Baines, Begy, Blanksby, Bool, A Brown, G Brown, Coleman, Dale, Fox, Harvey, Hemsley, Jones, Lowe, MacCartney, Oxley, Payne, Powell, Razzell, Stephenson, Waller, Walters, Webb, Wilby and Woodley.

There abstained Councillor Cross.

RESOLVED:

1. That the current position in respect of individual waste contract negotiations be noted
2. That in principle the contract extensions outlined in Appendix A be approved
3. That a thorough review of the Council's Waste Strategy and associated Options Appraisal work undertaken prior to any formal retendering of the Waste contracts commencing including creating a new budget of £50k to complete the works required as per para 6.3 – 6.5 be approved
4. That an annual charge per bin for Green Waste kerbside collections at £40 per annum for the financial year 2021/22 be approved
5. That a discount of 25% of the subscription charge for eligible residents on local council tax support be approved.

20 ANY URGENT BUSINESS

Councillor Baines thanked Councillor Begy for stepping at the beginning of the meeting. He gave thanks to Councillor Bool and stated that he had conducted himself whilst Chairman of the Council with dignity, courteously and integrity and thanked him for everything he had done during his time in office.

Councillor Baines also gave thanks to the Civic Officer- Kate Haworth and to Councillor Razzell for their hard work organising the Remembrance Service and commented that he very moving and a poignant occasion.

21 QUESTIONS & ANSWERS - MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

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The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.05pm

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NB If a person is not in attendance then their question will not be put unless they have nominated a representative.

Question 1) from Mike Hodgson

The climate emergency is the most urgent and important issue faced by citizens in this country and their representatives.

I am aware that a Climate Action Motion has already been passed by full council, and am concerned about the apparent lack of progress in putting things in place to progress this. I would like a response to the following questions in particular.

Could you please confirm which Cabinet member has been appointed to take responsibility for the delivery of zero carbon activity in Rutland?

Also, the motion committed to creating a Climate Change Partnership group, involving councillors, residents, young citizens, climate science and solutions experts, businesses and other relevant parties. Has this group been created, and- if so- could you please inform me of its membership? If not, could you please identify a date by which it will be created and how people can become involved?

Answer:

Thank you for this question: it summarises a watershed moment in our time: a time whereby the actions of humans over the last 2 centuries have created extensive damage to the world in which we live, placing it in great jeopardy for future generations. To remind us of this, even in the midst of a pandemic, is crucial.

The Cabinet member responsible for Zero Carbon activity is me as the portfolio holder for Environmental Services. As you are aware, RCC passed a motion to address climate change with the aim of zero carbon emissions by 2050. Part of achieving that was to ensure that a 'One County' approach was taken by involving all the groups you mention in your question. At this point this group was established but unable to meet or progress due to the pandemic and simply not having sufficient resources to do so both within RCC and also the partner organisations. This is not to say that work on climate change has not been happening: all departments are aware and sensitive to ensuring that any work considers the impact on the climate and whether or not a different approach can be taken to mitigate against this.

You are absolutely right however, silo working will not achieve what we all want: zero carbon emissions by 2050. This can only be achieved with a holistic approach: an action plan that encompasses us all; forming the partnership is the first step on this journey. With that in mind, notwithstanding how this pandemic progresses, the action group will have had its first meeting by April 2021.

Question 2 from Bridget Hodgson

As a resident of Rutland I would like the following questions to be asked.

In 2017 Edie a sustainability leaders forum, published a report which shows that Rutland 's carbon emissions per head are the highest in the country. Can the council account for this high level and what actions have been put in place since 2017 to reduce carbon emissions?

Currently 300/404 or 74% of District, County, Unitary and Metropolitan councils in Great Britain have declared a Climate Emergency. It is disappointing that Rutland has not yet done so, placing it in a diminishing minority of councils.

Given the urgency of this issue, when is Rutland County Council going to declare a Climate Emergency, to include:

- the words Climate Emergency
- a working group to report within a short timescale on immediate and longer term actions to be taken
- a plan to engage with a cross section of the community?

Answer:

Again, thank you for this question. It drills into the detail of the first question and further highlights the challenges we face as a modern society.

You mention the data from 2017, I would also like to note that since 2005 Rutland, per capita has dropped from 42.3 kT CO₂ to 25.0; demonstrating that we are moving in the right direction; the scene has been set for significant progress to be made: we can and we will.

It is also pertinent to note that a significant amount of our carbon emissions come from industrial activity most notably Hanson Cement. If these emissions are removed, using subset data, the emissions for 2005 were 14.3 kT of CO₂ per capita reducing to 8.9 per kTCO₂ / per capita by 2017, which is much nearer the national average. To reassure you on the subject of carbon emissions from Hanson Cement: this business has set very aggressive targets to reduce their emissions including the use of energy produced from solar panels and using waste material, some of it from Rutland to produce the heat required in cement production.

Clearly we do not wish to ignore our per capita domestic carbon emission rates but it must be noted that we are the most sparsely populated county in the country; this comes at a cost, not just in terms of the fiscal cost of living but in terms of carbon emissions; this is not to say that we should not drive reduction of emissions, rather that we acknowledge the greater intensity of challenges we face. We will simply need to think bigger and better.

So since 2017 the actions that have been put in place: an increasing number of our reports contain a consideration of environmental impact, our draft Local Plan offers vision for an expectation to protect and enhance our natural environment, our Growth and Infrastructure Scrutiny committee is completing its work on Bio Diversity, some initial engagement has taken place with local schools and the Youth Council, we are trialling an electric car in our pool of cars used for essential work by our staff; our car parks have electric charge points, our contractor delivers repairs to our highways network that are using new technologies to reduce carbon emission, for example by using products that require a lower temperature to be effective, our property services team are collecting baseline data across our property portfolio with the view of using 100% clean energy as soon as is practicable, the environmental impact assessment for the 4th Local Transport Plan is just about to go online, and we continue to work on Home Energy Conservation, to give a small snap shot of meaningful and carbon emission reducing activity.

Clearly, as alluded to in my answer to the first question, we need to join up and develop all of this work. This is not just an authority problem but one which each and every one of us must take responsibility for hence the commitment for the Climate Change Partnership group to meet and develop a cohesive action plan as outlined in the Climate Change motion.

I note that those authorities that have passed motions declaring a state of emergency site drawing up an action plan as the first crucial task; our Climate Change motion offered the

skeleton for this: actions are preferred to words. This work has been delayed by the pandemic; not in the sense of climate change being left fallow by individual departments as mentioned with examples of actions taken since 2017, but rather in the sense of joined up, holistic action. That is our next stage as outlined in my previous answer.

I thank you sincerely for your question and I look forward to having the opportunity to work with you and other likeminded residents over the coming months to deliver on our commitment to zero carbon emissions by 2050.

Question 3 from Ms Jennifer Blockley

1) It is noted that the County Council appointed a young white male for the position of PM for the feasibility study. Could council members please comment on why the post was not advertised and clarify how a female candidate or a candidate of ethnic minority might have applied?

2) Could the Council members please clarify how the £50,000 of taxpayer's money will be allocated?

Answer:

Thank you for your question Ms Blockley.

I do note that you have also provided to all Councillors a copy of your complaint and the reply that the Council has provided. You have also said that you intend to take this further. Both you and Councillors will be aware that this process includes an independent view from the Local Government Ombudsman and so I will not comment further until that process has concluded.

Question 4 from Ms Nurse (she has nominated Ms Jennifer Blockley to ask her question)

Having allocated £50,000 of tax payer's money to a feasibility study to look into the viability of the setting up of a new radio station, how can the County Council justify this when an article in the Rutland Times states that a former presenter Jennifer Lee has been working on a project to create a new station for Rutland and Stamford since May without any county council funding?

Answer:

The County Council is interested in working with everyone who wants to see a Radio station that provides truly local information for the County and I know that Ms Blockley have been invited to present your proposed business case to the indepen board when established. The project that was started by the last Chief Executive is intended to ensure that such a Station can be re-created and this will hopefully involve all who want to see this happen.

Question 5 from Ms Sylvia Matthews (she has nominated Ms Jennifer Blockley to ask her question)

If the radio station feasibility study finds that it will go ahead, when and where will the post of station manager be advertised.

Answer:

Please pass on my thanks to Ms Matthews for the question

That would be a decision for whatever organisation is formed to manage the platform. This will be independent of the Council.