



Rutland County Council

Catmose Oakham Rutland LE15 6HP.

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Minutes of the **TWO HUNDRED AND TWENTY FIFTH MEETING OF THE COUNCIL** held in the Zoom - <https://zoom.us/j/99285205131> on Monday, 22nd February, 2021 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT:

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| 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 | Ms J Burrows |
| Mrs J Fox | Miss M Jones |
| Mr A Lowe | Ms A MacCartney |
| Mr M Oxley | Mrs K Payne |
| Mrs R Powell | Mr I Razzell |
| Mrs S Webb | Mr N Woodley |

APOLOGIES: Mr W Cross Mrs S Harvey

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Cross and Harvey.

2 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman noted that these had been circulated prior to the meeting.

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

Councillor Hemsley, as Leader of the Council, announced that Cllr G Brown would be stepping down from his current position on Cabinet from the 23rd March 2021. The Leader thanked Councillor G Brown for his hard work as both Cabinet Member and as Deputy Leader of the Council.

Councillor Hemsley explained he would be holding the portfolio for Planning and that from 24th February 2021, Cllr Payne would be joining Cabinet. From the 1st March 2021, Councillor Stephenson would become Deputy Leader of the Council.

The Interim Chief Executive announced that the Government had issued their four step plan which would include the re-opening of schools in March 2021. He further noted that had been increased numbers of Covid in Rutland, the majority of which was down to additional testing in Stocken prison. Community transmission of Covid had decreased in the rest of the population of Rutland.

It was announced that on the 22nd February 2021, the asymptomatic testing site had been launched, which would allow people who need to leave home for work purposes to be tested if they are unable to access testing at work. Staff were thanked for their participation in the planning and delivery of the site.

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Baines declared a pecuniary interest in item 7 (Fees and Charges Report) in relation to charges for A-board licences. He explained that when the item was reached he would withdraw from the meeting and the deputy Chairman, Councillor Begy, would Chair the meeting for the duration of the debate and vote of this item.

Councillor Stephenson declared a pecuniary interest in item 7 (Fees and Charges Report) in relation to charges for A-board licences.

Councillor Oxley declared a pecuniary interest in item 7 (Fees and Charges Report) in relation to Burial Charges.

5 PETITIONS, DEPUTATIONS AND QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were none.

6 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

There were none.

7 REPORT FROM THE CABINET

Fees and Charges

At this juncture of the meeting, the Chairman, having declared a pecuniary interest, withdrew from the meeting.

Councillor Begy took the Chair.

Councillors Stephenson and Oxley also withdrew from the meeting having declared pecuniary interests.

Members of the Council considered report no: 05/2021 – Fees and Charges, that had been recommended by Cabinet. Councillor G Brown, as the relevant Cabinet Member, proposed the report and thanked the Chief Finance Officer and Finance Team for their hard work. It was noted that no changes had been made since the items were drafted and debated at the Scrutiny Committees on the 27th and 28th of January 2021 and no recommendations had been from those Committees.

Councillor Razzell seconded the report.

There voted in favour:

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

There who abstained:
Councillor MacCartney

The vote being 21 in favour and 1 abstention, the motion was carried.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the level of fees and charges for 2021/22 as set out in Appendices 1-4 of the report be approved.
- b) That it be noted that taxi and private hire vehicle licenses fees would be subject to change based on the outcome of forthcoming consultation through a public notice procedure and be brought back for approval following that consultation.
- c) That it be noted that weekly Residential Home Care rates were subject to a separate report.

Councillors Baines, Stephenson and Oxley re-joined the meeting with Councillor Baines resuming the Chair.

The Chairman explained that the next two items would be voted for en bloc.

Treasury Management Strategy & Capital Investment Strategy and Revenue and Capital Budget 2021/22.

Members of the Council considered report no: 161/2020 – Treasury Management Strategy and Capital Investment Strategy and report no: 34/2021 – Revenue and Capital Budget 2021/22.

Councillor G Brown proposed the reports and noted that the Treasury Management Strategy and Capital Investment Strategy had not changed since Scrutiny had considered and debated the reports.

In relation to the budget, it was noted that there was a lot of uncertainty with regards to Local Government finance and many Councils had had to use their reserves to bridge funding gaps. Councillor G Brown elaborated on the consultation responses and noted that 179 members of the public had responded, a significant increase in previous years. It was explained that there had been engagement with other small authorities, in similar financial positions in order to engage their MPs to lobby for a fairer settlement from Government.

Councillor Woodley seconded the report.

There voted in favour:

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

There who abstained:
Councillor Blanksby

The vote being 24 in favour and 1 abstention, the motion was carried

RESOLVED:

161/2020 – Treasury Management Strategy and Capital Investment Strategy

- a) That the Treasury Management Strategy in Appendix 1 of the report including the Investment Strategy, Borrowing strategy, Minimum Revenue Provision statement and Capital Expenditure Prudential indicators be approved.
- b) That the Capital Investment Strategy which is unchanged from that approved last year in Report 05/2020 be approved

34/2021 – Revenue and Capital Budget 2021/22

1. That the Revenue Budget of £42.6m for 2020/21 detailed in Section 3 of the report be approved
2. That that the Revenue Budget includes a £2.4m use of Reserves assuming a 3% Council tax rise (in the event that the Council approves a different level of Council tax, the use of Reserves will vary accordingly) be noted
3. That the capital programme as detailed in Section 6 of the report be approved
4. That the creation of a new Earmarked Reserve for Ash Dieback (£500k) as per para 3.5.9 of the report be approved
5. That the minimum reserve level be increased from £2m to £3m to reflect the changing risk profile be approved
6. That the Medium Term financial outlook and commits to taking action in 21/22 to address the deficit position be noted
7. That additional revenue or capital expenditure may be incurred in 2021/22 funded through 2020/21 budget under spends to be carried forward via earmarked reserves be noted. The use of reserves for budget carry forwards is not currently shown in the budget but will have no impact on the General Fund
8. That a deficit of c£186k on the Collection Fund as at 31 March 2021 (Section 4.2 of the report) of which £160k is the Rutland share be approved
9. That the responses to consultation (section 3) of the report be noted
10. That the updates since the draft budget was approved (section 2.2) of the report be noted
11. That authority be delegated to the s151 Officer to make any necessary changes to the budget arising from the Council tax decision and/or any additional funding received

8 COUNCIL TAX 2021/22

Councillor G Brown proposed report no 37/2021 – Council Tax 2021/22 which enabled the Council to calculate and set the level of Council Tax for 2021/22 in accordance with legislative requirements. He explained that Cabinet fully supported the proposed increase of 2.99% and commented that there were a number of reasons why they had not agreed with the advice from the Chief Finance Officer to increase Council Tax by 4.99%. An increase of 4.99% would significantly impact on residents already affected by the pandemic; to increase it by 4.99% would unduly disadvantage residents with increased financial uncertainty and remove money from the economy at a time when the focus should be rebuilding and recovering post-pandemic.

Councillor Hemsley seconded the report.

Councillor Waller proposed an amendment to the report to:

‘Approve a council tax increase of 3.99% and amend Appendix A to reflect this’.

Councillor Waller stated that like many other Councils, Rutland County Council were beginning to see the long term effect of Government handing down more responsibilities to local authorities whilst reducing funding. She commented that the Government was allowing Councils to increase Council tax by 5% and therefore agreed with the Chief Finance Officer’s recommendation of increasing Council Tax by more than 2.99%.

Councillor Burrows seconded the amendment.

The Chief Finance Officer circulated an amended appendix outlining the figures relating to the proposed increase in Council Tax of 3.99%.

The Chair called for a brief adjournment of the meeting, to allow members sufficient time to read the amended appendix circulated.

Members debated the amendment.

There voted for the amendment:

Councillors Burrows, Jones, MacCartney, Oxley, Powell and Waller.

There voted against the amendment:

Councillors Ainsley, Baines, Begy, Bool, G Brown, Coleman, Dale, Fox, Hemsley, Lowe, Payne, Razzell, Stephenson, Walters, Wilby and Woodley.

There abstained:

Councillors Blanksby, A Brown and Webb.

With 6 voting in favour of the amendment, 16 against and 3 abstaining, the amendment to the motion fell.

There being no additional amendments proposed, Council debated the substantive motion.

Upon a vote on the substantive motion;

There voted in favour:

Councillors Ainsley, Baines, Begy, Bool, G Brown, Coleman, Dale, Fox, Hemsley, Lowe, Payne, Razzell, Stephenson, Walters, Wilby and Woodley.

There abstained:

Councillors Blanksby, A Brown, Burrows, Jones, MacCartney, Oxley, Powell, Waller and Web.

There no votes against the motion:

With 16 voting in favour and 9 abstentions, the motion was carried.

RESOLVED:

1. That the formal Council tax resolution shown at Appendix A of the report be approved.
2. That no changes to the Local Council Tax Support Scheme (LCTS) for 2021/22 be noted
3. That no changes to the empty homes discount from 2021/22 be noted
4. That no changes to the long term empty homes premium from 2021/22 be noted.

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The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.46pm

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