



Rutland County Council

Catmose Oakham Rutland LE15 6HP

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Minutes of a **MEETING of the CABINET** held at Council Chamber, Catmose, Oakham, Rutland, LE15 6HP on Tuesday, 18th October 2022 at 10:00am

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PRESENT: Councillor L Stephenson (Chair) Councillor R Powell (Vice-Chair)
Councillor S Harvey Councillor M Oxley
Councillor K Payne Councillor D Wilby

OFFICERS PRESENT: Mark Andrews Chief Executive
Saverio Della Rocca Strategic Director for Resources
Dawn Godfrey Strategic Director of Children's Services
Penny Sharp Strategic Director for Places
John Morley Strategic Director for Adults and Health
Angela Wakefield Director of Legal & Governance,
(Monitoring Officer)
David Ebbage Governance Officer

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

2 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND/OR HEAD OF THE PAID SERVICE

There were no announcements made.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor K Payne declared a non-pecuniary interest in Report No.165/2022 as being Ward Member, and had therefore been involved in putting the neighbourhood plan together.

4 MINUTES

Consideration was given to the record of decisions made following the meeting of Cabinet on 13 September.

RESOLVED

That the record of decisions made at the meeting of the Cabinet held on 13 September 2022 be **APPROVED**.

5 ITEMS RAISED BY SCRUTINY

No items were received.

6 RUTLAND'S SERVICE CHILDREN'S PROMISE

Report No.169/2022 was introduced by Councillor David Wilby, Portfolio Holder for Education and Children's Services.

The report aimed to provide Cabinet with information about Rutland Service Children's promise which had been developed to promote the achievement and successes of this cohort of children and young people to ensure each one benefited from their education in Rutland.

He informed Members that in June 2022 a 2-day Service Pupil event, which had been funded through an MOD support grant, was held to further raise awareness of the Armed Forces Covenant and, particularly, the potential impact on the life of the child of serving personnel. Three separate focused sessions were held for Rutland County Council and partner services who work with military families, Rutland early education and childcare providers and for senior leaders from Rutland schools.

Members wanted to thank the young people who attended the event on those days with their honesty and openness around their feelings, it was a huge achievement.

It was proposed by Councillor D Wilby that the recommendations of report No. 169/2022 be agreed, this was seconded and upon being put to the vote the motion was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet:

1. **ENDORSED** Rutland's Service Children's Promise so that it can be shared with the education sector and wider services later in autumn term 2022 and influence and enrich the practice of those who work with children of Rutland's armed forces families.

7 REVIEW OF FOSTER CARER ALLOWANCES

Report No.166/2022 was introduced by Councillor David Wilby, Portfolio Holder for Education and Children's Services.

The report informed Cabinet of the review of fostering allowances and to seek approval for a range of measures designed to increase the number of Rutland County Council foster carers.

The review of fostering allowances and support had shown that whilst Rutland pay fostering allowances in line with the Fostering Network recommended levels, we were not keeping pace with neighbouring Local Authorities or independent fostering agencies

There had been no increase in fostering allowances since 2018 against a backdrop of increased living costs and significant rising costs in the provision of external placements.

Members welcomed the report, and we recognised the important work foster carers do. They felt it was vital to keep as many as possible within the border.

Councillor Harvey was pleased to see the increase in carers allowance in line with the full cost of living and the introduction of the professional foster carer scheme.

It was proposed by Councillor D Wilby that the recommendations of report No. 166/2022 be agreed, this was seconded and upon being put to the vote the motion was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet:

1. **APPROVED** the increased fostering allowances for all foster carers in line with cost-of-living increases.
2. **APPROVED** the increased retention bonus for foster carers, and to include staying put carers within the retention bonus scheme
3. **APPROVED** the introduction of an increased placement supplement for children with particularly challenging needs.
4. **APPROVED** the introduction of a professional foster carer payment for those caring for our hardest to place children.
5. **APPROVED** that foster carers could access the Employee Assistance Programme and approved a housing costs contribution of £1000 to Rutland County Council foster carers.
6. **RECOMMENDED** the Fostering Friendly Policy, which would support RCC employees who wish to become foster carers, be submitted to the Employment and Appeals Committee for approval.

8 KETTON AND TINWELL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Report No.165/2022 was introduced by Councillor Rosemary Powell, Portfolio Holder for Planning, Highways and Transport.

The report was to seek Cabinet's authorisation to carry out consultation on the proposed Ketton & Tinwell Neighbourhood Plan, followed by submission of that plan to an independent examiner. Subject to the acceptance of the recommendations of the examiner, hold a local referendum and, subject to the outcome of that referendum, delegate the making of the Neighbourhood Plan to the Strategic Director of Places.

Councillor Powell wanted to congratulate everyone who was involved in pulling this together as it is a huge task for volunteers to carry out in their neighbourhood.

Councillor Payne as Ward Member also wanted to congratulate everyone involved. There had been years of intense work from residents within her ward and she was very happy to see it go to the next stage.

It was proposed by Councillor R Powell that the recommendations of report No. 165/2022 be agreed, this was seconded and upon being put to the vote the motion was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet **AGREED** that:

1. The draft Ketton & Tinwell Neighbourhood Plan was published for public consultation for a minimum of 6 weeks.
2. Following public consultation, the draft plan and representations received were submitted for independent examination.
3. The Strategic Director of Places be authorised to appoint an independent examiner in consultation with the Ketton & Tinwell Neighbourhood Plan Group.
4. That following receipt of the examiner's report that the Strategic Director of Places in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Finance be authorised to publish the County Council's decision notice, update the Ketton & Tinwell Neighbourhood Plan and undertake a referendum.
5. Subject to the outcome of the referendum that the Strategic Director of Places in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Finance be authorised to make the Ketton & Tinwell Neighbourhood Plan part of the Development Plan for Rutland.

9 PERFORMANCE REPORT 2022-2023

Report No.168/2022 was introduced by Councillor Karen Payne, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Governance and Performance, Change and Transformation.

The report provided Cabinet with a report outlining progress year to date against the new Corporate Strategy 2022-2027 which was adopted in July 2022.

Data for the key performance indicators covered the period of 1st April 2022 to 30th August 2022. Of the 137 indicators data was currently available for 126. For the 11 indicators where data was not available this was due to several reasons including data being reported in arrears, no previous data being available to report, the indicator was new and required a baseline to be developed.

Overall performance against targets was positive with 81 (64%) of the 126 indicators on target with a further 10 (7%) within 5% of the target.

Performance was off target for 29% (36) of the indicators, example areas included:

- Finances remained under pressure and the Council's budget was not balanced.

- Housing supply remained below 5 years. This meant the Council would more likely have to approve a planning application on sites the Council would not have chosen, which may have an impact on the community. As a result, the Council were seeing an increase in planning applications for housing in the County.
- A high staff turnover and vacancy rate.
- The website needed to become more accessible.

Members welcomed the format and layout of the report. It was clear, showed enough detail for members of the public and for portfolio holders to be able to focus on key areas.

Councillor Oxley asked a question relating to 4.24 within the appendix and why that particular action was for just Uppingham and Rutland Water. Councillor Harvey responded by saying those two areas came forward to assist with a bid for funding from Changing Places which was successful, and the funding was given.

It was proposed by Councillor K Payne that the recommendations of report No. 168/2022 be agreed, this was seconded and upon being put to the vote the motion was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet:

1. **NOTED** the contents of the first performance report and the progress and challenges in delivering the strategic aims within the new Corporate Strategy 2022-2027.

10 MID-YEAR REVENUE FINANCE REPORT 2022/23

Report No.156/2022 was introduced by Councillor Karen Payne, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Governance and Performance, Change and Transformation.

Councillor Payne provided with an update on the revenue budget position for 2022/23.

The mid-year revenue position was that the Council was forecasting a deficit position of £0.961m compared to a budgeted deficit position of £1.176m, resulting in an underspend of £216k.

She highlighted that although the Council was seeing additional demand in areas such as social care and commissioned transport, the overall financial position (including underspends in other areas) had meant the majority of the additional budget that Officers had provisionally requested in the Financial Outturn report had, to date, not been required. For example, point (iv) in Appendix A showed a demand pressure additional budget draw down of £110k rather than the original request of £820k.

This was the same for additional staffing budget where vacancy levels meant only £186k of the additional request of £835k had been applied.

The Council had also received Adult Social Care Reforms funding of £97k and funding for the Special Educational Needs programme “Delivering Better Value” of £45k which meant that additional budget required in those areas had been reduced.

The Leader wanted to thank the Portfolio Holder for the honest report, it showed the Council where the challenges were and she highlighted to Members that the next few months would be incredibly difficult for Rutland.

It was proposed by Councillor K Payne that the recommendations of report No. 156/2022 be agreed, this was seconded and upon being put to the vote the motion was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet:

1. **NOTED** the revenue forecast at the end of August (para 3.3).
2. **NOTED** the changes to the approved budget as per para 3.2 including budget adjustments for new Ring Fenced grants (Appendix A).
3. **NOTED** that the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) gap for 23/24 was still estimated at £2.8m but further updates would be undertaken prior to budget setting to reflect the issues detailed in 4.1.
4. **APPROVED** the budget timetable for 22/23 as per para 8.3.

11 MID-YEAR CAPITAL PROGRAMME UPDATE

Report No.157/2022 was introduced by Councillor Karen Payne, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Governance and Performance, Change and Transformation.

She asked Cabinet to approve the closure the Ketton Centre (Library and Community Hub) project – The project was originally approved in 2019. The project was for the acquisition of land adjoining Ketton Centre [Library and Community Hub] from the Peterborough Diocese and the initial costs to put the land in a good serviceable condition as a car park. The land was transferred as a nil consideration in 2021/22. The Council had no plans to progress this project as the works would not provide value for money, the future maintenance of the car park would be supported from revenue.

She also informed Members that the approved capital programme now stood at £15.509m.

All capital projects were tracking to budget apart from the exception of £25k overspend on Barleythorpe roundabout. The Highways team would look for possible savings within their capital programme to cover this overspend.

It was proposed by Councillor K Payne that the recommendations of report No. 157/2022 be agreed, this was seconded and upon being put to the vote the motion was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet:

1. **NOTED** the capital 2022/23 forecast as at the end of August (paragraph 3.4).
2. **NOTED** the changes to the 2022/23 capital programme as at the end of August (paragraph 3.2).
3. **NOTED** the 2022/23 unallocated capital funding as at the end of August (Section 4).
4. **NOTED** that a Midlands bid for £935,355 led by Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) for c350 electric vehicle charging points was successful and that LCC as the accountable body would deliver this project working with partner organisations.
5. **REQUESTED** approval to close the Ketton Centre Library and Community Hub project. (paragraph 3.3).

12 FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

Report No.158/2022 was introduced by Councillor Karen Payne, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Governance and Performance, Change and Transformation.

It was highlighted that the Council's projections indicated that it was likely to have a financial gap of around £2.8m in 23/24, but one that grew over the period of the strategy. The growth in the gap reflected the fact that the Council's projected increases in funding could not keep pace with the inflation applied to existing spending plans.

The Council would use non ringfenced reserves to balance the budget prior to 27/28 (if required) but would limit use of such reserves to £2m per annum for a maximum of 4 years.

Councillor Payne highlighted to Members that the savings required, even with the use of reserves, were still significant and were likely to have a big impact on services in the County.

The Council must have a realistic plan to close the financial gap and must take the necessary action to deliver it. The programme as it stands was not sufficient. The Council had now appointed Human Engine as its Transformation partner to help it identify further savings and reshape the way services are delivered.

Members welcomed the report and the measured approach the Council would be taking to make the savings outlined within the report.

It was clarified to Members from the S151 Officer that the Social Care Levy was already built into the Councils budget.

A question was asked about the £2m reserves and if there would be any movement on that figure. Councillor Payne responded saying the report stated a cap of £2m per year, if £2m was not needed then the Council would not go up to that figure. The S151 Officer told Members that given the size of the challenge the Council faced, the

difficult decisions and the work that had been carried out, he supported the use of reserves for £2m for the next few years but warned that factors outside of the Council's control including a reduction in funding may threaten that plan.

It was proposed by Councillor K Payne that the recommendations of report No. 158/2022 be agreed, this was seconded and upon being put to the vote the motion was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet:

1. **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** to approve a financial strategy for closing the financial gap;
2. **NOTED** that the Council would aim to balance the budget (without the use of reserves for recurring expenditure) by 27/28;
3. **NOTED** that the Strategy assumes maximum council tax rises;
4. **NOTED** that the Strategy accepts that the Council's current service offer was not affordable and that all services would have to move in the direction of an 'affordable service offer' over time; and
5. **NOTED** that the Medium-Term Financial Plan was subject to change as more information became available.

13 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was proposed by the Chair that the public and press be excluded from the meeting in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 as the following item of business as was likely to lead to disclosure of information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person. This was seconded and upon being put to the vote the motion was unanimously carried.

RESOLVED

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting.

14 WASTE AND STREETSCENE SERVICES (INCLUDING WASTE COLLECTION AND DISPOSAL) - CONTRACT OPTIONS

Consideration was given to Report No.170/2022 from the Portfolio Holder for Communities, Environment and Climate Change, following consideration it was moved by Councillor M Oxley and seconded that the recommendations be approved. This was seconded and being put to vote the motion was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet:

APPROVED the recommendations of Report No. 170/2022.

15 ANY ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of urgent business.

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The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 11.45am

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