



# Rutland County Council

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Minutes of a meeting of the **SPECIAL PLACES SCRUTINY PANEL** held in the Council Chamber, Catmose, Oakham, at 6.15 pm on Wednesday, 13 January 2016.

**PRESENT:** Mr J Lammie - Chairman  
(in the Chair)  
Mr G Conde  
Mr W Cross  
Mr J Dale  
Mr O Hemsley  
Mr A Mann  
Mr M Oxley

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Mr T Mathias Portfolio Holder for  
Places (Environment,  
Transport and  
Community Safety)  
Miss G Waller

**OFFICERS PRESENT:** Mrs H Briggs Chief Executive  
Mr D Brown Director for Places (Environment,  
Planning and Transport)  
Mr P Phillipson Director for Places (Development and  
Economy)  
Mr S Della Rocca Assistant Director for Finance  
Mr A Merry Finance Manager – Technical  
Miss S Croad Corporate Support Officer

**APOLOGIES:** Mr E Baines  
Mr O Bird  
Mr T C King

## 512 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made in respect of the items on the agenda for this meeting.

## 513 PETITIONS, DEPUTATIONS AND QUESTIONS

No petitions, Deputations or Questions had been received from Members of the public.

## 514 QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS

No questions had been received from members.

## 515 REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET 2016-17 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN

Report No. 19/2016 from the Director for Resources was received.

The Assistant Director for Finance made a short presentation, the purpose of which was to show Members an overview of the Council's current and future financial position.

Councillor Mathias made a short statement to the panel as a member of the Cabinet. The Directors for Places introduced the report with a brief introduction outlining the Places Directorates Savings and Pressures.

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6.20pm Mr W Cross joined the meeting

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During the discussion the following points were noted:

- i. Members asked what the length of time would be to recover the £100,000 spend on the solar panels for Oakham Enterprise Park. Mr Phillipson explained to the panel that this would be likely to take 7.5 – 8 years if the panels are fitted as soon as possible;
- ii. Members raised concerns in regards to the £9.56 million set aside for specific projects/areas. The panel was reassured that any projects relating to these funds were holding pending allocation and that Cabinet or Council would have to approve their usage when plans are submitted. ;
- iii. Rutland County Council (RCC) has one of the highest Council tax charges amongst Unitary Authorities but Mr S Della Rocca explained that this is not because the Council is inefficient or wasteful as its spending per head is low. The Chief Executive pointed out that if the Council had not accepted freeze grant in the past year then its funding position would be worse;
- iv. Members raised their concerns in regards to the pension funds and costs of this to the Authority. Mrs Mogg explained that the Council could not opt out of the Pension Fund. Mr S Della Rocca assured the panel that whilst there were few options available to the Council a meetings will be held with the pension providers to look at what could be done;
- v. Members raised their concerns about cost centre 1537 – Pool Cars and Car Hire and its £100,000 budget. Members asked if the Authority had enquired about electric vehicles. Mr D Brown stated that the Authority had made £250,000 worth of savings since using the new pool car system. The technology for electric vehicles was not practicable at the time of entering into the contract but would be kept under review;
- vi. Members asked what the future held for the Authority in light of the financial projections. Mrs Briggs assured the panel that the Authority were in a better position than others and will continue to plan ahead to balance the budgets and look at other ways of generating income;
- vii. Cost Centre 2615 – Closed Churchyards – Members asked if Parishes or Churches could assist with the maintenance of the closed churchyards. Mr T Mathias explained that we as an Authority have a legal obligation to take over

- responsibility of any closed churchyards but would look at negotiations to reduce costs;
- viii. Members asked if Academies could assist with the costs of Home to School Transport. Mr T Mathias stated that we as an Authority had a statutory obligation to provide transport for children to get to school but this is being looked at in more detail through the transport review;
  - ix. The library provision is constantly being reviewed and will be looked at in more detail through the zero budget review for the Places Directorate. Members suggested that the Oakham library could be re-located within the Museum;
  - x. Members asked if the Authority could look at sharing more services with other Authorities. Mrs Briggs explained that the Council works with various local authorities at present in areas such as Legal, Public Protection and Emergency Planning and that the Council is always looking at further opportunities; and
  - xi. Members raised concerns in regards to cost centre 1531 – Forestry Advice and why the costs were high. Mr D Brown explained that this cost was due to more technical and professional advice being sought that we as an Authority do not have the provisions for.

**AGREED:**

- i. That the panel noted the contents of Report No. 19/2016.

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The Chair declared the meeting closed at 7.20pm

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