



## Rutland County Council

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Minutes of the 247<sup>th</sup> **MEETING of the COUNCIL** held in the Council Chamber, Catmose, Oakham, Rutland, LE15 6HP on Monday, 27th February, 2023 at 7.00 pm

**PRESENT:**

|                              |                                   |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Councillor J Dale (Chairman) | Councillor N Begy (Vice-Chairman) |
| Councillor P Ainsley         | Councillor E Baines               |
| Councillor A Brown           | Councillor G Brown                |
| Councillor P Browne          | Councillor J Burrows              |
| Councillor J Fox             | Councillor O Hemsley              |
| Councillor S Lambert         | Councillor A MacCartney           |
| Councillor M Oxley           | Councillor R Payne                |
| Councillor K Payne           | Councillor R Powell               |
| Councillor L Stephenson      | Councillor A Walters              |
| Councillor G Waller          | Councillor S Webb                 |
| Councillor D Wilby           | Councillor R Wilson               |

**OFFICERS PRESENT:**

|                  |                                  |
|------------------|----------------------------------|
| Mark Andrews     | Chief Executive                  |
| Angela Wakefield | Director of Legal and Governance |
| Tom Delaney      | Governance Manager               |
| Mathew Waik      | Communications Service Manager   |

**ABSENT:**

|                       |                     |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Councillor D Blanksby | Councillor K Bool   |
| Councillor W Cross    | Councillor S Harvey |
| Councillor L Toseland |                     |

### 1 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D Blanksby, K Bool, W Cross, S Harvey and L Toseland.

### 2 **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman had not attended any civic engagements since the last set of announcements but took an opportunity to thank two of the Council's senior officers, Saverio Della Rocca and John Morley, for their dedication and service to the Council as they were due to shortly leave the Council's employment.

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

Councillor L Stephenson, Leader of the Council, thanked Councillor M Oxley for his dedication to the County and its residents during his time on the Cabinet and significant tenure as a Councillor. The Leader confirmed the Cabinet would remain at

5 Members given the approaching elections to the Council, and Councillor Oxley's Portfolio Holder responsibilities had been distributed among the remaining Portfolio Holders as follows:

- Councillor L Stephenson – Culture
- Councillor S Harvey – Leisure
- Councillor R Powell – Environment and Waste, Climate Change, Public Protection and Community Safety

#### **4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors L Stephenson and E Baines declared a personal interest in Item 10 – Report of the Cabinet, specifically with regard to proposals relating to Fees and Charges, as joint owners of an A-Board which would be subject to the fee set by the Council.

#### **5 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting of Council held on 23 January 2023.

It was moved by Councillor L Stephenson and seconded that the minutes of the meeting be approved. Upon being put to the vote, with 19 votes in favour and 2 abstentions, the motion was carried.

#### **RESOLVED**

- 1) That the minutes of the meeting of Council held on 23 January 2023 be **APPROVED**.

#### **6 PETITIONS, DEPUTATIONS AND QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

A deputation was received from David Baker on behalf of Greetham Parish Council, as set out in the agenda supplement. Mr Baker was accompanied by Jane Denyer and David Hodson.

Following the deputation, Members were invited to ask any questions they had of Mr Baker. In response to a question Mr Baker confirmed the Parish Council's view was that the matters raised constituted a statutory nuisance which the County Council was required to address by the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

Councillor R Powell, Portfolio Holder for Planning, Highways and Transport, confirmed in response to the deputation that Council officers were engaged with the Parish Council over the matters raised and that the Council took the matter of health and safety seriously. Councillor Powell confirmed she had asked officers to follow the matter up as a matter of urgency and keep her as Portfolio Holder informed of progress.

#### **7 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**

No questions from members of the Council had been received.

## 8 REFERRAL OF COMMITTEE DECISIONS TO THE COUNCIL

No referrals had been received.

## 9 CALL-IN OF DECISIONS FROM CABINET MEETINGS DURING THE PERIOD FROM 23 JANUARY TO 27 FEBRUARY 2023 (INCLUSIVE)

No call-ins had been received.

## 10 REPORT FROM THE CABINET

Report No. 28/2023 was introduced by Councillor K Payne, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Governance and Performance, Change and Transformation. The report set out recommendations of the Cabinet to Council regarding the Council's budget for 2023/24.

### Treasury Management Strategy and Capital Investment Strategy

It was moved by Councillor K Payne and seconded that the Treasury Management Strategy and Capital Investment Strategy be approved. Upon being put to the vote, with 22 votes in favour, the motion was unanimously carried.

### **RESOLVED**

- 1) **APPROVED** the Treasury Management Strategy in Appendix 1 including the Investment Strategy, Borrowing strategy, Minimum Revenue Provision statement and Capital Expenditure Prudential indicators.
- 2) **APPROVED** the Capital Investment Strategy in Appendix 2

### Fees and Charges

The proposals were introduced by Councillor K Payne, it was requested that consideration be given to how the Council communicated any increases and fees and charges to residents and communicated the rationale for the rises, particularly where the fee was set nationally rather than by the Council. Assurance was also given that the outstanding matter of taxi licenses would be addressed and concluded.

Upon being put to the vote, with 21 votes in favour and 1 abstention the motion was carried.

### **RESOLVED**

- 1) **APPROVED** the level of fees and charges for 23/24, set out in Appendices A, B and C.
- 2) **APPROVED** new fees for:
  - Highways - temporary access vehicle crossing applications and permits on major developments (para 4.3.1)
  - Highways – new developments technical approval process (para 4.3.2)
  - Highways – roadside gullies mapping onto Kaarbon Tech (para 4.3.3)

- Bulky Waste – including stopping free collections and £3 surcharge (para 4.5.2)
  - Recycling and Residual Waste bins for new build properties (para 4.5.5)
  - A new monitoring and management fee for the First Home Scheme (para 4.8.1)
- 3) **NOTED** that taxi and private hire vehicle licenses fees will 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.
- 4) **NOTED** that Appendix D includes fees set nationally (some are still to be confirmed).
- 5) **NOTED** that fees and charges excluded from this report are listed at 2.3 of Report No. 04/2023

### Revenue and Capital Budget 2023/24

The proposals relating to the Council's revenue and capital budget were proposed by Councillors K Payne and seconded.

An amendment was tabled by Councillor N Begy and seconded. The amendment proposed a 1% rise in Council Tax with a 2% precept for Adult Social Care, the details of the amendment were set out in an agenda supplement.

Members in support of the amendment spoke of the need to keep residents' costs as low as possible and cited the detailed indications of where the Council would be able to close the gap in the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan created by a lower rate of Council Tax.

Members opposed to the amendment acknowledged the careful work that had been undertaken to form the proposals in the amendment but expressed concern about the reliance of the assumptions made regarding the Council's medium term finances. It was also felt important by Members to keep the Council's finances on as secure a financial footing as possible given the number of uncertainties ahead.

The amendment was put to a recorded vote and voting was as follows:

There voted in favour:

Councillors P Ainsley, N Begy, G Brown, J Fox, O Hemsley, and A Walters

There voted against:

Councillors E Baines, A Brown, P Browne, J Burrows, J Dale, S Lambert, A MacCartney, M Oxley, K Payne, R Payne, R Powell, L Stephenson, G Waller, S Webb, D Wilby, and R Wilson.

With 6 votes in favour, and 16 against, the amendment was defeated.

Councillor N Begy then tabled a further amendment in relation to the Council's Household Support Fund and Hardship Fund, the details of which had been circulated via an agenda supplement.

Members in support of the amendment cited the need to provide support to all residents in need of extra support in the current economic climate.

The amendment was put to a recorded vote and voting was as follows:

There voted in favour: Councillors E Baines, N Begy, A Brown, G Brown, P Browne, J Burrows, J Dale, O Hemsley, J Fox, S Lambert, A MacCartney, M Oxley, K Payne, R Payne, R Powell, L Stephenson, G Waller, A Walters, S Webb, D Wilby, and R Wilson.

Abstentions: Councillor E Baines

With 21 votes in favour and 1 abstention, the amendment was carried.

## **RESOLVED**

That Council:

- 1) **APPROVED** the allocation of an increased amount of funding from the Household Support Fund to support those not on LCTS and asks the Strategic Director of Resources to amend the Household Support Fund Policy accordingly in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Finance. The Policy will be reviewed prior to any allocation of funds in the second half of the HSF programme, probably September 2023, to ensure that it is meeting the objective of supporting those in need and not on LCTS.
- 2) **APPROVED** an additional £20,000 to be allocated to the RCC Hardship Fund to be ring-fenced for those households in significant need and who are not eligible for Local Council Tax Support, to be managed by the Section 151 Officer under delegated authority (on the recommendation of the Revenues and Benefits Manager) who are struggling to meet Council Tax payments. The maximum support will be capped at £100 per household.
- 3) **APPROVED** that if the Hardship Fund was at risk of being overspent, the Director for Resources may ask for additional funds to support those in hardship in line with the recommendation, which is already part of Cabinet's Budget proposals.
- 4) Council asked that those residents who are the most in need be made aware of the above programmes through the local press, social media, voluntary groups, foodbanks, etc.

Debate returned to the substantive motion as amended. It was put forward that although council tax rises would not be popular, approving the budget before Council would put the Council on a stable financial footing.

The motion, as amended, was put to a recorded vote and voting was as follows:

There voted in favour:

Councillors E Baines, A Brown, P Browne, J Burrows, J Dale, S Lambert, A MacCartney, M Oxley, K Payne, R Payne, R Powell, L Stephenson, G Waller, S Webb, D Wilby, and R Wilson.

There voted against:

Councillors P Ainsley, N Begy, G Brown, J Fox, O Hemsley, and A Walters.

With 16 votes in favour, and 6 against, the motion was carried.

## **RESOLVED**

That Council

- 1) **APPROVED** the General Fund Budget (Net Expenditure) for 2023/24 of £46.549m (section 9)
- 2) **APPROVED** budget reductions at service level (service savings, reversal of National Insurance rise and use of earmarked reserves) of £1.735m (Section 9.3) and corporate budget reductions of £1.889m as per section 9.3
- 3) **APPROVED** budget increases to meet service pressures of £5.401m arising from the inflation, cost of living and demand (Section 9.3) and a pay contingency of £743k
- 4) **APPROVED** the use of £589k of reserves to subsidise the main budget (Section 9) plus £900k set aside from general reserves to fund the Local Plan, Leisure and High Needs deficit (Section 7.1.4)
- 5) **APPROVED** the Council Tax resolution in Appendix 9 including an increase in Council Tax for Rutland County Council of 4.99% (2% for the Adult Social Care precept and 2.99% for main council tax) resulting in a Band D charge of £2,013.04 (Section 8)
- 6) **APPROVED** the award of up to an additional £25 discount on council tax bills for those individuals receiving local council tax support with an outstanding council tax liability to be funded from a Government grant (section 8.2.13).
- 7) **NOTED** the outcome of consultation (section 13)
- 8) **APPROVED** changes to earmarked reserves as per Section 7.1.4
- 9) **APPROVED** additions/deletions to the capital programme as per Section 10
- 10) **NOTED** the position on the Dedicated Schools Grant budget (Section 12)
- 11) **NOTED** that additional revenue or capital expenditure may be incurred in 2023/24 funded through 2022/23 budget under spends to be carried forward via earmarked reserves. The use of reserves for budget carry forwards is not currently shown in the budget but will have no impact on the General Fund
- 12) **APPROVED** the estimated surplus of £38k on the Collection Fund as at 31 March 2023 (Section 8.3) of which £33k is the Rutland share.
- 13) **NOTED** that the Director for Resources may ask for additional funds to support those in hardship as requested by Cabinet if required.

- 14) **APPROVED** the allocation of an increased amount of funding from the Household Support Fund to support those not on LCTS and asks the Strategic Director of Resources to amend the Household Support Fund Policy accordingly in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Finance. The Policy will be reviewed prior to any allocation of funds in the second half of the HSF programme, probably September 2023, to ensure that it is meeting the objective of supporting those in need and not on LCTS.
- 15) **APPROVED** an additional £20,000 to be allocated to the RCC Hardship Fund to be ring-fenced for those households in significant need and who are not eligible for Local Council Tax Support, to be managed by the Section 151 Officer under delegated authority (on the recommendation of the Revenues and Benefits Manager) who are struggling to meet Council Tax payments. The maximum support will be capped at £100 per household.
- 16) **APPROVED** that if the Hardship Fund was at risk of being overspent, the Director for Resources may ask for additional funds to support those in hardship in line with the existing recommendation 13.
- 17) Council asked that those residents who are the most in need be made aware of the above programmes through the local press, social media, voluntary groups, foodbanks, etc.

#### **11 NOTICES OF MOTION**

No notices of motion had been received.

#### **12 ANY URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of urgent business for consideration.

#### **13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

This was noted to be on 27 March 2023.

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**The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.22 pm.**

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