



# Rutland County Council

Catmose Oakham Rutland LE15 6HP

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Minutes of the **MEETING of the STRATEGIC OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held in the Council Chamber, Catmose, Oakham, Rutland LE15 6HP on Thursday, 26th January, 2023 at 7.00 pm

**PRESENT**

Councillor G Waller (Chair)  
Councillor P Ainsley  
Councillor E Baines  
Councillor N Begy (Vice Chair)  
Councillor K Bool  
Councillor A Brown  
Councillor S Lambert  
Councillor R Wilson

**APOLOGIES**

Councillor L Toseland  
Peter French

Diocesan Deputy Director of  
Education, Dioceses of Peterborough

**PORTFOLIO  
HOLDERS  
PRESENT**

Councillor L Stephenson  
Councillor R Powell  
Councillor S Harvey  
Councillor M Oxley  
Councillor K Payne  
Councillor D Wilby

Leader and Portfolio Holder for Policy,  
Strategy, Partnerships and Economy  
Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for  
Planning, Highways and Transport  
Portfolio Holder for Health, Wellbeing  
and Adult Care  
Portfolio Holder for Communities,  
Environment and Climate Change  
Portfolio Holder for Finance,  
Governance and Performance,  
Change and Transformation  
Portfolio Holder for Education and  
Children's Services

**OFFICERS  
PRESENT**

Mark Andrews  
Saverio Della Rocca  
Dawn Godfrey  
John Morley  
Penny Sharp  
Angela Wakefield  
Jane Narey (Clerk)

Chief Executive  
Strategic Director Resources S151  
Officer  
Strategic Director of Children and  
Families  
Strategic Director of Adults and Health  
Strategic Director of Places  
Director of Legal and Governance  
Scrutiny Officer

**ATTENDED**

Councillor W Cross  
Councillor J Fox

## **1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES RECEIVED**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were noted from Councillor Leah Toseland and Peter French.

## **2 RECORD OF MEETING**

The minutes of the meetings held on the 8<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> December were approved as an accurate record.

## **3 ACTIONS ARISING**

There were no actions from the meeting held on the 13<sup>th</sup> December 2022. The actions from the meeting held on the 8<sup>th</sup> December 2022 were noted as follows:

### Action 1

*Councillor Harvey to send a full breakdown of the public health housing budget (totalling £104,800) to Councillor Ainsley.*

Councillor Waller confirmed that the action had been completed and requested that an update be given at the next meeting on the 9<sup>th</sup> February 2023.

### Action 2

*The Clerk to arrange for an update on the Visions Children's Centre to be presented at a future meeting of the scrutiny committee as per Councillor Begy's request.*

The Clerk reported that she had contacted Councillor Begy for clarification as to which areas of the children's centre he would like the committee to scrutinise but had not received a response. Councillor Begy confirmed that he would contact the Clerk after the meeting.

### Action 3

*Performance data regarding the smoking cessation service to be sent to members.*

Councillor Waller confirmed that the action had been completed and requested that an update be given at the next meeting on the 9<sup>th</sup> February 2023.

### Action 4

*A full financial breakdown of the funding, expenditure, income, net contribution and outcomes regarding the Active Rutland Hub to be sent to members.*

Councillor Payne confirmed that the action had been completed.

### Action 5

*The Monitoring Officer and the Clerk to seek approval from the Chief Executive for the proposal that the scrutiny committee meeting on the 26th January 2023 should begin at the earlier time of 6pm.*

Councillor Waller informed attendees that, as Chair, she had declined the request for the meeting to start at 6 p.m. as there were members of the committee who worked full-time so would have been unable to attend a meeting at that time.

## **4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

## **5 PETITIONS, DEPUTATIONS AND QUESTIONS**

There were no petitions, deputations or questions.

## **6 QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS**

There were no questions with notice member members.

## **7 NOTICES OF MOTION FROM MEMBERS**

There were no notices of motion from members.

## **8 CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE IN RELATION TO THE CALL-IN OF A DECISION**

There were no call-ins.

## **9 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY AND CAPITAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY**

Report No.21/2023 was received from Councillor Karen Payne, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Governance and Performance, Change and Transformation.

The draft Treasury Management and Capital Investment Strategies were considered by Cabinet on 12 January 2023 and were recommended for approval by Council on 27 February 2023. The Committee was invited to provide comments and views on the strategies prior to their consideration by Council. During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- Councillor Begy requested clarification regarding the statement detailed on page 25 of the agenda pack (item 2.3.1 e) which stated that the Council 'continues to include a priority around ethical investments.' The Strategic Director of Resources explained that if an organisation was being considered for investment by the Council and it had the appropriate credit ratings but there were concerns regarding the organisation's Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) factors, then an investment might not occur. He informed attendees that a full explanation of the ESG factors was detailed on page 47 of the agenda pack (item 4.4.5) and that the Council endeavoured not to invest with any organisation that was unethical.
- There were no further questions from the Scrutiny Committee and there were no questions from the non-committee members.
- There were no recommendations from the Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- There were no other comments.

## **10 DRAFT REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET 2023/24**

Report No.22/2023 was received from Councillor Karen Payne, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Governance and Performance, Change and Transformation.

The draft Revenue and Capital Budget for 2023/24 had been approved by Cabinet for a three-week public consultation on Thursday, 12 January 2023. The Committee was invited to provide comments and views regarding the draft budget before the final budget was considered by Cabinet on 14 February 2023 and recommended for

approval by Council on 27 February 2023. During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- It was noted that Rutland County Council was in a better financial situation than some other local authorities due to its strong financial management but difficult decisions would have to be made to ensure that the Council remained financially viable.
- An extra £6.1 million would be needed by the Council in 2023/2024 to deliver the same services it had delivered in 2022/2023.
- An example of the cost rises that the Council now faced included the cost of an adult care bed which had risen from £535 per week to £800 - £900 per week.
- Government funding would not cover the extra costs the Council now faced and local authorities were expected to raise the Council Tax, making savings and use financial reserves.
- Savings of £1.8 million had already been implemented and further savings of £4 million had been identified over the four year period.
- It was noted that, if the Council Tax rate was not raised, Rutland County Council would lose £1.5 million in the year 2023/24 and every year thereafter which would threaten the Council's financial independence.
- Members were informed that the Council's £20k Local Council Tax Support scheme would continue to support those Rutland residents who demonstrated financial hardship and that there would be an extra £33k available for additional Council Tax support payments for those in greatest need.
- It was noted that the reduction of PAN (Published Admission Number) at Casterton College Rutland would not result in a cost pressure.
- The Portfolio Holder Portfolio Holder for Communities, Environment and Climate Change informed the Committee that he was very confident with the numbers stated in the budget relating to the Catmose Leisure Centre.
- The monies regarding the Homes for Ukraine scheme had been incorporated into the budget for 2023/24. It was not known if the scheme would continue after this date but it was confirmed that these Rutland residents had been incorporated into the future budgetary figures.
- The Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Planning, Highways and Transport confirmed that she would send Councillor Begy the details regarding the post removed within the Development Control team.

**ACTION: Councillor Powell**

- It was confirmed that the recruitment to the post of Climate Change Officer had been postponed but that climate change remained a priority for the Council.
- Members were informed that the waste procurement process was still underway and discussions were ongoing with different bidders.
- The budget for the People Directorate would be uplifted to include the increased demand pressures. This would enable the reduction in the separate demand contingency funding.
- The Committee requested that the report to Council (27<sup>th</sup> March 2023) on the Levelling Up Fund be clarified to enable full understanding of the government's requirements regarding the capital funding.

**ACTION: Saverio Della Rocca**

- The increase of £300k to the Local Plan Reserve would be to cover any costs related to the production of a second local plan.
- The draw on reserves had been less than expected but any areas of change/overspend would be highlighted in the final budget report.

- Additional due diligence was being done on the use of a new school admissions IT system but initial findings showed that a saving could be made.
- The Committee requested that the Portfolio Holder for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Care kept members up to date on any increase in risks/costs regarding Community Support Services and ASC Demand (Table 2 - P10 and P14).

**ACTION: Councillor Harvey**

- The Strategic Director of Resources confirmed that he would send details to councillors regarding what saving could be made by closing the Council's post room a few days a week and what impact, if any, this would have on services.

**ACTION: Saverio Della Rocca**

- There were no other comments.

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**Councillor Fox left the meeting at 8.17 p.m.**

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## **11 FEES AND CHARGES 2023/24**

Report No.23/2023 was received from Councillor Karen Payne, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Governance and Performance, Change and Transformation.

The Fees and Charges for 2023/24 would be considered by Cabinet at their meeting on 14 February 2023, for recommending to Council for approval. The Committee was invited to provide comments and views on the report prior to its consideration by Cabinet. During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- It was noted that the Council was asked to act with speed and efficiency when processing fees and charges.
- There were no other comments.

## **12 REVIEW OF THE FORWARD PLAN AND ANNUAL WORK PLAN**

The Forward Plan was reviewed and the annual work plan was updated accordingly. During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- Councillor Harvey to include an update on the public health housing budget and the smoking cessation service in her briefing to the committee on the 9<sup>th</sup> February 2023.
- Councillor Wilby to update the committee regarding the Visions Children's Centre at the meeting on the 9<sup>th</sup> March 2023.

## **13 ANY URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business.

## **14 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

9<sup>th</sup> February 2023 at 7.00 p.m.

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**The Chair declared the meeting closed at 8.24 pm.**

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## SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

No.	Ref.	Action	Person
1.	10	The Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Planning, Highways and Transport to send Councillor Begy the details regarding the post removed within the Development Control team.	<b>Councillor Powell</b>
2.	10	The Committee requested that the report to Council (27 <sup>th</sup> March 2023) on the Levelling Up Fund be clarified to enable full understanding of the government's requirements regarding the capital funding.	<b>Saverio Della Rocca</b>
3.	10	The Committee requested that the Portfolio Holder for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Care kept members up to date on any increase in risks/costs regarding Community Support Services and ASC Demand (Table 2 - P10 and P14).	<b>Councillor Harvey</b>
4.	10	The Strategic Director of Resources to send details to councillors regarding what saving could be made by closing the Council's post room a few days a week and what impact, if any, this would have on services.	<b>Saverio Della Rocca</b>