



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, 23rd March, 2023 at 7.00 pm.

PRESENT

Councillor A Brown (Acting Chair)
Councillor P Ainsley
Councillor R Wilson
Councillor G Brown (representing Councillor N Begy)
Councillor P Browne (representing Councillor S Lambert)
Councillor R Payne (representing Councillor G Waller)

APOLOGIES

Councillor G Waller (Chair)
Councillor E Baines
Councillor N Begy (Vice Chair)
Councillor K Bool
Councillor S Lambert
Councillor L Toseland

STATUTORY CO-OPTED MEMBERS – EDUCATION REPRESENTATIVES

PRESENT

Andreas Menzies	Roman Catholic Diocese
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PORTFOLIO HOLDERS PRESENT

Councillor L Stephenson	Leader and Portfolio Holder for Policy, Strategy, Partnerships and Economy
Councillor R Powell	Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Planning, Highways and Transport
Councillor S Harvey	Portfolio Holder for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Care
Councillor D Wilby	Portfolio Holder for Education and Children's Services

OFFICERS PRESENT

Mark Andrews	Chief Executive
Angela Wakefield	Strategic Director of Law and Governance
Dawn Godfrey	Strategic Director of Children and Families
Kirsty Nutton	Strategic Director Resources S151 Officer
Penny Sharp	Strategic Director of Places
Jane Narey (Clerk)	Scrutiny Officer

1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES RECEIVED

Angela Wakefield, Strategic Director of Law and Governance welcomed members to the meeting and informed them that apologies had been received from the Chair

(Councillor Gale Waller) and the Vice Chair (Councillor Nick Begy). The Committee would therefore be required to vote for an Acting Chair as per Procedure Rule 155.

It was moved by Councillor P Ainsley and seconded by Councillor G Brown that Councillor A Brown should be nominated as the Acting Chair for the meeting. Upon being put to the vote, with 5 votes in favour and 1 abstention, the motion was carried.

RESOLVED

- a) That Councillor A Brown was approved as the Acting Chair for the meeting of the Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on the 23 March 2023.

The Acting Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Councillor Gale Waller (Chair), Councillor Nick Begy (Vice-Chair), Councillor Kenneth Bool, Councillor Leah Toseland, Councillor Stephen Lambert and Councillor Edward Baines. Councillor Raymond Payne, Councillor Gordon Brown and Councillor Paul Browne attended the meeting as the representatives for Councillors Waller, Begy and Lambert respectively.

2 RECORD OF MEETING

The minutes of the meetings of the Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on the 26th January and the 9th February 2023 were approved as an accurate record.

3 ACTIONS ARISING

Actions from the meeting held on the 26th January 2023

Action 1

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.

Councillor R Powell confirmed that the action had been completed.

Action 2

The Committee requested that the report to Council (27th March 2023) on the Levelling Up Fund be clarified to enable full understanding of the government's requirements regarding the capital funding.

Action completed.

Action 3

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).

The Clerk informed attendees that Councillor S Harvey, Portfolio Holder for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Care had confirmed that she would keep members up to date on any increase in risks/costs regarding Community Support Services and ASC Demand.

Action 4

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.

The Clerk confirmed that the action had been completed.

Actions from the meeting held on the 9th February 2023

Action 1

The Portfolio Holder to ask the Primary Care Network if patients were charged for the call whilst waiting on hold and would notify members of the response.

The Clerk stated she would contact Councillor Harvey for confirmation.

Action 2

The Portfolio Holder to ask the Primary Care Network about the possibility of the GP practices in the future pooling their individual phone services into one combined service and feedback the response to the committee members.

Mark Andrews, Chief Executive informed members that the Primary Care Network had confirmed that they would be discussing the matter with the Integrated Care Board.

Action 3

CULTURE / ASSET REVIEW TASK AND FINISH GROUP

Councillor E Baines, with the support of Governance, to continue to seek information from educational establishments as to how the culture offer would be of most benefit to students and how they might become more involved.

The Clerk confirmed that the action was being undertaken.

Action 4

HOMELESSNESS EVIDENCE PANEL: FINAL REPORT

Councillor Waller to meet with the Portfolio Holder to re-word recommendation 6.2 for discussion/approval at the meeting of the scrutiny committee on the 9th March 2023.

The Clerk confirmed that the action had been completed and was on the agenda for approval.

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

5 PETITIONS, DEPUTATIONS AND QUESTIONS

No petitions, deputations or questions were received.

6 QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS

No questions with notice with notice were received from Members.

7 NOTICES OF MOTION FROM MEMBERS

No notices of motion were received.

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

No call-ins were received.

9 PORTFOLIO HOLDERS' UPDATE

An update was received from Councillor D Wilby, Portfolio Holder for Education and Children's Services covering the Visions Children's Centre, the Childcare Sufficiency

Statement and the Childcare Review. During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- Ofsted inspections had taken place at Ryhall CE Academy, Ketton CofE School, Great Casterton CofE Primary School, [Edith Weston Academy](#), Uppingham Community College, [Catmose Primary](#) and [St Nicholas CE Primary School](#). The three reports received and initial feedback from the other inspections indicated that Rutland schools were 'good.'
- The extension at the Catmose campus was ongoing, the Brightways relocation and internal refurbishment had been finished and the remaining new build project was on-track and on budget.
- The Interview Project would run from the 3rd to the 7th July 2023. There would be 4 interview offices with 7 interviews held per office per day. Any Member wanting further details or to assist with the Interview Project should contact Councillor D Wilby.
- Part One of the Uppingham Community College Inclusion Project had been completed and work had begun on Part Two of the project.
- Casterton College had been successful in their bid for funding from the Department for Education's School Rebuilding Programme but no details as yet received.
- The Oakham Church of England Primary School was preparing to join the Rutland Learning Trust led by Rob Gooding.
- Over 98% of parents received their first choice of secondary school in the school admission process. Councillor Wilby expressed his thanks to Julie Brown, Admissions Officer at RCC who had done a magnificent job.
- Places for children with SEND (special educational needs and disabilities) continued to be challenging and expensive but good work had been undertaken by Council Officers with the SEND Recovery Plan.
- A focused effort had taken place by Officers to engage with the SEND Parent Collaborative Group and meetings had proved positive.
- A strong Virtual School, for children with a social worker, was in place. This was led by Lee Martin, Head of Virtual School and good work was being done to support children and young people.
- The county currently had 10 unaccompanied asylum seekers and all were doing well and engaging with education.
- The Ukrainian refugees within the county had all been well received and had all settled well into the schools and the area.
- The Children's Centre had been a beacon for the community especially during the Covid lockdown. It remained a vibrant and well run centre with lots of initiative to run family focused groups and activities and was designated as Rutland's first 'Family Hub' in January 2023.
- Councillor Wilby shared two presentations with members of the committee. The first was on the Children's Centre Data Headlines for January 2022 and the second was on the Parent's Voice regarding the Children's Centre – copies attached.
- Education and Children's Services continued to be a challenging area. Additional stresses had been placed on the service by the pandemic, unaccompanied asylum seekers and the war in Ukraine but the Council's Officers were dedicated and had worked very hard to provide the best for the children of Rutland.
- The Chief Executive confirmed that direct payments to Adults carers had ceased but direct payments to those who required care and support had not and would continue.

- Councillor P Browne queried what was being done to help reduce the deficit in the SEND High Needs Block budget. The Strategic Director of Children and Families informed members that a SEND recovery plan was in place and the deficit was covered by a Central Government 'statutory override' until 2026 so would not affect the Council's general fund. The Council was one of 55 Local Authorities who were taking part in the Department for Education's (DfE) 'Delivering Better Value Programme.' This was a long term project which was aimed at stalling the increase in the budget deficit and bringing the Council into a balanced budget. A full update on the programme would be provided once the diagnostic phase had been completed by the end of June 2023.
- Councillor R Payne queried what was being done to help promote the free school meals school holiday programme in secondary schools. The Portfolio Holder for Education and Children's Services informed members that reminders were sent to all schools but confirmed that he would request for a further reminder to be sent. The Strategic Director of Children and Families informed members that targeted work was being done through the Early Help Service to encourage the older age group to attend the programme.
- Councillor G Brown asked if membership of the Youth Council could be promoted to children and young people who lived outside of Oakham and if pupils from the other schools e.g. Oakham School and Uppingham School could be invited to be part of the Rutland Youth Council. The Portfolio Holder for Education and Children's Services confirmed that he would pass on the request to the Young People Services team.

10 LEVELLING UP FUND ROUND 2 - ACCEPTANCE OF GRANT FUNDING

Report No. 50/2023 was received from Cllr Lucy Stephenson, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Policy, Strategy, Partnerships and Economy and was presented by Penny Sharp, Strategic Director of Places. During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- A decision regarding the Levelling Up Fund (LUF) would be taken by Council on Monday, 27th March 2023 so members should have had access to the full Council papers including the exempt reports.
- Round 2 of the LUF was announced in March 2022 and a combined bid between Rutland County Council (RCC) and Melton Borough Council (MBC) was agreed by Cabinet in June 2022, submitted in August 2022 and a decision was received in January 2023.
- There were three key elements to the bid:
 - investment in our health economy via the medi-tech digital innovation centre;
 - investment in our public transport via an integrated transport or 'mobi-hub' and
 - investment in our culture to enhance tourism via the enhanced digital visitor experience.
- The Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Policy, Strategy, Partnerships and Economy informed members that only 1 in 5 of the LUF bids were successful.
- Members were informed that the second item under section 2.17 only referred to women as there was a disparity in wages between men and women. A compelling evidence base had shown that women in Rutland were at a greater disadvantage than men in Rutland and received lower than national wages.

- Members were informed that a very tight governance framework would be put in place through the business plan, as set out in the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The Chief Executive informed members that gateway i.e. 'Go, No Go' sections would be clearly identified and any decisions to proceed with the projects would be a full Council decision.
- The Strategic Director of Places confirmed that the Council had an experienced project team but that additional staff would be recruited to support the programme. It was noted that there would be no additional cost to the Council despite the increased amount of work as the provision of the additional staff had already been integrated into the service costs. Additional funding streams would also be accessed in line with the strict LUF regulations.
- Councillor G Brown thanked Officers for the additional documentation and stated that the MoU provided greater clarity and the legal documentation between RCC and MBC was a lot clearer. However, he expressed concern about the revenue costs, the rising capital costs and the capability and time of Officers.
- The Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Policy, Strategy, Partnerships and Economy stated that financial thresholds were determined by the Council's governance rules so might require a Cabinet decision or a full Council decision. The feasibility plan for Rutland Memorial Hospital had been outlined at the [Rutland Health and Wellbeing Board on Tuesday, 21st March 2023](#).
- The Strategic Director of Places confirmed that every successful Local Authority had been requested to provide an updated baseline position with the signed MOU due to the rise in costs since the bid submission back in August 2022. She stated that at the moment no fixed local had been identified for the enhanced procedure suite at RMH but that the recent Asset Review had identified other options to maximise the use of land holdings including Jules House, Oakham Medical Practice, etc.
- The Chief Executive confirmed that he had already discussed with Councillor A Brown, Chair of the Scrutiny Committee's Economic Strategy Task and Finish Group, the opportunity for the group to be a 'critical friend' by assisting with monitoring the LUF programme/costs.
- The LUF project had been identified as a 'high risk project' which required Cabinet decisions and a high level of governance support. As such, the LUF Executive Delivery Programme Board would be a joint venture with MBC and the Board's Terms of Reference would be produced by Cabinet. Membership would include RCC's Chief Executive, The Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Policy, Strategy, Partnerships and Economy, the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Governance and Performance, Change and Transformation, the Strategic Director of Places and the Strategic Director of Resources and S151 Officer.
- The Capital funding would allow the Council to re-design services to be more efficient and therefore save money but the transformation would need to be governed so suggestions from the new executive would be welcomed.
- Members were informed that there was no option within the MoU to 'claw back' funds but that although MBC was responsible for its own projects, RCC could stop the necessary funding if sufficiently concerned.

Angela Wakefield, Director of Law and Governance (Monitoring Officer) confirmed that a motion to Exclude the Press and Public could be moved without notice under Procedure Rule 33 (o).

It was therefore proposed by Councillor P Browne 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 was likely to lead to the

disclosure of information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). This was seconded and upon being put to the vote the motion was unanimously carried.

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The Acting Chair closed the public meeting at 8.20 pm.
The Acting Chair re-opened the public meeting at 8.50 p.m.

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RESOLVED

That the Committee:

- a) **NOTED** that a report would be presented to Council on 27 March 2023 with these proposed draft recommendations:
 - A) Approves the Memorandum of Understanding for the Rutland and Melton 'Rural Innovation in Place' Levelling Up Funding (LUF) grant from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and delegates authority to the Chief Executive and Director of Resources in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Policy, Strategy, Partnerships and Economy and Portfolio Holder for Resources to sign the agreement on behalf of Rutland County Council.
 - B) Approves that Rutland County Council acts as the grant administrator (Accountable Body) for the Levelling Up Fund capital grant and delegates authority to the Director of Resources (s151 Officer) to manage the Accountable Body function.
 - C) Delegates authority to the Chief Executive and Director of Places in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Policy, Strategy, Partnerships and Economy to finalise and enter into a grant agreement between Rutland County Council (as Accountable Body) and Melton Borough Council (as grant recipient) to apportion responsibility for delivering the requirements of the Levelling Up Fund Memorandum of Understanding.
 - D) Approves the use of Developer Contributions to provide £1.2 million match funding to contribute to the Rutland element of the Levelling Up Fund proposition as identified in the indicative allocations previously agreed by Cabinet.
 - E) Delegates to the Director of Resources (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Places the administration and implementation (including project delivery) of the Levelling Up Fund grant requirements and monitoring returns.
- b) **ADVISED** of any additional issues or areas of concerns that Council may need to consider in making an informed decision about the acceptance of the Levelling Up Fund capital grant and Rutland County Council acting as Accountable Body.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee **AGREED** the following recommendations:

1. That clarity be provided to members at Council on Monday evening around the transformation project and the potential change in services resulting in the investment of the LUF and that benefits will be brought forward accordingly.

2. That the Economic Strategy Task and Finish Group be involved in reviewing the new Baseline calculations, timelines and the GO/NO-GO gateways potentially involving Cabinet decisions.
3. That the Transformation Governance Meeting involving Group Leaders be tasked with reviewing the savings achieved by the capital expenditure under 1 above.
4. That clarity be provided to members at Council on Monday evening of the potential of extending the scope of the LUF to provide wider and deeper health provision in Oakham.
5. That Scrutiny Committee consider the LUF Project Board Terms of Reference when it comes to Cabinet later this year in order to consider the implications of whether it should be considered as a 'Very High Risk' project requiring Council approval rather than a 'High Risk' project.
6. That a member visit be considered to a Medi-Hub, similar in style to that proposed, to understand the concept and the opportunities.

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Councillor G Brown left the meeting at 8.52 p.m.

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11 GROUP AND PANEL UPDATES

A) ECONOMIC STRATEGY TASK AND FINISH GROUP

- A verbal update was received from Councillor A Brown regarding the meeting of the Economic Strategy Task and Finish Group held on the 21st February 2023 – minutes attached.
- The next meeting would be held on the 12th April 2023 and a further update provided at the next meeting of the scrutiny committee.

B) HIGHWAYS AND SPEEDING

An update was received from Councillor P Browne. During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- Councillor P Browne had engaged with concerned residents in his ward and discussions had been held with various parties regarding possible traffic calming measures and their implementation into our towns and villages.
- He had also surveyed the railway-crossing closing times and liaised with Network Rail on their planned future train usage through Oakham, which had identified the extent of closing times from 2024 to 2030 and its consequential effects on traffic flows.
- Enquires had been made for Members to become involved in the task and finish group but this had been met with no wish for involvement.
- This was attributed to the fact that the elections were only 4 months away and that the timeframe would have restricted the ability for both the compilation of a realistic analysis and for any appropriate recommendations to be considered.
- Councillor R Payne proposed that the group should cease and that the matter should be re-introduced after the May election. This was seconded and being put to the vote was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED

That the Committee:

- a) **AGREED** that the Highways and Speeding Task and Finish Group should cease.
- b) **AGREED** that, after the elections in May 2023, the Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Committee should consider re-commencing the Highways and Speeding Task and Finish Group.

C) HOMELESSNESS EVIDENCE PANEL

The Acting Chair presented the amended wording of recommendation 6.2 in the final report for approval by the Committee. During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- The wording had been amended and approved by Councillor Gale Waller, Chair of the Homelessness Evidence Panel and Councillor Sam Harvey, Portfolio Holder for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Care.
- The Strategic Director for Children and Families had requested that the term 'domestic violence' be amended to 'domestic abuse' as this was the correct terminology.

RESOLVED

That the Committee:

- a) **AGREED** that the phrase 'domestic violence' be amended to 'domestic abuse'.
- b) **APPROVED** recommendation 6.2 of the Homelessness Evidence Panel to read as follows:

'That Cabinet, as part of its performance monitoring, review data on rehousing victims of domestic abuse to provide reassurance that the housing provided is suitable for the needs and safety of this cohort of homeless people.'

12 REVIEW OF THE FORWARD PLAN AND ANNUAL WORK PLAN

The Forward Plan and Annual Work Plan were discussed. No changes or amendments were requested.

13 ANY URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

14 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday, 20th April 2023 at 7 p.m.

FOR INFORMATION ONLY

15 LEICESTERSHIRE, LEICESTER AND RUTLAND INTEGRATED CARE SERVICE: PERFORMANCE REPORT

- The quarterly performance data report was received from the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Integrated Care System.
- Members were informed that the report was 'For Information Only.'
- If any Member had any questions regarding the report, they should send them to Governance (governance@rutland.gov.uk) who would collate and forward them on to Kate Allardyce, Senior Performance Manager for a response.

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The Acting Chair declared the meeting closed at 9.00 pm.

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