

Rutland County Council



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Minutes of the 253rd **MEETING of the COUNCIL** held in the Council Chamber, Catmose, Oakham, Rutland, LE15 6HP on Monday, 6th November, 2023 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT:

Councillor A Brown (Chairman)	Councillor N Begy
Councillor T Carr	Councillor P Browne
Councillor M Chatfield	Councillor G Clifton
Councillor K Corby	Councillor H Edwards
Councillor D Ellison	Councillor K Heckels
Councillor O Hemsley	Councillor A Johnson
Councillor S Lambert	Councillor A West
Councillor S McRobb	Councillor K Payne
Councillor R Payne	Councillor R Powell
Councillor R Ross	Councillor T Smith
Councillor L Stephenson	Councillor G Waller
Councillor D Wilby	Councillor H Zollinger-Ball

OFFICERS PRESENT:

Mark Andrews	Chief Executive
Kirsty Nutton	Strategic Director for Resources
Penny Sharp	Strategic Director for Places
Angela Wakefield	Strategic Director for Law and Governance
Tom Delaney	Democratic Services Manager

ABSENT: Councillor M Farina Councillor S Havey
Councillor C Wise

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Farina, S Harvey, and C Wise.

2 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman announced that since the last meeting of Council, he or the Vice-Chairman had attended the following events:

- Army Benevolent Fund Bagpipes & Highland Dancing Display in Market Square, Oakham.
- Battle of Britain Parade and the Chairman of SKDC's Civic Service, both in Stamford.
- Civic Farm Tour & Afternoon Tea in Caldecott joined by many Members.
- Children Looked After Care Awards Event at Oakham School.
- High Sheriff of Rutland's Justice Service.

- HM Lord-Lieutenant's Cadet Investiture at Casterton College
- Rocks by Rail Commemorative Event.
- Royal British Legion Festival of Remembrance in De Montfort Hall Leicester.
- Armed Forces & Veterans Breakfast Club at the Grainstore in Oakham.

Members were reminded of the events taking place over the upcoming weekend to commemorate Remembrance and were encouraged to attend as many events as possible.

The Chairman also informed Members that former Councillor Eddie Martin had recently passed away. Councillor Martin had represented Oakham East on Rutland District Council from 1987 to the creation of the unitary authority in 1997 for which Councillor Martin was a leading campaigner for, and had also been the County Council's first Leader. After leaving Rutland Councillor Martin had gone on to become a long-serving Councillor in Cumbria including serving as Leader of Cumbria County Council.

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

Councillor G Waller, Leader of the Council, announced to Members that on behalf of the Council she had attended a number of meetings for which the details would be circulated and appended to the minutes.

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

5 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Consideration was given to the minutes of the ordinary and special meetings of Council held on Monday, 4 September.

It was moved by the Chairman and seconded that the minutes be approved. upon being put to the vote, with 23 votes in favour and 1 abstention the motion was carried.

RESOLVED

- a) That the minutes of the ordinary and special meetings held on 4 September 2023 be **APPROVED**.

6 PETITIONS, DEPUTATIONS AND QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

No petitions, deputations or questions had been received from members of the public.

7 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

Two questions had been received from Councillors and these were taken in the order in which they were received.

Councillor R Powell asked her question to Councillor P Browne, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Property, as set out in the agenda supplement.

Councillor Browne in response thanked Councillor Powell for her support of the proposed policy EN3 in the draft Local Plan, it was explained that the Council's approach was for on-site offsetting in the first instance but could not guarantee off-site mitigation would always be within Rutland, as the Council did not hold land available for these purposes and so was reliant on sufficient landowners in Rutland being willing to submit sites for accreditation. It was confirmed that the Council's aspiration was to accrue a number of approved sites within Rutland to then be made available to developers.

It was also set out that the Council was still awaiting comprehensive regulations and guidance from central government regarding upcoming policy changes relating to biodiversity net gains and it was unknown if this would give Council's further powers that might enable mandating of off-siting to be within the county. Reference was also made to the ongoing work with Leicestershire County Council on a Local Nature Recovery Strategy for which a project plan was expected in the new year and would include a statement of the area's biodiversity net gain priorities.

In response to Councillor Powell's supplementary regarding how the Council was proactively encouraging landowners to submit sites, Councillor Browne set out that the methodology was not yet determined as this was reliant on the upcoming policy changes from central government, but confirmed the Council would be working proactively with landowners in due course.

Councillor K Payne asked her question to Councillor C Wise, Portfolio Holder for Highways, Transport and the Environment, as set out in the agenda supplement.

As Councillor Wise had sent apologies for the meeting Councillor G Waller, Leader of the Council, responded upon her behalf. In response, Councillor Waller set out the main responsibilities of the Council in relation to flooding and those of other organisations and set out how these responsibilities had been specially undertaken across the county in relation to Storm Babet. It was confirmed a dedicated webpage had been established on the Council's website with live information on incidents, current advice, and links to other services, and this page had been promoted through the Council's various communications channels including social media. It was set out a report on the impact of Storm Babet including all locations and the responses of all relevant bodies, it was confirmed this would include consultation with Parishes. It was noted that Storm Babet was not considered a significant flood incident for which funding from central government would not be available although further clarity was being sought from ministers. Parish Councils and residents were thanked for their local responses and it was noted that support for Parish Councils in preparation of local flood plans was available online: <https://www.clearcouncils.co.uk/news/what-parish-and-town-councils-can-do-to-manage-flood-risk-in-their-community/>

In response to a supplementary regarding specific action the Council was taking, Cllr Waller repeated a point that the Local Strategic Plan was subject to review including analysis of Storm Babet but added that discussions were ongoing with Leicestershire County Council on working collaboratively to address flood risk. It was set out the Cabinet was looking to create a new post that would include focusing on managing flood risk as part of the forthcoming budget.

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 4 SEPTEMBER TO 6 NOVEMBER 2023 (INCLUSIVE)

No call-ins had been received.

10 REPORT FROM THE CABINET

Report No. 158/2023 was introduced by Councillor A Johnson, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Resources. The report sought approval to continue with the existing Local Council Tax Support Scheme and Discretionary Fund which supported working age households who on low incomes for the 2024/25 financial year.

In response to questions, it was confirmed that the intended review of the schemes for future years would be taking place in the following financial year and would include modelling of expected future demand in the context of an aging population. It was also confirmed the Council did take measures to promote the availability of these schemes to eligible residents.

It was moved by Councillor A Johnson and seconded that the recommendations of Report No. 158/2023 be approved. Upon being put to the vote, with 24 votes in favour the motion was unanimously approved.

RESOLVED

- a) **APPROVED** to continue with the existing Local Council Tax Support scheme and to continue to adjust it annually for inflation in line with Governments Adjudications and Operations Circulars from the 2024/25 financial year.
- b) **APPROVED** to continue with the existing Discretionary Fund Policy from the 2024/25 financial year.

11 REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL

One report had been received from the Planning and Licensing Committee.

A) APPROVAL OF THE HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENSING POLICY

Report No. 165/2023 was introduced by Councillor N Begy, Chair of the Planning and Licensing Committee. The report sought Council approval for the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy following the recent policy development and public consultation exercise, and consideration by the Planning and Licensing Committee on 14 March and 24 October 2023. Members of the Committee spoke in support of the proposals citing the hard work undertaken to get to this juncture.

A motion to approve the recommendations of Report No. 165/2023 was moved by Councillor N Begy and seconded. Upon being put to the vote, with 24 votes in favour the motion was unanimously carried.

RESOLVED

That Council:

- a) **APPROVED** the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy.

12 REPORTS FROM SCRUTINY

No reports had been received.

13 JOINT ARRANGEMENTS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

Three reports had been received from Members and these were taken in the order they were received.

Councillor R Ross provided his written report as listed in the agenda on the meeting of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor T Carr provided Members with a verbal report regarding the Children in Care Awards she had attended as Champion for Looked after Children on 27 September, Councillor Carr thanked officers on the work that had gone into the event and highlighted the achievements of the event. Members were also encouraged to attend training on Corporate Parenting due to be held in January where they could learn more about the Council's work with children in care.

Councillor L Stephenson provided a verbal report on the Rural Community Council and confirmed a written copy would be circulated with the minutes.

RESOLVED

- a) That the reports be **RECEIVED** and **NOTED**.

14 NOTICES OF MOTION

A notice of motion had been received from Councillors R Ross and S McRobb.

A) A FAIR FINANCIAL SETTLEMENT FOR RURAL COUNCILS FOR 2024/25

Councillor R Ross introduced and proposed the motion as set out in the agenda and this was seconded.

Members spoke in support of the motion citing the Council's longstanding support for the Rural Services Network and the lobbying undertaken by previous administrations on fair funding for rural authorities to address the significant funding issues facing local authorities.

An amendment was moved by Councillor A West and seconded which sought to expand the third proposal to include asking the Leader to write to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, HM Treasury and the Prime Minister's Office. Members spoke

in support of the amendment citing the importance of ensuring the message in the motion was heard as far as possible.

Upon being put to the vote, with 24 votes in favour the amendment was unanimously carried.

Councillor G Waller moved a further amendment to include that the Council would issue a press release following the writing of the proposed letters. This was seconded and supported by Members who cited the importance of highlighting the Council's current record on living within its means.

The amendment was put to the vote and with 24 votes in favour was unanimously carried.

The motion as amended was then put to the vote. With 24 votes in favour the motion, as amended, was unanimously carried.

RESOLVED

That Council:

- a) **ENDORSED** the Rural Services Network campaign for a fair financial settlement for rural councils for 2024/25.
- b) **CALLED** Upon Government
 - i) In recognition of the continued failure to conclude the 2016 review, to fund rural authorities in 2024/25 based upon their full formula allocations, a benefit that has been denied for nine years.
 - ii) That this funding be based upon the £248m, adjusted for inflation, that the government identified in 2013/14 as being reflective of the increased cost of rural service provision.
 - iii) To commit to concluding the Needs and Resources Review in the first 12 months of the next Spending Review period, with a view to implementation in 2026/27.
- c) **REQUESTED** that the Leader of the Council write to the Member of Parliament, the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, HM Treasury and the Prime Minister to convey these messages to government.
- d) **REQUESTED** a press release be issued on the sending of these letters.

15 REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS, POLLING PLACES AND POLLING STATIONS 2023

Report No. 159/2023 was introduced by Councillor G Waller, Leader of the Council. The report sought Council approval of the recommendations of the Returning Officer within the report and to conclude the compulsory review of polling districts and polling places.

The recommendations of Report No. 159/2023 were moved by Councillor G Waller and seconded. Upon being put to the vote, with 24 votes in favour the motion was unanimously carried.

RESOLVED

That Council:

- a) **NOTED** the findings of the compulsory review of polling districts, polling places, and polling stations.
- b) **APPROVED** the changes of polling places and polling stations recommended by the Returning Officer at section 12 of this report.

16 APPOINTMENT OF STRATEGIC DIRECTOR FOR ADULTS AND HEALTH

Report No. 160/2023 was introduced by Councillor D Ellison, Portfolio Holder for Adult Care and Health. The report sought approval for the appointment of Mrs K Sorsky on a permanent basis into the post of Strategic Director for Adults and Health, having been appointed to this position on a temporary basis in February 2023. Mrs Sorsky was praised for her leadership and professionalism, both within her directorate and Council-wide as part of the Corporate Leadership Team.

The recommendations of Report No. 160/2023 were moved by Councillor D Ellison and seconded. Upon being put to the vote, with 24 votes in favour the motion was unanimously carried.

RESOLVED

That Council:

- a) **APPROVED** the appointment of Mrs K Sorsky to the permanent position of Strategic Director Adults and Health

17 HIGHWAYS TERM MAINTENANCE CONTRACT

Report No. 161/2023 was introduced by Councillor A Johnson, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Resources. The report sought Council to decide on the award of Rutland's Highway Term Maintenance Contract following a comprehensive procurement process.

Members spoke in support of the report, highlighting the work officers had undertaken over a notable period of time in order to undertake the procurement exercise and highlighted the Council's overall success with highways in recent years. Assurances were given regarding the ability of the Council to ensure spending once awarded would be within acceptance limits and work undertaken being to the expected standards.

In order to address several questions regarding the report and exempt appendix, it was moved by the Chairman and seconded that the press and public be excluded. This was seconded and upon being put to the vote, with 24 votes in favour the motion was unanimously carried.

RESOLVED

- a) That the press and public be **EXCLUDED** as the Appendix A to the report contained exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, namely commercially sensitive information.

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The meeting moved to an exempt session at 20:25 and was returned to a public session by the Chairman at 20:38

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A motion to approve the recommendations of Report No. 161/2023 had been moved by Councillor A Johnson and seconded. Upon being put to the vote, with 24 votes in favour the motion was unanimously carried.

RESOLVED

That Council

AUTHORISED the award of the Highway Term Maintenance Contract to the highest scoring bidder resulting from the procurement in line with the Award Criteria and as required by the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

18 ANY URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business for consideration.

19 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

This was noted to now be the special meeting of Council due to be held on Wednesday, 6 December to consider conferring the title of Honorary Alderman.

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The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.40 pm.

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