



# Rutland County Council

Catmose Oakham Rutland LE15 6HP.

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Minutes of the 255<sup>th</sup> (Special) **MEETING of the COUNCIL** held in the Council Chamber, Catmose, Oakham, Rutland, LE15 6HP on Thursday, 18th January, 2024 at 7.00 pm

**PRESENT:**

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

**OFFICERS PRESENT:**

Mark Andrews	Chief Executive
Penny Sharp	Strategic Director for Places
Angela Wakefield	Strategic Director for Law and Governance
Tom Delaney	Democratic Services Manager
Jane Narey	Scrutiny Officer
David Ebbage	Democratic Services Officer
Kate Haworth	Civic Officer
Mathew Waik	Communications Service Manager

**ABSENT:**

Councillor D Ellison	Councillor R Ross
Councillor R Powell	

## 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D Ellison, R Ross and R Powell.

## 2 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman confirmed he would make a full set of announcements at the next scheduled meeting of Council.

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

There were no announcements from the Leaders, Members of the Cabinet or the Head of Paid Service.

### 4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

### 5 PETITIONS, DEPUTATIONS AND QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

It was moved by Councillor L Stephenson and seconded that Procedure Rule 26 be suspended, this was to have the effect of removing the 30-minute time limit for petitions, deputations and questions to be considered. Upon being put to the vote, with 24 votes in favour the motion was unanimously carried.

#### RESOLVED

- a) That Procedure Rule 26 be **SUSPENDED** for the duration of the meeting.

The Chairman outlined that each of the deputations and questions would be taken in the order in which they were received as set out in the agenda supplement. Councillor C Wise, Portfolio Holder for Transport, Environment and Communities, was invited to respond to each question by the Chairman. For those questions where the questioner was not in attendance the question was not put.

- Gordon Brown, Chair of Barrowden Parish Council, made his deputation as circulated in the agenda supplement. In response to a question from a Member on the deputation, Mr Brown set out the impact of flooding in Barrowden and that in response Barrowden Parish Council with support from residents had dug a ditch across a field to act as a flood defence. In response to further questions Mr Brown confirmed the matter of flooding had been raised during his time on the Council as the relevant Portfolio Holder but due to changing climate conditions he felt longer term thinking would be required.
- Edwards Baines asked his question as circulated in the agenda supplement. In response Councillor Wise set out that heavy rainfall had taken place over Storms Babet and Henk and the intervening weeks leading to a number of flooding issues across the county. Once reports of flooding had begun to arrive Council services and other authorities such as the environment agency had met and mobilised responses including out of hours work on road closures and establishing of communication channels to residents with regular updates on changes. Additional support had been given to residents experiencing home flooding in Barleythorpe alongside Allison Homes due to the matters arising on unadopted roads.
- Cynthia Moss, Whissendine Parish Councillor, made her deputation as circulated in the agenda supplement. In response to a question from a Member Ms Moss certain flooding incidents in Whissendibne had been recurring on regular occasions.
- Eleanor and John Martindale asked their question as circulated in the agenda supplement. In response Councillor Wise the matter had been raised by the Ward Members and was a specific area that will be investigated, although it couldn't be confirmed until after the investigation as to whether a blocked drain

- was the source of the issue. In response to a supplementary Councillor Wise could not confirm the exact timings of the investigation.
- Councillor L Stephenson asked a question submitted by Chris Fisher as circulated in the agenda supplement. In response Councillor Wise outlined the guidance available to Councils from the Local Government Association which set out the responsibilities and powers of Councils with regard to flooding.
  - Wyn and Michelle Edwards asked their question as circulated in the agenda supplement. In response Councillor Wise set out that Rutland County Council and Whissendine Parish Council had agreed an approach in 2021 to limit water flow and communication with landowners on widening water courses had since taken place. It was also confirmed the brook was a specific area that would be investigated as part of the planned Section 19 investigation which had been triggered by Storm Henk. In response to a supplementary regarding the responsibility of Parish Council's and action undertaken after 2021 Councillor Wise offered to provide a written response.
  - Councillor K Payne asked a question submitted by Jennifer Hughes-Nurse as circulated in the agenda supplement. In response Councillor Wise set out that the exact causes of the recent floods and solutions to these would be established as part of the Section 19 investigation.
  - Joan Richardson asked her question as circulated in the agenda supplement. In response Councillor Wise confirmed this was a specific area that would be investigated as part of the Section 19 investigation. In response to a supplementary Councillor Wise reiterated the importance of establishing the exact causes for each case of individual flooding to then implement the best solution.
  - Hilary Lewis asked her question as circulated in the agenda supplement. In response Councillor Wise confirmed internal flooding had been recorded at Melton Road, Langham and that this was a specific area that would be investigated under the Section 19 investigation which would inform the Council's Flood Risk Management Strategy. In response to a supplementary confirmed the issue of traffic would be included in the investigation.
  - Barbara Murie asked a question on behalf of Tom Murie as circulated in the agenda supplement. In response Councillor Wise confirmed the area would be investigated as part of the Section 19 investigation, the issue of erosion was also acknowledged as a long term issue for consideration would need to be given. In response to a supplementary it was confirmed the suggestions made in Gordon Brown's deputation would be among those considered by the investigation.
  - Peter Gatheral asked a question on behalf of Virginia and Andrew Kilpatrick as circulated in the agenda supplement. In response Councillor C Wise confirmed the specific area would be investigation a part of the Section 19 process.
  - Greg Harker, Chair of Stretton Parish Council, asked his question as circulated in the agenda supplement. In response Councillor Wise set out that individuals should not walk or drive through flood water. It was set out there were only three water rescue units across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland who could save an individual who became trapped in flood water, and that local volunteers should not enter flood areas until water had receded. In response to a supplementary it was set out that issues emergency services had to prioritise areas to respond to and this often meant prioritising areas where personal safety was at risk.
  - Simon Jackson asked his question as circulated in the agenda supplement. In response Councillor Wise confirmed the gulleys on the A606 had last been inspected and cleaned by contractors in October 2023 but this area would be

- investigated as part of the Section 19 investigation. It was confirmed that during flooding the Council would not instruct staff to enter flood water to clear gully's or drains due to personal safety risk, in the event of a risk to life the emergency services would be called to respond. It was confirmed once water had receded to a safe level, street cleansing could then commence. In response to a supplementary it was reiterated that flood water would always recede over time.
- Sinclair Rogers, Chair of Ketton Parish Council, asked his question as circulated in the agenda supplement. In response Councillor Wise set out that as part of the Section 19 investigation the Council would be able to ask the Environment Agency on how they had fulfilled their duties with regard to river maintenance and the mitigation measures in place. In response to a supplementary question Councillor Wise reiterated the matter would be raised with the Environment Agency.
  - Monty Andrew asked his question as circulated in the agenda supplement. In response Councillor Wise set out that the previous Strategic Flood Risk Assessment had been undertaken at a desktop level with statutory partners but confirmed that following recent floods a much more comprehensive Flood Risk Management Strategy as part of the Local Plan this would include public consultation allowing individual residents and local Parish Councils to submit their views.
  - Karen Tattersall asked her question as circulated in the agenda supplement. In response Councillor Wise confirmed the Section 19 investigation would include the specific area. In response to a supplementary Councillor Wise confirmed Anglian Water and the environment Agency would be included in this process.
  - Nigel Spencer made his deputation as circulated in the agenda supplement. There were no questions from Members for Mr Spencer.
  - David Hjorns asked his question as circulated in the agenda supplement. In response Councillor Wise set out that the exact causes of the flooding identified would be examined as part of the Section 19 investigation.

The Chairman thanked all those who had taken the time to address Council.

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

One question had been received from Councillor K Heckels and this was put to Councillor C Wise as set out in the agenda supplement.

In response Councillor C Wise set out that only suitably trained emergency services personnel could enter flood water when there is a risk to life and that when flooding begins the Council could only react to a flood incident rather than address the cause as it was taking place. It was outlined there was then an opportunity once flooding had subsided to examine what measures could be in place to prevent future flooding. Councillor Wise also reiterated the unprecedented level of flooding that Rutland had experienced as a result of Storm Henk.

In response to Councillor Heckels' supplementary regarding the Section 19 investigation, it was set out that villages were likely to have informal arrangements for emergency planning, and the Council would need to consider whether emergency plans should be in place for individual villages.

## **7 FLOODING IN RUTLAND**

Councillor L Stephenson introduced the report submitted for the meeting and proposed the suggested actions in the report which were seconded.

Members cited the experiences of residents across the county during recent flooding and spoke in support of the report and proposal for Scrutiny to investigate the matter and clarify the Council's roles and responsibilities and identify where investment could be made. It was particularly felt that Scrutiny's work should seek to act on the matters raised by residents at the meeting and seek where possible to engage with residents directly where possible. It was also noted that there would be a number of stakeholders to engage with including the Environment Agency, Anglian Water and Severn Trent and developers where unadopted roads were concerned. It was also noted this should compliment rather than duplicate the work that would be undertaken by the Council as part of the Section 19 investigation.

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Councillor M Farina left the meeting at 20:16 and returned at 20:19.

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The proposed resolution in the report was moved by Councillor L Stephenson and seconded. Upon being put to the vote, with 23 votes in favour and 1 abstention the motion was carried.

## **RESOLVED**

That Council:

- a) **NOTED** the report.
- b) **REQUESTED** the Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Committee to investigate the above matters guided by Council's debate and makes recommendations to Cabinet and Council regarding the role of Council as Local Lead Flood Authority.

## **8 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

This was noted to be Monday, 26 February.

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**The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.10 pm.**

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